

Australian aid a tiny dancer compared to UK effort: Elton John

By Ashlee Betteridge
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In an [op-ed for *The Australian* today](#) [paywalled] on World AIDS Day, Sir Elton John writes on the progress that has been made in the fight against HIV/AIDS, and the need for continued support. He also took the opportunity to highlight how Australian and UK aid efforts are on “quite different” paths.

The entertainer and long-time AIDS advocate (who has his [own foundation](#) to raise funds for the cause) criticised the cuts to the Australian aid budget ahead of his tour down under.

The British government recently legislated to maintain its aid investment at the UN recommended level of 0.7 per cent of gross national income.

In contrast, Australia aid spending is set to reach 0.22 per cent next year. This will be the lowest level ever of Australian aid although we are more hopeful with the new Malcolm Turnbull-led government, which has already made some positive changes. They include appointing Steve Ciobo as Australia’s Minister for International Development and the Pacific, and helping to lead the region to rid the Asia-Pacific of malaria by 2030 in the recent commitment of \$18 million to a new Regional Malaria and Other Communicable Disease Threats Trust Fund.

Still, this isn’t the Australia that I know. It’s the lucky country, not just because of its unsurpassable beauty but because it’s filled with people who look out for their neighbours, no matter what.

He went on to argue that Australia should increase its contribution to the Global Fund, which will begin raising funds for its next replenishment next year, and called on Australians “to make your concern for your future and the future of your region known. To stand up for the great work done in your name through Australian aid. To raise your voice, and make sure that your leaders know that Australian aid is part of what makes your country so great.”

Elton John is not the only famous musician to have a go at Australia’s increasingly dismal aid effort—Bob Geldof criticised it during his visit [last year](#).

About the author/s

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Ashlee Betteridge was the Manager of the Development Policy Centre until April 2021. She was previously a Research Officer at the centre from 2013-2017. A former journalist, she holds a Master of Public Policy (Development Policy) from ANU and has development experience in Indonesia and Timor-Leste. She now has her own consultancy, Better Things Consulting, and works across several large projects with managing contractors.

Link: <https://devpolicy.org/australian-aid-a-tiny-dancer-compared-to-uk-effort-elton-john-20151201/>

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