

Abbott on Australia's modest aid cuts

by Jonathan Pryke
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Tony Abbott has defended the cuts to Australian aid as “modest”. Asked at a joint press conference with Vietnamese Prime Minister Nguyen Tan Dung about his Government's aid cuts, Mr Abbott **responded**:

Yes, there have been some modest reductions coming up in Australia's aid budget... Our aid budget has been growing very strongly in recent years and we think it's important to pause it and scale it back a bit, before it then starts to grow again in a few years time.

In fact, as readers of this blog will know, the cuts are far from modest. To the contrary, they are the **largest multi-year aid cuts ever**: adjusting for inflation, the aid budget will be 33% smaller in 2016-17 than it was in the last year before the current government came to power, 2012-13. And the 2015-16 cuts of 20% are the largest aid cuts in a single year. As for aid starting to grow again, all the forward estimates show is a small increase in 2017-18 in line with inflation.

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