



AUSTRALIAN
COUNCIL
FOR
INTERNATIONAL
DEVELOPMENT

**ACFID Submission to the ALP National Platform –
Consultation Draft**

May 2015

About ACFID

The Australian Council for International Development (ACFID) unites Australia's non-government aid and international development organisations to strengthen their collective impact against poverty. Our vision is of a world where gross inequality within societies and between nations is reversed and extreme poverty is eradicated.

ACFID's purpose is to provide leadership to the not-for-profit aid and development sector in Australia in achieving this vision and to fairly represent and promote the collective views and interests of our membership.

Founded in 1965, ACFID currently has 133 members and 13 affiliates operating in more than 100 developing countries. The total revenue raised by ACFID's membership from all sources amounts to \$1.3 billion (2012-13), \$719 million of which is raised from over 1.9 million Australians (2012-13). 80% of funding is from non-government sources. ACFID's members range between large Australian multi-sectoral organisations that are linked to international federations of NGOs, to agencies with specialised thematic expertise, and smaller community based groups, with a mix of secular and faith based organisations.

ACFID members must comply with the ACFID Code of Conduct, a voluntary, self-regulatory sector code of good practice that aims to improve international development outcomes and increase stakeholder trust by enhancing the transparency and accountability of signatory organisations. Covering over 50 principles and 150 obligations, the Code sets good standards for program effectiveness, fundraising, governance and financial reporting. Compliance includes annual reporting and checks. The Code has an independent complaints handling process. Over 130 organisations belong to the ACFID Code and can be viewed at www.acfid.asn.au

The full list of ACFID's current members and affiliates can be found in **Annex A**.

It is important to note that this submission does not over-ride any policy positions that may be outlined in any individual submissions from ACFID members.

1. Introduction

ACFID welcomes the opportunity to consult on the Australian Labor Party's Draft National Platform. We commend the Australian Labor Party for its ongoing commitment to international development and the Australian aid program reflected in its draft National Platform. ACFID believes it is a strong statement on the importance of reducing poverty and inequality in our region and around the world. This submission provides additional recommendations that we believe would strengthen the Labor Party's National Platform and the subsequent Labor policy that will be developed for the Foreign Affairs portfolio in the lead up to the next Federal Election, in the interests of developing countries, Australia and our region.

2. Purpose of Australia's aid program

ACFID commends Labor's commitment to an aid program that has reducing inequality and poverty as its fundamental purpose.¹ Reducing poverty must remain at the heart of global development efforts, and progress will not be forthcoming without also tackling inequality. We commend Labor's commitment to the implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals and utilising them as a guide for Australia's international development assistance. We also commend Labor's position that Australia should take a leadership role on international development assistance.²

3. Rebuilding Australia's aid program

ACFID welcomes Labor's commitment to growing the Australian aid program and increasing Official Development Assistance (ODA). We also acknowledge the Shadow Minister for Foreign Affairs and International Development's strong and ongoing condemnation of recent successive cuts to Australia's aid program.

However, ACFID is concerned that Labor's commitment to ODA reaching at least 0.5% of Gross National Income is not accompanied by a clear timetable.³

We note that the longstanding international commitment to reach 0.7% of GNI is likely to be affirmed by global leaders in September of this year as part of the Sustainable Development Goals. Australia is currently punching well below its weight in its contribution to aid and development. In order to do our fair share internationally, Australia must have an aid budget commensurate with its international obligations.

Labor had previously committed to achieving 0.5% by 2015 and had a timetable for doing so. **We call on Labor to commit to restoring the aid budget to \$5 billion plus CPI as**

¹ ALP Draft National Platform, page 209.

² Ibid, page 210.

³ Ibid, page 210.

a first step in the next term of Government, and to then reaching 0.5% by 2025, with a view to reaching 0.7% by 2030.

4. Aid program policy priorities

4.1 Humanitarian response

ACFID welcomes Labor's commitment to contribute to international aid efforts to alleviate the pressing humanitarian needs of displaced persons.⁴ We emphasise that alongside such a commitment, is the important role of Australia's aid program in addressing the root causes of conflict and fragility. To this end, aid to fragile, conflict-affected and post-conflict states is critically important to build peace and stability in our greater region. Australia has historically been one of only a few countries to invest the majority of its aid program in fragile states, and we encourage Labor to **commit to prioritising aid to fragile and conflict-affected states.**

Furthermore, we urge Labor to **commit to humanitarian and emergency response as a key priority of Australia's aid program.** We are currently witnessing a rise in the scale, frequency and impact of humanitarian crises on vulnerable people around the world. It is vital that Australia continue to play a lead role in responding to humanitarian emergencies not only in our region but around the world, on the basis of need. We urge Labor to **ensure that humanitarian assistance accounts for at least 10% of Australia's ODA.**⁵

4.2 Climate change and disaster risk reduction

ACFID welcomes Labor's 'strong commitment' to addressing climate change through the Australian aid program.⁶ We also welcome a particular focus on climate change and natural disaster planning, response and relief with regards to Labor's partnerships for development with Pacific Island Governments.

To further strengthen this commitment, we would urge Labor to **make climate change and disaster risk reduction a key policy priority for the aid program,** given the significant global challenge posed by climate change and disasters to exacerbating poverty and inequality and eroding decades of development gains.

We would also urge Labor to scale up Australia's current **contribution to the Green Climate Fund to reach a fair share of the international goal to provide \$100 billion in climate finance by 2020, and ensure that climate finance is new and additional to Australia's ODA,** to avoid the diversion of funds for delivering on other aspects of the Sustainable Development Goals.

⁴ ALP Draft National Platform, page 172.

⁵ Currently, Australia's humanitarian assistance accounts for 8% of Official Development Assistance.

⁶ ALP Draft National Platform, page 211.

4.3 Human rights, women's empowerment and disability inclusive development

We commend Labor's commitment to focus international aid efforts on advancing human rights and for the empowerment of women to be a fundamental principle of Australia's aid program.⁷

We also commend Labor for its recognition on the importance of disability-inclusive development⁸ within the National Platform, and recognise that when in Government, Labor initiated disability inclusion in the aid program. Given the scale of people with disability living in poverty and that they are often left out of development efforts, we believe Labor's position could be strengthened through a **commitment to make disability inclusive development a fundamental principle of Australia's aid program**, as per the approach taken with women's empowerment.

5. Aid delivery and management

5.1 Commitment to partnership with NGOs

ACFID welcomes Labor's commitment 'to delivering Australia's ODA in partnership with NGOs'.⁹ NGOs and civil society have been working in partnership with the Australian Government, particularly through the Australian NGO Cooperation Program (ANCP), for over 40 years to deliver development outcomes. The ANCP has been recently assessed by DFAT to deliver nearly 20% of DFAT's overall results for only 2.7% of overall ODA. This impact was achieved in cooperation with Government, utilising the expertise, networks and partnerships of NGOs and extending the reach of Australia's aid program.

In Government, Labor committed to increasing the number of ANCP NGOs to 50, a target which is about to be reached but with a reduced budget for the program. ACIFD calls on Labor to **prioritise funding to Australian NGOs with demonstrated effectiveness and to increase the budget for the high-performing ANCP to support the work of existing agencies and that of new entrants.**

5.2 Evidence and research

Prioritising research and evidence is crucial to understanding and finding effective solutions to the most complex of development challenges. Under the Labor Government, the then AusAID maintained a strong level of research investment, driven by a research strategy, a centralised research section, and a well-supported program in the Australian Development Research Award Scheme (ADRAS). Since the merger with DFAT, the centralised research section has been disbanded, the ADRAS program is no longer continuing and the research strategy no longer applies. Given Labor's strong track record

⁷ ALP Draft National Platform, page 210.

⁸ Ibid, page 211.

⁹ Ibid, page 211.

in this area, we encourage Labor to **commit to investing in development research and ensuring an evidence-based aid program**. We also urge Labor to **establish the Office of Development Effectiveness as an independent body to evaluate and report on the effectiveness of Australia's aid efforts**.

5.3 Transparency and accountability

When in Government, Labor actively promoted transparency and accountability in the Australian aid program under the AusAID Transparency Charter. Labor also signed the International Aid Transparency Initiative while in office. We encourage Labor to reflect its ongoing commitment to transparency in its National Platform. In particular, we urge Labor to commit to improving transparency in the aid program by **reinstating the practice of developing an 'aid blue book' as part of the budget papers**. We also encourage Labor to commit to **adhere fully to Australia's obligations under the IATI**.

6. Whole of Government approach to development

6.1 Policy coherence for development

In an interdependent global economy, the prospects of developing countries are increasingly affected by the policies and institutions of other countries. To this end, Australia's policies on the environment, trade, immigration, taxation and investment have a significant impact on development and poverty reduction in developing countries, alongside the important role of ODA.

ACFID welcomes Labor's ongoing commitment to core international labour standards, and fair and decent work practices in Australia and in our trading partners. This commitment is particularly important for developing countries whose development prospects are deeply shaped by the trade policies of their trading partners.

Overall, we encourage Labor to include in its National Platform a **commitment to take a whole of Government approach to development**, to ensure all policies with cross border implications further the goals of alleviating poverty and inequality and promoting sustainable development. Within this, we encourage Labor to **utilise the Sustainable Development Goals as not just a guide for Australia's international development assistance, but as a whole of Government framework for development**, ensuring policy coherence and tracking Australia's progress and contribution to their achievement.

6.2 Climate change and clean energy

ACFID welcomes Labor's commitment to tackling climate change and to a clean energy future including a commitment to decarbonise Australia's energy sector. We emphasise that action on climate change is squarely in Australia's own interests. As previously highlighted, it is also crucial to protecting development gains, reducing poverty and inequality, and ensuring the prosperity and stability of our region and beyond.

To this end, ACFID welcomes Labor's clear commitment to the current goal of limiting global warming to no more than 2 degrees. We encourage Labor to also acknowledge the renewed calls by vulnerable countries, including many countries in our region, for a goal of 1.5 degrees. In addition, ACFID calls on Labor to strengthen its climate change policy by committing to:

- **post-2020 targets for Australia's domestic emissions of at least 40% below 2000 levels by 2025, at least 60% by 2030, and achieving net zero emissions by at least mid-century; and**
- **proactively supporting the implementation of a strong and effective global climate change agreement.**

6.3 Refugees and asylum seekers

ACFID welcomes Labor's aspirations to increase Australia's humanitarian intake to 27,000 places per year. We urge Labor to consider increasing this to up to 35,000 places to deal with surges in global protection needs.

ACFID also welcomes Labor's statement that it 'will treat people seeking our protection with dignity and compassion and in accordance with our international obligations and core Australian principles of fairness and humanity'.¹⁰ We also endorse statements by Labor to ensure that asylum seekers who arrive by irregular means will not be punished for their mode of arrival. We call on Labor to strengthen its commitments in this policy area by committing to:

- **ending the practice of detaining and processing refugees offshore;**
- **ensuring that funds from Australia's aid program are not used to fund the onshore or offshore processing of refugees; and**
- **resuming adequate funding to community and specialist legal advice centres for asylum seekers.**

6.4 Australia's peace-keeping capabilities

ACFID notes that the Labor National Platform includes a comprehensive statement on Australia's Defence capabilities. We urge Labor to ensure that this statement **encompasses a commitment to invest additional resources into the conflict prevention and peacebuilding capabilities of Defence.** It is vital that Australia continue to contribute to UN peacekeeping activities to strengthen the international peace and security architecture that Australia has helped to build over many years. In addition, peacekeeping and conflict prevention should be an integral aspect of Defence training to fully equip the ADF to constructively transform conflicts and create a sustainable peace environment. This can help to reduce Australia's ongoing military expenditure and improve peace and security in our region and beyond.

¹⁰ Clause 210, ALP Draft National Platform

Annex A: ACFID List of Members

FULL MEMBERS:

- ACC International Relief
- Act for Peace - NCCA
- ActionAid Australia
- ADRA Australia
- Afghan Australian Development Organisation
- Anglican Aid
- Anglican Board of Mission - Australia Limited
- Anglican Overseas Aid
- Anglican Relief and Development Fund Australia
- Asia Pacific Journalism Centre
- Asian Aid Organisation
- Assisi Aid Projects
- Australasian Society for HIV Medicine
- Australia for UNHCR
- Australia Hope International Inc.
- Australian Business Volunteers
- Australian Cranio-Maxillo Facial Foundation
- Australian Doctors for Africa
- Australian Doctors International
- Australian Federation of AIDS Organisations
- Australian Foundation for the Peoples of Asia and the Pacific
- Australian Himalayan Foundation
- Australian Injecting and Illicit Drug Users League
- Australian Lutheran World Service
- Australian Marist Solidarity Ltd
- Australian Medical Aid Foundation
- Australian Mercy
- Australian Red Cross
- Australian Respiratory Council
- Australian Volunteers International
- Beyond the Orphanage
- Birthing Kit Foundation (Australia)
- Brien Holden Vision Institute Foundation
- Bright Futures Child Aid and Development Fund (Australia)
- Burnet Institute
- Business for Millennium Development
- CARE Australia
- Caritas Australia
- CBM Australia
- ChildFund Australia
- CLAN (Caring and Living as Neighbours)
- Credit Union Foundation Australia
- Daughters of Our Lady of the Sacred Heart Overseas Aid Fund
- Diaspora Action Australia
- Diplomacy Training Program
- Door of Hope Australia Inc.
- Edmund Rice Foundation (Australia)
- EDO NSW
- Engineers without Borders
- Every Home Global Concern
- Family Planning New South Wales
- Fairtrade Australia New Zealand*
- Food Water Shelter
- Foresight (Overseas Aid and Prevention of Blindness)
- Fred Hollows Foundation, The
- Global Development Group
- Global Mission Partners
- Good Shepherd Australia New Zealand
- Grameen Foundation Australia
- Habitat for Humanity Australia
- Hagar Australia
- HealthServe Australia
- Hope Global
- Hunger Project Australia, The
- International Children's Care (Australia)
- International Christian Aid and Relief Enterprises
- International Detention Coalition
- International Needs Australia
- International Nepal Fellowship (Aust) Ltd
- International RiverFoundation
- International Women's Development Agency
- Interplast Australia & New Zealand
- Islamic Relief Australia
- Kokoda Track Foundation
- Kyeema Foundation
- Lasallian Foundation
- Leprosy Mission Australia, The
- Live & Learn Environmental Education
- Mahboba's Promise Australia
- Marie Stopes International Australia
- Marist Mission Centre*
- Marsh Foundation
- Mary MacKillop International

- Mary Ward International Australia*
- Mercy Works Ltd.
- Mission World Aid Inc.
- Motivation Australia
- MSC Mission Office
- Nusa Tenggara Association Inc.
- Oaktree Foundation
- One Thousand Villages
- Opportunity International Australia
- Oro Community Development Project Inc.
- Oxfam Australia
- Palmera Projects
- Partners in Aid
- Partners Relief and Development Australia
- People with Disability Australia
- PLAN International Australia
- Project Vietnam
- Quaker Service Australia
- RedR Australia
- Reledev Australia
- RESULTS International (Australia)
- Royal Australian and New Zealand College of Ophthalmologists
- Royal Australasian College of Surgeons
- Royal Institute for Deaf and Blind Children
- Salesian Missions
- Salvation Army (NSW Property Trust)
- Save the Children Australia
- Service Fellowship International Inc.
- Scarlet Alliance: Australian Sex Workers Association
- School for Life Foundation*
- SeeBeyondBorders
- Sight For All
- SIMaid
- So They Can
- Sport Matters
- Surf Aid International
- Tamils Rehabilitation Organisation Australia*
- TEAR Australia
- Transform Aid International (incorporating Baptist World Aid)

- Transparency International Australia
- UNICEF Australia
- Union Aid Abroad-APHEDA
- UnitingWorld
- University of Cape Town Australian Trust
- Volunteers in Community Engagement (VOICE)
- WaterAid Australia
- Women for Women in Africa
- World Education Australia
- World Vision Australia
- WWF-Australia

AFFILIATE MEMBERS:

- Australian National University – School of Archaeology and Anthropology, College of Arts and Social Sciences
- Deakin University – Alfred Deakin Research Institute
- La Trobe University – Institute of Human Security and Social Change
- Murdoch University – School of Management and Governance
- Refugee Council of Australia
- RMIT – Global Cities Research Institute
- University of Melbourne – School of Social and Political Sciences
- University of Queensland – Institute for Social Science Research
- University of Sydney – Office of Global Engagement**
- University of the Sunshine Coast – International Projects Group
- University of Technology, Sydney – Institute for Sustainable Futures**
- Vision 2020
- University of Western Australia – School of Social Sciences**

* Denotes Interim Full Member

** Denotes Interim Affiliate Member