

Canberra is not closed: ten reasons to go to #AAC2020

by Stephen Howes and Anthea Mulakala

5 February 2020



Audience members at the 2019 Australasian AID Conference

There are less than two weeks to the [2020 Australasian AID Conference](#) (Monday 17 February – Wednesday 19 February). Here are our ten reasons not to miss [#AAC2020](#), held every February since 2014, and co-hosted by the [ANU Development Policy Centre](#) and [The Asia Foundation](#).

1. **Canberra is not closed.** Yes, we've had a bad summer with fire, hail and smoke, but the smoke is reducing, the weather is improving, and the conference is in a modern, air-conditioned building.
2. **Lant Pritchett.** Lant is one of the megastars of the development intelligentsia. He'll be headlining our pre-conference events with his Monday 17 February 5pm keynote address on "Good intentions, great policies, crappy outcomes: the difficult dynamics of deals". Stronger (often aid-funded) rules and regulations sound good, but Lant argues that they can actually make things worse. We're also looking forward to hearing Lant take on Andrew Leigh and Jo Puri in our "Debating RCTs" session. Did randomised control trials deserve the Nobel Prize? Are they revolutionising development, or missing the point?
3. **Radhika Coomaraswamy on women, peace, and security.** Our opening morning keynote speaker. An eminent Sri Lankan lawyer, diplomat and human rights advocate, Dr Coomaraswamy, former UN Under Secretary General and current Special Representative for Children and Armed Conflict, is one of the world's leading experts on women, peace, and security, and will set out a forward-looking agenda.
4. **Jonathan Glennie on the future of aid.** Does aid have a future, and if so, what does it look like? No one has thought about this as much as author Jonathan Glennie, our third keynote speaker, who will set out a new approach to aid, and argue for five paradigm shifts.
5. **The latest on Australian aid.** This year's conference has a strong focus on Australian aid – and appropriately so, given the [new international development policy](#) now being prepared. We have sessions on Australian aid to PNG, and another on Australian aid to Indonesia – so that's the two biggest Australian aid programs covered. We also have two panels on Australian aid, the national interest and foreign policy. The 2019 Australian aid transparency audit will be released, and there'll be lots on aid effectiveness of course.
6. **Beyond aid.** It's not just an aid conference, but aid and international development. There are heaps of [sessions](#) on labour mobility, food security, climate change, men's attitudes to violence against women, civil society in Asia, public-private partnerships, and more from the frontiers of development policy.
7. **Indonesia and the Pacific.** We have sessions on what Indonesia can teach the world about anti-poverty programs, and on what the Pacific can teach the world about working with men and boys to end violence

against women. There are also sessions on learning reforms and challenges in both Indonesia and the Pacific.

8. **Four book launches.** The AAC has become the place to get your book or report launched, in the pre-conference launch session (this year, Monday 17 February). We have four launches: “Where is the money for women and girls in the Pacific?”, “The Asia Girls’ Leadership Index”, “Pacific perspectives on the world” and “Priorities for Australia’s humanitarian action”.
9. **58 panels and 220 presenters.** We truly have something for everyone, from disability inclusion to technological innovation, from impact investing to aid evaluation. Interested in increasing the diversity of Australian aid professionals? Or in workplace gender equality here and abroad? Social and indigenous procurement? Child-focused aid? Adaptive programming? Development leadership? Identity? WASH? Law and governance? Peacebuilding? The global learning crisis? Regional health security – what could be more topical? The list goes on, and our apologies to anyone we’ve omitted. Check out the full program [here](#).
10. **Networking, and drinks.** We would mention the [Mitchell Humanitarian Award](#) and the celebration of our 2019 aid profiles at our annual conference dinner. Unfortunately, the dinner is already sold out. But, even if you’ve missed out on the dinner, you can still join us for drinks – twice – on Monday and Wednesday, late afternoon. Which is the final reason to come – [#AAC2020](#) is the region’s premier opportunity for networking in the international development space.

So don’t miss it. Register [here](#). Then [download](#) the conference app.

Stephen Howes from the Development Policy Centre and Anthea Mulakala from The Asia Foundation are two of the conveners of the [2020 Australasian Aid Conference](#).

Author/s:

Stephen Howes

Stephen Howes is Director of the Development Policy Centre and Professor of Economics at the Crawford School of Public Policy at The Australian National University.

Anthea Mulakala

Anthea Mulakala is the Senior Director for International Development Cooperation at The Asia Foundation.

Link: <https://devpolicy.org/canberra-is-not-closed-ten-reasons-to-go-to-aac2020-20200205/>