



Senator for Tasmania
Putting Tasmania First
Jacqui Lambie

Media Statement 7.4.15

Lambie replies to Foreign Aid Cuts Criticism

Independent Senator for Tasmania, Jacqui Lambie has rejected criticism levelled at her by the Australian Council for International Development (*see attached*) regarding Australia's budget for Foreign Aid.

"The average Australian and Tasmanian doesn't realize that both the government and opposition have plans to borrow \$5B each year for the next 5 years - so that they can send it straight back overseas in foreign aid." said Senator Lambie.

"If our government and organizations like the Australian Council for International Development have their way - more than \$25B over the forward estimates will be borrowed and then sent to foreign countries - while ordinary Tasmanian pensioners, unemployed workers, Uni students and families struggle to pay their bills.

I make no apology for putting poor Tasmanians and Australians first - before any other country's people. Charity begins at home. If the Australian Council for International Development wanted an informed debate about the amount of foreign aid money that was sent out of Australia - firstly they would tell the truth about the size of our foreign aid budget." said Senator Lambie.

"Instead of saying there's been "\$11B in cuts to foreign aid" and it's "just 1% of the Federal Budget" - they should explain to the average Australian worker that in reality our nation still has a plan to borrow \$25B over the forward estimates - and send it overseas in poorly managed and targeted programs.

The average Australian has never been asked the question: How much do you think we should spend each year in foreign aid?

- a) \$1B
- b) \$2B
- c) \$3B
- d) \$4B
- e) \$5B

Once the Australian Council for International Development has the answer for that question (*a question they don't want honestly answered*) - they can come back to me and have proper debate about foreign aid.

In the meantime I'm looking after my own backyard and still having trouble understanding why we're sending nearly \$600M a year to Indonesia - a country with a military almost 10 times the size of Australia's permanent Defence Force." said Senator Lambie.

Contact 0407 904 134

10 things Jacqui Lambie should know about Australian aid

The peak body for Australia's aid and development sector is keen to help Senator Jacqui Lambie understand more about the benefits of Australia's aid program.

ACFID's Executive Director Marc Purcell said that there was strong support for international aid in the Senator's home state.

"Over 85,406 Tasmanians donate to aid agencies. A further 1330 corporate supporters and 268 community and church groups from Tasmania support the international work of our aid organisations," Mr Purcell said.

"We don't have to choose between Australian aid helping others and helping Australians. As a country, we are big enough and generous enough to do both.

"I would be delighted to talk Senator Lambie through at least 10 things she should know about Australia's aid program.

Last year Australian aid:

1. Enabled over 1.3 million more children enrol in school.
2. Built more than 9,000 new classrooms.
3. Trained over 100,000 teachers across the region.
4. Provided more than 400,000 poor farmers with access to farming technology.
5. Vaccinated more than 2.3 million children.
6. Ensured nearly 1 million additional births were attended by a skilled birth attendant.
7. Helped over 66,000 women survivors of violence access critical services.
8. Gave 2.9 million people access to safe drinking water.
9. Increased access to basic sanitation for over 1 million people.
10. Responded to emergencies in 24 countries including Typhoon Haiyan in the Philippines and flooding in Solomon Islands.

"All these things were achieved by a program that costs less than one per cent of the Federal Budget.

"Seeing is believing. We would love to invite Senator Lambie to visit aid projects run by Australians overseas so she can see for herself the tangible benefits of Australian aid in lifting people out of poverty.

"We would like her to see why halving the aid program would be so damaging to poor people in our region. We would like her to see why the \$11bn in cuts already made by Joe Hockey are so unfair.

"Australia's aid program also benefits Australia by building security and stability in our region. The aid program works closely with our Defence forces overseas in places like Afghanistan, East Timor and the Solomon Islands.

"Australia's aid improves health of people by treating the sick and most recently helped slow the spread of the deadly Ebola virus. Australian aid supports economic growth and trade opportunities by supporting women to build small business. All this for just 1% of the Federal budget," Mr Purcell said.



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ACFID unites Australia's non-government aid and international development organisations to strengthen their collective impact against poverty

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