



4 June 2014

Tony Abbott MP  
Prime Minister  
Parliament House  
Canberra ACT 2600

Dear Prime Minister

**Re: Reduction in overseas aid in Federal Budget 2014 - 15**

Australian Quakers wish to express deep concern at the Government's decision to reduce funding for overseas aid by a large amount, as part of the Federal Budget for 2014-5. This will have an adverse impact on programs that assist the people of our region, who are among the poorest in the world. In addition, the loss of 500 experienced officers from AusAID will affect Australia's ability to undertake effective aid (in every sense) and mean that some of the innovative programs cannot be continued.

It is especially regrettable that over the next few years the decline in funding for overseas aid (\$7.6b) will be around 20% of the total savings in the Budget, when overseas aid represents only around 1.3% of total expenditures. Australia will not live up to its commitments made under the Millennium Development Goals to raise the level of aid to the UN target of 0.7% of Gross National Income (GNI), or even to the 0.5% target agreed by the ALP and Coalition in 2007. The level will now fall to around 0.3%.

Australia has a responsibility to set a strong example to other developed nations, given our current international standing as a member of the United Nations Security Council and president of the G20 group. This is particularly relevant in the light of the latest OECD report (April 2014) that shows a significant increase in aid in real terms by 17 of the 28 member countries despite budget pressures (e.g. the UK has raised aid by 28% in 2013). Australia is one of those that has reduced its contribution.

We are concerned that the Government's decision will, along with the restraints on the budget for the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade (DFAT), put at risk the non-military relationships and peace building activities in our region, and reduce the commitment to multilateral responses to global challenges.

On behalf of Australian Quakers I urge a review of the level of support for overseas aid programs.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Julian Robertson".

Presiding Clerk  
Australia Yearly Meeting

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