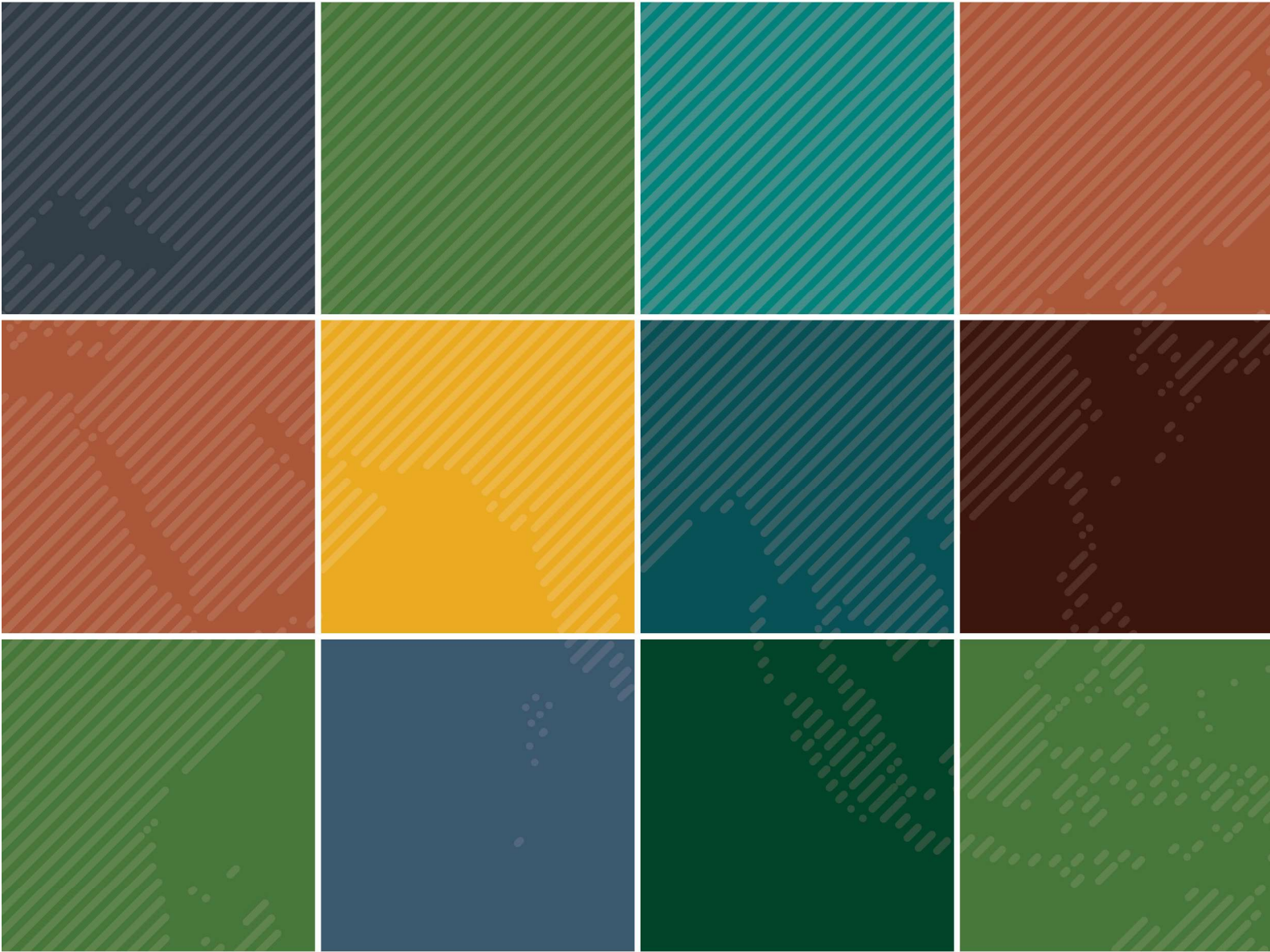




Australian Government

Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade



**AUSTRALIA – MYANMAR
DEVELOPMENT PARTNERSHIP
PLAN 2024–2029**

Section 1: Introduction

Australia's partnership with the people of Myanmar

On 1 February 2021 the Myanmar military regime overthrew the democratically elected government in Myanmar, creating one of the largest crises in the Indo-Pacific. Since the coup, the people of Myanmar have been subjected to military rule that has deprived many of their rights, their democratic aspirations and, for thousands, their liberty and their lives. Australia remains deeply concerned at the deteriorating situation and strongly condemns the actions of the Myanmar military regime. We call on the Myanmar military regime to immediately de-escalate violence and ensure unhindered and safe humanitarian access across the country, and we urge all parties to prioritise the protection of civilians and fully adhere to international humanitarian law and international human rights law. We have been consistent in expressing our serious concerns, supporting the region's response and maintaining an international focus on the crisis. We have limits on how we engage with the regime to avoid conferring credibility or legitimacy on it and to ensure we act in Australia's national interest.

Australia is committed to supporting the people of Myanmar through our international advocacy and our development and humanitarian assistance. Cessation of violence and alleviation of the humanitarian situation in Myanmar remain our priorities. This includes promoting safe and unimpeded access for humanitarian assistance; advocating for the release of all those unjustly detained; supporting the efforts of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) to address the crisis, including through the regime's full implementation of ASEAN's Five-Point Consensus on Myanmar; and dialogue to return Myanmar towards the path of democracy.

Purpose of the Development Partnership Plan

Australia's [International Development Policy](#) presents a long-term vision for how the development program will meet the critical needs of our partners, support sustainable development and help lift people out of poverty. Australia seeks relationships based on respect and partnerships that create economic and social value for us all. To achieve this, Australia supports our partners to:

- build effective, accountable states that drive their own development
- enhance state and community resilience to external pressures and shocks
- connect with Australia and regional architecture
- generate collective action on global challenges that impact us and our region.

This Australia – Myanmar Development Partnership Plan 2024–2029 (DPP) translates into action the development and humanitarian priorities Australia shares with the people of Myanmar. This DPP sets out agreed objectives, how we will work with partners to deliver shared outcomes, and how progress will be monitored. It also identifies where Australia can add value to development and humanitarian priorities in Myanmar and how Australia will work with other actors, ensuring the Australian Government contribution to the development and humanitarian ambitions of the people of Myanmar is well coordinated.

Given the situation in Myanmar, Australia does not provide any direct funding to the military regime, and we take proactive steps to ensure our assistance to Myanmar neither goes to the regime nor lends it credibility or legitimacy.

Australia does not use political or any other affiliation as the basis for targeting our development and humanitarian assistance; we determine priorities based on need. Our development and humanitarian assistance is delivered through United Nations agencies, multilateral and regional partners, international non-governmental organisations (INGOs), local non-government organisations (NGOs) and local civil society organisations (CSOs).

The DPP reflects the full spectrum of Australia’s development and humanitarian support – Australian Government bilateral Official Development Assistance (ODA) as well as significant regional and global ODA and non-ODA development activities. A commitment to ongoing dialogue and engagement with non-state actors in support of a genuine and respectful partnership underpins this DPP. Given the sensitivities and the security situation in Myanmar, Australia does not publicise the details of our local implementing partners. This is at our partners’ request as it can adversely affect the safety and security of staff and affected populations. Due to a constantly changing context, this DPP will be reviewed on an ongoing basis to ensure priorities remain relevant and a mid-cycle review of the DPP will be undertaken.

Preparing the Development Partnership Plan

In preparation for the DPP, the Australian Government Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade (DFAT) met stakeholders in Australia and Myanmar, representing a diverse range of interlocutors. In Australia, DFAT met the Australian Council for International Development’s Myanmar Community of Practice and representatives of the Myanmar diaspora. In Myanmar, DFAT engaged with the United Nations system, INGOs, NGOs, CSOs and community leaders.

Stakeholders were invited to provide written submissions. All responses have been considered in the drafting of this DPP.

The Myanmar program has also been part of consultations conducted by DFAT’s Office of Southeast Asia, including with other government departments and external stakeholders, and as part of the stakeholder survey commissioned from the Development Intelligence Lab.¹

Section 2: Myanmar development context and Australian partnership

Myanmar is embroiled in a complex crisis. One of the poorest countries in Southeast Asia, it was already vulnerable to disasters and facing substantial political and development challenges before the COVID-19 pandemic. The pandemic and the February 2021 coup presented immense economic and social shocks, overwhelming an already weak state system.

The coup triggered a protracted and multifaceted crisis, with the poorest and most vulnerable people (particularly women, children and ethnic minorities) most affected. Fighting erupted in many states and regions across Myanmar, including in areas not previously affected by conflict (such as the central Dry Zone) and the border areas which are under mixed or contested control. Following the coup, thousands of people abandoned government jobs to join the Civil Disobedience Movement (CDM). The military regime no longer has control over much of the country.

As a result of pre-existing economic weaknesses, the coup, the CDM and an increase in conflict, economic and human development indicators have taken significant hits, resulting in nationwide impacts. The economy collapsed, contracting by 18 per cent² in 2021. The World Bank estimated that the poverty rate in early 2024 was 32.1 per cent, based on household consumption, a reversion to levels last seen in 2015.³ The United Nations Development Programme meanwhile estimated 49.7 per cent of people in 2024 were living below the national poverty line (MMK1590 a day), up from 24.8 per cent in 2017.⁴ Coverage of essential health services (Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) indicator 3.8.1) dropped from 60 per cent in 2019 to 52 per cent in 2021.⁵ Myanmar has a Human Development Index⁶ score of 0.608 (Medium) and a Global Gender Gap Index⁷ score of 0.65. In the Myanmar Humanitarian Needs and Response Plan 2025, the United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA) estimated that of the population of 54 million, more than 19.9 million people were in need of humanitarian assistance (up from 1 million in 2021).⁸

Long-running conflicts and forced movement resulted in internally displaced people well before the 2021 coup. According to OCHA's Humanitarian Country Team report in December 2019 (before the COVID-19 pandemic) more than 97,000 people in Kachin State had lived in camps since 2011, pushed out of their homes by conflict. In northern Shan, around 9,600 people were displaced by conflict, as were 32,000 people in Rakhine. Around 740,000 Rohingya sought refuge in Bangladesh from persecution in Myanmar, and another 126,000 remained in camps within Myanmar.⁹ However, since the coup, conflict has caused the number of internally displaced people across almost all areas of Myanmar to steadily increase, reaching 3.5 million as of January 2025.¹⁰ This mass displacement is likely to continue to increase, degrading social cohesion and limiting development gains.

Service delivery in many areas has plummeted. The education sector has been particularly affected. Following the coup, 60 per cent of tertiary education workers and 27 per cent of primary and secondary teachers went on strike, with many joining the CDM.¹¹ The military has used schools and universities as staging grounds and directed attacks at teachers and education institutions. Education services have been significantly disrupted, restricting access for at least 12 million children and young people.¹² Education CSOs, opposition groups and religious and ethnic schools are providing some services in areas the regime does not control or cannot reach. The crisis disproportionately affects ethnic minority groups and girls, with only 18 per cent of girls graduating from secondary school.¹³

Education is an essential contributor to human development and eradication of poverty. The current education crisis is likely to have long-term implications for the people of Myanmar, and disadvantaged children in particular. Lower educational attainment is associated with lower earnings, higher crime rates, poorer health and mortality outcomes, and reduced participation in political and social institutions. The loss of education opportunities due to conflict can adversely affect the ability of society to recover from conflict.¹⁴ A generation of lost learners will fail to become the skilled workers that Myanmar's economy will need in the future and be less able to adapt to economic

diversification. The state of education in Myanmar is likely to remain dire for the foreseeable future, becoming a multigenerational crisis.

Similarly, the health sector is highly politicised and a dangerous environment in which to work. New protection and assistance needs have emerged with the expansion of armed conflict and the proliferation of armed militias driving increased displacement. Outbreaks of vaccine-preventable diseases (including diphtheria) have been recorded¹⁵ and a worsening health status has been modelled for other diseases.¹⁶ Prior to the coup, spending on health in Myanmar was already lower than most countries in the region,¹⁷ and since the coup, it has declined and is expected to decline further.¹⁸ The health sector also suffers from massive human resources shortages and the regime retaliates against institutions that hire CDM-aligned healthcare workers. Outside of state-run services, the proportion of the population that has access to services through INGOs, private sector health facilities and others is unclear. The confluence of a non-functional health system and increasing health vulnerabilities among large sections of the population has led to deteriorating maternal and child health outcomes, a lagging emergency care response and dangerously low routine vaccination rates, which may have implications for regional health security. The World Health Organization estimates 12.1 million people (22 per cent of the population) needed health assistance in 2024. We expect the need for support in the health sector to continue to increase, which will present a challenge for development partners because needs already outstrip available resources.

Conflict continues to escalate across the country and humanitarian need has increased dramatically since January 2021.¹⁹ Myanmar is classified as conflict-affected by the World Bank,²⁰ the only country in Southeast Asia on its FY24 List of Fragile and Conflict-Affected Situations. Myanmar scored 9/100 in the 2023 Freedom House Freedom in the World report, among the worst of those countries designated Not Free,²¹ and all six World Bank World Governance Indicator ranks have declined since 2017.²²

Myanmar is frequently affected by natural disasters, including floods, landslides and cyclones. Cyclone Mocha, in May 2023, affected at least 1.6 million people.²³ It caused around USD2.24 billion in damage – equivalent to 3.4 per cent of Myanmar's 2021 gross domestic product (GDP) – destroying more than 200,000 buildings, including homes, schools and medical facilities, and compounding the humanitarian crisis.²⁴ An estimated 1 million people were affected by the flooding from heavy monsoon rains and the remnants of Typhoon Yagi in September 2024.²⁵

Myanmar is highly vulnerable to climate change, which is expected to increase the frequency and intensity of disasters like Cyclone Mocha. Myanmar has a low Notre Dame Global Adaptation Initiative country index score (37.1, ranked 166th in the world),²⁶ indicating that it is both vulnerable to climate change and other challenges and lacks readiness and resilience.

Social protection coverage remains limited and insufficient to meet Myanmar's growing needs. Even prior to the coup, the national social protection system was underdeveloped with very limited coverage. Government spending on social protection was among the lowest in the region at only 0.3 per cent of GDP pre-COVID-19, against a regional average of around 1 per cent.²⁷ While development partners had parallel transfer and cash-for-work programs, geographic coverage was limited and long-term financing not assured.

Prior to the coup, the Government of Myanmar made major commitments to expanding its safety net system. Social protection was a strategic priority under the Myanmar Sustainable Development Plan 2018–2030. Since the coup, the regime has reduced social assistance transfer programs and cut the budget of the Ministry of Social Welfare, Relief and Resettlement, which administers aged, maternal and child support programs. Some development partners and national NGOs remain involved in social protection-type programming in Myanmar, particularly through geographically targeted maternal and child transfers, cash for work and community self-help groups. However, this work is often limited by short-term and unpredictable funding and difficulties in working outside of regime systems.

Until 2020, Myanmar was making progress against the SDGs. Since 2021, however, progress against most SDGs has slowed or gone backwards. The regime does not report results against the SDGs. Where reliable data are available,

it is clear that the goals will not be met: for each indicator, Myanmar has experienced either a moderate worsening or complete downturn. For example, poverty has increased, while the number of people estimated to be at risk of moderate to severe food insecurity and hunger increased from 13.2 million in 2022 to 15.2 million in 2023,²⁸ meaning more than a quarter of the population is food insecure. As noted earlier, there are significant challenges in the health sector; regime support for services is absent and, where services are available, prices are increasing. Education has been seriously disrupted, with school attendance rates plummeting since 2020; this compounded pre-existing poor learning outcomes, with 89 per cent of children not proficient in reading at the end of primary school in 2019. These outcomes are likely to have worsened.²⁹ Advances in gender equality have been rolled back as the rule of law deteriorates and risk factors for gender-based violence increase. Collecting data and minimising Myanmar's further decline against the SDGs will be an ongoing challenge for development partners.

Prior to the 2021 coup, Myanmar had been navigating multiple complex transitions: from military rule to a democratic government, from a closed to an open market economy, and from conflict to peace. Australia's development assistance was working across education, health, effective governance and resilience to support this transition. The coup and its aftermath, combined with the impact of COVID-19, have reversed many of the gains made and significantly amplified Myanmar's humanitarian and development challenges.

The regime does not have a development planning framework and has abandoned many of the policies developed under the pre-coup government. Australia does not work with the regime on our development program; instead, we work with local and international partners to identify the pressing priorities affecting the most vulnerable people of Myanmar, with a particular focus on the effects of the ongoing humanitarian crisis.

Priorities listed by stakeholders during our consultations for the DPP include: alleviating the humanitarian crisis, providing support for access to basic services, addressing food insecurity, improving resilience, and strengthening education and health care, as well as peacebuilding and governance. All spoke of the importance of working with local actors.

Following the coup, Australia's assistance in Myanmar pivoted to meet the immediate needs of the country's most vulnerable people while building community resilience, including for the poor and ethnic minorities. We redirected development assistance away from regime entities, and do not provide funding directly to the regime.

To ensure our support benefits the people who need it most, we work through trusted non-government partners including multilaterals and NGOs, often co-funding with other bilateral donors.

At the national and subnational levels, legitimate opposition institutions and other, non-regime, political bodies are engaging in dialogue and negotiation processes as they chart a course towards a future democratic Myanmar. Our programming will support these actors and these processes, including to support them to be diverse and inclusive.

Our program will remain under close review and be flexible to respond to the evolving situation to best meet the needs of affected populations.

Climate change

Myanmar is highly vulnerable to the effects of climate change. It is susceptible to rising temperatures and sea levels as well as increased extreme weather events. Tidal surges, floods, landslides, drought and increased cyclones (in number and intensity) will have severe effects on agriculture, water resources and livelihoods across the country over the coming years. Some regions, such as the central Dry Zone, are more vulnerable and susceptible to the rise in temperature, while the southern coastal regions are more likely to be heavily affected by the increasing prevalence of storms and cyclones. The 2021 Global Climate Risk Index ranked Myanmar as the second most climate-affected country in the world.³⁰ Projections for most climate variables in Myanmar are poor: temperatures are rising and the monsoon season is likely to shorten and become more intense.³¹ Sea level rises will affect

Myanmar's extensive low-lying coastal areas, particularly the Ayeyarwady Delta, while storm surges from cyclones will reach further inland. Flooding and landslides are also expected to be more frequent.

Data, as in other sectors, are rarely up to date but what are available paint a grim picture. The regime has abandoned the pre-coup government's environmental policies and is instead pursuing extraction of oil, natural gas and minerals and harvesting of timber, leading to extensive deforestation and pollution. This is exacerbated by an increase in illegal mining and logging, which have benefited from the absence of monitoring since the coup.

Because Australia does not work with the regime, our support for climate change priorities will focus on building resilience in communities, assisting with agricultural livelihood development, and supporting preparedness for the effects of climate change-driven hazards. Where possible we work with our humanitarian partners to support their readiness for the next disaster. We will continue to look for ways to expand our support for disaster preparedness through our future programming.

Should there be a return to the path of democracy, we would be well-placed to provide assistance through advisers on renewable energy and extractives management, priorities that were identified by the previous government before the coup.

Gender equality, disability and social inclusion (GEDSI)

Women, people with disability, displaced people, ethnic minorities and members of the lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer and intersex (LGBTQI+) community all suffer heavily under the regime and current conflict. Up-to-date statistics are difficult to obtain, including about the incidence of sexual and gender-based violence, level of access to essential services by people with disability, and the levels of violence and persecution faced by different ethnic groups. Laws that were implemented before the 2021 coup, such as the Rights of Persons with Disabilities Law (2015), are not priorities of the regime. There is no overarching law on gender equality and no legislation prohibiting domestic or partner violence.

Prior to the coup, Myanmar had the lowest reported levels in Southeast Asia for workforce participation of women,³² representation of women in government³³ and maternal survival.³⁴ Between 2017 and 2023, Myanmar's Global Gender Gap ranking dropped from 83rd to 123rd.³⁵ Women and people with disability face significant barriers to accessing justice.³⁶

People with disability are severely marginalised. While statistics are hard to obtain, disability prevalence rates established through surveys are lower than regional and global averages, suggesting significant under-reporting. Populations in conflict-affected areas and rural areas are more likely to experience higher rates of disability than those in urban areas. Children with disability are less likely to access formal education than children without disability. The number of people with disability is expected to increase as a result of the conflict, through landmine injuries, limited or no access to essential health services, malnutrition and trauma. Before the coup, organisations of people with disability were becoming progressively more engaged in a range of policy issues and reforms, including progress towards inclusive education; engagement in election processes; and efforts to support a human rights-based approach to people with disability in national policy. Our programs will continue to increasingly incorporate the views of, and support for, people with disability and organisations working with them.

LGBTQI+ people are unable to safely express their identities in Myanmar, with the Myanmar Penal Code providing for up to 10 years jail for homosexual acts.³⁷ Socially, although a 2020 survey found a majority of respondents believed LGBTQI+ people deserved equality and decriminalisation, more than half also said they would not accept a family member or politician who identified as such.³⁸

Intersectionality – the interactions between ethnicity, gender, age, poverty and disability – contribute to greater marginalisation. Women and girls with disability, particularly those from ethnic minority groups in Myanmar, face multiple layers of discrimination, leaving them more likely to be excluded from labour force participation. This puts

them at a higher risk of gender-based violence, sexual abuse, neglect and exploitation. Australia's engagement in Myanmar will continue to support women and other marginalised groups to participate in meaningful decision-making and will continue to support improvements to access to basic services and needs, particularly during humanitarian crises.

Women have been at the forefront of the CDM, with female civil servants at the Ministry of Health the first to strike in protest. Gender-disaggregated data, available for 3,000 of the 6,000 civil servants suspended by the military, show that 72 per cent are women.³⁹ The first union to strike was the Women Garment Workers Union and during the first weeks of protests an estimated 60 per cent of protestors were women.⁴⁰

Women continue to be active participants in the conflict. Research conducted among ethnic armed organisations before the coup found that while women played subordinate roles in all armed organisations in Myanmar, ethnic armed organisations had brought far more women into peace talks than the military had done.⁴¹ Women were poorly represented in the police force before the coup and continue to report poor levels of trust in the institution. Today, opposition people's defence forces are more likely than ethnic armed organisations to have women in frontline roles, often using them when the presence of men would draw more attention, such as in logistics chains.⁴²

This DPP will help respond to the severe challenges faced by women, girls and other marginalised communities in Myanmar, particularly members of minority ethnic groups and those displaced in the humanitarian crisis. Gender equality, disability and social inclusion (GEDSI) is mainstreamed across the Myanmar program. Several investments have gender equality and/or inclusion as specific objectives. The Women, Peace and Security agenda underpins our work in this sector, informing our approaches to women's roles and experiences in conflict environments.

Section 3: Objectives of the Australia – Myanmar development partnership

In the long term, the overarching goal for the DPP is a prosperous, resilient and stable Myanmar. However, the significant effects of the 2021 coup and ongoing conflict within Myanmar will make progress towards this goal challenging in the near term.

Our work in Myanmar operates at the nexus of humanitarian, peace and development practice. The crisis in Myanmar is protracted, meaning many humanitarian operations are providing longer-term assistance that supports development goals while also working to alleviate acute suffering. Our humanitarian program addresses immediate needs and helps to improve communities' resilience to future shocks. The development program is focused on longer-term improvement and the provision of essential services, positioning us to provide greater support to specific sectors should there be substantial transformation of the situation. There are strong linkages between our development and humanitarian programs, and we work to ensure these programs are coordinated and share lessons learned. We play an active role in donor coordination mechanisms for both development and humanitarian programs and seek to share lessons across both.

Our development and humanitarian programs are closely complemented by our political and advocacy work. Australia's overarching priorities are the cessation of violence and alleviation of the humanitarian crisis, including promoting safe and unimpeded access for humanitarian assistance; advocating for the release of all those unjustly detained; supporting ASEAN's efforts to address the crisis, including through the regime's full implementation of ASEAN's Five-Point Consensus on Myanmar; and dialogue to return Myanmar towards the path of democracy.

Our four development and humanitarian objectives and how we will work to progress each are set out below and summarised in Table 1. These objectives reflect principles and priorities developed following consultation with a wide range of Myanmar stakeholders. They do not reflect the priorities of the current regime.

Targeted gender equality programs are included in Objective 1 and mainstreamed across Objectives 2, 3 and 4. Climate change is addressed under Objective 2, through climate resilience and adaptation of livelihoods programs, and Objective 4, in responding to climate-related disasters, which are expected to increase in intensity and frequency because of climate change. Opportunities to work on climate change mitigation and adaptation are limited due to non-engagement with the regime, the ongoing conflict and resulting access issues. We will continue to look for opportunities to deliver climate programming. Disability inclusion is mainstreamed across Objectives 1, 2, 3 and 4.

We will keep our objectives under close review as the situation in Myanmar evolves. We anticipate these four objectives will remain relevant into the foreseeable future, regardless of changes in ruling powers and conflict status. Human rights, accountability, democratic space, gender equality and disability inclusion, health, education, livelihoods, climate change, scholarships and humanitarian response will all require support in the coming years. We anticipate that the relative priority between these objectives and the way we work to achieve them may change. A mid-cycle review of this DPP will be undertaken to review progress and make adjustments as required.

We work in close partnership and coordination with other bilateral donors that are supporting the people of Myanmar, including the United Kingdom, United States, European Union, Canada, New Zealand, Switzerland, Norway, Sweden, France and Finland. Much of this joint support is channelled through multidonor or pooled funds. These can address a range of challenges, such as the need for flexible financing; dispersing funds to local and national organisations quickly; and ensuring coordination to address gaps.

Table 1: Australia – Myanmar development partnership

Goal: A prosperous, resilient and stable Myanmar

Objective	Objective 1 Support efforts to mitigate conflict and its effects, and protect space for longer-term progress on human rights, rule of law, democratic space, and gender equality and social inclusion	Objective 2 Build resilience in vulnerable communities by supporting health, education, livelihood and climate change adaptation needs	Objective 3 Build the leadership and skills of the people of Myanmar, and strengthen our people-to-people links	Objective 4 Effectively respond to the humanitarian needs of those affected by conflict, disasters and displacement
Outcomes	<p>Outcome 1.1 More civil society organisations and networks can sustain the democratic space, and advocate for human rights, democratic principles, and gender equality and social inclusion</p> <p>Outcome 1.2 More women and marginalised groups are represented in leadership and decision-making</p> <p>Outcome 1.3 Non-state armed actors demonstrate increased respect for human rights</p>	<p>Outcome 2.1 Children in conflict-affected areas access education services that meet their learning needs</p> <p>Outcome 2.2 Vulnerable populations in conflict-affected areas have access to better, stronger and more relevant health services</p> <p>Outcome 2.3 Vulnerable groups have improved livelihoods and better resilience in the face of the effects of climate change</p>	<p>Outcome 3.1 People-to-people links are bolstered</p> <p>Outcome 3.2 Support is provided for the next generation of global leaders for development</p>	<p>Outcome 4.1 Affected communities have safer and more equitable access to protection and humanitarian assistance</p> <p>Outcome 4.2 Affected communities are more self-reliant with more equitable access to education, skills and psychosocial support</p> <p>Outcome 4.3 Communities are better prepared to prevent, prepare for and respond to crises and disasters</p> <p>Outcome 4.4 Humanitarian action is more efficient, inclusive and locally informed, and meets the needs of vulnerable populations</p>
Focus areas	<p>Objective 1 focus areas</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Human rights • Democratic space • Gender equality 	<p>Objective 2 focus areas</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Health • Education • Livelihoods • Climate adaptation 	<p>Objective 3 focus areas</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Scholarships • Short courses 	<p>Objective 4 focus areas</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Humanitarian response • Disaster risk reduction

Ways of working

We will work to progress the objectives set out in Table 1 through:

- ongoing consultation
- deeper partnerships

- transparency
- strengthened monitoring, evaluation and learning
- policy dialogue
- promoting locally led development
- maximising effectiveness and results
- twin-track approach to GEDSI
- compliance with DFAT’s Preventing Sexual Exploitation, Abuse and Harassment Policy; Child Protection Policy; and Environmental and Social Safeguard Policy.

Objective 1: Support efforts to mitigate conflict and its effects, and protect space for longer-term progress on human rights, rule of law, democratic space, and gender equality and social inclusion

Objective 1 contributes to the building effective and accountable states focus area of Australia’s International Development Policy. It does this by supporting CSOs, legitimate national and subnational governance entities, women and other marginalised groups to represent their communities, defend human rights and the rule of law, mitigate conflict and its effects, and take part in dialogues and decision-making processes. Programming will be aimed at supporting inclusive processes led by the people of Myanmar to help communities protect themselves from conflict and violence (including gender-based violence) and finding ways to protect democratic space and chart a course towards a democratic future.

We will continue to target local partners, helping build their capacity to implement programming. We will ensure that there is flexibility in our programming to be able to respond to opportunities as they emerge in this dynamic space. This will include a research component to support local actors, implementing partners and the international community to navigate the challenging context.

GEDSI is a core aspect of this objective, which encourages the participation of women and other marginalised groups. We apply the Women, Peace and Security agenda to our work in Myanmar to support the women’s movement and increase women’s roles in decision-making and leadership. We will support women’s organisations to provide counselling and other services to survivors of gender-based violence.

Funding for this objective is likely to remain steady over the lifetime of the DPP. We expect change processes to be incremental and complex and we will need to be patient and flexible – our expectations are modest. We will review our funding and modalities should there be a significant change in the situation.

Objective 2: Build resilience in vulnerable communities by supporting health, education, livelihood and climate change adaptation needs

Objective 2 contributes to the enhancing state and community resilience focus area of Australia’s International Development Policy. It both supports longer-term development objectives and, like all our programming in Myanmar, operates on the development–humanitarian continuum, given that many beneficiaries will have been affected by conflict, disasters and displacement.

To minimise further decline in SDG indicators, we will target household- and community-level economic resilience and strengthen basic health, livelihoods and education services and systems, delivering essential economic household and community support. These are essential building blocks for Australia’s long-term contribution to the resilience of the people of Myanmar, their pathway out of poverty, social cohesion and Myanmar’s democratic

recovery. Should the situation change significantly, we would be well-positioned to begin providing technical advice and systems-strengthening programming to a new government.

Livelihoods and food security support will aim to tackle local-level drivers of poverty and vulnerability, while also considering immediate interventions to support community needs. Programs will aim to improve the nutritional status of vulnerable households; contribute to sustaining or increasing improved and gender-responsive livelihood strategies; and increase community resilience to shocks through gender-responsive and inclusive risk management, social protection and social cohesion.

We have been a leader in supporting the education sector for more than a decade. Continuing this comparative advantage, education support will focus on inclusive basic education, particularly quality teaching and learning, and provide learning opportunities for out-of-school children and youth. This support will use both emergency response and longer-term development approaches. Australia's bilateral and global education programming in Myanmar will utilise existing coordination mechanisms with other education actors to ensure a comprehensive response to the education crisis.

Support for health care will aim to sustain essential lifesaving health services, particularly for the complex health needs of populations facing displacement in conflict-affected areas. This will include support for global and regional initiatives to address major health challenges in Myanmar, including access to essential medicines, sexual and reproductive health services, and routine immunisation. Continuing to provide assistance in this sector will support our regional health security objectives and limit the potential for regional disease outbreaks.

We will build communities' self-sufficiency and help local service providers strengthen their systems and deliver better services. Women and marginalised groups, such as displaced persons and ethnic minorities, will be a focus. We will also help build resilience to climate change, including through livelihoods and food security programming. We expect this work to continue as planned but will look for further opportunities for climate change adaptation programming and we will review our funding and modalities should there be a significant change in the situation.

Support is provided through proven, multidonor partnerships, assisting with coordination and collaboration across these complex sectors. Australia sits on the boards and steering committees of these funds and is involved in the decision-making process for this support. We also coordinate with the multilateral system in these sectors, advocating for funding provided at the global level to be delivered as effectively as possible. This objective links closely with our humanitarian support delivered under Objective 4.

Objective 3: Build the leadership and skills of the people of Myanmar, and strengthen our people-to-people links

Objective 3 contributes to the connecting partners with Australian and regional architecture focus area of Australia's International Development Policy. Australia will continue to support emerging and future leaders, including through our Australia Awards Scholarship program and the Mekong–Australia Partnership.

Australia Awards are prestigious scholarships and short courses offered by the Australian Government to the next generation of global leaders for development. Through study and research, recipients develop the skills and knowledge to drive change and help build enduring people-to-people links with Australia. Applicants are assessed on their professional and personal qualities, academic competence and their potential to make positive contributions to development challenges in Myanmar following their study.

Australia Awards in Myanmar are delivered by both DFAT and the Australian Centre for International Agricultural Research (through the [John Allwright Fellowship program](#)). Delivery of Australia Awards is supported by a contractor who assists with the selection committee, student logistics and support, and liaison with universities. Funding for Australia Awards is expected to return to pre-pandemic levels following a catch-up phase for the 2021, 2022 and 2023 cohorts, which were delayed due to COVID-19 travel restrictions and the coup.

The Mekong–Australia Partnership and other global and regional programs will also allow us to continue work on issues important to Australia’s strategic interests in the region, environmental resilience, inclusive economic growth, infrastructure and foreign investment, without working in partnership with the regime.

Objective 4: Effectively respond to the humanitarian needs of those affected by conflict, disasters and displacement

Objective 4 contributes to the generate collective action on global challenges focus area of the International Development Policy. It responds to the complex ongoing humanitarian crisis in Myanmar, providing immediate and lifesaving assistance to vulnerable, conflict-affected and displaced people, including food, shelter, water supply and sanitation, protection services, education and health care (including sexual and reproductive health services). It uses a humanitarian–development nexus approach, with coordination and sharing of lessons with other objectives, particularly the work to support service delivery under Objective 2. There is significant humanitarian need in Myanmar. At least one-third of the population is in need of immediate humanitarian assistance. Our humanitarian support is based on the fundamental principles of humanity, impartiality, neutrality and independence.

We will contribute to international efforts to meet humanitarian and protection needs and increase resilience and self-reliance of conflict and crisis-affected populations in Myanmar, including communities on the borders. We will focus on basic needs, reform of the humanitarian system, self-reliance and resilience. A continued strong focus on gender equality and social inclusion will underpin all efforts. Our support will be aligned to the priorities identified within the United Nations’ Myanmar Humanitarian Needs and Response Plan, ensuring coordination among humanitarian actors and effective targeting. Australia’s assistance currently reaches communities in every state and region in Myanmar. We will continue to prioritise those most in need, including an emphasis on women and girls and vulnerable groups in hard to reach and conflict-affected areas.

Flexible and countrywide funding will enable partners to provide appropriate and timely humanitarian assistance where it is most needed, including in response to increases in conflict and climate-induced disasters. Support will be provided through partners with demonstrated humanitarian expertise and ability to reach affected populations at scale across Myanmar. Partners will be required to demonstrate commitment to gender equality, disability inclusion, localisation and accountability to affected populations. In addition to meeting basic needs, this objective will support an increase in the resilience and self-reliance of conflict and crisis-affected populations, as well as progress on humanitarian reform priorities, although the ability to achieve these outcomes will depend on the context.

Section 4: Delivering our partnership with the people of Myanmar

Locally led development

Localisation is at the heart of Australia's program in Myanmar. We support local organisations and actors while creating space for locally led dialogue. We prioritise programs that give funding to local downstream partners and support core funding for local organisations, including women's groups. We advocate to INGOs and the United Nations to increase the localisation aspects of their own programs and initiatives, by including civil society actors in decision-making and allowing local organisations to take the lead in addressing their own needs. Local partner voices are essential to our understanding of the situation in Myanmar and the challenges it faces. The program is supporting emerging, locally led and inclusive subnational bodies and providing systems strengthening to local and community systems.

Threats to local civil society space and operations are growing, including personal security, financial flows and registration laws. We prioritise the 'do no harm' principle and protect the safety and security of local organisations and intended beneficiaries. We advocate for flexibility where appropriate to ensure local organisations can continue to deliver.

Stakeholders identified locally led development as a key priority, although there were different views on what this meant. Our implementing partners in Myanmar provide support to many local organisations – in some sectors they are the only entities that can deliver programming, particularly in remote and conflict-affected areas. We will continue to track our support to local organisations through our United Nations and INGO partners, including via funding to subgrantees, depending on local sensitivities.

While direct funding is not practical or desired by CSOs in many cases, most of our programs provide subgrants which include capacity development components for local organisations and/or core funding. We will continue to advocate with our implementing partners for improved localisation efforts.

In December 2023, the Australian Embassy in Myanmar relaunched the Direct Aid Program. Australia delivers this small grants program in countries that are eligible for ODA. Individuals, community groups and CSOs can apply for small grants in the areas of climate change adaptation and mitigation, cultural heritage and the creative economy, and youth and sports. The Direct Aid Program is supporting localisation by providing direct support to local organisations in Myanmar.

Consultation

DFAT regularly meets with other donors, implementing partners and their local downstream partners. Where travel restrictions and safety considerations permit, DFAT travels to undertake consultations with partners outside of Yangon. DFAT actively participates with development and humanitarian partner coordination systems which involve both other donors and implementing partners. In Australia, DFAT holds meetings with Myanmar community groups, academia focused on Myanmar and the Australian Council for International Development's Myanmar Community of Practice.

Evaluation and learning

DFAT is partnering with experienced, trusted and longstanding development and humanitarian organisations to manage our programs in Myanmar. Based on consultations with our implementing partners, DFAT has determined that publishing details of evaluations would put our implementing partners and their downstream partners and staff at an unacceptable risk and would contravene the 'do no harm' principle. Nevertheless, continuous improvement of, and accountability for, the program will be assured through regular data collection and program assessments.

We maintain a focus on learning within and between our programs. Evaluation findings will be discussed at multidonor steering committee meetings as well as meetings with individual implementing partners, to ensure that the findings are shared to improve implementation. We will also use our participation in coordination meetings to explore opportunities to capitalise on programming in the development–humanitarian nexus and maximise its effectiveness.

As noted in this document, it is difficult to find accurate, recent statistics in almost any sector. Similarly, access and communications for monitoring and evaluation are extremely limited. Our current proposed approach relies on high-level quantitative measures, but this will be supplemented by more detailed and qualitative information to be drawn from evaluations over the life of the DPP.

Performance and results

The Performance Assessment Framework (PAF) at Table 2 provides a selection of indicators and expected results for the first three years of the DPP. The PAF will be updated periodically, including at the mid-cycle review point at which time indicators and results for the second half of the DPP will be identified.

Table 2: Performance Assessment Framework

Objective 1: Support efforts to mitigate conflict and its effects, and protect space for longer-term progress on human rights, rule of law, democratic space, and gender equality and social inclusion

Outcome	Indicator	Expected results 2024–25	Expected results 2025–26	Expected results 2026–27	Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)
Outcome 1.1 More civil society organisations and networks can sustain the democratic space, and advocate for human rights, democratic principles, and gender equality and social inclusion	1.1.1 Number of organisations Australia has supported in the reporting period to strengthen accountability and/or inclusion, including examples of assistance provided and significant policy change achieved, at the level of: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> civil society organisations or systems (by type and level) (Tier 2) 	60	60	60	SDG16: Peace, justice and strong institutions
Outcome 1.1	1.1.2 Number of organisations of persons with disability (regional/national/state/local) receiving capacity building support (Tier 2) ^a	12	11	10	SDG10: Reduced inequalities

Outcome	Indicator	Expected results 2024–25	Expected results 2025–26	Expected results 2026–27	Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)
Outcome 1.2 More women and marginalised groups are represented in leadership and decision-making	1.2.1 Number of services provided to victim/survivors of sexual and gender-based violence (Tier 2)	1,552	1,552	1,552	SDG5: Gender equality
Outcome 1.3 Non-state armed actors demonstrate increased respect for human rights	1.3.1 Not publicly reported	Not publicly reported	Not publicly reported	Not publicly reported	SDG16

a This indicator is annual new partners and is not cumulative.

Objective 2: Build resilience in vulnerable communities by supporting health, education, livelihood and climate change adaptation needs

Outcome	Indicator	Expected results 2024–25	Expected results 2025–26	Expected results 2026–27	Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)
Outcome 2.1 Children in conflict-affected areas access education services that meet their learning needs	2.1.1 Number of children provided with education assistance	84,000	84,000	84,000	SDG4: Quality education
Outcome 2.1	2.1.2 Number of schools and learning centres that have improved ability to provide services	585	629	634	SDG4
Outcome 2.1	2.1.3 Number of educators provided with capacity development	1,600	1,600	1,600	SDG4

Outcome	Indicator	Expected results 2024–25	Expected results 2025–26	Expected results 2026–27	Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)
Outcome 2.2 Vulnerable populations in conflict-affected areas have access to better, stronger and more relevant health services	2.2.1 Total number of medical products (items) that were delivered to Myanmar with Australian support (that is, Australia’s share) under this investment in the reporting year	118,000	120,000	121,000	SDG3: Good health and wellbeing
Outcome 2.3 Vulnerable groups have improved livelihoods and better resilience in the face of the effects of climate change	2.3.1 Number of people reached with new or improved social protection programs (Tier 2)	25,000	30,000	35,000	SDG1: No poverty SDG10: Reduced inequalities
Outcome 2.3	2.3.2 Number of women entrepreneurs provided with financial and/or business development services (Tier 2)	110,000	110,000	110,000	SDG5: Gender equality
Outcome 2.3	2.3.3 Number of people for whom Australia’s investments have improved adaptation to climate change and resilience to disasters (Tier 2)	1,000	1,200	1,500	SDG13: Climate action

Objective 3: Build the leadership and skills of the people of Myanmar, and strengthen our people-to-people links

Outcome	Indicator	Expected results 2024–25	Expected results 2025–26	Expected results 2026–27	Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)
Outcome 3.1 People-to-people links are bolstered	3.1.1 Number of people who successfully complete a tertiary course (Tier 2)	65	49	54	SDG4: Quality education
Outcome 3.2 Support is provided for the next generation of global leaders for development	3.2.1 Number of students who successfully complete an Australian-funded short course or short activity (Tier 2)	50	50	50	SDG4

Objective 4: Effectively respond to the humanitarian needs of those affected by conflict, disasters and displacement

Outcome	Indicator	Expected results 2024–25	Expected results 2025–26	Expected results 2026–27	Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)
Outcome 4.1 Affected communities have safer and more equitable access to protection and humanitarian assistance	4.1.1 Number of marginalised women, men, girls and boys provided with emergency assistance in conflict and crisis situations (Tier 2)	523,000	523,000	523,000	SDG1: No poverty

Outcome	Indicator	Expected results 2024–25	Expected results 2025–26	Expected results 2026–27	Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)
Outcome 4.1	4.1.2 Number of people using either: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • basic or safely managed drinking water services, or • basic or safely managed sanitation services and/or a handwashing facility with soap and water (Tier 2) 	25,000	30,000	32,000	SDG6: Clean water and sanitation SDG13: Climate action
Outcome 4.2 Affected communities are more self-reliant with more equitable access to education, skills and psychosocial support	4.2.1 Number of children receiving formal/informal education through education in emergencies programming	60,000	60,000	60,000	SDG4: Quality education
Outcome 4.3 Communities are better prepared to prevent, prepare for and respond to crises and disasters	4.3.1 Number of people participating in activities to strengthen capacity in preparing for, responding to, or recovering from shocks (for example, disasters, pandemics, fires, floods)	800	850	1,000	SDG13
Outcome 4.4 Humanitarian action is more efficient, inclusive and locally informed, and meets the needs of vulnerable populations	4.4.1 Proportion of humanitarian funding flowing to local organisations	20%	25%	30%	SDG2: Zero hunger SDG17: Partnerships for the goals

Cross-program

Theme	Indicator	Expected results 2024–25	Expected results 2025–26	Expected results 2026–27	Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)
Gender equality	Development investments over \$3 million address gender equality effectively (Tier 3)	80% of all development investments effectively address gender equality	80% of all development investments effectively address gender equality	80% of all development investments effectively address gender equality	SDG5: Gender equality
Disability	Percentage of development investments that effectively support disability equity in implementation (Tier 3)	Results collected centrally	Results collected centrally	Results collected centrally	SDG10: Reduced inequalities

Annex 1: Map – geographic spread of Australian assistance in Myanmar (2023–24), sectors by state



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