

Budget 2018 Action Strategy & Messaging

Internal Stakeholders



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Situation Analysis

With further cuts to Australian aid rumoured, Micah is preparing to engage pastors. Politically, the logic is as follows; the government is trying to introduce a Corporate Tax bill. While this has been delayed, it stands to reason that if it goes through they will need to find ways to fund it. That money won't come from defence, and can't come from education (show of force from Catholic schools in Batman) or healthcare (last election Medicare scare campaign). This limits the government's options to reducing funding for programs that impact the domestic or foreign poor.

Before the Easter break, the Minister for International Development, Senator Concetta Fierravanti-Wells, refused to rule out cuts to aid in the 2018 Federal Budget.

Micah is in a position to mobilise key advocates, in important electorates to influence Liberal MPs and secure the Australian aid budget, taking further cuts to aid off the table.



Key Messages



Campaign Story

As Christians, we have a responsibility to speak up for the vulnerable both at home and overseas. Whether it's quietly in the way we humbly serve our community, or more publicly in the way we stand up and take action to hold our leaders to account.

We find ourselves at a time in our nation's history when not only have our leaders cut our contribution to ending poverty and righting injustice to its lowest level ever, but when they are mulling over cutting it some more.

As Christians, we won't give up on our call to do justice and love mercy.

As Australians, we won't give up on our neighbours. We can and must do more to end poverty and build opportunity for all.

As voters, we want to show our deep concern that leaders would let another cut to aid happen on their watch.

Key Messages



We believe in Australian aid because we believe in life.

As Christians, we believe that every person is created in the image of God.

When emergencies hit and we're on the ground with clean water and shelter, when communities are trained and equipped to build hospitals and schools, when we run programs that give a generation of girls the chance to break down barriers and achieve their dreams; we're not just doing the right thing, we're living out our calling as Australians and as Christians.



Cutting aid cuts programs that change lives.

If we cut aid, we shut the door to a brighter future for our neighbours; for children trying to go to school, and parents trying to make ends meet.

Every cut to aid undercuts the moral character of our leaders and of our nation.

Every cut to aid stops children from reaching their God-given potential.

Key Messages



I'm here because Australian aid matters to me.

As a Christian, I won't give up on our call to do justice and love mercy.

As an Australian, I won't give up on our neighbours when we can and must do more to end poverty and build opportunity for all.

As a voter, I am deeply concerned that our leaders would let another cut to aid happen on their watch. Aid has been cut to its lowest ever level, when Australia can and must do more to end poverty and build opportunity in our region.



We need leadership that shows moral courage.

You and I share something in common in that our leadership, mine in my church and yours in this electorate, is based on the slow and steady work of service.

There aren't always easy moments to show what type of leader you are. But this is one of those moments. Cutting aid puts you in a box; in a moment you can appear mean spirited and tight-fisted. This is your chance to be known for who you are, and to reflect the big-hearted electorate that you serve.

Key Messages

5

The church is together on this

I'm here as a representative of my congregation. Together we're praying that aid will not be cut and that Australia and our government will continue to serve those in need.

I'm also joined in this action by fellow pastors around the country, meeting over this week and next with your Liberal colleagues to make the same ask.

We are deeply concerned by rumours of a cut to aid, and the church is united in our call to love our neighbours.

Final Call to Action for MP

Our aid budget is already at the *lowest* it has ever been.

It has been cut and cut again.

Will you speak to the Treasurer and ask him to ensure a cut to aid is off the table in the upcoming budget?

They say	We say
<p>We can't afford to give out of borrowed money.</p>	<p>We can, and we must. Australian Aid is such a small amount of our national budget, but it says so much about the type of nation that we are.</p>
<p>There are a lot of things at play in budget discussions, aid is just one of the items being looked at.</p>	<p>Our aid budget is already at the lowest it has ever been. It has already been cut and cut again. Will you speak to the Treasurer and ask him to ensure a cut to aid is off the table?</p>
<p>We need to focus on putting Australians first.</p>	<p>We do. 99% of our budget is about putting Australians first, and well it should be. Like you, I spend my days serving our local community and hearing from local residents and they certainly have needs that must be met. But we can do more. We can serve those who need it most both here and in our region.</p>
<p>The Coalition has been the punching bag for too long, we need to sure up our supporters first.</p>	<p>Australians are looking for leadership they can believe in. This is a chance for the Coalition to be known for who you are, a Government that wants people to be able to reach their potential, living in the fullness of freedom and opportunity.</p>
<p>We're not cutting anything, we're freezing spending and working on a plan to restore surplus by 2021.</p>	<p>We can't rectify our budget deficit by creating a moral deficit. We need the assurance now that further cuts to aid are off the table. Australia has a job to do in helping to end poverty and build opportunity in our region - a more prosperous region is the key to a more prosperous future for Australia. Will you make a promise that the Coalition will not cut aid in the 2018 budget?</p>

They say	We say
<p>You will find out on Budget night.</p>	<p>I understand there are competing priorities as your Government prepares the Federal Budget, and I understand the need to keep final decisions under wraps. But, Australia's aid budget is already at the lowest it's ever been. Cutting aid cuts programs that change lives, that build opportunity for our region and that helps Australia and our neighbours live a more prosperous and full life.</p> <p>I'm here to ask you to speak to the Treasurer and ask him to take any further cut to aid off the table.</p>

Key Stories: Aid and its Impact and Need

1

Nepal Earthquake - Aid works

Aid can help vulnerable communities reduce the risks from disasters.

Prior to the 2015 earthquake in Nepal, World Vision retrofitted Nepalese schools to withstand earthquakes. All 160 retrofitted schools survived the 7.8 magnitude earthquake of April 2015, while more than 6,000 schools were severely damaged or destroyed.

Even the most conservative estimates suggest that AU\$1 invested into Disaster Risk Reduction activities saves between \$2-80 in response and recovery costs.

2

Rohingya - Aid is needed

This is the fastest growing refugee crisis in the world and it's on our doorstep.

More than 800,000 people need shelter, more than 60,000 children are malnourished.

In the face of this crisis, Australia cannot, in good conscience consider a cut to aid.

Cutting aid will only serve to worsen refugee crises in our region.

Cutting aid to programs that serve people in need is short-sighted, and mean-spirited.

Key Stories: Robert Menzies, Liberals and Aid

Prime Minister Robert Menzies, and symbolic father of the Liberal movement in Australia said:

“It is a good thing that Australia should have earned a reputation for a sensitive understanding of the problems of people in other lands; that we should not come to be regarded as people who are detached from the miseries of the world. I know that we will not come to be so regarded, for I believe that there are no people anywhere with warmer hearts and more generous impulses.”

Our contribution to aid grew under Menzies as we engaged with our region and the world - it continued to rise under Liberal Prime Ministers like Harold Holt (who was Menzies' Treasurer) and then John Gorton. Aid has been a key element of the Liberal movement in Australia, giving people the opportunity to build independent and prosperous lives.



Appendicies



Sydney Morning Herald

Thursday 29th March.

Sydney Morning Herald ran a feature on the front page about rumoured cuts to aid, with response from Micah's Executive Director, Tim Costello.

<https://www.smh.com.au/politics/federal/the-turnbull-government-is-mulling-more-cuts-to-overseas-aid-20180328-p4z6rn.html>



Overcoming Objections

Objection: Charity starts at home

Charity starts at home, but it doesn't end there. I like to think Australians believe in a fair go, no matter where you are born. We can take care of issues at home *and* contribute to the global community. Last year our aid efforts got over one million children into school. That's something we can be proud of.

Objection: We can't afford it

Australia is one of the richest countries in the world, yet our aid level will soon fall to its lowest level since records began. As a country that believes in a fair go, we can do better than balancing our books on the backs of the world's poorest. Last year Australian aid vaccinated more than two million children from life threatening diseases.

Objection: Aid is nice, but it doesn't help us balance the budget.

Every \$1 of Australian aid to Asian countries results (on average) in \$7.1 in Australian exports to Asian countries. Aid in our region is one of the best measures to sure up our economy and our region for the long term.

Take the story of a Sri Lankan woman named Nisanthi. She was given a small micro-loan to start a coir processing business. She now sells 2 ½ tonnes of coir a week, some of which is exported internationally – creating employment for many women in her community. This is how today's aid recipients become tomorrow's trading partners.

Overcoming Objections

Objection: People don't really care about aid though, do they?

Polling consistently shows that around 50% of the population think aid should be increased to help people living in the poorest parts of the world.

In 2017, Australians were rated as the sixth most generous people individually. Yet, our government contribution to aid places us in 17th place, and slipping further behind each year. The public expects more.

Objection: We should not borrow money from overseas to give overseas

Our government, like all governments around the world, borrows to fund all government programs and pay salaries - not just for our aid program. Borrowing to fund government spending is a normal part of budgeting. It doesn't make sense to single out just one thing the Government spends on – like Australia's aid program – and say that it should not be funded the same way as all other things the Governments spends on.

The fact is, Australia has among the lowest debt levels in the world. And we as Australians still give to charity even if we have a mortgage or student debt – so using Australia's debt as an excuse does not really make sense. This is especially true because Australia's aid program is only about 1 percent of government spending and does not make a real dent in Australia's debt.

Overcoming Objections

Objection: There will always be poor / poverty

In just the last 20 years, the number of people living in extreme poverty has halved. Australian Aid has played a part in that story by supporting people in poor communities to access basic human rights such as education and healthcare.

For example, last year Australian aid helped one million children gain access to school. The proportion of people living under the World Bank's lowest global poverty line fell from 42% in 1981 to 11% in 2013. Australian aid in Timor Leste helped cut maternal mortality by two-thirds, and child mortality in half from 2002-2015. Aid played a role in the elimination of small pox—an achievement that has saved over 200 million lives.

Australian aid is helping strengthen governance and rule of law, preventing instability returning to countries like the Solomon Islands, Timor Leste and parts of PNG.