

## Aussie Christians mobilise to halve poverty by 2015

The Micah Challenge coalition launches its national *Finish the Race* campaign this month in the lead up to federal election recently set for September 14.

The campaign will mobilise Christian churches, organisations and individuals across the country in a united appeal to Australian politicians to prioritise our commitment to the UN Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) – a set of eight international targets intended to halve poverty by 2015.

“Our vision is to give every Christian in this country the opportunity to add their voice to our collective call for justice”, said Micah Challenge’s National Coordinator, John Beckett.

“We hope to see hundreds of churches and individuals taking local action in every electorate across the country between April and July 2013 that will lead to positive and constructive global change.”

According to Mr Beckett, the conditions for campaigning this year are uniquely conducive for change.

“Elections are foundation building times for political parties, and with the last federal election before the MDG deadline in sight, we have a significant opportunity to influence our major parties’ policies and ensure the goal of halving global poverty by 2015 doesn’t slip down our nation’s priority list.”

During the six month pre-election campaign, Micah Challenge supporters will specifically call on their politicians to accelerate progress towards achieving the Millennium Development Goals by increasing Australia’s aid budget to 0.7% of Gross National Income by the year 2020.

Mr Beckett believes the Government’s recent and unprecedented decision to divert \$375 million away from life-saving overseas programs, in order to meet the domestic costs of processing asylum seekers, highlights the precarious nature of the government’s promises to the world’s poor.

“Advocating for the world’s poorest people to be prioritised on our national agenda is more important now than ever,” said Mr Beckett.

Whilst the onus is on politicians to determine our national priorities, Mr Beckett says *Finish the Race* also involves a clear call for Christians to ensure addressing global poverty is moved up their individual priority list.

“We believe everyone needs to play their part - individuals, churches, communities and politicians – which is why we’re now encouraging individuals and churches to pledge their commitment to taking action this year.”

*Finish the Race* is supported by Christian churches, denominations, aid and development agencies and individuals such as Darlene Zschech, John Dickson, Colin Buchanan and Melinda Tankard-Reist.

To join the campaign or find out more, visit [www.finish2015.com.au](http://www.finish2015.com.au).

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**John Beckett, Micah Challenge’s National Coordinator, is available for interviews.**

## MEDIA RELEASE



[Click here](#) for 8 x 30 second Finish the Race CSAs you can play from February-March.

[Click here](#) for campaign logos and images available for use.

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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](http://www.micahchallenge.org.au).*