

campaign for *Australian Aid*

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For Immediate Release

TREASURER MAKES SIXTH CONSECUTIVE CUT TO INTERNATIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Treasurer Josh Frydenberg has made the government's sixth consecutive cut to Australia's Official Development Assistance and plans to cease \$500 million of existing aid projects in South-East Asia (Bangladesh, Cambodia, Nepal, Indonesia and Pakistan) to fund an infrastructure facility for the Pacific.

Jody Lightfoot, director of Campaign for Australian Aid, said: *"Six consecutive cuts to Australia's international development is a failure of moral leadership"*

"The Prime Minister had an opportunity to show global leadership, instead he has chosen to pander to populism and cut vital services to our poorest neighbours".

"Countries like the UK are now more than three times more generous than Australia in helping our poorest neighbours overcome poverty".

The Coalition will reduce Australia's Official Development Assistance to a new record low of 0.21% of GNI by 2019-20.

"The Coalition has broken their own record for being the least generous government in Australia's history" - said Mr Lightfoot

"Australian aid has saved the lives of 230,000 children through our health programs in the last two decades. Cutting services that support kids in poverty does not reflect the willingness of Australians to help people in need"

"Despite a budget surplus, the Prime Minister has missed an opportunity to restore a legacy of bipartisanship for Australia's international development"

Aid and development groups have raised concerns about the EFIC (Support for Infrastructure Financing) bill which contains no requirement that any infrastructure project supported by EFIC must benefit the recipient country.

“Development projects in the Pacific should put the needs of our Pacific neighbours first” - said Mr Lightfoot

“A step up in Pacific should not mean a step down in Asia, particularly when Australia’s international development has been cut to its lowest level ever”

The Labor Party has committed in their party platform to increase Australia’s Official Development Assistance as a percentage of gross national income every year in office starting with their first budget.

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FURTHER INFORMATION

Celebrity chef Julie Goodwin, TV and radio host Tom Ballard, comedian Judith Lucy, and Australian of the Year Simon McKeon AO are amongst 60 community leaders and public figures who have called for a bipartisan commitment to rebuild Australia’s international development ahead of this year’s federal election

Olympic Runner Eloise Wellings, said: “I’d love to see Australia stand up and be a leader in tackling global poverty and align our aid budget with our long standing values as Australians - equality, giving people a fair go and showing compassion and generosity towards people who are doing it tough near or far”.

Julie Goodwin, celebrity chef and winner of Masterchef 2009, said: *“Australian aid saves lives. I have seen the work being done in remote and poor communities to help them become more resilient in the face of the devastating effects of climate change. As a largely fortunate nation, Australia needs to bring our resources and our generosity to the world table. The aid we provide overseas has a profound positive effect on health, education and wellbeing of our fellow human beings”.*

Simon McKeon AO, 2011 Australian of the Year, said: “Australia hasn’t tasted a recession in more than a quarter of a century. It is therefore shameful that our assistance to those in real need overseas has fallen to all time lows”.

Former Australian UN Youth Ambassador Paige Burton said, "Everyone deserves a fair go, regardless of who they are, or where they were born. When our neighbours are struggling, we need to help them"

Rev. Dr John Dickson, Rector of St Andrew's Roseville and co-founder of the Centre for Public Christianity said "I recently witnessed Australian aid up close, among refugees by the Syrian

border. I was moved by its sensitivity to local conditions and inspired by its professionalism and power"

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