



Micah Australia
413/410 Elizabeth St
Surry Hills NSW 2010

Friday 15 April

The Honourable Scott Morrison MP
Treasurer
Australian Parliament House
Canberra ACT 2600

Dear Treasurer,

As leaders within Australia's Christian denominations, we write to call on you not to proceed with planned cuts to Australia's aid budget – cuts that will see Australia become the least generous we've ever been.

Coming on top of more than \$11 billion in cuts to aid since coming to office, this will be the fourth time the Government has targeted Australian aid for cuts. We believe it is time to reverse course. These cuts damage and undermine programs which have a direct impact on the lives, livelihoods, security and opportunity of many of our region's poorest and most vulnerable people and communities, including women and girls and people with disability.

Last year alone, Australian Aid helped to:

- vaccinate more than 2.8 million children,
- ensure over 2.2 million more people gained access to safe drinking water, and more than 800,000 people gained access to basic sanitation,
- ensure treatment for more than 1.5 million people with HIV/AIDS and more than 1.3 million people with tuberculosis,
- distribute more than 130 million treated bed nets to fight malaria, and
- respond to humanitarian crises and natural disasters in 15 countries (including Cyclone Pam in Vanuatu and the major earthquake in Nepal).

We note that the British Prime Minister, David Cameron, has vowed never to “balance the books on the backs of the poorest”, and that his Government has legislated to increase UK aid to the internationally-agreed level of 0.7% Gross National Income (GNI). We believe that Australia can – and should – make the same commitment. Our region, the Indo-Pacific, is home to the majority of the world's poorest people and is the region most vulnerable to natural disasters. We have a shared interest in working to ensure stability, security and opportunity for all.

More than ten million Australians identify with our churches. We are united by our belief in Jesus, who showed us what it means to “love our neighbour”. We know that as a nation we put this into practice when we help our neighbours recover from natural disasters, support people's basic human rights, assist in meeting the challenges of climate change or provide a safe refuge to those fleeing persecution.

Australia's support for aid and the flourishing of our neighbours is fundamentally a moral question and it rises above partisan politics. In 2005, Prime Minister Howard committed to doubling the aid program, and Prime Minister Rudd's commitment to increase aid towards 0.5% of GNI was supported as bipartisan policy by the Coalition from 2007 until recently.

Because of our shared faith, our commitment to compassion and our common humanity, and with a resolute hope that Australia can be a better neighbour and more principled actor in the community of nations, we call on you not to proceed with the scheduled cut of \$224 million and begin, instead, to restore our commitment to Australian aid.

Yours truly,



Archbishop Philip Freier
Anglican Diocese of Melbourne



Bishop Greg O'Kelly
Catholic Diocese of Port Pirie



Pastor Stuart McMillan
President, Uniting Church in Australia



Commissioners Floyd Tidd & James Condon
Territorial Commanders, Salvation Army



Bishop John Henderson
Lutheran Church of Australia



Pastor Jorge Munoz
Chair, Adventist Development & Relief Agency



Pastor Wayne Alcorn
President Australian Christian Churches



Rev Dr Bill Brown
National Chair, Australian Baptist Ministries



Rev Janet Woodlock
Federal Coordinator, Churches of Christ



Dr Peter Downes
National Director, Vineyard Churches Australia



Rev Dr Peter Dobson
Acting National Superintendent,
Wesleyan Methodist Church



c3 church
Pastor Phil Pringle
Founder, C3 Church