

## The rapid UK Haiyan review: could Australia do the same?

By Ashlee Betteridge

18 March 2014

The UK's Independent Commission for Aid Impact (ICAI) this month [released a review](#) of DFID's response to the Typhoon Haiyan disaster in the Philippines, praising the quick steps taken while outlining the challenges ahead for the agency in assisting the country in its recovery.

The report appears to be a valuable document for preparing for future humanitarian responses, and reading it brings a few points to mind.

First, it is quite astonishing that ICAI has done a report on the Haiyan response already, considering the disaster only took place in mid-November.

Imagine having that kind of speedy public reporting and review here in Australia.

Why has the Australian aid program shied away from rapid reviews? They appear to serve a valuable purpose in informing aid and humanitarian decision-making and improving practice, as well as providing a resource for the public to find out what their aid dollars are doing on the ground. [According to ODE's website](#), it undertook two pieces of rapid analysis in 2008, and then there have been none since. Perhaps it is time for a rapid review revival.

It is also somewhat jealousy-inducing that ICAI reports to Parliament on both the achievements and flops of UK aid through the International Development Committee. Now that [we have a foreign affairs and aid subcommittee](#) in Australia, will it be reviewing ODE and other aid program evaluative outputs, [as suggested in our policy brief](#)? Rapid reviews with a feedback channel direct to Parliament could have potential to further boost political leadership and knowledge on aid.

And on a different note, as [The Guardian summarises](#), "unlike other militaries, the UK put its armed forces under the explicit direction of DFID, winning praise from other agencies on Britain's effective use of military assets." From the review, it sounds like the UK response took some new steps forward on whole-of-government and humanitarian coordination. It would be very interesting to see how the Australian response compared on this front.

Greg Sheridan [recently noted](#) that Foreign Minister Julie Bishop "was impressed with how quickly and effectively the British deployed their military for disaster relief in the Philippines". We should also be impressed at how efficiently their independent aid watchdog

has reviewed it.

## About the author/s

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Link: <https://devpolicy.org/the-rapid-uk-haiyan-response-review-could-australia-do-the-same-20140318/>

Date downloaded: 26 June 2022



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