

# 2019 Policy Asks



## Who we are

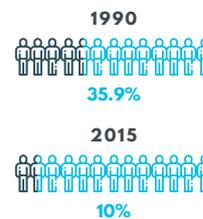
Micah is a movement of Australian Christians, churches and organisations. We raise a powerful voice for justice and a world free from poverty.

Christians throughout Australia believe that individuals, institutions and nations are called to act to address situations of injustice and need through generosity, love and advocacy. The supporters of Micah, do not just call for government action – but are acting themselves – **Christian aid agencies in Australia collect \$621 million in charitable donations each year for overseas development work.**<sup>1</sup>

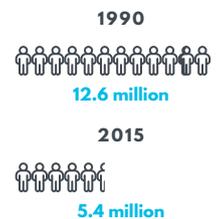
## Context

Tremendous progress has been made in recent decades as the world increased its focus on the problems of global poverty. Since 1990, extreme poverty has been slashed by almost three quarters<sup>2</sup>; child mortality by almost two thirds<sup>3</sup>; and the world has been stepping up to liberate people trapped in slavery. These are significant achievements – however these gains are fragile. Climate change, proliferating conflicts, and poor governance are threatening to push more people into poverty and vulnerability, and undo this progress. For the first time in decades, hunger and acute malnutrition are increasing; while the number of people displaced around the world has risen to an unprecedented 68.5 million people<sup>4</sup> – fuelling trafficking and forcing millions into extreme poverty.

### EXTREME POVERTY



### CHILD DEATHS



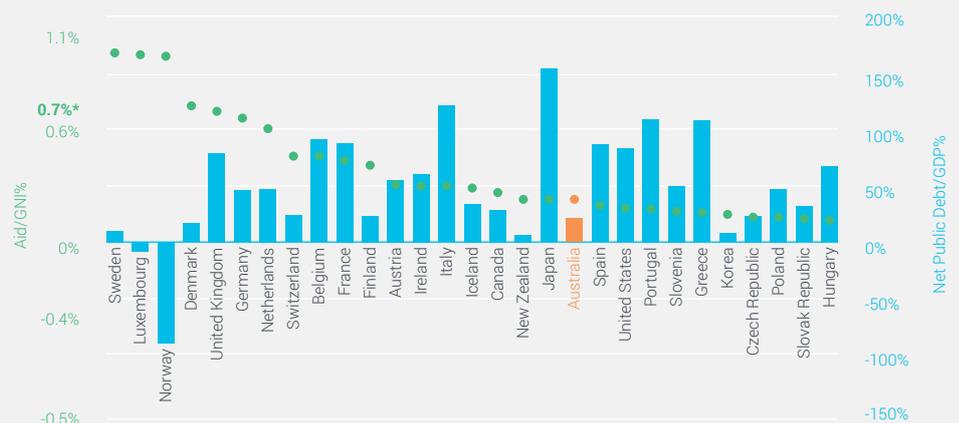
## 1 Australian Aid

**Thank you – We acknowledge the commitment made by the ALP in 2018 to increase aid as a proportion of GNI every year in office starting with the first budget. We look forward to working with you to ensure this is done in a timely manner. We believe Australia can and should return to the top half of rich country donors by the end of the next parliamentary term.**

Every day, there are 20,000 less children dying compared to 1990<sup>5</sup>. Australian aid has been part of that story, and we have been remarkably proud of our contribution. However, we are saddened that at 0.23% GNI, Australia's generosity is at a record low – and it continues to fall. Australians are the wealthiest people on the planet, when measured by median wealth<sup>6</sup>. Our budget is set to return to surplus, and at 19% net debt to GDP, we have one of the lowest levels of public debt amongst all aid-giving nations. Yet at a time when the world is facing an unprecedented humanitarian crisis, Australia has been stepping back on the compassion and generosity, ranking 19th amongst official aid givers. As one of the richest and least indebted aid giving nations in the world, Australia should be a leader in aid generosity. It's time to begin moving in this direction.

### FOREIGN AID VS. NET PUBLIC DEBT

- Net Public Debt
- ODA/GNI% 2017
- \* International Aid Target
- Australia



**Australia should return to the top half of rich country aid donors by the end of next parliamentary term<sup>7</sup>.**



## 2 Doing More for those Trapped in Slavery

### GLOBAL FUND TO END MODERN SLAVERY

There are 40.3 million people trapped in Modern Slavery. 25 million in forced labour. 62% of whom are trapped in our region (the Asia-Pacific) are forced to make goods and provide services that we too often are the beneficiaries of. Australia has been a global leader in tackling this heinous crime, a position that has been strengthened by the launch of our 2016 International Strategy to Combat Human Trafficking and Slavery. This strategy coordinates, prioritises and strengthens our previous anti-slavery efforts, as well as the landmark introduction of the Modern Slavery Act, which compels large businesses to disclose how they are tackling slavery in their supply chains and other operations. The Global Fund to End Modern Slavery (GFEMS) is an innovative and bold public-private partnership seeking to leverage 1.5 billion USD to make slavery unprofitable. It, like Global Funds before it, will seek to provide a cohesive global strategy to tackle slavery, and make strategic grants and investments in places where increased effort is most needed and most effective. To date, only the US and UK governments have contributed to the GFEMS. Adding Australian support to this fund would leverage and strengthen our position as a leader in the fight against global slavery.

**Australia should contribute \$17 AUD million to the GFEMS. This amount would bring us in line with what the UK gave (in proportion to GDP).**

## 3 Doing More for the Displaced

**Thank you – We acknowledge the commitment made by ALP in 2018 to give \$500m over the next five years to support the work of the United Nations High Commission for Refugees. This commitment will make a huge impact on the lives of displaced people needing essential services and we are grateful for your efforts in this important area.**

### UNHCR FUNDING

With protracted crises around the world, and increasing instances of unstable governments, 68.5 million people have been forcibly displaced. 85% of these are hosted within developing countries. Resources available from donors for refugees and other displacement situations are being stretched. Based on funding to date, the UNHCR anticipate they will receive just 55% of the \$8.2 billion USD that is needed to provide essential services to displaced people, including food, healthcare, shelter and schooling<sup>8</sup>. In its Foreign Policy White Paper, Australia has acknowledged that it should substantially increase its humanitarian funding. Focusing a portion of this funding on the UNHCR is not just compassionate, it is consistent with Australia's policy of reducing the need for people to take unsafe journeys in order to find protection.

**Australia should increase its funding to the UNHCR, from the current \$25 million to \$100 million per annum.**

1 Calculated using revenue figures from ACFID members, and adding the largest Christian non-ACFID member, Compassion International. 2 World Bank World Development Indicators (2018). Accessed at [data.worldbank.org/topic/poverty](http://data.worldbank.org/topic/poverty) Most recent data is for 2015. 3 UNICEF. *Level and Trends in Child Mortality 2018* (2018). 4 UNHCR. *Statistical Yearbook 2018* (2018). Accessed at [unhcr.org/en-au/figures-at-a-glance.html](http://unhcr.org/en-au/figures-at-a-glance.html) 5 UNICEF. *Levels and Trends in Child Mortality 2018*. 6 Credit Suisse. *Global Wealth Report 2018*. 7 This would be moving up to a ranking of 14th position, and an aid budget that is at least 0.29% of GNI. An ask consistent with ACFID and C4AA's aid ask. See Micah's extended policy briefing paper for more detail. 8 Ibid

