In 2015-16, $3.47 million was provided for 146 projects in South East Asia through our diplomatic missions in Bali, Bangkok, Dili, Hanoi, Ho Chi Minh City, Jakarta, Kuala Lumpur, Manila, Phnom Penh, Yangon and Vientiane.

Bali
The Australian Consulate-General in Bali funded 10 projects in the poorer areas of the Indonesian provinces of Bali and Nusa Tenggara Barat (NTB), totalling $120,000. Direct Aid Program (DAP) projects focused on promoting gender equality and sustainable economic growth, and improving health, sanitation and the quality of life of people with disability.

With DAP funding, Bali Sports Foundation (BSF) obtained tools and machinery to manufacture sports wheelchairs for athletes with disability to offer them sporting opportunities. BSF also taught workers with disability to make the wheelchairs—the skills that will support Indonesian athletes to compete in the 2018 Asian ParaGames in Jakarta.

In Nusa Dua, DAP funded the upgrade of R.O.L.E. Foundation’s facilities for training disadvantaged young women for a career in the hospitality industry. The foundation works with hotel and business partners to provide students with practical work experience. Graduates from its program normally secure permanent employment with its partners, while some have started their own businesses.

In Lombok, DAP funding helped Jage Kastare Foundation establish a permanent charity shop to sell used clothing, toys and recycled products. The foundation uses the proceeds to fund scholarships for underprivileged students. Its new shop, which opened in May 2016, also provides spaces for local community members to learn English, art and recycling methods.

Jakarta
The Australian Embassy in Jakarta provided $413,000 for 15 projects in Indonesia - several of them in eastern Indonesia, the least developed region in the Indonesian archipelago. Direct Aid Program (DAP) projects promoted sustainable
development, women’s empowerment and poverty reduction, supported people with disability, and improved the livelihood of women and children.

DAP funded a Nusa Tenggara Association project, which aims to raise the incomes of rural villagers and improve food security in East Nusa Tenggara, one of Indonesia’s poorest regions. The project will enhance the production technology and marketing of cocoa, cashews and vegetables – their main cash crops. It also seeks to increase the production of maize – the main staple for most households.

Through the Bintangs Australian Rules Football Club/AFL Indonesia, DAP funded an expanded Indonesian AFL development program, which will facilitate AFL clinics for boys and girls in orphanages and schools across Jakarta over the next 12 months. The project aims to build program management capability and skills, and to develop and mentor sports teachers in delivering the clinics. The funding will also be spent in obtaining sports equipment and training kits, and on improving sporting grounds and facilities for child safety. The clinics will showcase the Australian sport and promote health and fitness.

**Bangkok**

The Australian Embassy in Bangkok provided $365,000 for 22 projects in Thailand’s disadvantaged areas. The projects funded by the Direct Aid Program (DAP) promoted gender equality, supported inclusive economic growth, and improved the quality of life for people with disability, health and sanitation.

In Thailand’s deep south, troubled by a long-running Malay-Muslim separatist insurgency, a DAP project helped lift the spirit of the youth and build social cohesion through art and sporting events. In Pattani Province, DAP supported Saiburi Looker, a community group, to organise skateboarding and street art exhibitions, as well as community concerts. During Reconciliation Week 2016, the southern Thai-Malay Muslim street artists joined Australian Indigenous performers and Bangkok hip-hop dancers in a two-day workshop to share their cultures and experiences. The program culminated in a final hip-hop performance for a broad Thai audience with the Malay-Muslim street art as the backdrop.

**Dili**

Under the Direct Aid Program (DAP), the Australian Embassy in Dili funded four projects in Timor-Leste to a total value of $240,000. The DAP projects promoted gender equality through women’s economic empowerment and political participation,
and supported youth leadership and security sector reform.

Through the Asia Pacific Support Collective – Timor-Leste, a leading women’s advocacy NGO, DAP funded the economic empowerment of vulnerable women at the grassroots level. The project helped women become more active in decision-making in communities, reducing their vulnerability to violence.

Working with another women’s NGO, Fundasaun Patria, DAP sponsored a project to encourage women’s participation in town and village councils. Fundasaun Patria provided women in five municipalities with training in leadership, the political system and the electoral process to prepare them for standing in elections. Two hundred women expressed their intention to run as candidates in town and village council elections scheduled for October.

Women of Tapo Memo’s chicken farming group in Maliana, Timor-Leste learn to improve their business through a DAP project.

Hanoi

Through the Direct Aid Program (DAP), the Australian Embassy in Hanoi funded 21 projects, totalling $400,000. Grants were provided to projects in six northern Vietnamese provinces, with a particular focus on Ha Giang, one of Vietnam’s poorest and most remote provinces, where limited foreign development assistance is provided.

The DAP projects focused on gender equality, environmental sustainability, education, water, sanitation and hygiene, and were directed toward the most in-need communities, particularly ethnic minorities.

In the mountainous Dong Van District, where water is scarce, DAP funding provided six environmentally friendly bio-toilets for students and teachers at Ho Quang School. The easy-to-use, low-maintenance toilets offer a safe and economical solution to poor sanitation, which poses a high risk of gastrointestinal and respiratory diseases to children and the community. The project also assisted in developing communication materials on hygiene and sanitation.

Also in Dong Van, another DAP project helped Dao and Hmong ethnic minority women preserve traditional embroidery and tailoring skills, which bring them a stable monthly income of 3 million Vietnamese dong (AUD175) from selling their products to tourists. The project benefits poor women, who are vulnerable to human trafficking as a result of their quest for better economic opportunities across the border in China. The women will soon train others in the area.

A Hmong lady displays her colourful traditional embroidery products in Dong Van District, Ha Giang Province.

Ho Chi Minh City

The Australian Consulate-General in Ho Chi Minh City provided $340,000 for 18 projects in nine
provinces in southern Vietnam. Direct Aid Program (DAP) projects targeted greater economic engagement for poor communities, human resource development and support for ethnic minorities.

With DAP funding, the University of Medicine, Pham Ngoc Thach (UPNT), a public university in District 10, purchased clinical equipment to set up an optometry training centre, which also offers low-cost services to the community. The centre allows practical training in optometry for UPNT students. A Rapid Assessment for Avoidable Blindness Study estimates that three per cent of people aged 50 or over suffer bilateral blindness, where the number of eye care professionals is inadequate.

Kuala Lumpur

The Australian High Commission in Kuala Lumpur funded nine projects in Malaysia totalling $149,000. Direct Aid Program (DAP) projects focused on the health and education of disadvantaged community members, particularly women, children and those affected by HIV/AIDS, as well as providing disaster relief.

DAP funded PACOS, a community-based group based in Sabah, to provide assistance in researching and building water supplies in Kg Tmbatuon and Kg Kiau, which had been ravaged by the Mt Kinabalu earthquake in June 2015. PACOS installed gravity water systems in the two villages and conducted training on water management.

The Chin Student Organisation, which provides education and support for the Chin ethnic refugee children from Myanmar in Malaysia, received DAP funding for two projects. One of them supplied new Maths and English textbooks and eye glasses. In the other project, two Australian nurses carried out health screenings, including dental checks and treatments, and provided hygiene packs to students.

Manila

The Australian High Commission in Manila funded 10 Direct Aid Program (DAP) projects across the Philippines, totalling $260,000. The projects focused on women’s empowerment, water and sanitation,
health care, emergency and disaster preparedness, and education and training for children and people with disability.

Bantay Bata 163, the social welfare program of ABS-CBN, the largest media company in the Philippines, received DAP funding to produce audio-visual modules to train children to be better prepared for natural disasters. In partnership with the Philippine Department of Education, the modules will be used to deliver emergency preparedness training, which covers typhoons, floods, earthquakes, fire safety and basic first aid, at 20 elementary and high schools in the Cebu and Davao provinces.

With DAP funding, the Fairplay for All Foundation constructed a concrete sports court for regular training for the youth in Quezon City’s Payatas dumpsite, one of the country’s largest and poorest slums. The availability of the court is expected to double the number of children playing football regularly with the Payatas Football Club to 200. It will also provide other sporting opportunities, including volleyball, badminton and Zumba.

Phnom Penh

The Australian Embassy in Phnom Penh provided $450,000 for nine projects in Cambodia. The project, funded under the Direct Aid Program (DAP), focused on the welfare of women, children and people with disability, health, sanitation, economic empowerment and the environment.

DAP funded a project run by Action on Disability and Development International Cambodia, an international NGO, to help women and girls with disability access justice and support services. It aims to build the capacity of local authorities to address violence against women and girls.

Through Samatapheap Khnom Organisation, a local NGO, another DAP projects seeks to ensure effective social service delivery to vulnerable people, particularly women and children. It aims to help them access social protection, justice and social services from the government, private sector and other non-government organisations.

Yangon

The Australian Embassy in Yangon provided $312,000 for eight projects in Myanmar. The projects, funded through the Direct Aid Program (DAP), targeted capacity building, poverty reduction, health, rural development, cultural preservation and gender equality.

Through the Aust-Myanmar Mission Association, DAP funded the reconstruction of a vital bridge over Manipur River at Gamlai in remote north-western Chin State – the country’s poorest region. Heavy rains and flooding in July 2015 destroyed the
widely used bridge, cutting off local communities from access to markets and services.

DAP also funded Partners Myanmar’s Garden Towers project, designed to strengthen food security and raise household incomes in Myanmar’s impoverished ‘dry zone’ in the arid centre of the country. The towers, made from 150 litre plastic barrels with holes cut in the sides to allow the planting of crops, utilise an integrated compost system to fertilise the plants. Taking only a tiny space, they have helped improve the livelihood of landless farmers, the elderly and people with disability.

After two months, ‘Garden Towers’ provide a steady supply of vegetables for poor and vulnerable villagers.

**Vientiane**

The Australian Embassy in Vientiane provided $422,000 for 20 projects across eight provinces in Laos. The projects funded under the Direct Aid Program (DAP) targeted children’s education, wildlife conservation, ecotourism, cultural and heritage conservation, women’s empowerment, and support for victims of human trafficking and people with disability.

DAP supported the Elephant Caravan in Xaboury and Luang Prabang as part of the celebration of Luang Prabang’s 20 years as a UNESCO World Heritage Site. The caravan travelled nearly 500 kilometres on foot throughout the provinces to conduct conservation awareness activities and distribute educational materials, whose production was funded by DAP.

DAP also funded the Lao Men Standing Up and Speaking Out campaign, which encourages men to take action to eliminate violence against women. During the campaign, 10 prominent Lao male personalities called for an end to the violence on TV, posters and videos.

As part of the celebration of Luang Prabang’s 20 years as a UNESCO World Heritage Site, DAP supported an elephant caravan to raise awareness of conservation issues.