



Australia supports social protection programs to help poor people deal with predictable daily stresses and unexpected shocks. The programs address risk, vulnerability, inequality and poverty through a system of transfers to people in cash or in kind. These transfers can unlock the economic potential of the poorest and contribute to inclusive growth.

## Strategic direction

Social protection is a relatively new space for the Australian development cooperation program, but one which is growing in importance in the Indo-Pacific region.

Australia's approach is outlined in the *Strategy for Australia's Aid Investments in Social Protection*. This strategy guides our official development cooperation expenditure in social protection, and supports our program teams to make informed investment choices within their respective global, regional or country level allocations.

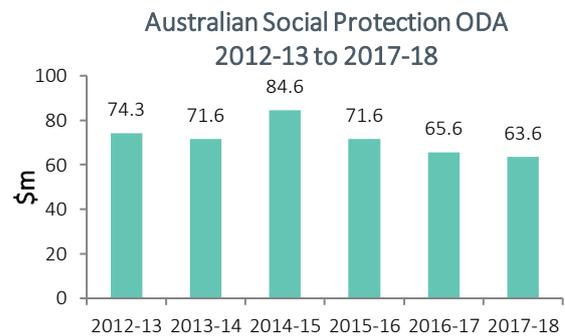
Australia's approach to social protection typically involves supporting partner governments to improve the design and implementation of their current social protection for the poor and vulnerable, contributing to human development and economic growth outcomes.

We work in economic partnership with a number of governments in the region including Indonesia, Bangladesh, Myanmar, the Philippines, Laos and Timor-Leste to improve the effectiveness, efficiency and reach of their systems.

Australia's development cooperation investments in social protection pursue three objectives:

- improve social protection coverage in the Indo-Pacific;
- improve the quality of social protection systems; and
- enhance our partner governments' ability to make choices on appropriate programs and systems for their context.

Australia's work in social protection contributes directly towards achieving the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) 1, 3 and 10; and indirectly to SDGs 4, 5, 8, 12 and 17.



## Sector performance in 2017-18

- Through MAHKOTA in Indonesia, Australia supported the Government of Papua to establish an innovative indigenous child grant. Over 16,000 Papuan women in three remote districts now have legal identity numbers and bank accounts – many for the first time. These women received their first direct cash transfers in December 2018.
- The Government of Indonesia also extended its conditional cash transfer program from 3.5 million to 10 million poor households, using its own budget and drawing on Australia's support through the World Bank Partnership for Knowledge-based Poverty Reduction.
- In Laos, Australia is supporting the Ministry of Labour and Social Welfare, to pilot an early childhood allowance for 200 households over 20 months. This pilot will inform the establishment of a universal early childhood allowance.
- In Bangladesh, we are supporting extremely poor people by contributing to social transfers for 72,804 households in 2017-18.
- In the Philippines, our support has resulted in increased access to cash transfer programs for indigenous people, street families, people with a disability, and women and girls. In addition, the Government of the Philippines has integrated shock-responsive, gender and child sensitive approaches into its new Social Protection Framework.
- In the Pacific, we facilitated dialogue and learning by Pacific Island Governments, humanitarian and development partners on the use of cash assistance and social protection for disaster response.



## Operational evaluations in 2017-18

- An independent strategic review of MAHKOTA and the World Bank Partnership for Knowledge-based Poverty Reduction in November 2018 recommended we extend MAHKOTA to 2021, and continue to support the World Bank’s work on poverty, social protection and labour in Indonesia.
- A UNICEF *Situational Analysis of Children with Disabilities in the Philippines* in April 2018, highlighted the need for inclusive services and social protection for children with disabilities.

## Priorities for 2018-19

- We will seek to expand our engagement in the Pacific, furthering country preparedness for greater use of cash transfers in emergencies and the development of longer-term social protection systems.
- DFAT will contribute to global learning and engagement on social protection through the hosting of webinars, South-South learning events, global online communities, and funding key social protection tools and research where there are clear evidence gaps.
- DFAT’s Social Protection Hub will focus on providing technical support to our country programs.

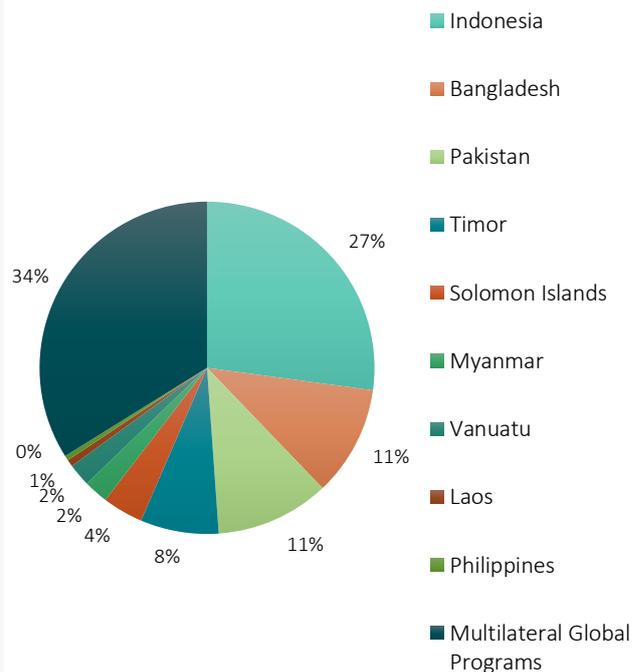
## For more details:

- [Strategy for Australia’s Aid Investments in Social Protection](#)



Beneficiaries of the Pantawid Pamilyang Pilipino Program, Philippines  
 Credit: Ben Pederick, Good Morning Beautiful Films.

### Australian Social Protection ODA by country 2017-18



### Gender equality

The social protection programs we support around the region overwhelmingly target women, enabling them to pursue economic opportunities as well as supporting them to meet basic needs within the family.

### Innovation

In Indonesia, our support is enabling the Government to test different mechanisms to distribute electronic funds through the banking system. This includes trialling mobile phone payments, smart cards and vouchers with barcodes.

### SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOALS

