

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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## **Small steps towards a better future**

Micah Australia warmly welcomes today's announcement by Deputy Opposition Leader, Tanya Plibersek, that a Labor government would restore \$30 million of funding to Australian Aid non-government organisations and work to improve the transparency and poverty-focus of Australia's aid program.

Micah Australia National Coordinator, Ben Thurley, said, "Australians are rightly proud of what our aid achieves. Last year alone, Australian aid helped an extra 1.4 million children attend school and provided safe drinking water to more than 4 million households".

"To continue these life-saving and life-transforming programs, we can and should do more and ensure that Australian aid is focused and accountable on the outcomes it achieves in the fight against poverty," Mr Thurley said.

In addition to the \$30 million restored to Australian NGOs, the Deputy Opposition Leader also announced:

- \$10 million in funding for poverty-focused data gathering and collaboration,
- a restoration of the ministerial aid budget statement, to provide additional transparency about the performance of the Australian aid program,
- intention to legislate the purpose and accountability mechanisms of Australian aid.

Micah Australia welcomes these commitments.

Micah Australia calls on both Government and Opposition to reverse the most severe cuts to aid in Australia's history.

Mr Thurley said, "Since 2012, both sides of politics have cut Australia's aid budget, including the largest ever cuts in Australia's history under incoming Abbott Government".

"Australia is one of the wealthiest countries in the world and has the sixth lowest level of debt among all developed countries. Yet aid is being cut to its lowest level in history and will fall next year to just 22 cents in every \$100 of our national income. We have the ability to do more, and in a region of countries struggling against poverty, Australians must step up to do more."

"As well as these significant steps, we call on Government and Opposition to reverse recent cuts, to return Australia into the top half of aid contributing nations after the next election, and announce a timetable to lift our aid contribution to the international target of 70 cents in every \$100 of national income to help achieve the global goals for sustainable development by 2030."

**-ENDS-**

**For interviews or comment:**

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*Micah Australia is a coalition of churches and Christian organisations raising a powerful voice for justice and a world free from poverty. [www.micahaustralia.org](http://www.micahaustralia.org).*

