THE DEPARTMENT OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS AND TRADE (DFAT) IS RESPONSIBLE FOR LEADING THE AUSTRALIAN GOVERNMENT’S RESPONSE TO INTERNATIONAL HUMANITARIAN CRISIS. THE HUMANITARIAN STRATEGY ARTICULATES HOW DFAT WILL RESPOND TO HUMANITARIAN CRISSES AND ENSURES OUR HUMANITARIAN INVESTMENTS AND POLICY ENGAGEMENTS ALIGN WITH AND SUPPORT AUSTRALIAN GOVERNMENT POLICY, INCLUDING AUSTRALIAN AID: PROMOTING PROSPERITY, REDUCING POVERTY, ENHANCING STABILITY.

WHY AUSTRALIA SUPPORTS HUMANITARIAN ACTION

Humanitarian crises undermine growth, reverse hard-won development gains, increase poverty and can result in instability which can last for decades. Over the past decade, the number of people in need of humanitarian assistance has doubled.¹ Since 2005, disasters have killed more than 700,000 people globally and left nearly 23 million homeless,² while armed conflict and...
persecution of civilians has resulted in unprecedented numbers of displaced people – almost 60 million in 2015.\(^3\) As demand for humanitarian assistance increases, so too does the need for our responses to be effective, efficient and accountable.

**OUR THEMATIC PRIORITIES**

DFAT’s approach to delivering humanitarian assistance is informed by thematic priorities that are central to the efficacy of all Australian aid.

- Gender Equality and Women’s Empowerment
- Disability Inclusiveness
- Protection
- Private Sector Engagement
- Monitoring, Evaluation, Accountability and Learning

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2 The Sendai Framework 2015-2030

3 UNHCR *Worldwide displacement hits an all-time high as war and persecution increase* [http://www.unhcr.org/558193896.html](http://www.unhcr.org/558193896.html)
1. STRENGTHEN INTERNATIONAL HUMANITARIAN ACTION

Australia will support reform and innovation within the international humanitarian system to ensure that it is fit for purpose, particularly in the Indo-Pacific. We will advocate for integration of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the Paris Climate Change Agreement within humanitarian action, particularly in protracted and slow-onset crises. We will demonstrate our leadership in protecting and empowering vulnerable groups, in particular women, children, and people with disabilities, and promote respect for principled humanitarian action and international law.

2. REDUCE DISASTER RISK

Australia will invest in a safer future by supporting countries to reduce disaster risk. Australia will promote effective disaster risk reduction in our region, in line with the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction 2015-2030. We will also continue to support effective climate adaptation and efforts to reduce loss and damage in line with the Paris Climate Change Agreement. We will work with partners to identify risks and hazards, and lay the foundations for resilience to disasters and climate change, focused on local communities, and local and national governments.
3. SUPPORT PREPAREDNESS AND EFFECTIVE RESPONSE

Australia will support countries to better prepare for disasters. Australia will provide effective humanitarian assistance and protection in response to rapid and slow onset crises, with a focus on the Indo-Pacific. We will build resilience and strengthen responses to protracted and slow-onset crises through effective humanitarian relief and development assistance that addresses the underlying causes of conflict, displacement and chronic vulnerability.

4. ENABLE EARLY RECOVERY

Australia will support the transition from humanitarian relief to longer-term recovery and development. We will prioritise early recovery efforts to resuscitate basic services, markets and livelihoods after a disaster or crisis. We will provide technical assistance to partner organisations and governments to assist early recovery efforts.

GENDER EQUALITY AND WOMEN’S EMPOWERMENT

Australia’s approach prioritises gender equality, and women’s empowerment as central to effective risk reduction, preparedness, response and recovery. The Government’s aid policy requires more than 80 per cent of investments effectively address gender issues.

DISABILITY INCLUSIVENESS

We will ensure people with a range of abilities are active participants in the planning, design and implementation of humanitarian assistance.

PROTECTION

Protecting the rights and dignity of people affected by a crisis is an essential component of Australia’s humanitarian action and advocacy. For further information, see DFAT’s Protection in Humanitarian Action Framework.
WHO WE WORK WITH

DFAT’s humanitarian partners are chosen for their ability to deliver effective and professional humanitarian assistance in line with the Humanitarian Strategy. This includes partnerships with Australian non-government organisations (NGOs), Australian Red Cross (ARC), and international humanitarian agencies such as the World Food Programme (WFP), United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA) and International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC). DFAT has multiyear agreements in place to provide humanitarian partners with funding quickly and efficiently in an emergency.

GUIDING PRINCIPLES

The Humanitarian Strategy is underpinned by ten guiding principles:

RESPECT FOR HUMANITY

RESPECT FOR INTERNATIONAL LAW

AFFECTED STATE LEADERSHIP
PRIVATE SECTOR ENGAGEMENT

We will find ways to encourage greater investment by businesses in disaster prone and crisis-affected regions to: promote resilience through economic activity; provide access to services and risk mitigation; draw on the significant additional capacity offered by private sector partners; and promote innovation.

MONITORING, EVALUATION, ACCOUNTABILITY AND LEARNING

We will continually learn from our actions to improve the quality of our work. We are committed to high standards of transparency and accountability in the management of the Australian aid program.

See Humanitarian Strategy for further information: www.dfat.gov.au
www.dfat.gov.au

Enquiries regarding the Humanitarian Strategy are welcome and should be directed to:

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*Cover: DFAT officials surveying the damage and impact of Tropical Cyclone Winston in Fiji, March 2016. Photo: Market Development Facility – Fiji*