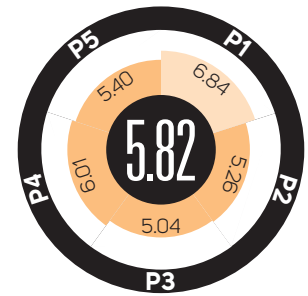


AUSTRALIA

HRI 2011
Ranking
10th



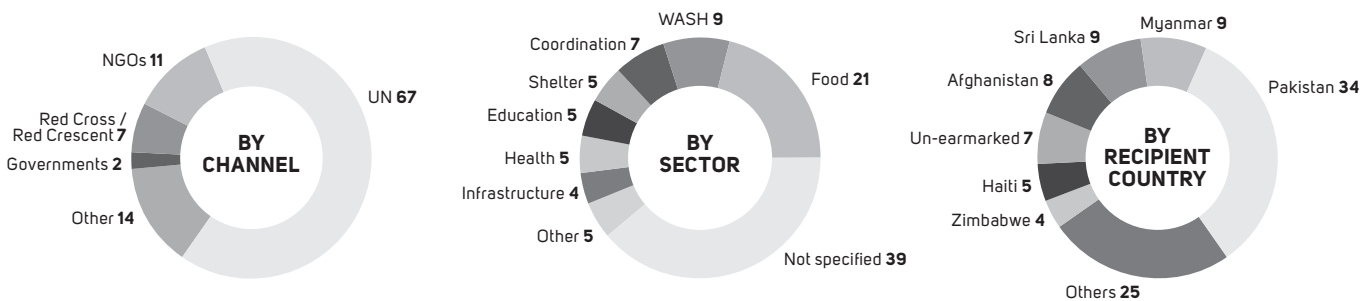
Group **3**
ASPIRING
ACTORS

OFFICIAL
DEVELOPMENT
ASSISTANCE **0.32%**
of GNI

HUMANITARIAN
AID **10.9%**
of ODA

US \$19
Per person

HUMANITARIAN AID DISTRIBUTION (%)



GENDER RATING

POLICY

FUNDING

FIELD PERCEPTION

STRENGTHS

Pillar	Type	Indicator	Score	% above OECD/DAC average
2	QT	Funding reconstruction and prevention	9.03	+101.5%
5	QT	Participating in accountability initiatives	7.78	+73.8%
4	QT	Refugee law	7.96	+41.6%
4	QL	Funding protection of civilians	8.08	+18.9%

AREAS FOR IMPROVEMENT

Pillar	Type	Indicator	Score	% below OECD/DAC average
4	QL	Advocacy towards local authorities	4.00	-28.1%
5	QL	Implementing evaluation recommendations	3.23	-24.7%
1	QL	Adapting to changing needs	4.74	-24.4%
1	QT	Funding vulnerable and forgotten emergencies	5.41	-21.6%
2	QL	Beneficiary participation	3.78	-21.3%

OVERALL PERFORMANCE

Australia ranked 10th in the HRI 2011, improving three positions from 2010. Based on the patterns of its scores, Australia is classified as a Group 3 donor, "Aspiring Actors". Donors in this group tend to have more limited capacity to engage with the humanitarian system at the field level, but often aspire to take on a greater role in the sector. They generally focus on a few core strengths, such as in the area of prevention, preparedness and risk reduction, or on specific geographic regions. Other donors in the group include Belgium, Germany, Ireland, Italy, Japan, Luxembourg and Spain.

Australia's overall score was below the OECD/DAC average, yet above the Group 3 average. Australia scored above the OECD/DAC and Group 3 average in most pillars, with the exception of Pillars 1 and 3 (Working with

humanitarian partners). In Pillar 1, Australia scored below both the OECD/DAC and Group 3 averages and in Pillar 3, Australia received its lowest score - below the OECD/DAC average, yet above the Group 3 average.

Australia did best compared to its OECD/DAC peers in indicators on *Funding reconstruction and prevention*, *Participating in accountability initiatives*, *Refugee law*, and *Funding protection of civilians*. With the exception of the latter, Australia's relative strengths are concentrated in quantitative indicators. Its scores were relatively the lowest in the indicators on *Advocacy towards local authorities*, *Implementing evaluation recommendations*, *Adapting to changing needs*, *Funding vulnerable and forgotten emergencies* and *Beneficiary participation* - all qualitative indicators except for *Funding vulnerable and forgotten emergencies*.

AID DISTRIBUTION

In 2010, Official Development Assistance (ODA) represented 0.32% of Australia's Gross National Income (GNI), with 10.59% of ODA allocated to humanitarian aid, or 0.034% of its GNI. According to data reported to the United Nations (UN) Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs' (OCHA) Financial Tracking Service (FTS), in 2010, Australia channelled 67.2% of its humanitarian assistance to UN agencies, 6.5% to the Red Cross/Red Crescent Movement, 10.7% to NGOs and 1.9% bilaterally to affected governments. In 2010, the Australian Agency for International Development (AusAID) provided humanitarian assistance to 21 emergencies in Asia, ten in Africa, four in the Americas

and two in Oceania (OCHA FTS 2011). The 2005 Humanitarian Action Policy affirmed Australia's intention to focus aid "primarily...on the Asia-Pacific region." It has also played a significant lead role in spearheading humanitarian relief efforts with France and New Zealand in the South Pacific. Recently, AusAID has begun to increase its development and humanitarian assistance to other regions of the developing world and has announced its intention to scale up development and humanitarian relief efforts in the Middle East and Africa, particularly in Sudan, South Sudan, the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) and the Horn of Africa in the coming years (AusAID 2011c).

POLICY FRAMEWORK

The Australian Agency for International Development (AusAID), an autonomous body within the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade (DFAT), manages Australia's humanitarian aid. In 2010, AusAID was established as an Executive Agency directly accountable to the Minister of Foreign Affairs (Australian Government 2011). AusAID's Corporate, Humanitarian and International Group now encompasses four divisions, including the Africa, West Asia and Humanitarian Division (AusAID 2011a). AusAID has strengthened its base in Canberra, while further expanding the role for its overseas offices and offshore programme management (AusAID 2009a). AusAID also cooperates with other areas of the government when mobilising responses to humanitarian emergencies, in particular with the Australian Defence Force. In 2011, Australia established the Australian Civilian Corps for the deployment of Australian specialists to countries affected by natural disaster and conflict to facilitate recovery and longer-term rehabilitation efforts (AusAID 2011c).

The 2005 *Humanitarian Action Policy* governs Australia's humanitarian assistance, blending

humanitarian action with development, conflict prevention, peace-building and post-conflict reconstruction goals and is complementary to Australia's 2002 *Peace, Conflict and Development Policy*. The *Humanitarian Action Policy* is rooted in a *Good Humanitarian Donorship (GHD) Principles* and explicitly references them multiple times. A new policy is currently being developed and is due for release at the end of 2011.

The 2011 *Independent Review of Aid Effectiveness* called for the development of a comprehensive policy statement and the articulation of multiple year strategies (AusAID 2011c). AusAID responded to this review by producing *An Effective Aid Program for Australia: Making a Real Difference—Delivering Real Results*. In recent years, AusAID has focused on incorporating disaster risk reduction (DRR) efforts into its development programmes, publishing *Integrating Disaster Risk Reduction, Climate Change and Environmental Considerations in AusAID Programs* (AusAID 2010b) and *Investing in a Safer Future: A Disaster Risk Reduction Policy for the Australian Aid Program* (AusAID 2009b).

HOW DOES AUSTRALIA'S POLICY ADDRESS GHD CONCEPTS?

GENDER

AusAID's 2005 *Humanitarian Action Policy* describes the need to incorporate gender considerations into all stages of humanitarian action, taking into account the different effects of crises on women, and to ensure female participation in activities (AusAID 2005). AusAID has also declared gender equality and female empowerment to be an overarching goal of its aid programme at all levels of activities. The 2007 publication, *Gender Equality in Australia's Aid Program*, insists on preserving gender perspectives, especially in crisis situations and DRR efforts, and seeks to promote equal participation of women in decision-making roles in conflict situations (AusAID 2010c). AusAID has also reaffirmed its commitment to promoting gender equality in all programmes in *An Effective Aid Program for Australia*, and has declared its intention to collaborate with multilateral agencies and NGOs to implement gender sensitive policies (AusAID 2011c and AusAID 2011f). In recognition of women's increased vulnerability in humanitarian crises, Australia helped fund the production of the *2010 Inter-agency Field Manual on Reproductive Health in Humanitarian Settings*. Australia has supported programmes related to maternal health care and protecting women from exploitation during crises; for example, it supports SPRINT, a programme to provide sexual and reproductive health services to women in crisis situations (AusAID 2011f). Furthermore, Australia has supported GenCap to support the deployment of gender experts to humanitarian crises, as well as training for peacekeepers on prevention and response to sexual violence.

PILLAR 1

RESPONDING TO NEEDS

AusAID's 2005 *Humanitarian Action Policy* upholds the importance of neutral, impartial and independent humanitarian aid and sets forth plans to allocate funding in proportion to needs and on the basis of needs assessments, according to the changing situations in humanitarian crises (AusAID 2005). AusAID also pledges to provide support based on the scale of the disaster and to mobilise resources rapidly (AusAID 2005). Australia has standby funding arrangements with NGOs, in which funding can be requested through simplified, fast-track procedures during crises (AusAID 2011e). AusAID has also announced its intention to deliver "faster, more effective responses" as the frequency and intensity of humanitarian crises continue to increase (AusAID 2011c).

PILLAR 2

PREVENTION, RISK REDUCTION AND RECOVERY

Australia's humanitarian action also includes capacity building, vulnerability reduction and the promotion of disaster and emergency prevention and preparedness measures (AusAID 2005). AusAID articulated its commitment to supporting implementation of the *Hyogo Framework for Action* in the 2009 document *Investing in a Safer Future: A Disaster Risk Reduction Policy for the Australian Aid Program* to be applied in conjunction with existing policies to integrate disaster risk reduction (DRR) efforts into responses to crises and disease outbreaks (AusAID 2009b). A progress report and the 2010 publication of *Integrating Disaster Risk Reduction, Climate Change and Environmental Considerations in AusAID Programs* have followed (AusAid 2010b). AusAID also recognises the crucial nature of DRR and the importance of engaging local communities (AusAID 2005). More recently in *An Effective Aid Program for Australia*, AusAID declared its intention to increase its focus on DRR and disaster preparedness, including measures to anticipate natural disasters. The *Peace, Conflict and Development Policy* also outlines AusAID's commitment to conflict prevention and peace-building (AusAID 2002). Australia's 2005 *Humanitarian Action Policy* stresses the importance of beneficiary participation in all programme stages and describes its commitment to facilitate the transition between relief and development (AusAID 2011). Australia recently established the Civilian Corps with the *Australian Civilian Corps Act 2011*, and part of their mission is to "provide a bridge between emergency response measures and long-term development programs," (DFAT 2011).

PILLAR 3

WORKING WITH HUMANITARIAN PARTNERS

AusAID stresses the importance of cooperation with humanitarian partners in its *Humanitarian Action Policy*. The policy highlights the usefulness of partnering with NGOs for rapid and flexible emergency responses and plans to support both local and Australian NGOs. Australia holds a leading role in a number of partnerships established for coordinating responses to natural disasters in this region, e.g. the France, Australia and New Zealand (FRANZ) agreement (AusAID 2005) and *Talisman Sabre* with the US (Department of Defence 2011). AusAID also promotes flexible responses by establishing longer-term funding arrangements with humanitarian agencies for better planning and responsiveness to emergencies and recognises the importance of untying aid to improving effectiveness and efficiency (AusAID 2006). In *An Effective Aid Program for Australia*, AusAID asserts its commitment to supporting partnerships with governments, NGOs, UN agencies and the Red Cross/Red Crescent Movement.

PILLAR 4

PROTECTION AND INTERNATIONAL LAW

Australia's 2005 *Humanitarian Action Policy* expresses a clear commitment to meeting the protection needs of vulnerable people and promoting international humanitarian law, human rights law and refugee law. It pledges to advocate for humanitarian agencies' access to displaced populations and outlines plans for meeting the safety requirements of humanitarian workers. The policy affirms Australia's support for the *Good Humanitarian Donorship Principles* and commits to actively supporting the development of international standards (AusAID 2005).

PILLAR 5

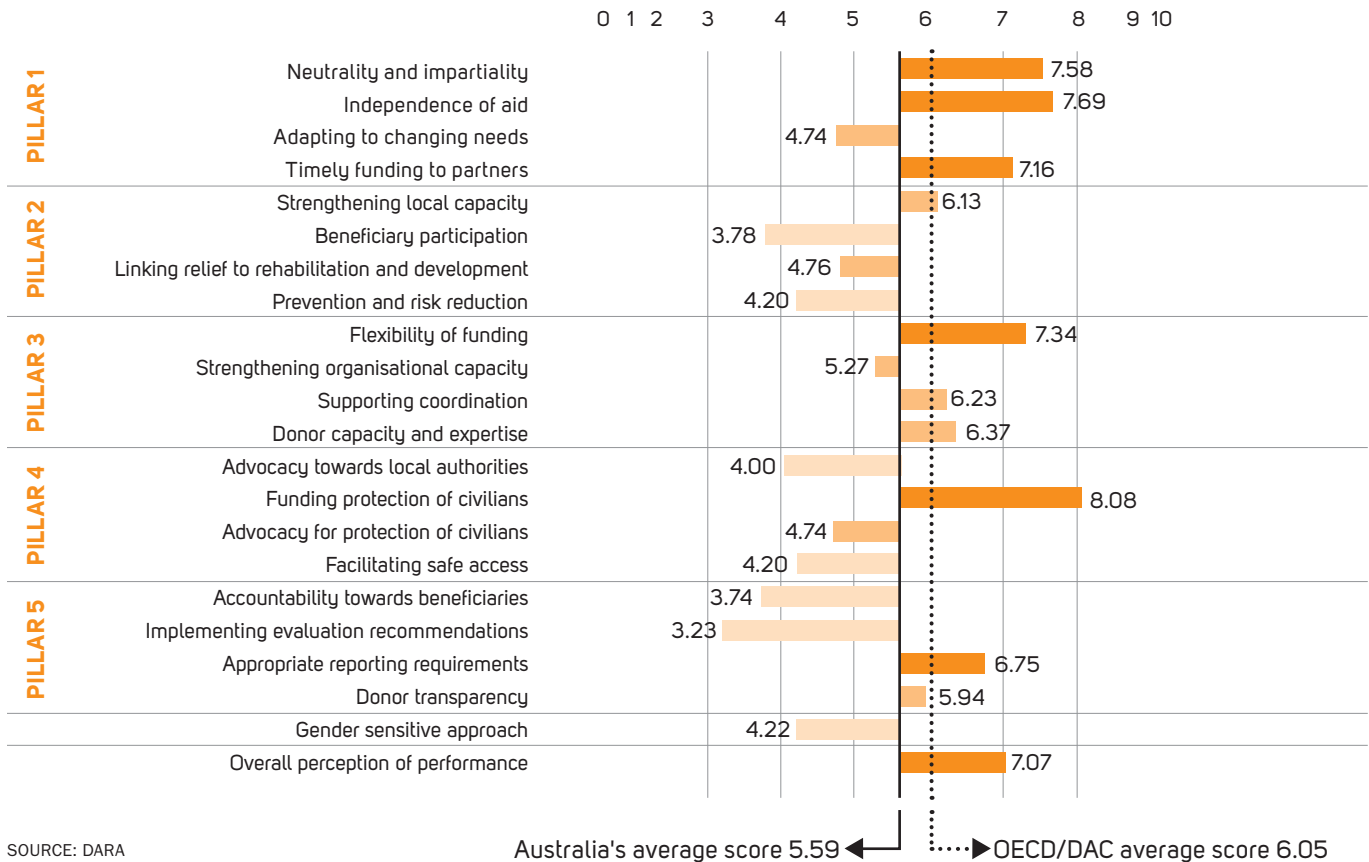
LEARNING AND ACCOUNTABILITY

AusAID's 2005 *Humanitarian Action Policy* provides for a robust evaluation system and stresses the need to ensure transparency and accountability of operations. AusAID publishes an evaluation report each year that includes a review of its performance in emergency, humanitarian and refugee programmes. Australia is also an International Aid Transparency Initiative signatory with an implementation plan set for July-October 2011 (IATI 2011). Following the 2011 release of the *Independent Review of Aid Effectiveness*, AusAID has announced that it will improve its ODA evaluations and issue a Transparency Charter by the end of 2011 to make information on funding and results more accessible (Australian Government 2011).

FIELD PARTNERS' PERCEPTIONS

AUSTRALIA'S FIELD PERCEPTION SCORES

Collected questionnaires: 21



SOURCE: DARA

Colours represent performance compared to donor's average performance rating:

■ Good
 ■ Mid-range
 ■ Could improve

HOW IS AUSTRALIA PERCEIVED BY ITS PARTNERS?

GENDER

AusAid's field partners provided mixed feedback regarding gender. One organisation reported that AusAID "comes back with questions" about its gender sensitive approaches in programmes, seeming to confirm that Australia's policy focus on gender issues is translated to the field. However, others lumped Australia together with other donors for whom "gender is not an issue".

PILLAR 1

RESPONDING TO NEEDS

In Pillar 1, evidence from the field suggests that Australia is following through with its promises to respond to needs. Some interviewees situated Australia as part of a group of donors that links needs assessments to project designs. Australia's field partners held mixed views of the independence and timeliness of Australia's humanitarian assistance. It received a significantly lower score for its efforts to verify that programmes adapt to changing needs.

PILLAR 2

PREVENTION, RISK REDUCTION AND RECOVERY

Although Australia's quantitative scores in Pillar 2 were above average, field perceptions were significantly lower. Particularly poor was its score for *Beneficiary participation*, where one interviewee stressed that "it's all just on paper," and that there was "no follow up to see what's really happening." Its scores for linking relief to rehabilitation and development and support for prevention and risk reduction were also low. Feedback on Australia's support for local capacity was more positive.

PILLAR 3

WORKING WITH HUMANITARIAN PARTNERS

Although Australia received its lowest score in Pillar 3, its scores in the qualitative indicators were comparatively higher. Pillar 3 is the only pillar where Australia's qualitative scores are better than its quantitative scores. Most field organisations considered Australia supportive of coordination, a flexible donor and felt it has sufficient capacity and expertise to make appropriate decisions. For example, one interviewee noted that Australia participated in cluster meetings, and another pointed to AusAID's strong capacity at the field level, noting that its staff is well prepared. Feedback was not as positive regarding Australian support for its partners' organisational capacity in areas like preparedness, response and contingency planning, though one respondent thought AusAID would be willing to help strengthen its organisational capacity "if asked".

PILLAR 4

PROTECTION AND INTERNATIONAL LAW

In Pillar 4, Australia's partners praised the country for its funding for the protection of civilians. Its scores were much lower, however, in qualitative indicators on advocacy – both for protection and toward local authorities. Perceptions of Australia's support for safe access and security of humanitarian works was also poor.

PILLAR 5

LEARNING AND ACCOUNTABILITY

In Pillar 5, field organisations seem fairly satisfied with Australia's reporting requirements and transparency. One organisation stated that Australia took some steps towards promoting transparency of its funding and decision-making by sending out its scoring sheet. Multiple organisations suggested AusAID could work to improve the integration of accountability towards affected populations into the programmes it supports and work with partners to implement evaluation recommendations.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The following recommendations are based on data from 2010, prior to Australia's aid review. It remains to be seen how the new policy will influence these issues.

● ENSURE CRISIS SELECTION IS BASED ON NEED

Australia performed well in the majority of the quantitative indicators. Only one quantitative indicator was found to stand out as a weakness: *Funding vulnerable and forgotten emergencies*, which measures funding to forgotten emergencies and those with the greatest vulnerability. Australia is supportive of forgotten emergencies, but tends to prioritize crises in its geographic region. As a result, Australia provides less funding to crises with high levels of vulnerability when compared to other donors. In 2010, Australia designated 40.2% of its humanitarian funding for these crises, compared to the Group 3 average of 63.0% and the OECD/DAC average of 63.9%. Australia could review its funding criteria to ensure it responds to crises with the greatest need at the global level while maintaining its niche in the Asia-Pacific.

● ENSURE ACCOUNTABILITY TOWARD BENEFICIARIES IS INTEGRATED IN HUMANITARIAN PROGRAMMES

Australia could improve its efforts to ensure accountability toward affected populations. Australia received one of the lowest scores of the OECD/DAC donors for this qualitative indicator, as partners indicated minimal emphasis and follow-up on downward accountability from Australia. Australia should engage in dialogue with its partners to discuss practical measures to ensure accountability towards beneficiaries is integrated in humanitarian programmes.

● ENCOURAGE LEARNING FROM THE PAST

Australia's partners indicate that Australia could also enhance the use and follow-up of evaluations and other lesson-learning exercises to ensure recommendations are integrated in subsequent programming. Australia's

recent announcement of a renewed focus on evaluations is highly positive. It would do well to also enhance its efforts to work with its partners to use the lessons learned.

● LOOK FOR WAYS TO IMPROVE MONITORING OF PROGRAMMES WITHOUT FIELD PRESENCE

Australia also received low scores for *Adapting to changing needs*, *Beneficiary participation* and *Gender*. Partner feedback was similar for all three indicators: greater monitoring is needed to transform them from requirements on paper to meaningful components of programmes. However, it is possible that the crisis selection may have influenced the lower scores and that Australia does verify that these requirements are fulfilled in crises where it has field presence. Australia should consider alternatives, such as partnerships with other donors, greater dialogue or field visits to monitor more closely the programmes it funds beyond its region.