

## 2019-20 Pre-Budget Submission



Thank you for the opportunity to provide input to the 2019-20 Budget process. CARE Australia seeks a world of hope, tolerance and social justice, where poverty has been overcome and all people live with dignity and security. In the formulation of the 2019-20 Budget we call on the Australian Government to:

- rebuild the Australian development assistance budget;
- implement initiatives specifically to support women and girls in humanitarian crises; and
- prepare to strengthen Australian workplace laws regarding harassment and gender inequality.

Formed in 1987 CARE Australia has a special focus on gender equality to bring lasting development to communities. CARE Australia has earned an international reputation for our innovative, sustainable and effective long-term development projects and our ability to respond quickly to humanitarian disaster situations. CARE Australia is a member of the CARE International confederation of 14 autonomous members working in 95 countries undertaking development assistance and disaster relief. The primary geographic focus of CARE Australia is the Pacific and South-East Asia where we manage all programs and activities of the CARE International confederation in Cambodia, Laos, Myanmar, Papua New Guinea, Timor-Leste, Vanuatu and Vietnam. During 2017-18 CARE Australia assisted over 2.1 million people across 28 countries, including responding to 13 emergencies across 19 countries.

### **Rebuilding the Australian Development Assistance Budget**

Over the past five years the Australian aid budget has been cut savagely. The Finance Minister, Mathias Cormann has noted, since 2013 the government has found “net savings of around \$80 billion”<sup>1</sup> from the foreign aid budget. Australia’s Overseas Development Assistance budget is now at its lowest levels in history, accounting for less than one per cent of government spending. A diminished aid budget reduces Australia’s ability to contribute to gender equality and the advancement of the rights of women and girls.

While we welcome the focus on our Pacific neighbours through a renewed strategy and infrastructure program, this should not come at the expense of schools, health clinics and the broader aid program. Australia is a wealthy country

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<sup>1</sup> Hon Mathias Cormann speech to the Sydney Institute, 17 December 2018  
<https://thesydneyinstitute.com.au/blog/political-choices-matter-2/>

**CARE Australia**  
243 Northbourne Avenue  
GPO Box 2014  
Canberra ACT 2601  
tel 02 6279 0200  
fax 02 6257 890  
ABN 46 003 380 890  
info@care.org.au  
[care.org.au](http://care.org.au)

with a healthy economy, and as stated by the Finance Minister the “budget will return to surplus in 2019-20”.<sup>2</sup> We can afford to fund new infrastructure programs without putting people’s health and children’s futures at risk.

CARE Australia supports the submissions by ACFID, and the Equality Rights Alliance raising particular concerns about the level of development assistance, and its allocation to combat gender inequality.

### Recommendations:

*Rebuild the ODA program by setting a trajectory that ensures funding predictability and that ODA-eligible development finance levels reach internationally agreed levels of 0.7 percent of GNI by 2030*

- *maintain the commitment to ensuring 80 percent of Australia’s development program will effectively address gender issues and set a new target to increase expenditure on aid investments which set gender equality as a principal objective*
- *increase funding support for women’s rights organisations and networks, lifting aid coded as supporting ‘women’s equality organisations and institutions’ above current levels*

### **Gender in Emergencies**

The development challenges facing the Indo-Pacific region are significant. Asia and the Pacific remains the world’s most disaster-prone region, at risk from both sudden and slow-onset disasters.<sup>3</sup> Disaster impacts are not gender neutral. In the Pacific, women are more likely to be killed by disasters compared to men, and are more susceptible to sexual and gender based violence, recording one of the highest rates globally in the aftermath of a disaster.<sup>4</sup>

Though there is recognition of the need to mainstream gender equality throughout development activities within DFAT, there remains a lack of basic gender inclusion measures across Disaster Risk Reduction (DRR) activities in the Pacific. CARE Australia’s work on women’s leadership in community based disaster committees found where gender equality training had been delivered

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<sup>2</sup> Hon Mathias Cormann speech to the Sydney Institute, 17 December 2018  
<https://thesydneyinstitute.com.au/blog/political-choices-matter-2/>

<sup>3</sup> United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA) *Global Humanitarian Overview 2019 2019*  
<https://reliefweb.int/sites/reliefweb.int/files/resources/GHO2019.pdf>

<sup>4</sup> UN Women 2016 *Time to Act on Gender, Climate Change and Disaster Risk Reduction: An overview of progress in the Pacific Region with evidence from The Republic of the Marshall Islands, Vanuatu and Samoa* p.11

and women had taken up leadership roles, the community as a whole work together more effectively.<sup>5</sup>

Violence and conflict is a significant cause of humanitarian need. “By the end of 2017, war, violence and persecution had uprooted 68.5 million men, women and children around the world – the highest number on record.”<sup>6</sup> Work is currently underway on the development of Australia’s Second National Action Plan on Women, Peace and Security (WPS). This second National Action Plan is an opportunity to consider how resourcing is allocated to support women’s engagement in defence work, peace and security activities, as part of humanitarian responses.

Adequate resources need to be provided in emergency and humanitarian responses to ensure gender equality is not an afterthought.

#### Recommendations:

*Ensure gender sensitive programming for DRR and humanitarian response. This includes*

- *integration of gender equality into the emergency preparedness planning process;*
- *designing emergency assistance to meet the practical needs of women and girls; and*
- *strengthening women’s voice in humanitarian response, and resourcing the second National Action Plan on WPS to deliver increased engagement with civil society*

#### **Best practice in business**

More than one third of the world’s countries have no laws prohibiting sexual harassment at work.<sup>7</sup> Around the world, millions of working women are vulnerable in the places where they work. The International Labor Organization is currently debating the establishment of a new convention and recommendation on violence and harassment in the world of work.

The Australian Human Rights Commission (AHRC) is also currently reviewing Australia workplaces and legal frameworks through the *National Inquiry into Sexual Harassment in Australian Workplaces*. As the progress is made on the ILO convention and recommendation, and the work of the AHRC, now is the time to

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<sup>5</sup> J Webb 2017 *Does Gender Responsive Disaster Risk Reduction Make a Difference?* p.39

<sup>6</sup> United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA) *Global Humanitarian Overview 2019* 2019

<https://reliefweb.int/sites/reliefweb.int/files/resources/GHO2019.pdf>

<sup>7</sup> The World Bank Group *Women, Business and the Law 2018* 2018

ensure resources are available to implement needed changes to support vulnerable workers here and in the region.

Our trade partners need to be engaged to improve monitoring, reporting, and support systems across the region, with business supported to review and implement changes as necessary across supply-chains.

In November 2017, the Australian Government pledged to progress ratification of the ILO Protocol of 2014 to the Forced Labour Convention 1930.<sup>8</sup> Australia has not ratified an ILO instrument since 2011. There has been little public awareness or engagement on the ILO Protocol in the year since the pledge was made.

Recommendations:

*Progress early review for ratification of the proposed new ILO Convention on Violence and Harassment in the World of Work*

*Look to review current trade agreements to ensure they support improved practices on combating harassment and gender inequality*

*Finalise ratification of ILO Protocol of 2014 to the Forced Labour Convention 1930*

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<sup>8</sup> Department of Jobs Annual Report 2017-18 2018 <https://www.jobs.gov.au/annual-report-2017-18/secretarys-review>