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'Bolt from the blue': Sector welcomes bipartisan support for foreign aid

SEARCH NEWS

Foreign aid groups believe there is finally some good news on the horizon after a bipartisan parliamentary report called for Australia's aid budget to be boosted over the next decade.

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Monday, 8th April 2019

at 2:53 pm

Luke Michael (<https://probonoaustralia.com.au/author/luke-michael/>), Journalist

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The Joint Standing Committee on Foreign Affairs, Defence and Trade recommended the federal government, within a year, commit to a set timeframe of no more than five years for increasing Australia's aid funding to at least 0.5 per cent of gross national income (GNI).

The committee also said a second timeframe should be set for increasing Australia's aid budget to at least 0.7 per cent of GNI within 10 years.

This report follows a [disappointing federal budget for foreign aid](https://probonoaustralia.com.au/news/2019/04/foreign-aid-treated-like-an-atm/) (<https://probonoaustralia.com.au/news/2019/04/foreign-aid-treated-like-an-atm/>), which saw Australia's aid investment fall from \$5 billion in 2013/14 to \$4 billion in 2019/20 – just 0.21 per cent of GNI. This will drop to 0.19 per cent in 2021/22.

Micah Australia executive director Tim Costello welcomed the report.

“After another devastating blow to the aid budget this week, there is finally some good news on the horizon” Costello said. [\(https://probonoaustralia.com.au/\)](https://probonoaustralia.com.au/)

“This program and have recognised that a serious injustice has been done to the aid budget over the past few years.”   [\(https://twitter.com/probononews\)](https://twitter.com/probononews)  [\(https://facebook.com/ProBonoAustralia/\)](https://facebook.com/ProBonoAustralia/)

The committee’s report

[\(https://parlinfo.aph.gov.au/parlInfo/download/committees/reportjnt/024253/toc_pdf/Firstrep](https://parlinfo.aph.gov.au/parlInfo/download/committees/reportjnt/024253/toc_pdf/Firstrep) into Australia’s aid program in the Indo-Pacific said there should be a legislated floor for aid funding of 0.5 per cent within five years and 0.7 per cent within 10 years.

The report also recommended the government raise public awareness about the benefits of Australia’s aid program.

Costello said this was a rare case of bipartisanship on aid, and called on both Prime Minister Scott Morrison and opposition leader Bill Shorten to back the report.

“As this report details, good, long-term development requires stability and predictability in funding. But each year the sector experiences a ‘merry-go-round’, wondering whether there will be cuts or not,” he said.

“We need proper bipartisan agreement and a clear way forward, and I will be advocating strongly for this.”

The Australian Council for International Development also welcomed the report. CEO Marc Purcell told Pro Bono News after the bitter blow of another aid funding drop in the budget, this report was a “welcome bolt from the blue”.

He said the report was the realisation of what a strategic, predictable and principled aid program could look like, but warned a political will to achieve it was still needed.

“If the committee’s proposals were implemented, this would be a huge leap forward in making Australia a partner of choice, a good neighbour and a respected global citizen,” Purcell said.

“Reaching 0.5 per cent within five years and 0.7 per cent by 2030 – combined with legislative floors – would mean Australia could turn its back on the damaging cuts in recent years and the running-down of our bilateral relationships in Asia, as well as our global reputation.”

Foreign Affairs and Aid Sub-Committee chair Chris Crewther MP, said that the committee identified a need to strengthen Australians’ confidence in the aid program.

“Australia has the capacity to do more, but the support of the Australian people is critical,” Crewther said.

“The committee hopes that the aid program can be better understood, not as a one-way street, but as a partnership that benefits Australia and our partner countries.

“With a steady and certain aid budget, and a renewed focus on effectiveness, Australia’s aid program can continue to build on its record of achievements.”



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[Luke Michael](https://probonoaustralia.com.au/author/luke-michael/) | Journalist | [@luke_michael96](https://twitter.com/luke_michael96)

Luke Michael is a journalist at Pro Bono News covering the social sector.

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Australian businesses are increasingly open to adopting shared value practices within the workplace but are still grappling with how to implement it effectively, new @sharedvalueaust research says. bit.ly/2lp4Ogm



28m



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Despite nearly 40 per cent of Australian clothing companies cleaning up their ethical act from the year before, only 5 per cent pay their factory workers a living wage, an annual report has revealed. bit.ly/2lpo2SL



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Wendy Williams

Wednesday, 3rd April 2019 at 12:28 pm



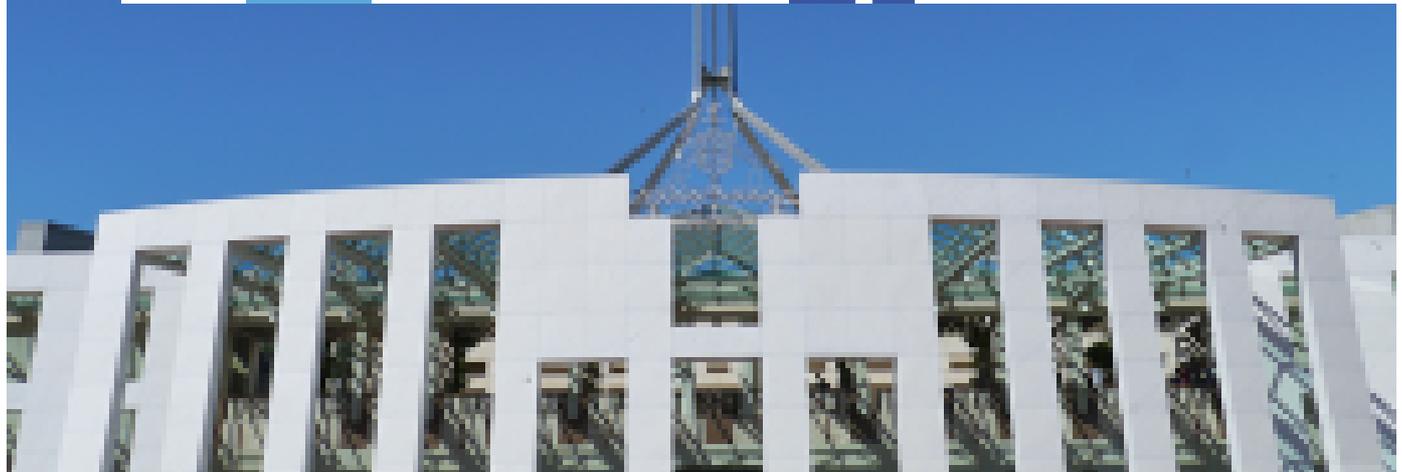
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Luke Michael

Friday, 29th March 2019 at 4:20 pm



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Maggie Coggan

Wednesday, 13th March 2019 at 5:36 pm



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Luke Michael

Tuesday, 12th March 2019 at 8:00 am

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Luke Michael

Wednesday, 27th March 2019 at 4:35 pm



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Luke Michael

Thursday, 28th March 2019 at 4:55 pm



(<https://probonoaustralia.com.au/news/2019/04/advocates-ask-why-are-ndis-funds-not-being-used-to-fix-the-scheme/>)

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Luke Michael

Wednesday, 3rd April 2019 at 12:19 pm

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