



MEDIA RELEASE

12 May 2011

COALITION'S PLEDGE TO HELP HALVE GLOBAL POVERTY WELCOMED

The Australian Council for International Development (ACFID) has today welcomed the affirmation of the Coalition's continued commitment to help halve global poverty by 2015.

The bipartisan commitment to aid is very important. It was former Prime Minister John Howard who started Australia's foreign aid efforts to help halve global poverty.

The Deputy Leader of the Opposition has today reminded Australians that helping countries to provide basic healthcare services is one of the most effective forms of assistance the international community can provide.

"Ms Bishop is right about the positive impact of Aussie aid," said Marc Purcell, ACFID's Executive Director.

"Our aid money creates a lower risk of health pandemics and problems worldwide. This decreases risks for Australians overseas and lowers the likelihood of diseases entering our country."

"In fact, Australian aid has helped to decrease cases of malaria in the popular Australian travel destination Vanuatu by 80%. Malaria is so deadly it can kill a person overnight."

Our aid money benefits Australians while also doing the right thing by the poorest people in the world.

"Giving aid is not only the right thing to do, it helps to create a more secure, healthy and prosperous world for Australians," said Mr Purcell.

"By helping people to access their right to food, shelter, safety, education, work and freedom, Australian aid effectively fights terrorism without guns – making a safer, more stable world.

"Australian aid supports mainstream schooling, which means there is an option other than a school run by militants or radicals for many children. In close-by Indonesia, we have helped over 300,000 children to get places in mainstream schools since 2005.

"This means Australians travelling overseas are safer and our country is less likely to be threatened by or drawn into war.

"Aid also benefits the Australian economy and businesses. Prosperous and stable countries offer new markets to Australia – helping the economies of those in need and providing new opportunities at home. Australia earns an estimated \$130 billion annually through exports to countries that we currently support with aid.

"On top of all this, we are making sure mothers and children do not die needlessly and we are giving thousands a fair chance at life. Over a million Australian families support this important work every year by donating to aid and development charities.

"Now, with the Global Financial Crisis forcing millions further into poverty and starvation, it is more important than ever for the Australian Government to give generously too," Mr Purcell concluded.

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