

Government makes Australia one of the world's least generous nations

The Micah Challenge coalition strongly condemns the Government's deep and unprecedented cuts to Australia's aid program announced in today's mid-year budget update by Treasurer Joe Hockey.

The cuts of \$3.7 billion over four years come on top of \$7.6 billion of cuts made by the Government in the May Budget. The aid budget will be cut by \$1 billion next year, which is the largest ever cut made to aid in Australia's history.

"We find it absolutely disgraceful that for the third time in 15 months the Abbott Government has broken its promises on aid and turned to our poorest neighbours to find their budget savings," said Ben Thurley, Political Engagement Coordinator for Micah Challenge Australia.

By 2017-18 when the cuts come into full effect, Australia's development assistance will fall to its lowest ever recorded level of just 21 cents in every \$100 of national income.

This cut will make Australia one of the least generous aid donors in the world and further undermine the predictability, stability and effectiveness of Australia's aid program.

Mr Thurley says Australian aid is making a real difference in the world through saving and transforming lives.

"Last year alone, Australian aid ensured half a million people in Indonesia had access to safe drinking water and 600,000 new mothers in Bangladesh had their deliveries looked after by a skilled health volunteer."

"These kind of outcomes rely on secure and predictable funding and long-term partnerships to overcome some of the worst impacts of poverty. It's the poorest people, and their lives, hopes and opportunities that are harmed by this Government's continued plunder of the aid program," said Mr Thurley.

Based upon DFAT's 2014-15 Annual Report, Micah Challenge estimates that the Government's cuts to the aid program could have the following impacts over the next four years: 600,000 fewer births attended by a skilled birth attendant; 900,000 fewer additional children enrolled in school; 1.5 million fewer children vaccinated; 1.9 million fewer people provided with increased access to safe water; 8.8 million fewer vulnerable women, men, girls and boys provided with life-saving assistance in conflict and crisis situations.

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Micah Challenge is a global movement of Christians speaking out against poverty and injustice in support of the Millennium Development Goals. In Australia, more than 50 aid and development agencies, as well as churches, schools, groups and individual Christians endorse the campaign. www.micahchallenge.org.au.