

0.5 is the new 0.7 for Labor

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The Australian Labor Party (ALP) is currently consulting on its next National Platform, and the [draft platform](#) [pdf], while obviously still open to change, provides us some insights on the ALP's possible stance on aid in the lead up to the next election.

The draft platform (skip to page 209 to find the aid part) says that Labor “believes the fundamental purpose of Australian aid is to reduce inequality and help people lift themselves out of poverty” and that “[w]e will focus our effort on addressing the intractable problems facing developing countries that require global leadership and action and in areas where Australian resources can most effectively and efficiently be deployed to make a difference”.

There is a statement of support for the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), a commitment to education, governance and gender empowerment, a call to rebuild the expertise in the aid program (something Tanya Plibersek has [said before](#)—a standalone aid agency continues to look unlikely) and “appropriate attention” for food security, water and sanitation, climate change and disability-inclusive development.

The [Pacific Partnerships for Development](#), which were signed under Labor (the current government is moving towards aid investment plans), also get a positive mention.

Perhaps most interestingly, the draft hints at the potential new volume commitment... not that it is a particularly firm one.

“Labor is committed to growing the Australian aid program and increasing Official Development Assistance to internationally accepted levels. We believe Australia should do its fair share internationally, and work with the international community to achieve the longstanding funding targets which are reiterated by the SDGs. Labor will, over time, achieve a funding target for the aid program of at least 0.5 per cent of Gross National Income.”

It's worth noting that the current [Labor National Platform](#) [pdf] mentioned the now-mythical 0.7 per cent target.

“Labor is committed to increasing Overseas Development Assistance to 0.5 per cent of Gross National Income by 2015. This would bring Australia to the OECD average for the relative size of our aid program. Beyond 2015–16, as economic and fiscal conditions permit, Labor has an aspirational goal of raising aid to 0.7 per cent of GNI. This is a long-standing policy adopted by Australian governments since 1970.”

Labor is [accepting submissions](#) on the platform until 29 May.