



AUSTRALIAN  
COUNCIL  
FOR  
INTERNATIONAL  
DEVELOPMENT

FEDERAL ELECTION 2022:

# Australian development cooperation and humanitarian assistance for a changed world



## A CHANGED WORLD

It has been more than a decade since the Australian Government conducted an independent review of its development cooperation program and more than four years since the 2017 Foreign Policy White Paper. Over this period Australia's strategic circumstances and that of our region, the Indo-Pacific, have changed profoundly. COVID-19, climate change and geopolitical competition portend a more uncertain and difficult world in which rising poverty and inequality, increased human insecurity and illiberalism, and heightened disruption and displacement threaten regional prosperity, peace and resilience.

In this changed world, the role of development cooperation and humanitarian assistance as a practical expression of Australia's values on the international stage, coupled with its ability to help forge enduring global and regional partnerships, has never been more important. Alongside diplomacy and defence, an effective and inclusive development cooperation program can help shape the world that we and our partners want to see.

## AT THE 2022 FEDERAL ELECTION, ACFID AND ITS MEMBERS ARE CALLING ON ALL POLITICAL PARTIES TO AFFIRM:

- That an **effective and inclusive development cooperation and humanitarian assistance program** is a **vital and unique national capability**. It must be valued and resourced in manner that both reflects Australia's changing strategic circumstances and lives up to our enduring moral obligations.
- That **effective development** must be defined in terms of poverty reduction, human development and progress toward the globally agreed 2030 Sustainable Development Goals. This must include more ambitious climate change action.
- That **inclusive development** must be defined in terms of transformative change that expands civic space and elevates the voices, knowledge and solutions of marginalised people and communities, including women, people with a disability and children and youth.
- That a new long-term development policy should be a **whole-of-society** endeavour that reflects the perspectives and capabilities of our development partners, civil society, Indigenous communities, business, universities, and delivery agencies.
- That **all forms of development finance**, not only Official Development Assistance, must maximise human development impact and must be subject to the same high standards of effectiveness and inclusion, as well as transparency and accountability.
- That whilst many of our development challenges are shared, **locally-led** development cooperation and humanitarian action delivers the most appropriate and sustainable solutions to these challenges.
- That attempts to restrict the **vital advocacy voice of the not-for-profit and charity sector** undermines Australia's democratic credentials abroad and inhibits their legitimate role in communicating with the Australian people at home.

## Why

Australia's development cooperation and humanitarian assistance program works at the heart of our foreign policy and with our partners to help shape a more cooperative world and a more peaceful, prosperous and resilient Indo-Pacific region through:

## What

### EFFECTIVE AND INCLUSIVE DEVELOPMENT

Centre rights-based and transformative approaches to economic and social inclusion in a new, long-term development policy.

Set, monitor and report on benchmarks for both dedicated and mainstreamed investments in gender equality, disability inclusion and children, commensurate with restoring Australia's international leadership role in these areas.

Prioritise funding to locally-led organisations, including women's rights organisations, organisations for people with a disability, and youth-led organisations.

Expand DFAT funding and technical expertise for gender, disability and social inclusion analysis of all country and regional strategies and new funding initiatives across Australia's international development program.

### CIVIL SOCIETY AS A CORNERSTONE OF EFFECTIVE AND INCLUSIVE DEVELOPMENT

Make support for strong and vibrant civil society throughout the Indo-Pacific a key objective of a new, long-term development policy.

Commit to providing at least 25% of Australian ODA to and through civil society across humanitarian and development programs and funding.

Develop and fund initiatives that nurture civil society networks or civic space 'ecosystems' to create space for community partnership and collaboration within civil society, as well as stronger ties and feedback loops between civil society, government and the private sector.

Develop and publish a roadmap towards the locally-led delivery of Australian Government-funded development and humanitarian programs.

Fund the Pacific-led implementation of the Pacific Regional Accountability Framework for Civil Society Organisations.

### COMBATTING CLIMATE CHANGE

Urgently develop a national plan to reduce climate pollution this decade, including a path to transition away from fossil fuels and to meet a target of zero emissions by 2035.

Restore Australia's international leadership climate finance as part of a growing development budget, re-engage with multilateral mechanisms to meet our fair share of climate finance and commit to transparent and consistent reporting of this finance.

Ensure that carbon offset programs deliver clear co-benefits for local communities, including Indigenous and marginalised people and communities.

Build on the successes and lessons of locally-led programming by increasing resources for locally led action on climate change and by tracking climate finance provided at the local level.

Strengthen partnerships to both reverse ecosystems degradation and to foster their recovery.

### STRONG AND RESILIENT HEALTH SYSTEMS IN THE INDO-PACIFIC

Develop a new health and international development policy, drawing on the lessons from the COVID-19 pandemic and the structural inequalities in access to quality health services it has exposed.

Prevent new strains of COVID-19 and support global pandemic preparedness by contributing Australia's fair share of finance to the ongoing effort to ensure vaccine access and equity and to other global health funds.

Invest in strengthened Pacific health security through a health systems approach, prioritising locally-led approaches to improved health workforce planning, public health surveillance, risk communication, and laboratory capacity.

Invest in resilient regional health systems with a focus on building the critical health workforce and primary health care infrastructure that can deliver universal healthcare.

### HUMANITARIAN ASSISTANCE BASED ON NEED

Alleviate humanitarian suffering both in and beyond our region based on need by committing Australia's fair share of global humanitarian funding, strengthening humanitarian principles and improving partners' capacity to operate in insecure environments.

Address the root causes of conflict and displacement through increased investment in anticipatory action and disaster risk reduction, as well as strategy for global displacement.

Strengthen effective and inclusive humanitarian assistance through increased multi-year funding, enhanced civil society capability, localisation and cash-based assistance, and by placing protection at the heart of humanitarian action.

## How

A new long-term development policy encompassing all forms of development finance, linked to legislated budget increases and an enhanced development leadership and aid management capability, that matches Australia's strategic circumstances and that delivers and demonstrates human development impact.

10-year development partnerships with our Indo-Pacific partners that reflect our shared goals and that centre locally-led approaches to development cooperation and humanitarian assistance.

Recognition of the unique and enduring role of NGOs and their local partners in delivering effective and inclusive development, building people-to-people linkages and fostering new connections between the Australian public and communities in our region and further afield.

Enhanced transparency and accountability to the communities with whom our development cooperation and humanitarian assistance works and to the Australian public.

# ACFID's Vision, Purpose and Values

The Australian Council for International Development (ACFID) is the peak body for Australian non-government organisations involved in international development and humanitarian action.

## ABOUT ACFID

Our vision is of a world where all people are free from extreme poverty, injustice and inequality, and where the earth's finite resources are managed sustainably. Our purpose is to lead and unite our members in action for a just, equitable and sustainable world.

Founded in 1965, ACFID currently has 131 full members and 22 affiliates operating in more than 90 developing countries. The total revenue raised by ACFID's membership from all sources amounts to \$1.86 billion (2018-19), \$701 million of which is raised from over 1.26 million Australians. 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 and humanitarian action outcomes and increase stakeholder trust by enhancing the transparency, accountability and effectiveness of signatory organisations. Covering 9 Quality Principles, 33 Commitments and 92 compliance indicators, the Code sets good standards for program effectiveness, fundraising, governance and financial reporting. Compliance includes annual reporting and checks. The Code has an independent complaint handling process.



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**Cover photo:** Afghan refugee Saleema visits the refugee school that she attended as a child. During school visits, Saleema helps raise awareness about the importance of education and dares young refugees, especially girls, to dream of a better tomorrow. Photo: Amsal Naeem/UNHCR.

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