

NGOs accuse Coalition of plotting to break pre-election promise

By Ashlee Betteridge
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The executive director of Australia's peak body for international development NGOs has spoken out in the media this week on concerns that the government is planning to break its pre-election commitment to direct more aid through NGOs.

ACFID's Marc Purcell [told Guardian Australia](#) that fears about cuts began in November when the government asked ten large NGOs, including World Vision, Oxfam and the Fred Hollows foundation, to "hold off" invoicing for their funding. Purcell also spoke to [Radio National's AM](#) on the topic, noting a lack of response from DFAT or the minister on questions from the sector.

Just two days before the election, during the Coalition's costings launch, Treasurer Joe Hockey [emphasised](#) his government's intention to "re-prioritise foreign aid allocations towards non-government organisations that deliver on-the-ground support for those most in need". But was this just a cynical statement to try to quieten public backlash from the sector to aid cuts before election day or an actual policy promise?

If ACFID members' concerns aren't warranted, the fastest way for the government to clear the air would be to release details of where the planned current year aid cuts will fall—we are now more than halfway through the financial year and no details have been released, with [December's MYEFO giving away nothing](#). Unless they know more than we do, this indecision must surely be crippling the ability of aid staff in DFAT to make decisions—and slow decisionmaking was already [highlighted as a problem for aid effectiveness](#) by the results from our Australian aid stakeholder survey.

About the author/s

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