



United  
Nations  
Association  
of Australia

# AUSTRALIA'S CONTRIBUTION TO THE UNITED NATIONS

Australia was a founding member of the United Nations in 1945 and has been an active member over the last 70 years in the areas of human rights, development assistance, economic and environmental affairs, and peace and security. As global issues become increasingly complex and inter-connected, countries need to develop global solutions to regional problems and challenges. Australia is firmly committed to effective global cooperation, and engaging with the UN multilateral system has always been a keystone of Australia's foreign policy.

## > OUR CONTRIBUTION TO DEVELOPMENT

Australia's core funding to United Nations development agencies supports the United Nations' efforts to progress the Millennium Development Goals. The Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade (DFAT) recognises that the United Nations development agencies are important partners for the Australian aid program. The agencies have the geographic reach, specialist expertise, and ability to operate at scale to advance Australia's international development agenda. Australia's official development assistance delivered through UN agencies in 2014-15 was more than \$616.9 million; with \$157.1 million (including \$21.2 million in core funding) going to the United Nations Development Program (UNDP) and \$75.6 million (including \$34.4 million in core funding) going to the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF). These contributions made up around 38 per cent of Australia's overall contribution to the United Nations in 2014-15. In the 2014-2015 period, Australia's contribution to the UNDP helped to create 920,000 new jobs (41 per cent for women) in 77 countries, helped to improve the livelihoods of 11.2 million people in 94 countries, assisted electoral work in 77 countries, and aided 750,000 people (51 per cent women) in 22 countries to gain access to legal aid services. Our contribution to UNICEF in this period helped to deliver infant and young child feeding programmes in 80 countries, distribute vaccinations for 40 per cent of the world's children, assisted more than 187 million people to access clean water, ensured 4.4 million people had access to decent sanitation, and helped 8.6 million children to go to school during humanitarian situations.

Australia also supports the World Health Organisation, UN Women, International Atomic Energy Agency, International Labour Organization, United Nations Office of Drugs and Crime and United Nations Environment Programme.

## > OUR CONTRIBUTION TO PEACE & SECURITY

Australia also has a distinguished record in international peace and security due to its efforts building and restoring peace, promoting global disarmament, and contributing to UN peacekeeping missions. Since 1945 Australia has contributed 65,000 personnel to more than 50 UN and other multilateral peace and security operations worldwide, including in Timor-Leste, Solomon Islands, Lebanon, Sudan, Cyprus, Korea, Somalia, and Rwanda. Australia has also led negotiation of the Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty and the Chemical Weapons Convention and been engaged with the negotiations for a new Arms Trade Treaty to enhance international standards for the transfer of conventional arms.

## > SNAPSHOT: AUSTRALIA ON THE UNITED NATIONS SECURITY COUNCIL 2013–2014

Australia commenced a two year term as a non-permanent member of the UN Security Council on 1 January 2013. Over the 2013-2014 term, the Security Council faced a large number of security and humanitarian crises worldwide. Australia has been praised for serving its term with distinction, developing a reputation as an active, pragmatic member by pursuing solutions to difficult and sensitive issues.

During its term, Australia encouraged groundbreaking initiatives on the humanitarian crisis in Syria, strengthened international cooperation to counter terrorism, improved the implementation of sanctions, and led the Council to a unanimous resolution on the downing of Malaysia Airlines flight MH17. Australia also led the Council in the security transition in Afghanistan and pushed for the Council to address the human rights violations in the Democratic People's Republic of Korea.



## > THE FUTURE OF AUSTRALIA'S ROLE IN THE UN

Australia hopes to continue playing a major role in the United Nations and uphold its reputation as a key contributor to UN agencies. Australia is currently trying to increase its presence in global forums through its candidacy for the 2018 membership of the UN Human Rights Council. While Australia has been a strong supporter of human rights and the Council in the past, many experts consider that Australia's present stance towards refugees is at odds with its responsibilities under the UN Refugee Convention and other international treaties. This position could reduce Australia's reputation as an international citizen of good standing and is likely to reduce other countries willingness to vote in support of Australia's bid for a seat.

Over the next few years, Australia has the opportunity to partner with UN agencies and participate in UN forums to tackle global issues such as climate change, closing the gap between Indigenous and non-Indigenous populations, and working towards a sustainable post-2015 development agenda.



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