

Submission to Independent Aid Review

I suggest that the single most effective thing the Australian Government could do to enhance aid effectiveness would be to end the practice of using aid to further Australia's national interest, a step already taken in the United Kingdom. This would, as a minimum suggest:

- Removing reference to national interest from the objective of Australia's aid program
- Establishing AusAID as a separate department (currently under the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade) with a Cabinet level minister responsible for international development.

It is difficult to reconcile a stated focus on 'aid effectiveness' and yet at the same time have the primary indicator of aid effectiveness being the advancement of Australia's national interest. To demonstrate true commitment to the Millennium Development Goals and global poverty and development frameworks, this should be a first step in reviewing the structure of the aid program. Otherwise, national interest will supersede all other measures, frameworks, partnership agreements and indicators.

This should be accompanied by a philosophy shift regarding what development is, which would need to include sending officers to the field with more experience than 12 months as a youth ambassador. Three to five year frameworks for social change projects are insufficient, impractical and may actually hinder prospects for effectiveness. Strict project management approaches are ill suited to the organic people led development that is constantly preached, but rarely seen in actuality. There is a need for the aid program to take risks (see Paul Collier, *The Bottom Billion* for more on this) and allow **time** for the results to show. These issues are strongly intertwined with the fact that aid is a political issue in the Australian Government, not, as it should be, about improving the status of the poorest in our region. Programmatic decisions made for political reasons don't offer aid effectiveness. In changing the platform from which aid is delivered, greater effectiveness will follow.

Thank you

Please note I do not wish to have my personal details made public – please publish as details withheld.