

An Open Letter to Prime Minister Malcolm Turnbull



“No Poverty” is the number one UN Sustainable Development Goal that the Government signed in 2015. Those goals apply globally and here in Australia.

This week is Anti-poverty Week and we are writing to you urging you to commit the Government to ending poverty here in Australia, while also doing our fair share as a good global citizen to ending poverty globally.

Domestically, the Australian Government has committed to at least halving poverty “in all its dimensions according to national definitions.” To date, no national definition of poverty has been adopted by the Government. We urge it to adopt the OECD poverty line, set at 50% of median income.

By this measure, there are an estimated 2,990,300 million people or 13.3% of the population in Australia, living below the poverty line. It is unacceptable that after 20 years of economic growth, our wealthy nation has not made real progress in reducing poverty. Of particular concern, child poverty has increased in the last decade in Australia.

We require a national plan to tackle the scourge of poverty that diminishes us all in one of the wealthiest countries in the world. The first action in this plan should be an immediate increase to the unemployment payment, which sits more than \$100 below the poverty line.

One of the world’s greatest achievements in the early 21st Century was a stunning decline in human suffering. In 1981, 44 per cent of the world’s population lived in extreme poverty and today, it is believed to be less than 10 per cent and falling. The number of children dying before their fifth birthday has halved in two decades.

Global co-operation and humanitarian aid has made a profound difference and Australians have contributed to these successes through our Australian aid efforts.

Experts agree that we can get close to eradicating extreme poverty by 2030 if countries work together. While other countries are increasing overseas aid, your Government has cut aid to the lowest it has ever been. It is time to increase aid funding to move us quickly towards our global promise of 70 cents in every \$100.

This Anti-Poverty Week, let’s convert our international commitment to reduce poverty in Australia and overseas into meaningful action.



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