



SENATOR THE HON BOB CARR

706-1141.
RECEIVED
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PETITIONS COMMITTEE
MINISTER FOR FOREIGN AFFAIRS
CANBERRA

The Hon John Murphy MP
Chair, Standing Committee on Petitions
PO Box 6021
Parliament House
CANBERRA ACT 2600

05 FEB 2013

Dear Chair

Thank you for your letter of September 17, 2012 regarding a petition on reducing overseas aid and stopping illegal immigrants (reference number 706/1141). I regret the delay in responding. I understand that the Minister for Immigration and Citizenship will write to you separately on the topic of illegal immigrants.

Australia's aid program is directed towards helping people overcome poverty. As well as assisting nations and individuals in need, our aid program advances our own national interests – it promotes security and stability in our region. This is important for Australia given that 22 of our 24 nearest neighbours are developing countries.

Australia's current level of overseas aid is 0.35 per cent of our Gross National Income (GNI). This equates to 35 cents for every \$100 the Government spends. Australia is committed to an aid program that is focused on achieving results for poor people and on delivering value for money for Australian taxpayers.

Through our aid program, Australia is helping to build more stable governments. We are improving law and order in Solomon Islands by building correctional facilities and supporting law and justice in rural areas. We are providing electoral assistance in Afghanistan to support free and fair elections. We are also improving access to justice systems in East Asia and the Pacific.

We also have a regional and global responsibility to help those in greatest need. There are around 1.4 billion people living in extreme poverty globally. Since 2003, AusAID has helped to reduce cases of malaria by 80 per cent in Vanuatu and by more than half in the Solomon Islands. In Papua New Guinea, 900,000 children have been immunised against measles and other diseases since 2009. Australia's support has also seen an extra 330,000 new school places in some of Indonesia's poorest areas.

Thank you for raising this matter and I trust this information is of assistance.

Yours sincerely

Bob Carr