

**19 Feb 2018
MEDIA RELEASE**



Micah Australia is back in year crucial for the world's poor

Micah Australia, a formidable movement of Australian Christians advocating God's heart for the world's poor, is back on the national scene with Tim Costello at its helm as Micah's new Executive Director.

Micah's return to empower Australian Christians to deepen their engagement in poverty reduction couldn't come soon enough.

The United Nations declared only last year that the world currently faces humanitarian crisis at a scale not seen since the end of World War II. More than 20 million people are facing starvation and famine, most notably Nigeria, Somalia, South Sudan and Yemen.

Yet, in the midst of this great need, Australia's own foreign aid budget has suffered four years of successive cuts, wiping \$11.3 billion of funding from programs crucial to furthering global health, education, gender and security goals.

Australian aid - a measure of our nation's generosity and love for others - is now at its lowest level ever.

Tim Costello, who is also Chief Advocate of World Vision Australia, has this to say on why now is the time for the Australian Church to lift up its voice:

"Micah is not back to call Christians into left-vs-right politics, it's here to call people deeper.

"When I observe some of Australia's lack of thought over the plight of refugees, famine and genocide, some of the millennials' obsession with taking selfies, and older Australians with more concern for house prices than homelessness, I am reminded of the prophet Micah's words - that acting justly, loving mercy and walking humbly with God is the way the world is meant to be ordered.

"It's about God on the throne, not self on the throne. Displacing our relationship with God on the throne is the root cause of our sin and moral failure.

"The message of Micah has never been more relevant than it is today. Many Christians are hungry for an agenda worthy of their commitment, energy and God-given gifts. It is Christians, especially Christian leaders, who must set the tone of compassion.

"Christianity is about learning to love like Jesus loved. And Jesus loved the poor and Jesus loved the broken. He was radical and his followers should be too."

Matt Darvas, former Marketing Manager at Compassion Australia, and the Missions and Justice Pastor at the Grainery Church in Newcastle, is Micah's new Campaign Director.

Matt had this to say about the movement's goals in 2018:

“In 2018 we will seek to put the needs of the world’s poor back on the agenda of our politicians and leaders.

“Central to that will be advocating the rebuilding of a strong and effective foreign aid program. Poverty erects what can seem like insurmountable barriers around those who are poor. It robs them of their ability to pursue their God-given potential through the absence of the basic building blocks we take for granted in Australia.

“More than that, poverty speaks to the individual. It tells them ‘You don’t matter.’ As followers of Jesus, we want to put an end to poverty’s lies and its power, replacing it with the hope of Jesus through His Church.

“We are at a crossroads as a nation. Either we will fall into the current sweeping our world and our culture. One that prioritises Australia first, our needs, our comfort and our abundance. Or we will heed the call of Jesus to love others.

“This is about much more than a foreign aid budget, it’s about the soul of our nation.

“Our hope is that this unique point in time becomes the Church’s ‘Micah moment’, and we will be looking for Christians and leaders from all walks to join us through collective prayer, action and gatherings that will be announced soon.”

-Ends-

To organise an interview with Tim Costello or Matt Darvas call Matt Darvas on **0416 280 340** or email matt.darvas@micahaustralia.org

Micah Australia is a coalition of churches and Christian organisations raising a powerful voice for justice and a world free from poverty.

