

Mia Bromley

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Tuesday, 28 February 2017

Dear Sir / Madam,

I am a consultant in public health and social services, with tertiary qualifications in criminology, education and a Master of Public Health. I am a Graduate of the Australian Institute of Company Directors, and sit on two not for profit boards, including the board of RESULTS Australia.

RESULTS Australia trains and supports everyday people to be powerful voices for the end of poverty. My experience in public health and social justice inspires my particular interest Australia's aid program, and how we respond to global challenges.

Today, 800 million lives are still characterised by persistent, absolute poverty. Poverty stops people from achieving their potential, from contributing fully to society, and from enjoying basic health. Poverty's twin is inequality: in 2017, 8 billionaires own the same amount of wealth as the poorest half of the world – 3.6 billion people. We must eradicate absolute poverty and inequality to create a fairer world.

I believe that health and social equity are important principles on which to base Australia's approach to foreign policy. I believe Australia's foreign policy should reflect Australian values, and promote compassionate and innovative approaches to foreign aid. These values will enable a fairer and more sustainable world where everyone has equal access to the things they need to build a dignified life.

Ending poverty, reducing inequalities and addressing climate change should be top foreign policy objectives of the Australian Government. Australia should be a passionate advocate for, and leader in realising, the United Nations' Sustainable Development Goals by 2030. Our aid program should be sustainable, equitable and collaborative. Our aid program should be a force for overcoming the worst aspects of hunger and poverty, including improving the health and educational outcomes of the people in most need. The issues I am most concerned about are - broadly - health and education.

Good nutrition in the first 5 years has been shown to lead to higher IQs, better education, higher salaries later in life. Every dollar invested in effective nutrition programs returns \$16 (2016 Global Nutrition Report). We still have a long way to go in ensuring that every child gets the best start to life, and Australia has an important part to play.

The Asia-Pacific region is the most disaster-prone region in the world, accounting for 47% of disasters in 2015. In the same year, Australia announced a 5% cut to humanitarian and emergency aid! We must increase our ability to respond to emergencies in our own region by boosting our humanitarian aid budget.

Climate change has a devastating impact on the Pacific, whose island nations are among the most impacted. Sea levels rise, crop yields decrease, fishing stocks are depleted, flooding and erosion threaten households and livelihoods. These conditions unless tackled will lead to a significant escalation in climate-induced migration. Australia can lead the world in climate-responsive technology innovations and sustainable development.

As a country that has experienced 25 years of uninterrupted economic growth, it is astounding that we are at our least generous ever in our aid program. Australia must repair the aid budget and get back on track to investing 70 cents per 100 dollars of Gross National Income on aid. If spending targets are appropriate for defence, then they are appropriate for aid. Australia has a strong economy, a stable population and a significant opportunity to welcome people seeking refuge across the globe. We must commit to increasing our humanitarian intake to 42,000 by 2021.

I urge strong, decisive action and bold policies to stamp out the world's worst epidemics including malaria, tuberculosis, HIV and AIDS, and polio, which is on the brink of being eradicated. I urge the same to ensure every child can eat good food that set both body and brain up for life, and that every last child attends a high quality school. Every. Last. One. Australia's own growth and prosperity will be hindered as long as poverty and inequality are allowed to hold back such a significant portion of the global population.

Kind Regards,

Mia Bromley

Director

RESULTS Australia