

Global Poor Get Tony Abbott's Goat this Christmas



Image caption: *On the twelfth day of Christmas Mr Abbott's constituents gave to him seven goats-a-bleating, three chicks-a-laying and a pack of seeds to plant a fruit tree.*

MEMBERS of Seaforth Baptist Church in the Warringah electorate have today delivered over 75 handwritten Christmas cards to Tony Abbott, along with a gift of goats, chickens, seeds and education supplies bought on his behalf to fight poverty overseas.

The constituents' season's greetings contain messages of hope, compassion and an expressed desire for Mr Abbott to stand for a generous and effective contribution to ending extreme poverty in the year to come.

The cards were delivered to Mr Abbott's Manly office in a giant envelope today, together with a representation of the gifts they have bought on his behalf (from Australian charity, TEAR Australia) to make a difference in the lives of those facing poverty and marginalisation in developing countries.

“At this special time of year we’re conscious of those around the world who are suffering the effects of extreme poverty and we want to ask our local MP and Prime Minister to ensure that Australia is doing its fair share to make a difference in their lives,” said Vikki Howorth, Social Justice Pastor at Seaforth Baptist Church.

With the Coalition Government recently announcing it will cut \$4.5 billion from the foreign aid budget over the next four years, including \$656 million over this year’s budget cycle, members of Seaforth Baptist, along with aid advocates throughout the country, are continuing to express their concern over the aid cuts and urge Mr Abbott to take a stand for generosity and justice.

“We like to think of ourselves as a generous nation; Australia the ‘lucky’ country. We were even ranked at the top of the World Giving Index last year. So by making a personal contribution to ending poverty on behalf of Mr Abbott this Christmas, we want to demonstrate the spirit of generosity that exists among individual Australians which we’d also like to see reflected on the national level,” said Mrs Howorth.

In partnership with the Micah Challenge campaign – a coalition of Australian Christian aid agencies, groups and individuals speaking out against poverty and injustice – many churches, schools and community groups are taking similar action by including their MP in their season’s greetings this year.

According to John Beckett, the National Coordinator of Micah Challenge Australia, the Christmas cards serve to build relationships with MPs, many of whom are new to the job, as well as highlight the need to remain committed to our poorest neighbours.

“As part of global efforts over the years, Australia has helped to educate millions of children, provide dignity and opportunity for women and girls, improve governance in developing countries and save countless lives,” said Mr Beckett.

“We are proud of this contribution and don’t want to see aid cut, which is why we’re urging all MPs to take a stand for justice and generosity this Christmas. We believe that a wealthy nation like Australia can and must meet its international commitments to the poorest people in the world, whilst also meeting our domestic needs.”

-ENDS-

High res images available here:

<https://www.dropbox.com/sh/s2t6pequcb1h4t5/1e7b8xuR4w>

Available for interviews:

- Vikki Howorth, Social Justice Pastor, Seaforth Baptist Church
- John Beckett, National Coordinator, Micah Challenge Australia.

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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.