

Election 2019 – International aid

WHY IS THIS AN ISSUE FOR WOMEN?

- A feminist foreign policy calls into question the budget priorities that mean that by 2021, for every dollar spent on Official Development Assistance (ODA), Australia will spend \$11 on defence and divert an additional \$3.8 billion (the equivalent of the annual aid budget) towards arms manufacturers (ACFID, IWDA & CARE, 2018).
- A feminist foreign policy puts a gender lens across recent announcements on infrastructure investment facilities, which have shifted the focus of Australia's interests in the Pacific. There are gendered implications of this policy turn, including the gendered impacts of sovereign debt and of infrastructure projects (IWDA, 2019).
- The climate change impacts of infrastructure investments also raise issues for women, who are disproportionately affected by climate-induced natural disasters. These disasters pose an increasing threat to the stability of Australia and our region, and gender is a compounding factor in vulnerability. Evidence shows that more women than men die from natural hazards, and that gender inequality in access to decision making, control over financial resources, technology and information is compounded by environmental disasters (Neumayer & Plümper, 2007).
- The impacts of trade liberalisation and globalisation on women so far demonstrate both potential and risks. Evidence shows that global trade liberalisation has exacerbated existing gender inequalities and in many cases has worsened women's economic and social status (Kabeer, 2018). Trade policies are often designed and implemented without consideration of gender issues, resulting in missed opportunities and gender inequitable outcomes, as well as inefficient and ineffective policy. For example, the negotiations of the Pacific Agreement on Closer Economic Relations (PACER) Plus trade agreement lacked transparency, and failed to adequately account for the different economic and social roles of Pacific women and men (Pacific Network on Globalisation, 2016).
- Development assistance funding and targets should support gender equality, including the funding of women's rights and feminist organisations. Research in 70 countries across four decades has found that the mobilisation of women's organisations and movements is more important for tackling violence against women and girls than a nation's income, progressive political parties, or the representation of women in politics (Htun and Weldon, 2012). Despite this, support for women's equality organisations makes up just 1.22% of Australia's aid (OECD, 2018).

ELECTION COMMITMENTS

The table below sets out how fully parties' current election commitments address NFAW recommendations: Full implementation Partial implementation No or negative response

SEE ALSO NFAW PAPERS ON **CLIMATE CHANGE AND ON ENERGY.**

NFAW RECOMMENDATION		
Fully integrate an expanded concept of security, articulated in the Pacific Island Leaders Forum Boe Declaration on Regional Security, into Australia's defence policies, including the Second National Action Plan on Women, Peace and Security.		
PARTY COMMITMENTS		
ALP	LNP	GREENS
<p>No mention of the Boe Declaration, but the ALP wants to refocus foreign policy on the Indo-Pacific region. They are committed to strengthening relationships and increasing spending on aid, but no details are available.</p> <p>The ALP has indicated that it will develop a more independent stance towards the US in response to its relationships with its regional neighbours, particularly China.</p> <p>No mention of the Second National Action Plan (NAP) on Women Peace and Security.</p>	<p>While it is welcome to see the Boe Declaration referenced in the Foreign Minister's foreword to the Australian Aid Budget Summary, it is not reflected in the Department of Defence Portfolio budget statement. This document notes new initiatives for the Defence Cooperation Program as part of the Pacific Step-Up, but does not characterise these efforts in human security terms in line with the Boe Declaration.</p> <p>The Second National Action Plan (NAP) on Women Peace and Security is due to be finalised in mid-2019, but no funding or information on the NAP is provided in the budget papers. It is expected that the departments involved will fund activities associated with the NAP out of their budgets, with no centralised allocation of funding.</p>	<p>Greens policy does not mention the Boe Declaration on Regional Security; however, they are committed to Australia's role as a regional leader and believe that we should be preparing our defence force to provide humanitarian support in Asia Pacific region. In addition, they would increase Australia's aid and development budget to 0.7% of Gross National Income by 2030, establish an independent development oversight agency and reinstate the Ministerial position for International Development and the Pacific.</p> <p>The Greens believe Australia's foreign policy should be based on dialogue, diplomacy and co-operation, not aggression. They call for a renegotiation of the US alliance, which they describe as 'increasingly unstable'. The decision to go to war would be removed from the Prime Minister and vested in the parliament.</p>
NFAW RECOMMENDATION		
Adhere to commitments under international law in relation to arms control, particularly the widely-ratified Arms Trade Treaty, strengthen transparency in relation to supply of assets; suspend and/or ban the supply, export or transfer of assets and military assistance and/or training where there is an overriding risk that such assets or parties may be used to commit or facilitate violations of international humanitarian law international human rights law or other serious crimes against civilians, including children.		
PARTY COMMITMENTS		
ALP	LNP	GREENS
		The Greens policy states that they will immediately abolish the Defence Export Facility and introduce legislation that prohibits

		<p>Australia from exporting weapons to countries known to be human rights abusers.</p> <p>They commit to signing and ratifying the Nuclear Weapons Ban Treaty and ensuring that Australia contributes a fair share to foreign aid and limiting Australia's role as a global arms dealer.</p>
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NFAW RECOMMENDATION

Ensure that gender equality analysis and issues of climate change are integrated into the new Australian Infrastructure Financing Facility for the Pacific, including in the management of the new facility, determination of priorities, and the gender dimensions of sovereign debt, and infrastructure projects.

PARTY COMMITMENTS

ALP	LNP	GREENS
	<p>Responding to concerns raised by the aid sector, the Foreign Minister's foreword to the Aid Budget Summary states that "The Facility will assist Australia to work with partner governments and the private sector to address critical infrastructure gaps while avoiding unsustainable debt. The \$2 billion facility, of which \$500 million will be in grants, will focus on telecommunications, energy, transport and water and incorporate cross cutting issues that include climate change and gender." This commitment is welcome; however it remains to be seen how it will be operationalised in the design of the AIFFP.</p>	

NFAW RECOMMENDATION

Commit to funding and implementing the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change's Gender Action Plan.

PARTY COMMITMENTS

ALP	LNP	GREENS
	<p>Australia has not committed to funding the UNFCCC Gender Action Plan. Additionally, the Government made its last payment to the Green Climate Fund in 2019 and has stated it will not commit further funding in the 2020 replenishment round.</p>	

NFAW RECOMMENDATION

Undertake routine gender analysis in formulating trade policy by, for example, integrating a gender and trade chapter into the EU-Australia Free Trade Agreement.

PARTY COMMITMENTS

ALP	LNP	GREENS

NFAW RECOMMENDATION		
Maintain a commitment that at least 80% of Australia’s overseas development investments, regardless of their objectives, will address gender issues in their implementation.		
PARTY COMMITMENTS		
ALP	LNP	GREENS
<p>No specific target is mentioned but the Labor Party is committed to expanding Australia’s international development program and increasing Development Assistance as a percentage of GNI every year, starting with their first budget.</p> <p>No details are provided, but the ALP commits to development assistance programs that will increase women and girls’ access to political, economic and social opportunities across the world as well as promoting human rights and good governance.</p>	<p>The 80% target still stands as part of the aid performance framework. However progress towards the target has been disappointing. Data released alongside the federal budget indicates progress is going backwards, and now stands at 75%, down from 77% the previous year. It will be critical to adequately resource gender equality capability within the department in order to meet the target in future years.</p>	<p>No specific target is mentioned, but the Greens are committed to ensuring that Australia’s aid program is specifically designed to raise the status of women globally through a suite of measures. These include setting funding and performance targets for gender equality investments in our aid program, setting stand-alone funding targets for women’s rights organisations, increasing funding for sexual and reproductive health rights, developing an adolescent girls action plan. The Greens would require the Minister for Foreign Affairs to present an annual gender equality report to parliament.</p>
NFAW RECOMMENDATION		
Introduce new expenditure targets for principle and significant investment for gender equality alongside strengthened funding for women’s rights organisations and closing the gender data gap.		
PARTY COMMITMENTS		
ALP	LNP	GREENS
		<p>The Greens are committed to ensuring that our aid program is specifically designed to raise the status of women globally. They support a suite of measures aimed at achieving global gender equality, including setting funding and performance targets for gender equality investments in our aid program, setting stand-alone funding targets for women’s rights organisations, increasing Australia’s funding for sexual and reproductive health rights, developing an adolescent girls action plan and requiring the Minister for Foreign Affairs to present an annual gender equality report to Parliament. No expenditure targets are included.</p>

OTHER ELECTION COMMITMENTS		
Commitment	Party	Comments
Labor will help developing countries claw back cash from tax avoiders, by supporting a tax compliance program that returns \$100 in revenue for every \$1 invested. Labor will provide \$5 million a year to Tax Inspectors Without Borders, with a portion of that funding assisting the Australian Tax Office to send tax experts to developing countries who request our help.	ALP	Endorsed.
	Choose an item.	
	Choose an item.	

Authorised by Kate Gunn, Sydney.