

To the panel of the Independent Review of Aid Effectiveness,

I call upon the Australian Government to implement the following changes with respect to their aid program:

- Increase the focus on sustainable development, poverty alleviation, including climate change adaptation and mitigation and its impact on aid, rather than our “national interest”.
 - Remove reference to national interest from the objective of Australia’s aid program.
 - Establish AusAID as a separate department (currently under the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade) with a Cabinet level minister responsible for international development.
 - Commit to at least A\$2.1 billion per year funding for climate aid, commensurate with Australia’s contribution to global ODA.
 - Ensure that this climate aid is new money, not funds redirected from other development priorities and that it is aimed primarily at assisting the most vulnerable communities.
 - Prioritise local advisors (especially technical assistance positions) over external advisors.

- Improve the transparency, accountability and monitoring of Australian aid spending:
 - Make the Office of Development Effectiveness an independent body separate from AusAID, following the example of the UK’s Independent Commission on Aid Impact.
 - Publish timely, accessible and detailed information about all aid initiatives.
 - Publicly release all parts of commercial aid contracts which do not satisfy the Department of Finance and Administration’s ‘Confidentiality Test’.

- Require all aid providers to demonstrate how their initiatives are guided by host governments, communities and civil society organisations in the planning, implementation and evaluation of aid initiatives.

- Demonstrate how Australia’s policies on trade, investment, finance, migration, security and climate change are consistent with the promotion of poverty alleviation, gender equity and sustainable development.

Yours sincerely,

Laura Smelter