



A Safer 
World For All

Policy Platform

May 2022

micah



Micah Australia

Micah empowers Australian Christians to advocate on the most urgent global justice issues facing our world today - extreme poverty, rising conflict, climate change and leaving no one behind.

Our work is supported and enabled by a coalition of Australia's leading Christian international development agencies

Through our key initiatives and campaigns, we support Australian Christians and church leaders, to engage our federal politicians warmly and relationally, leading to significant outcomes on key issues of global justice.

In recent years, together we have carried out over 300 meetings with members of parliament, and through our campaigns End COVID for All and Christians United for Afghanistan, helped to secure over \$1 billion in additional aid &

humanitarian assistance and a further 16,500 refugee places for those fleeing Afghanistan.

We believe that when the Church exercises its prophetic mandate as a voice for justice, the actions of an entire nation can be changed.

The issue of global justice is one in which Christians are substantially invested.

We believe that individuals, institutions, and nations are called to respond to neighbours in need with generous love and compassion. Christian humanitarian and international development agencies in Australia collect over \$621 million in charitable donations each year. The supporters of Micah do not just call for Government action, they act themselves.

The State of the World

Our world is in crisis. From Ukraine, to Afghanistan, Myanmar and Ethiopia.

When leaders choose war, it is the vulnerable who suffer. Pregnant mothers are forced to flee. Children must abandon their education. Families are left without food or shelter. People with disabilities left behind.

Rising conflict—combined with the ongoing impacts of COVID-19 and climate change—means the world's poor and vulnerable are coming under immense pressure and danger.

Australia can help by opening our doors to people fleeing conflict and providing life-saving aid for those who stay.

But in recent times our government has cut both. We've accepted fewer refugees. We've become less generous with our aid.

In 2022—an election year—it's time to take a better path forward.

The 'Triple Threat': Conflict, COVID-19 & Climate Change



Conflict

Whilst the number of war related deaths has been declining since 1946, conflict and violence has been on the rise.

The key contributors of this rise are a scarcity of resources (this is exacerbated by climate change), a breakdown of governance and unresolved regional conflict.

Today, 10% of the world's population are living amidst conflict, with over 426 million children living in these areas. There are currently 84 million people displaced globally.

There are currently **40 different ongoing violent conflicts across the world**, with the most severe in Myanmar, Ethiopia, Syria, Iraq, Democratic Republic of Congo, Eritrea, Ukraine, Yemen, and Venezuela.



COVID-19

The COVID pandemic has been one of the greatest humanitarian crises in our time, exacerbating pre-existing inequalities and revealing structural failures in our global system.

For the first time in more than 20-years we saw an increase in poverty, with **over 150 million people pushed into extreme poverty because of the crisis**. It has widened the gap between the poor and the rich, those living with a disability and those without, and led to an increase in gender-based violence.

It has had long-term impacts upon education and livelihoods, with **10 million children expected not to return to school** after the COVID pandemic settles due to families worsened circumstances placing pressure on children to stay home and work.



Climate Change

It is the world's poorest who are most impacted by the effects of climate change. **There are 132 million people at risk of falling into poverty by 2030** due to the direct effects of climate change.

The last seven years have been the world's hottest years on record and our planet, and its people are desperately calling for change. Long-term disasters like drought and famine are increasing with **45 million people across 43 countries reported by the UN to be on the brink of famine** and in need of immediate support.

Unfortunately, there are other health implications too, with the spread of tropical diseases that prefer warmer climates (like malaria), with 250,000 additional deaths per year predicted between 2030 to 2050 from such causes.

Key takeaway

Those who are the poorest and most vulnerable in our global community are those who are already experiencing the worst impacts of this triple threat of conflict, COVID-19 and climate change.

Whilst Australia has taken some important actions to support these people and their communities, significant additional commitments are required to meet the magnitude of this moment if we are to make a safer world for all.





Restore our refugee program

Ask: Restore Australia's refugee program to 20,000 places per year to create more refugee places for those fleeing conflicts in Myanmar, Ethiopia, Syria, Iraq, Democratic Republic of Congo, Eritrea, Yemen, and Venezuela.

The number of refugees and displaced peoples globally has increased to 84 million people. Across the globe, 1 in every 95 people on earth has fled their home because of conflict or persecution. This number is increasing as conflict continues to increase. The threat of climate change also threatens to increase this figure.

While the refugee crisis has been increasing, our humanitarian refugee program has been shrinking. Despite overwhelming need, the Australian Government cut its annual Refugee and Humanitarian Program in 2020 by 5,000 places to a capped program of just 13,750 places. These cuts have prevented vulnerable people from being protected, kept families apart, stopped children from receiving an education, and robbed Australia of the economic and social benefits refugees bring to our communities.

On Federal Budget Night (March 29, 2022) we welcomed the Australian Government's announcement of a special intake of 16,500 additional spaces for those fleeing Afghanistan, as well as action to protect Ukrainians by providing temporary protection visas to those within Australia and those to come. Although this is important progress, this is not Australia's fair share.

*The overall humanitarian refugee program **must be restored to 20,000 places each year**, so that we can play our role in addressing the growing refugee crisis and provide durable solutions to those who have lost everything.*



Increase life-saving humanitarian aid

Ask: Increase life-saving humanitarian aid to conflict & hunger hotspots in Ukraine, Myanmar, the Horn of Africa and Middle East.

In 2022, 274 million people will need humanitarian assistance and protection, a significant increase from previous years. Conflict, increasing natural disasters and rising food insecurity is leaving millions in desperate need of support. The UN has found that 43 countries are on the brink of famine.

Australia's humanitarian assistance changes lives. Some great steps have been taken lately to support those impacted by the ongoing crises in Afghanistan and Ukraine, with \$140 million allocated to Afghanistan (2021-2024) and \$65 million to Ukraine.

However, our overall humanitarian assistance budget is not an adequate response to the volatile global situation. COVID-19, conflict and climate change are impacting the already under-resourced global humanitarian sector and intensifying humanitarian needs globally, making emergencies even more complex.

*To respond to crises as they arise, as well as support those that are current and ongoing, **Australia must increase its humanitarian support by doubling its commitment** to provide \$500m p.a. in global humanitarian funding to at least \$1 billion p.a. from 2022-23. Such an investment is needed for Australia to be a key driver of change in addressing these global humanitarian challenges.*



Rebuild Australian Aid

Ask: Rebuild Australian Aid to help nations become more stable & resilient, currently at its least generous level ever (0.21% of GNI) and projected to fall even lower.

Australia's aid program is transforming the lives of many.

The *Pacific Women Lead* program is a great example, and just one of many programs which Australia funds. This initiative over seven years has so far supported 116,341 women and children to access crisis support services, 881,549 people to participate in awareness and education about ending violence against women and children, 25,765 women to utilise financial information and services and 25,658 women to take on leadership roles at the community, provincial and national level.

In the past year, 30 million COVID vaccines have been shared within the Pacific region through generous action.

In response to the COVID pandemic, the government has added \$1.5 billion in temporary aid measures to help our neighbours struggling to respond to the impacts of the pandemic.

Through the Australian aid program people have sight restored, children receive an education, health rates improve and more.

However, the overall generosity of Australia's aid budget has been on a significant downward trend since the 2013 election.

How 'generous' donor countries aid programs are, can be seen by comparing their foreign aid to the size of their economy, measured using Gross National Income (GNI). The internationally agreed aid-to-GNI target is 0.7%. At one point, both major political parties in Australia had agreed to increase aid to 0.5% of GNI.

In 2021, Australia's aid reached a historic low of just 0.21% of GNI. When compared against other wealthy donor nations in the OECD this ranks Australia 21st out of 29 nations and sadly, looking ahead, things are only set to get worse. Aid will fall to 0.20% in FY 2022-23, before dropping even further to a mere 0.18% in 2023-24.

Whilst the Government increasing aid temporarily in response to the pandemic was positive, the overall baseline of aid needs to be much higher. This way, Australia will not only be able to respond to emergencies but also work in deep partnership with our neighbours, to enhance their capacity and development in the long run, leading to a more stable and prosperous future for all.

*To stand as a true partner to our neighbours and offer more than just a 'band-aid', Australia's **aid budget must be legislated to reach .5%** by 2025-26 and 0.7 per cent ODA/GNI by 2029-30.*

Micah's Policy for a Safer World for All

We call on all parties to help make a safer world for all, by committing to:

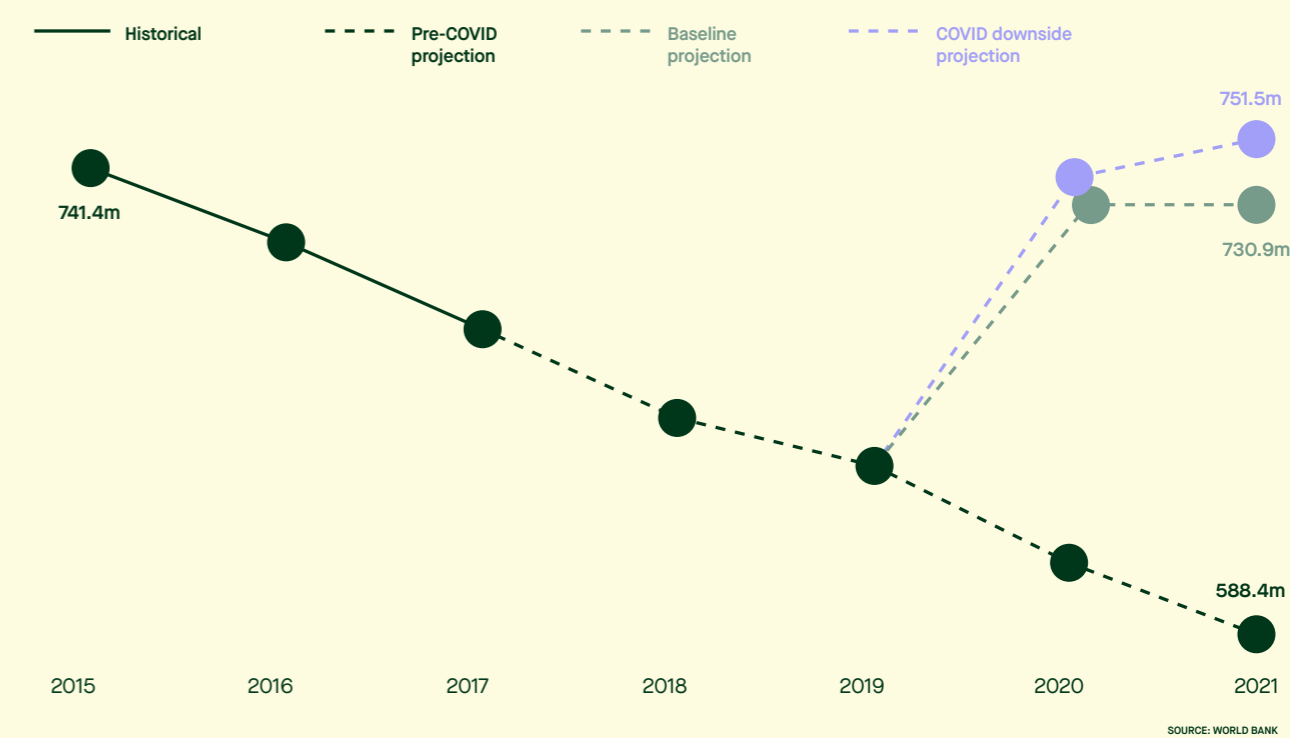
1. Restore Australia's refugee program to 20,000 places per year
2. Increase life-saving humanitarian aid to conflict & hunger hotspots
3. Rebuild Australian Aid to help nations become more stable & resilient

Generosity: Australian aid as a percentage of GNI



Extreme Poverty: Rising for the first time in 20 years

Number of people (millions) living on less than \$1.90/day



A Safer
World For All

You can
take action!

Call on Australia's political leaders to help make a safer world for all!

Sign our petition and access further resources at saferworld.com.au



Restore our
refugee program



Increase
life-saving
humanitarian aid



Rebuild
Australian Aid

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