



**CONTRIBUTING
TO A JUST AND
PEACEFUL
WORLD**



“ OUR VISION:

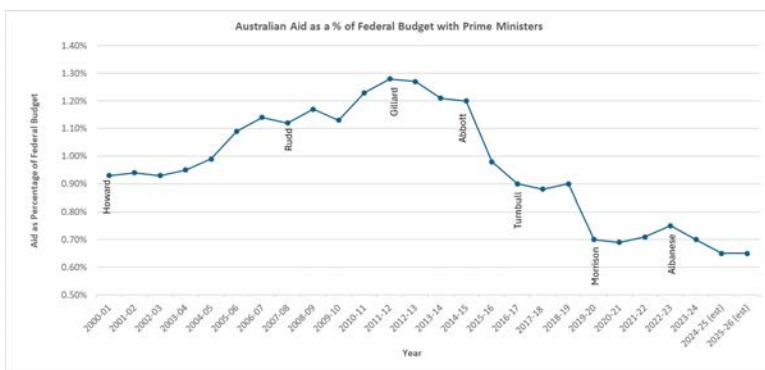
Australia acts with courage and conviction to build a just and peaceful world. We are a nation that works in partnership with other nations to dismantle the structural and historical causes of violence, injustice and inequality. Our government upholds human rights everywhere, acting in the best interests of all people and the planet.

OUR HOPES

- Australia is a good neighbour in our region and beyond, seeking the common good of people and planet alongside national interests.
- Australia upholds its international human rights obligations and uses United Nations mechanisms to strengthen human rights at home and abroad.
- Australia is a generous contributor to ending global poverty and inequality, with a timeline for increasing our international aid contribution to 1% of the Federal budget.
- Australia takes strong climate justice action, reducing emissions and funding loss and damage and climate adaptation in our neighbouring regions.
- Vulnerable people at risk of human trafficking are educated about their rights, have access to better opportunities and are protected by enforced anti-trafficking laws.
- The rights of seasonal workers in Australia are protected and local communities assist in providing pastoral care.
- Nations armed with nuclear weapons agree to destroy their stockpiles in accordance with a legally-binding, time-bound plan.
- A peacefully negotiated resolution for Israel and Palestine affirming the right for both the State of Israel and the State of Palestine to live side by side in peace and security.

THE STATE OF THE NATION & THE WORLD:

- Australia has stepped back its contributions to foreign aid.



- Australia's public spending on overseas aid has decreased to 0.65% of the Federal budget, compared to 1.3% under the Gillard government and 1.05% under the Howard government.
- In 2023, Australia ranked 26th out of the 31 OECD countries in generosity, measuring aid as a fraction of Gross National Income.
- This is in the face of increasing need: One in five children live in a conflict zone, there's been an 80% increase in humanitarian need since 2019, 700 million people live in extreme poverty.
- As of 2023, according to Forbes, Australians ranked second in the world in terms of median wealth and fifth in terms of average wealth. Australian incomes are 87 times higher on average than incomes of people in the poorest countries.
- Globally, there are many conflicts, causing thousands of lives lost and numerous people displaced, for example, the Russia-Ukraine conflict, the Israel-Palestine conflict, and internal conflicts within a nation, including but not limited to Sudan, Democratic Republic of Congo, Myanmar, and Ethiopia.

THE WITNESS FROM THE SCRIPTURE

- God's call and God's blessing is focused toward the sharing of blessing with others (Genesis 12:1–3).
- The prophet Isaiah's vision of a servant of God, which Jesus later claimed for himself, was of someone who lightens the burden of workers, breaks chains and brings freedom to the oppressed, brings good news to the poor and comforts the broken hearted (Isaiah 58: 6, 61: 1; cf. Luke 4: 18).
- Jesus teaching consistently calls for a love of all people, even enemies (Matthew 5: 43–44), and his disciples are called to be "peacemakers" (Matthew 5: 9), to the "ministry of reconciliation" (2 Corinthians 5: 18) and to pursuing peace with everyone (Hebrews 12: 14).
- The New Testament teaches that when one suffers, all suffer together (1 Corinthians 12:26), and calls us to care for others not just ourselves (Romans 12: 9–13; Philippians 2: 1–4; Galatians 6: 3).

WHAT THE UCA AFFIRMS

While the UCA has not passed specific resolutions regarding all the recent developments in the global context, they are worth noting. In the post-COVID world, we see a number of countries in which the rights and freedoms of civil society are curtailed by rising authoritarian rule. Across the nations, we see an increase in military and security considerations dominate foreign policy. We see a weakening of commitment to international law. Nonetheless, the following lists all the major resolutions passed since the inception of the UCA, which reflects where the Church stands and affirms.

The Statement to the Nation (1977)

“We pledge ourselves to seek the correction of injustices wherever they occur. We will work for the eradication of poverty and racism within our society and beyond. We affirm the rights of all people to equal opportunities. We will oppose all forms of discrimination which infringe basic rights and freedoms.”

Peace and Disarmament (1982)

The Assembly resolved to:

Acknowledge that God came in the crucified and risen Christ to make peace; that he calls all Christians to be peacemakers, to save life, to heal and to love their neighbours. The call of Christ to make peace is the norm, and the onus of proof rests on any who resort to military force as a means of solving international disputes;

Affirm that the Uniting Church is committed to be a peacemaking body, seeking to follow the Lord of the Church by encouraging political authorities to resolve political tensions by peaceful means.

Call on the members of the Uniting Church in Australia to support and engage in peacemaking programs and resist reliance on military solutions to political problems.

Overseas Aid (2015)

The Assembly resolved to:

- a. Affirm that Australian development aid, funded by the government, church and individuals, is an effective and powerful way of combating poverty and injustice throughout the world, thereby

addressing the root causes of conflict, instability, people displacement and disease.

- b. Express profound concern regarding the recent cuts that will reduce Australian government aid to the lowest levels in our history.
- c. Call on the Federal Government to:
 - i. Restore overseas aid funding cut from the 2015-16 budget; and
 - ii. Announce a credible timetable to allocate 0.7 per cent of Gross National Income to Australia's overseas aid program, commensurate with Australian's international Obligations.

Palestine

In 2015, the Assembly resolved to:

- a) Receive the requests from the Heads of Churches in Jerusalem, the Kairos Palestine movement and the World Council of Churches to act in response to the plight of the people of Palestine. The UCA has issued a number of statements in solidarity with our partner churches in response to communal and religious conflict, and political tension in the life of their societies.

In April 2024, the Assembly Standing Committee passed a resolution which:

- Condemned all atrocities and acts of brutality which make peace efforts impossible.
- Called on the Australian Government to do all it can to facilitate a just peace in the Holy Land including supporting the International Court of Justice in its measures to prevent genocide, supporting peace-making organisations and imposing targeted sanctions on Israeli settlers responsible for serious human rights abuses against Palestinians.
- Called on the Israeli Government to end extrajudicial killings and impunity for members of the Israeli security forces and settlers that murder Palestinians and to abolish the practice of detaining Palestinians without charge.

OUR ASKS

Foreign Aid

1. Scale up Australia's aid program to at least 1% of the Federal budget in next term of government.
2. Recommit Australia to the internationally agreed target of contributing 0.7 per cent of GNI to overseas aid by 2030.
3. Deliver aid in ways that strengthen democratic freedom and accountability, strengthening civil society, greater community ownership and deeper impact.
4. Support developing nations to mitigate and adapt to the impacts of climate change.
5. Contribute our fair share towards the climate loss and damage fund.

Slavery & Human Trafficking

People across our region are trapped in modern slavery and vulnerable to human trafficking

- An estimated 27.6 million men, women, and children were trapped in forced labour on any given day in 2021.
 - Far too many are being exploited to produce goods and services that people in Australia enjoy.
 - People are vulnerable to trafficking and modern slavery for a number of reasons, including lack of education and employment opportunities, discrimination and social isolation, and lack of protection by adults or social systems⁸⁷.
 - Australia has introduced a Modern Slavery Act and an Australian Anti-Slavery Commissioner, which can assist in the struggle against modern day slavery and human trafficking in the supply chains of businesses.
1. Commit to requiring businesses importing goods with high risk of modern slavery in their production

to thoroughly investigate their suppliers to adequately address the Risk.

2. Introduce a mechanism to hold goods at the border if there is strong evidence they have been produced with the involvement of modern slavery.

Global Conflicts

1. Palestine-Israel

Despite the current cease-fire agreement between Palestine and Israel, we are yet to achieve just peace. Therefore, it is paramount to support international efforts towards a just and lasting peace in Palestine and Israel.

- Ongoing Israeli attacks on Gaza since October 2023 leading to tens of thousands of deaths and potential genocide of the Palestinian people. Palestinians also continue to be held without charge in Israel.
- Violent attacks on the people of Israel by Hamas resulted in over 1,100 deaths on October 7 2023, and Israelis continue to be held in hostage situations and Israelis continue to be killed in attacks by Palestinians.
- Palestinians have suffered decades of injustice in the Occupied Palestinian Territory under Israeli occupation, in what has often been described as an 'open air prison', without proper access to power, water, health services and travel.
- Palestinian and Jewish communities around the world are facing rising discrimination and abuse as a result of this conflict. Growing polarisation has reduced the opportunities for dialogue and understanding, with increasing calls for extreme positions of no sharing of territory by people on both sides.
- Whilst Australia has taken some measures towards supporting a just and lasting peace, as at December 2024 it is yet to commit to:
 - A comprehensive national arms embargo on Israel and all other armed groups in the conflict.
 - Imposing targeted sanctions against Israeli individuals and entities involved in Israel's

illegal occupation of Gaza and the West Bank, and the attempted genocide of the Palestinian people, as per our international obligations.

- While the prospect for a permanent cease-fire is uncertain, but there are organisations of Palestinians and Israelis that work for a just and lasting peace through non-violent means.

2. West Papua-Papua (Indonesia)

Conflict in West Papua and Papua (Indonesia) has not been resolved.

- Indigenous Papuans (from the Indonesian Provinces of Papua and West Papua) are facing violence from Indonesian security forces, racial discrimination, exploitation of natural resources and environment by national and multi-national companies as well as the military.
- Christian churches in the Papuan provinces have regularly called for peace dialogues that address the political causes of the ongoing conflict.
- Due to Australia's proximity and trade ties with Indonesia, we have a responsibility to promote justice, dialogue and stronger human rights protections in our region.

1. Support local and international efforts for peace and justice in the Papuan Provinces.

2. Urge the Australian government to prioritise human rights in the Papuan Provinces in diplomatic relations with Indonesia.

3. Continue to express to the Indonesian government our concerns for Papua and call on them to support initiatives that involve peace, reconciliation and the development of an effective voice for all Papuans regarding their future.

3. Myanmar

Restore democracy and justice in Myanmar.

- In February 2021, Myanmar's military launched a coup to remove the National League for Democracy

party that was elected by popular vote².

- During the brutal ongoing civil war, more than 75,000 people have been killed, 3 million people displaced and 28,000 have been arrested by Myanmar's military.
- There is a widespread humanitarian crisis in the country, made worse by the powerful 7.7 magnitude earthquake that struck in March 2025.

Call on Australia to use all diplomatic and multilateral means available to end the trade of arms to Myanmar and pressure the military to restore democracy.

4. Ukraine

An immediate end to armed hostilities, and peace through dialogue.

- Since Russia invaded Ukraine in 2022, the peoples of Ukraine and Russia have faced immense suffering, with thousands killed, millions displaced, and cities levelled.

Nuclear Weapons

Australia has not signed on to the UN Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons.

- Nuclear weapons are unique in their destructive power and the threat they pose to the environment and human survival.
- The United Nations Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons has been signed by 86 nations and ratified by 54. It entered into force in January 2021.³ Australia has not signed on to the treaty.

Sign on and ratify the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons.

CONVERSATION STARTERS

You may like to select one or two of these questions to put to MPs or community leaders.

1. What is your party's or organisation's commitment to Australia's aid program?

2. What policies do you have to prevent human trafficking and modern slavery?
3. What can you do to support a just and peaceful resolution in Palestine and Israel?
4. Will you support Australia signing the UN Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons?
5. How can we work together to promote democracy and support local civil society groups, including churches, who are resisting authoritarian governments around the world?
6. How does or how can your local community contribute to the world beyond Australia in ways that lead to a more just, safe and peaceful world for all?

References:

1. <https://justact.org.au/wp-content/uploads/2020/10/Letter-writing-action-on-Philippines-murders-Oct-2020.pdf>
2. <https://www.bbc.com/news/world-asia-55902070>
3. <https://treaties.unoda.org/t/tpnw>



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