



MEDIA RELEASE

To: News Editor
From: Uniting Church Synod of WA,
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Uniting Church WA calls for an increase to international aid

At its 43rd Annual Meeting of the Synod of WA, held this weekend, the Uniting Church WA agreed to call on the Federal Government to begin restoration of overseas aid cuts and commit to achieving the internationally agreed target of 0.7% Gross National Income (GNI) by 2030, beginning with a return to the top half of rich country aid donors by the end of [the](#) next parliamentary term.

After a bi-partisan commitment in the year 2000 to increasing our foreign aid contribution to 0.5% of GNI by the year 2015, Australian aid reached its highest point in the 2012–13 period (0.34% of GNI).

Since then, we have witnessed successive cuts to our aid program through the past six budgets.

This is about more than just numbers on a screen. Each time the Government chooses to spend less than they promised on Australian aid, real projects impacting real human lives are affected.

Aid cuts are cuts to initiatives such as schooling, healthcare, immunisation and clean water programs that are helping people in need build a better future.

Australians are the wealthiest people on the planet when measured by median wealth, but Australia now ranks 19th among rich country aid donors.

Despite the proportion of undernourished people being almost halved since 1990 (now under 11%) there are still 821 million people—one in nine worldwide—going hungry each year. Due to protracted conflicts and rising populations, undernourishment and severe food insecurity have been increasing.

Rev Steve Francis, Moderator of the Uniting Church WA, said that the Uniting Church has a long-standing commitment to contributing to a just and peaceful world, and to the eradication of extreme poverty.

“To love our neighbour is one of our core Christian beliefs,” he said. “Australia is not living up to this with its current international aid budget.

“Australia is among the wealthiest countries in the world, and our international aid should reflect that. So we call on the Federal Government to restore our international aid budget.”

Ends

For media enquiries and interviews, please contact Media and Communications Manager, Maggie Johns on 0419 831 576