

Report on the

**MAKEPOVERTYHISTORY 2010**

**Roadtrip and Summit**

for the Australian Youth Forum

Compiled by The Oaktree Foundation



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# 1 Executive summary

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The **MAKEPOVERTYHISTORY** 2010 Roadtrip and Summit was held the week of May 8 to May 15, 2010. It aimed to raise public and political awareness of the Millennium Development Goals. 1,000 young people from around Australia participated in nine Roadtrips across Australia which converged for a weekend Summit in Canberra.

A highlight of the Summit was the forum run in partnership with the Australian Youth Forum. Young people were asked their opinion on 'how Australia can show global leadership in achieving the Millennium Development Goals'. This consultation process resulted in four key recommendations being made to the Australian government:

- Increase Official Development Assistance to 0.7% of gross national income
- Ensure aid is better targeted towards those in need
- Deliver more aid through non-government organisations
- Establish AusAID as a separate government department

## 2 Introduction

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In 2000 all 192 member states of the United Nations, including Australia, agreed to achieve the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) by 2015. They are the most supported, comprehensive and specific development goals the world has ever agreed upon. The MDGs are 8 key goals, which aim to:

1. Eradicate extreme poverty and hunger
2. Achieve universal primary education
3. Promote gender equality and empower women
4. Reduce child mortality
5. Improve maternal health
6. Combat HIV/AIDS, malaria and other diseases
7. Ensure environmental sustainability
8. Develop a Global Partnership for Development

Since the Australian government committed to the MDGs, the Make Poverty History coalition has focussed on the promotion and achievement of these goals. This coalition is made up of over 60 non-government organisations based in Australia who work together to tackle global poverty. Member organisations work both through the programs they run individually and by collectively holding the Australian government accountable to its commitment of achieving the MDGs through its distribution of Official Development Assistance (ODA).

As a member of the Make Poverty History coalition, the Oaktree Foundation has had considerable involvement in the movement to promote public awareness of and political support for the MDGs. Oaktree is an aid and development organisation run entirely by volunteers under the age of 26. The Oaktree mission is “young people working together to end global poverty”. The organisation engages with the MDGs on three levels:

- Supporting education projects in developing countries around the world
- Developing dedicated and effective agents of change, through programs run in Australia
- Advocating for change by engaging with communities and political leaders

The Oaktree Foundation is focused on the education and mobilisation of young people as they are not constrained by cynicism or the societal restrictions that often limits the achievement of real change. Oaktree provides training and opportunities to empower youth to harness their idealism and passion and make real progress towards ending global poverty.

The Oaktree Foundation has been involved in a number of high profile Make Poverty History campaigns. In 2006, they led the Make Poverty History Concert in Melbourne, the largest youth-run concert in Australian history, where artists such as Bono and Pearl Jam helped spread the message to end extreme poverty. 07/07/07 was the midway point to the MDGs and this was marked by the Make Poverty History ZeroSeven Roadtrip. 700 ambassadors travelled to Sydney from across the country to speak with an audience of over 50,000 Australian. The result was the largest aid increase in Australian history, with a commitment to give 0.5% of Gross National Income in ODA by 2015.

2010 is a significant year as only five years remain until the MDGs are due to be completed. In September, the United Nations Summit in New York will review the progress made towards the MDGs, and outline the work that still needs to be done. It is an opportunity for nations, including Australia, to demonstrate their commitment to the eradication of global poverty. In anticipation of this summit, and following the success of previous campaigns, the Oaktree Foundation embarked on the Make Poverty History 2010 Roadtrip and Summit to remind the Australian people and government that “we have unfinished business”.

### **3 The Make Poverty History 2010 Roadtrip and Summit**

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The Make Poverty History 2010 Roadtrip started on the 8<sup>th</sup> of May, when 1,000 young people departed from seven capital cities on nine separate Roadtrips. These converged in Canberra, where the Make Poverty History Summit took place from the 12<sup>th</sup> - 14<sup>th</sup> of May. It was the largest youth-run campaign of its kind ever to be organised in Australia.

The 1,000 Roadtrip ambassadors came from a broad spectrum of Australia's youth population. Collectively, they represented every federal electorate in the country. High school, TAFE and university students joined together with young teachers, hospitality workers and bankers, taking a week out from their everyday lives to participate in the campaign.

Throughout the Roadtrip, these ambassadors raised awareness of the MDGs by organising events and activities in support of the key asks of the campaign, and collected signatures for the Act to End Poverty.

The Act to End Poverty is a petition that calls on the Australian Government to reaffirm its commitment to achieving the MDGs by 2015.

Ambassadors collected signatures for the petition throughout the Roadtrip and it was also able to be signed online ([www.theacttoendpoverty.com.au](http://www.theacttoendpoverty.com.au)).

#### **1 Events and activities**

##### **1 The Roadtrip**

The specific events and activities ambassadors engaged in varied across the nine Roadtrips that took place simultaneously across the country. These activities incorporated both traditional and non-traditional methods of grass-roots campaigning.

Electoral forums were hosted in Perth, Corangamite, Deakin, McEwen, Willis and Braddon, where politicians from both sides of parliament shared their views on foreign aid. The 1,000 ambassadors participating on the Roadtrip went door-knocking in a number of marginal electorates, speaking with people about the issue of extreme poverty and the role the Australian government should play in tackling it. This was coupled with campaigning in schools, universities and public spaces to raise awareness of the MDGs and gather support for the Act to End Poverty.

Flash mobs were also organised around the country with great success. A flash mob is a group of people who converge on a spot, perform an action, such as freezing or dancing, and then disperse. These were highly effective in attracting attention from both the public and the media. They also helped maintain momentum among the ambassadors over the week-long campaign.

## 2 The Summit

The Roadtrip ambassadors were joined by more young people in Canberra for the three day Make Poverty History Summit.

During the Summit, ambassadors met with 143 Members of Parliament and Senators, and spoke with them about their experience of the campaign and the importance of ending global poverty. The consultation process, hosted by the Australian Youth Forum, then gave all Summit participants the opportunity to voice their opinions on 'how Australia can show global leadership in achieving the Millennium Development Goals'. The outcomes of this discussion are detailed later in this report.

Over the course of the Summit, ambassadors also heard from the following speakers:

- Stephen Smith, Minister for Foreign Affairs
- Senator Sarah Hanson-Young
- Scott Morrison, Shadow Minister for Immigration
- Bob McMullan, Parliamentary Secretary for International Development Assistance
- Malcolm Turnbull, Member for Wentworth
- Tim Costello, CEO of World Vision Australia
- Hugh Evans, Director of the Global Poverty Project
- Jarrod McKenna, Founder of Empowering Peacemakers in Your Communities
- Marc Purcell, Executive Director of the Australian Council for International Development
- Cameron Neil, Operations Manager of the Fairtrade Association of Australia and New Zealand
- Chris Varney and Samah Hadid, 2009 and 2010 Youth Representatives to the United Nations

The Summit ended with a concert at the University of Canberra, where Blue King Brown, Evermore and Diafrix lent their support to the movement to end global poverty.

## 2 The Impact

The 1,000 young people who participated in the 9 Roadtrips made a significant impact on the communities they visited, through both the direct engagement they had with people and the media coverage they received.

This resulted in:

- Over 100,000 face-to-face interactions<sup>1</sup> between ambassadors and members of the public
- 47,091 people signing the Act to End Poverty, which was then passed as motion through both the House of Representatives and the Senate
- Coverage in every major Australian newspaper, hundreds of local newspapers, and every major television network, with a reach of 12,804,970 readers<sup>2</sup> and 4,236,322 television viewers and radio listeners<sup>3</sup>
- Millions of people reached through social media

### 1 The impact on participants

1,000 young people spent a week travelling the country on the Roadtrip. They were given the tools to talk to their peers about extreme poverty, and the opportunity to make a tangible difference through their actions. At the end of the week-long trip, they were challenged to continue taking action when they returned to their community. Many Roadtrip ambassadors have already taken up this challenge, volunteering with various organisations both in Australia and the developing world, and running programs to raise awareness of the issues around poverty in schools, universities and churches.

This impact is significant not only because of the number of participants, but also because of the wide range of backgrounds that these participants came from. Collectively, they represent every federal electorate in Australia. They also represent a wide range of occupations including students, teachers, mechanics and investment bankers, who all spent the week of the Roadtrip working together.

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<sup>1</sup> On average, ambassadors spoke to at least 20 people a day over the 5 days of the Roadtrip, through gathering signatures for the Act to End Poverty and other activities. Therefore the 1,000 ambassadors collectively had over 100,000 face-to-face conversations during the week.

<sup>2</sup> Calculated by summing the circulation figures of each newspaper. Data taken from [www.slicemedia.com](http://www.slicemedia.com)

<sup>3</sup> Calculated by summing the listeners/viewers of each station. Data taken from [www.slicemedia.com](http://www.slicemedia.com)

This breadth of representation was made possible by the financial and in-kind support the Roadtrip received from a number of sponsors. The cost to each individual was reduced to \$350, which covered all accommodation and transport, as well as most food. The support of organisations such as the Australian Youth Forum (an Australian Government initiative), the Australian National University, Monash University and the University of Canberra, enabled the distribution of a number of full and part scholarships. Full fee-paying Roadtrip participants were also able to donate towards scholarships.

The limited number of scholarships available meant that they were allocated strictly on a needs basis. Scholarship holders were extremely positive about their experience of the Roadtrip, as can be seen in the following excerpts taken from feedback they provided:

- “It helped me be a part of an adventure that has changed my life... Everything it stands for and everything we achieved was amazing.”
- “If I hadn't had the opportunity to attend I would not be as passionate or action-orientated as I am now!”
- “[The scholarship] meant that I could be educated about something I knew I wanted to be involved with, but knew very little about... I plan on helping younger aged people in understanding the need to eradicate extreme poverty.”
- “It was amazing to be given this opportunity, not only to gain so much self belief, but I now believe that I can stand up and fight towards the end of global poverty!”

### **3 Analysis of promotional activities**

The campaign was promoted through 3 main streams:

- Major print and broadcast media
- Local newspaper and radio
- Social media

These promotions started early in the year, with advertisement of applications to apply to be a Roadtrip ambassador, or to attend the Summit. During the week of the Roadtrip and Summit, the events and activities of the campaign received further significant media attention.

Coverage of the campaign appeared across hundreds of regional news outlets, but also in some significant national media. For example, the Roadtrip television commercial featured in 162 spots on Channel 9 over the month of March.

- Print media audience: 12,804,970
- Broadcast media audience: 4,236,322
- Total media reach: 17,041,292

Millions of people were also reached through social media.

- The Facebook advertising campaign gather just under 19,000,000 impressions
- The Roadtrip and Act To End Poverty Facebook pages
  - collected over 12,000 fans, 60% of whom joined during the week of the campaign
  - attracted 20,000 visits during the week May 8 to May 15

These promotions created significant exposure not only for the campaign itself, but also for the sponsors that made the Roadtrip and Summit possible.

Sponsors were also promoted internally to ambassadors, throughout the Roadtrip and Summit. At training sessions, flyers and other collateral, including AYF postcards and badges were distributed to ambassadors. Banners displaying sponsors branding were present at all events and activities during the Roadtrip. Additional promotion took place during the Summit. For example, an AYF banner was displayed on stage, behind the podium for an entire day of the summit (Friday).

## **4 Youth engagement in community activities**

Despite the fact that Australian youth are often perceived to be apathetic and unenthusiastic about engaging in community activities, over 1,500 people applied to be part of the Roadtrip, many of whom had never done anything like it before. Those selected to attend the Roadtrip demonstrated a consistently high level of engagement with both the campaign and the overall cause. There are three key reasons for this success:

- Effective use of a structured environment
- Tangible goals and outcomes

- Organised by peers

## 1 Structured environment

The structure of the Roadtrip allowed young people to participate regardless of their previous experience in the area of aid and development. While some ambassadors were seasoned campaigners, the majority had not been actively involved in this kind of work before the Roadtrip.

The three training sessions held in the weeks prior to the Roadtrip enabled ambassadors to share their knowledge and experience which ensured that all participants had a sound understanding of the issues surrounding aid and development, and the key tasks of the campaign. The events and activities run over the course of the Roadtrip were structured to enable the participation of all ambassadors and encouraged them to support each other.

The Roadtrip also provided a structured social environment for the ambassadors, since the majority of ambassadors did not know each other previously. Within each Roadtrip, ambassadors were divided into groups of up to ten people, each with a group leader. Most events and activities were carried out in these groups, which allowed group members to develop a strong support network over the course of the campaign.

## 2 Tangible goals and outcomes

From the outset, all ambassadors were given a clear idea of the goals and outcomes of the Roadtrip, through the three metrics that determined success for the campaign:

- Number of names on the Act to End Poverty – goal: 40,000
- Number of face-to-face conversations in marginal electorates – 100,000
- Number of media reads – goal: 15 million

This gave participants a clear sense of purpose as they tackled the otherwise daunting problem of global poverty. For example, the fact that the Act to End Poverty received 47,091 signatures, and was then passed in both the House of Representatives (Parliament of Australia, 2010) and the Senate (p.19, Parliament of the Commonwealth of Australia, 2010), provided the ambassadors with a tangible result for their work.

## 3 Organised by peers

The Roadtrip was organised and run entirely by volunteers under the age of 26. As a result, throughout the organisation, promotion and execution of the Roadtrip, the campaign was run on young people's

terms and in young people's language. The entire campaign was centred on young leaders appealing to other young people to become involved. The success of the Roadtrip was primarily due to the fact that people want to be part of things led by like-minded people.

This further highlighted the value of government agencies partnering with youth organisations, such as the Oaktree Foundation, to carry out projects of this kind. Youth organisations have the skills and networks to make these projects successful, and are able to effectively engage other young people in their activities because they are their peers. Meanwhile government agencies have the resources required to carry out these campaigns, however often struggle to directly engage Australian youth, who see them as being disconnected from young people's daily life.

## **5 Sponsorship**

The Roadtrip and Summit were made possible by the generous support of a number of sponsors, including:

- AusAID
- The Australian Government Australian Youth Forum
- Oxfam
- Monash University
- World Vision
- Student Housing Australia
- Tasmanian North West Coast Council

The financial and in-kind support from sponsors significantly contributed to the success of the campaign.

## 4 Australian Youth Forum

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On the final day of the Make Poverty History Summit, the Australian Youth Forum (AYF) partnered with the Oaktree Foundation to gather the opinions of participant on the issue of Australia's international aid efforts. The central question posed was: "Going into the UN Summit this September, how can Australia show global leadership in achieving the Millennium Development Goals?"

In order to develop more detailed responses, the central question was broken down into four main focus areas:

1. How can Australia ensure the effectiveness of the aid we give?
2. How can Australia show global leadership in solving world poverty?
3. What are Australia's responsibilities to our poorest neighbours in relation to climate change assistance?
4. What can young Australians do in their community, to address the issues of global poverty?

Following the Summit, young people from across the country were invited to voice their opinions on these same issues, through the platform of the AYF website.

This forum, which lasted two and a half hours, was organized by a small committee: Duncan Lockard (COO, Oaktree and AYF Steering Committee), Eleanor Webster (EA to COO, Oaktree), Eva Mackinlay (AYF Steering Committee), Tracy Feeney (Office for Youth), and Viv Benjamin (National Director of the MAKEPOVERTYHISTORY Road Trip)

### Goals of the Forum

While planning the forum, the committee developed four goals:

- Accurately represent the views of young people on the issue of global poverty
- Produce clear and concise recommendations to the Government in answer to the questions provided
- Increase awareness of the Australian Youth Forum and its work
- Help young people feel like they have a conduit to speak to a government that listens

## 1 Consultation during the Summit

The initial AYF consultation took place during the final day of the Make Poverty History Summit. The aim was to use all that the ambassadors had learnt, through their collective interaction with over 100,000 people during the week, to produce a concise set of recommendations in response to the four focus questions.

The forum was a welcome change of pace for all the participants. It was an opportunity for them to speak and be heard, after spending the greater part of the Summit listening to others. The enthusiasm with which the ambassadors participated in this process demonstrated the importance of the issue of global poverty, and the Australian government's response to it.

The consultation process was designed to allow all 1,000 participants to contribute to the final outcomes of the forum. In order to achieve this, the ambassadors were split into ten groups. Each group was assigned one of the four questions to answer. These groups then split into smaller groups of up to fifteen people, and brainstormed their responses to the focus question they had been assigned. Each group then selected their top idea and presented this to the larger group; who then voted to select the group with the best idea. The ten groups then presented the best idea they had selected to the whole Summit.

Minute-takers recorded the ideas that were voiced throughout the process. The following summary is based on these minutes, as well as the final ideas presented to the Summit.

### 1 Final ideas from each group

#### *How can Australia ensure the effectiveness of the aid we give?*

- We feel that aid should be spent predominantly through grass roots civic society organisations which encourage public participation in the region they're trying to target. These grass root organisations should be monitored by independent NGOs which strive for transparency and accountability. We also feel that this aid should chiefly target the MDGs that have not had the most success in achieving e.g. maternal health
- Australia should try to be a leader in aid but needs to keep tight alignments with the international community as to which nations receive our aid

Australia needs to engage in dialogue with developing nations to ensure that our aid caters to their needs and respects their values and cultures.

- Need to ensure that aid programs undergo careful planning and are sustainable.
- Ensure that programs are evaluated at all stages of implementation

- Ensure accountability in both developing countries and the Australian Government through top-down and bottom-up measures and ensure that the evaluation and accountability processes are independent.

### ***How can Australia show global leadership in solving world poverty?***

- Australia to take the lead in founding an international maternity health fund, modelled on the HIV/AIDS fund, announcing Australia's contribution at the G20 Summit.
- To take the lead in international discussions aimed at increasing aid effectiveness through increased co-operation between nations and specialisation on aid delivery based on the strength and expertise of the donor countries
- Establish a fair trade rating/registration system to be placed on products within Australia both non-fair trade and fair trade alike to educate consumers

Australia will take the lead by ensuring a fairer global trading system that empowers developing nations to develop on their own terms, without being hampered by currently unfair unbalanced trading rules:

- Establishing a fair trade regime for Australia's economy through taxation, labelling, marketing and regulation of fair trade and non-fair trade products
- Re-defining the role of the international financial institutions (IFIs) as a holdings fund to equalise world trade as advocated by John Maynard Keynes in 1945, helping to ensure a fairer global financial and trading system
- Taking measures to introduce financial regulation and debt auditing globally, such as introducing an international debt audit to recognise illegitimate debt in the developing world and a financial transactions tax (Robin Hood tax) to make global finance more stable and socially useful.

### ***What are Australia's responsibilities to our poorer neighbours in relation to climate change assistance?***

- Youth education for climate change, including compulsory climate change/sustainability education for all Australian students
- Youth dialogue and action for communities across Australia and the Pacific including partnerships between Australian and Pacific Island youth
- Government funding in particular for curriculum development and establishing partnerships for climate action
- We need to have a strong climate change refugee policy
- Ensure that there is legislative protection for those who have been forced from their home countries in the Pacific
- Australia needs to lead the charge in providing asylum for climate refugees

- Australia has a comparative advantage in research & development therefore we should provide a fund to incentivise private firms developing technology that is clean, cheap and sustainable so that developing countries can leap frog old and dirty forms of development.
- Establish a framework similar to the MDGs for climate change

### ***What can young Australians do in their community, to address the issue of global poverty?***

Government funding and support for the creation of youth action groups which seek to educate young people and the broader community about the complexity of the issues around poverty, perhaps through the introduction of development studies into formal curriculum

Nationwide Implementation - Educate / Empower / Equip

Within School System

- Educate students about the issue of global poverty
- Empower students by giving them ownership of the issue of global poverty and challenging them to take action within their own communities
- Equip by encouraging students to utilise their own talents and passions to address the issue of global poverty

Training

- Accessible, regular training for young corporates/interns and teachers/educators on issues of global poverty

Corporate Sector

- Mobilisation of corporate sector to utilise the workplace to address issues of global poverty and promote sustainability

Asks of the government

- Funding for packaged resources/training to facilitate educators and corporate business in the engagement of active citizenship

Change That Sticks – Advocacy campaign

- Sticker campaign to identify/visualise the real changes occurring

## **2 Consultation online**

From the 12<sup>th</sup> May to the 2<sup>nd</sup> June, 2010, young people from across Australia were also able to participate in an online consultation process through the AYF website.

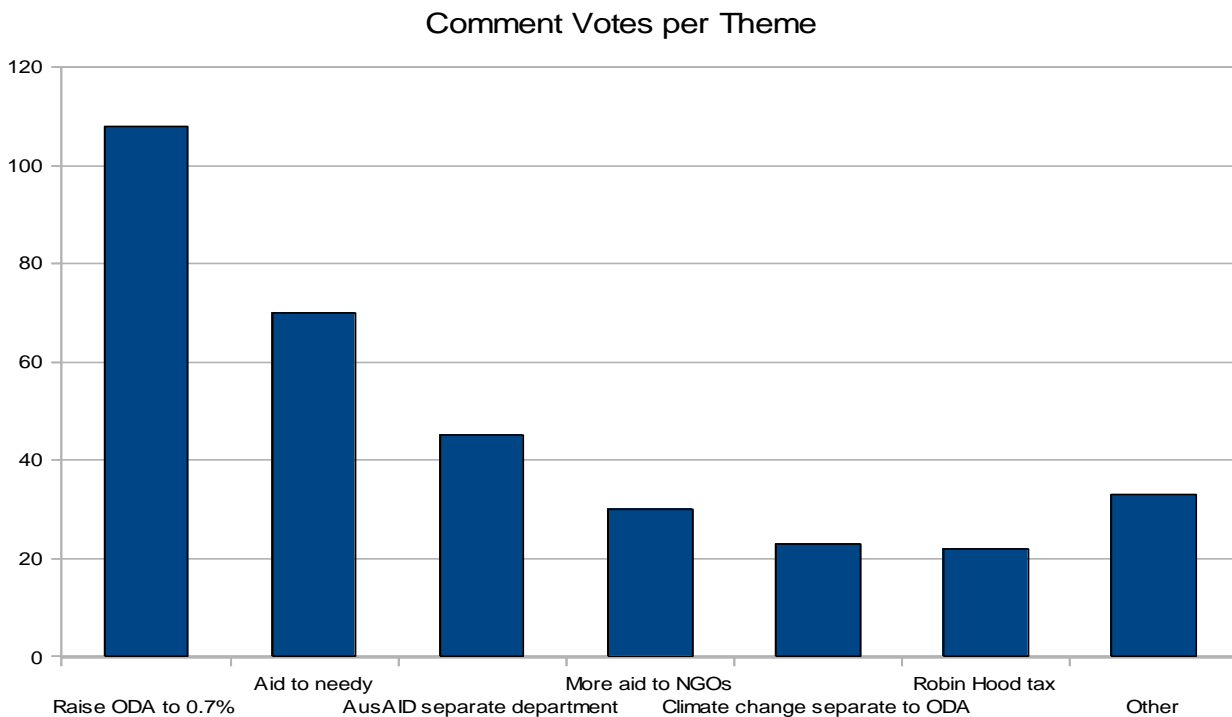
The website contained a briefing, which detailed the central theme of “Going into the UN Summit this September, how can Australia show global leadership in achieving the Millennium Development Goals?” and the same four focus questions that were used in the Summit forum. Participants could then post a comment, responding to some or all of the focus questions. They were also able to vote in support of the comments left by other participants.

During the three weeks the online consultation process was open, young people posted 32 comments in response to the focus questions, and a total of 212 votes were received in support of these comments.

Each comment typically addressed a number of the focus questions and suggested several answers to them. However, it is interesting to note that there were a few solutions common to a number of comments, including those that received the most votes:

- ODA funding needs to be increased to 0.7%
- Aid needs to be better targeted to those in need
- AusAID needs to be established as a separate department, with a cabinet-level minister for International Development
- More ODA should be delivered through NGOs
- Climate change funding needs to be separate to ODA funding
- A Robin Hood tax should be established to assist the increase in ODA funding

The popularity of these themes is illustrated below:



Note: This does not represent the number of individual votes. Individual comments typically addressed several themes. A vote for a comment was interpreted as support for all themes it addressed.

### 3 Outcomes

The results of the consultation, both online and at the Summit, indicate that there are four main ways that Australia can show global leadership in achieving the Millennium Development Goals:

- Increase ODA to 0.7% of GNI
- Ensure aid is better targeted towards those in need
- Deliver more aid through NGOs
- Establish AusAID as a separate department

#### 1 Increase Official Development Assistance to 0.7% of GNI

A theme that was reiterated throughout the Summit forum and the online consultation was the need for Australia to increase the percentage of GNI dedicated to foreign aid. Participants cited three key reasons for supporting this change:

- To uphold Australia's commitment to the MDGs
- To promote global political and economic stability
- To reflect the support of the Australian public

The youth that were consulted stressed that increasing ODA to 0.7% was required, to be “in line with numerous commitments Australia has made within the UN System, and in line with our commitments from 2002 under the Monterrey Consensus, among other international commitments.” Participants saw this increase as an integral step to achieve the MDGs by 2015. As one person indicated, “Australia is lagging a long way behind other developed nations in our commitment [to foreign aid]”. Another stated that “to renege on our word is a shameful display of disrespect to the UN, purportedly of the three pillars of the [current government's] foreign policy framework.”

A large number of participants highlighted how “poverty contributes to the formation of extremist terrorism, the flow of refugees and the trafficking of drugs in our region.” The young people generally viewed an increase in ODA as both an investment in future trading partners and a way of addressing issues such as terrorism and illegal immigration at their source. The online comment which received

the most votes stated that “the govt [sic] needs to lose this outdated idea that everyone who supports an increase in ODA is somehow jeopardising Australia's future... This false dichotomy of the economic 'us and them' has long been discredited. The govt [sic] needs to catch up.”

Finally, young people indicated that an increase in foreign aid is widely supported by the Australian public. As one participant said “I am proud that the Australian public fall second in terms of money given by the public to overseas aid NGO's... Clearly it is something that a lot of Australians care about, as they are literally giving money out of their own pocket.” Others referred to recent surveys that found that “80% of Australians support the increase [in foreign aid].”

The people consulted had a number of ideas on where the money for this increase could be sourced from. The most popular solution was the implementation of a Robin Hood tax, which would “involve charging a tiny tax of just 0.05% levied on financial speculation by investment banks and other wealthy finance institutions,” which would “make global finance more stable and socially useful.” They pointed to the international support this idea has already received from political leaders in Europe, as well as renowned economists such as Jeffrey Sachs.

## 2 Ensure aid is better targeted towards those in need

Participants identified two key ways of improving the targeting of Australian foreign aid:

- Focus on the achievement of the MDGs, particularly in the poorest countries in our region
- Separate funding for climate change assistance from funding for ODA

Contributors at the Summit and online voiced the need for Australia to “distribute aid to those who need it most – rather than based on commercial/strategic interests”. They cited the United Nations Resolution 2626, which states that “financial and technical assistance should be aimed exclusively at promoting the economic and social progress of developing countries.” In order to achieve this, many participants expressed the need for ODA to “be going directly towards projects that aim to achieve the Millennium Development Goals,” in particular those MDGs that are currently not on track to meet their targets.

In order to achieve this, funding for other causes, such as climate change assistance, needs to be separated from ODA. There was widespread consensus that climate change “is a problem we, as developed countries, have created and it is now our poorer neighbours... who are now suffering.”

However, many young people found the “fact that \$350 million<sup>4</sup> of the aid that Australia is designated to give goes to Climate Change mitigation... [rather than] to reaching the MDG's is disgraceful!” In order to better target ODA towards achieving the MDGs, “funding for these other causes... should be made additional to, rather than drawn from, the Australian aid budget.” This would be in line with international agreements on climate change financing<sup>5</sup>.

### 3 Deliver more aid through Non-Government Organisations

Many of the young people consulted were critical of the low proportion of aid that is delivered through NGOs. Currently less than 7% of ODA is delivered through NGOs (p.16, Australian Council for International Development, 2010)<sup>6</sup>. As one participant pointed out “this is significantly lower than many other donor countries such as the United States (16%) and Norway (22%).” Other methods of aid delivery, such as through bilateral and multilateral agreements with other governments, remain important. However, some contributors highlighted that “grassroots agencies can be more responsive to local needs. Improving the quality and availability of health services, for example, may be better achieved by subcontracting to alternative service providers such as NGOs rather than funding government health staff.” This also overcomes the problems associated with aid delivered directly to partner governments, who can withhold, divert or delay the funding from reaching its intended destination.

### 4 Establish AusAID as a separate government department

In order to improve the effectiveness of Australia's aid program, in the words of one participant, “it needs to detach its trade arm from its aid arm.” AusAID is currently part of the Australian Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade (DFAT), which leads to an unclear distinction between Australia's economic

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<sup>4</sup> The 2010/11 Aid Budget includes \$160m to be spent on climate change. This is part of the four multi-year measures, valued at \$350.4m (p.16, Australian Council for International Development, 2010)

<sup>5</sup> The Copenhagen Accord includes a commitment to “new and additional resources... to enable and support enhanced action on mitigation” (paragraph 8, United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change, 2009)

<sup>6</sup> The 2010/11 Aid Budget does not provide a figure for total ODA delivered through NGOs. \$135.1m of the \$4,349m total budget can be expected to be delivered through NGOs through the following areas: AusAID NGO Cooperation Program (ANCP); volunteer programs (including AYAD); development research programs; Australian Council for International Development (ACFID); NGO policy and development effectiveness; public engagement and development education.

and humanitarian interests. A number of young people suggested that appointing “a cabinet-level Minister for International Development to preside over a separate department will increase the efficiency, longevity, accountability and effectiveness of Australia's development projects.” They cited the example of the United Kingdom's Department for International Development (DfID), which has been a separate department with its own cabinet-level minister since 1997. Young people also emphasised how the establishment of DfID in the UK enabled significant improvement of the transparency and effectiveness of aid programs. As one contributor noted “the strength of a development agency within government drives aid effectiveness and success.”

## 5 Concluding comments

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This forum was a tremendous success and achieved the 4 goals that it set:

- The views of young people were communicated accurately, with this report highlighting the direct input youth gave online and throughout the Summit forum.
- A set of four clear and concise recommendations, in answer to the central question, have been made to the Australian government.
- Awareness of the Australian Youth Forum and its work has been increased, both through the consultation process and the presence of the AYF brand throughout the events and activities of the Roadtrip and Summit
- Participation in the forum has helped young people feel like they have a conduit to speak to a government that listens.

This forum built on the strengths of the AYF. Its success demonstrates that partnerships with youth-run organisations are an effective way to achieve the AYF's aspiration to engage young people.

### Young People are willing and able to engage with the government, when it is done appropriately

When the group of ambassadors were presented with the opportunity to participate in the forum, they responded extremely positively. They were very enthusiastic about the prospect of being able to speak to and be heard by the government.

The format of the forum enabled a large group of people to have their individual voices heard, while also producing quality results that were representative of the group as a whole. The small group discussions were critical in achieving this.

### Young People have something relevant to say on Development

Young people had a clear message, which was present throughout the consultation process:

- Increase ODA to 0.7% of GNI
- Ensure aid is better targeted towards those in need

- Deliver more aid through NGOs
- Establish AusAID as a separate department

This message was articulate, insightful and well-informed.

### **We need to ensure these young people continue to be heard**

The forum concluded with the group uniting around a desire to hear the response to their input. They wanted to know that their thoughts and ideas would reach key decision-makers, be considered and responses made. Closing this feedback loop is highly recommended.

## 6 References

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