

NGOs call for more aid... for NGOs

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Australia's peak council for non-government international aid and development organisations [has released](#) its policy proposals for the Australian aid program ahead of the September 7 election.

ACFID puts forward some 20 policies across a range of areas, but its press release focuses on support for increasing total aid to 0.5% of GNI, and providing more aid for Australian NGOs. ACFID calls for funding for the AusAID-NGO Cooperation Program (ANCP) to increase from two per cent of ODA to eight per cent. If you are unfamiliar with the ANCP and how it works, my colleagues Jonathan Pryke and Robin Davies [recently wrote on it](#).

Such an increase would continue the rapid growth ANCP has experienced since the scale-up of Australian aid started in 2005-06. Then ANCP totalled \$26 million. Today it is \$141 million. Further increasing the ANCP to 8% of a growing aid budget would imply a program of support for Australian development NGOs in excess of \$600 million.

The proposal also calls for increases in a number of other areas:

- Doubling the number of volunteer placements to 2,000 a year. Problems with the existing volunteer program have been highlighted recently by [Stephen Howes](#) and [myself](#), and an Office of Development Effectiveness evaluation into the volunteer program is currently underway.
- A doubling of support for food security.
- Scaling-up of funding for disability prevention, treatment and inclusion in Australia's aid program.
- Increasing links between Australian medical and health research organisations and institutions in neighbouring countries.
- More funding for humanitarian response, and more of that (at least 25%) to go directly to NGOs.

ACFID also advocates for a Cabinet Minister for aid, less red tape for NGOs, and benchmarks for the aid program. It wants the Office of Development Effectiveness to report directly to the Minister – on the grounds that that will make it independent, though arguably it is independence from the Minister that is required if we want “a real watchdog for Australian aid.”