

26-1-2011

To the secretariat,  
 AUSTRALIAN AID REVIEW  
 GPO BOX 887  
 CANBERRA 2601

TO THE SECRETARY  
 RE: SUBMISSION TO AN INDEPENDENT REVIEW of foreign aid.  
 Terms of reference :

#### Background

This section fails to give adequate information. Many citizens are at a loss where eg. Australia's interests are safeguarded in subsaharan Africa or even the Middleeast. Once again the GDP is quoted without even given an approximate dollar figure for the financial years 2009-10 or 2010-11. Therefore I am unable to calculate or estimate how many dollars cabinet expects to spend on foreign aid in this year, let alone in 2015-16. For instance I calculated \$3.25 billion for this financial year while you suggested provisionally \$4.3 billion ?

How can I have confidence about this "small beer" of \$ 1.05 Billion difference just like countless other electors who do not even bother to comment (apart from the letters to the editor).

Another bureaucracy was founded 5 years ago to to review and evaluate. AUSAid was found to have "a rigorous system and processes in place" to ensure integrity. It appears that besides ODE somebody also conducts a "review of advisers engaged under a program .....including developing country partners".

The latter themselves are being reviewed about "procurement and agreements". Finally our National Audit Office was also brought in and noted two years ago that AUSAid manages the increased money flows effectively.

An absolutely amazing amount of navelgazing by many people to find everything works fine, BUT NO see below:

#### Objective

"To examine effectiveness and efficiency of the program" What is the difference between the two, apart from splitting hairs ? As incompetents, like this writer, would say "if it ain't broken why fix it" ? Is somebody engaging in oxymorons in Canberra? There is no indication in the Background that the above estimated \$4.3 Billion will be spend unwisely.

#### Scope

Many dotpoints will require a focus about appropriateness.

- a) I fail to understand "taking into account Australia's area of comparative advantage" e.g. in Africa ? A similar phrase has been used by the Australian Business Council and many economists for years to send our manufacturing industry into oblivion. They also used the phrase "level playing field" to delude the public for decades. I would have thought that a nation's "absorptive capacity" is a matter of common sense, surely the Sudan would have different administration of health than PNG. I have problems with your cost and benefit studies for Afghanistan. The number of Aid organisations in that country, the money put in bilaterally, the money the EU has pledged, two flawed elections and the corruptions admitted by its no trust leader, over 40 nations to create a modicum of order and the lack of state in many Regions. There is no guarantee when the Coalition of the Willing loses its will and

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moves out; that any achievements will be appreciated and maintained. I will not even mention the UN and its regular call for more millions

- b) I had the impression from reading your Background that our aid program is good.
- c) See above. But of course to achieve "maximise effectiveness" (?) in low income nations is another matter. We cannot even achieve that in our own country ! I merely think of East Timor, the new southern Sudan, Pacific Island States or PNG, an independent nation for 25 years.
- d) Future organisational structure of AUSAid, ODA and working with our public service, donors and institutions. Which institutions will those panel members focus on ? No examples given. I have problems with one institution overseas. What is the (very costly) AFP doing in Afghanistan or in Indonesia ? Teaching, instructing, gathering information ? They have NOT reduced drug or people smuggling. Do their costs come out of the aid budget ?
- e) "Management of fraud and risk in the aid program". It is the nature of the beast and widespread in EAST and WEST. Our media has regular reports of deceit. I remember our aid dollars turning up in Taliban pockets, the AWB scandal in Iraq, foodaid being sold on black markets, financial aid for islamic schools in Indonesia (which consular staff measures the success of that money in young secularly useful minds ?) or the amounts lost in foreign bankaccounts.

#### Managements arrangements

No comment, except for the fact that the writer noted the absence of the Humanities and the Health/welfare disciplines on the review panel.

Indeed I do not believe that the panel members will make the nexus between poverty and population numbers. Possibly that angle is not part of the terms of reference.

#### Approach

The panel will consult extensively with Government, NGOs and key stakeholders but not with citizens. Are they considered ignorant of the issues or worse, may be against such political largesse ? I look forward to an invitation to SPA to be interviewed, *as well as Mary Gop Inderni*

#### Final comment by this writer/submittor and concerned citizen

Our foreign aid should not be involving the African continent nor the Middle East. We should try to further the wellbeing and good governance amongst our OWN NEIGHBOURS in our region. There is still much to be done. It could include strongly indentured guest workers whose incomes, send home, contribute far more to the individual family than AUSAid.

Indeed no country from Malaysia all the way to the Pacific island states can be called our good friend (instead it is communist China which buys its way in). Therefore it is of concern that we give aid to China, Afghanistan or Lhaos. Why they are receiving aid which is supposedly in our national interest is difficult to understand. A far greater share of aid should go to the empowerment of women (Grameen Bank!). Their increased role would lead to less children, better nutrition/health for the individual, less family pressure, less childslavery (there are more childslaves around than ever before) less demand for already too expensive education and in the end less unruly and unemployable youth to deal with by inefficient governments. Maybe a panel member may even see a link between boredom and "homegrown terrorism". Smaller families will ensure perhaps enough arable land to feed them all, which is another plus. More so, since foreign, global "predators" buy/use up their land for agroindustrial use, because their governments look much further in the future

THAN WE DO.

or.

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~~Indonesia has a population of 240 million people, with around 100 million people living on \$US2 a day or less, and highly vulnerable to poverty. Education is a powerful tool to bring people out of poverty.~~

Education is a major focus of Australian development assistance to Indonesia and we support the Indonesian Government's goal of providing nine years of basic education to all boys and girls by 2015 through improving access, quality and management of education services. The new \$500 million education partnership with Indonesia is an investment in both our futures. The Australian Government spends around \$62 billion per year on education in Australia – our investment in improving education in Indonesia amounts to less than 20 cents for every \$100 we spend here.

Australia has a history of successful engagement in Indonesia's education sector, notably from 2005 to 2010, through the \$387 million Basic Education Program which improved access to basic education by creating around 330,000 new school places through the construction or extension of 2075 junior secondary schools.

In Indonesia, like in Australia, faith-based schools are an important part of the national education system. The vast bulk of Indonesian Islamic schools are – like private schools in Australia – professionally managed and make a valuable contribution to their communities. The Islamic sector educates around 22 per cent of Indonesian students in 40,000 primary, junior and secondary Islamic schools across the country.

The new education partnership continues to support Islamic education by helping around 1,500 moderate Islamic schools to achieve accreditation against national education standards. It targets improvements in the quality of teaching and learning and helps raise the education levels, particularly for children from poor households, to national standards.

Accreditation integrates Islamic schools into the national system by requiring them to meet national minimum service standards. This will ensure consistency of teaching quality and predictable access to Indonesian government funds. The Ministry of Religious Affairs has afforded accreditation as the highest priority under their strategic plan.

Your letter also raises concerns around Islamic communities in Australia. Your letter has been forwarded to the Minister for Immigration and Citizenship and his office may reply to you directly on these issues.

I trust this information has been of use.

*Noting our own stimulus efficiencies – all the above underlined segments are disputable or contestable.*

Yours sincerely



Danielle Heinecke  
A/g Assistant Director General  
Indonesia and East Timor Branch  
Australian Agency for International Development

The six paragraphs above are the result of a query to the PM and her gift of \$ 500 million to Indonesian (moderate ?) educators.

My original letter was passed onto another unknown bureaucracy, an Agency for International Development's Acting Assistant Director General