Australia is a key member of the International Dialogue on Peacebuilding and Statebuilding. The Dialogue brings together international donors and the g7+ group of fragile states to identify priorities for peacebuilding and statebuilding in fragile and conflict-affected states. Five objectives have been identified—security, justice, jobs, political settlements, and revenues and services. These objectives have been agreed as prerequisites to achieving the Millennium Development Goals. Photo: OECD

Working with our partners

Australia contributes to the development of fragile and conflict-affected states in different ways—but always in partnership. Where we have a long history of engagement, particularly with neighbouring countries, we work directly with partner governments to achieve their development strategies and goals. Elsewhere we work through local and international non-government organisations and multi-lateral organisations, including the World Bank and the United Nations. We often contribute to global programs with many other countries.

Cover: The National Solidarity Program, supported by Australia, is a flagship development program of the Government of Afghanistan and has had success delivering urgently needed services. It is an example of strong, coordinated donor support for Government priorities. Photo: UNICEF/NYHQ2010-0792/Kate Holt

More information about AusAID and the *Framework for working in fragile and conflict-affected states* is available at www.ausaid.gov.au
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These icons symbolise the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs)—eight goals representing an agreement by world leaders to reduce poverty and enhance human development by 2015. More information about the MDGs is available online at www.ausaid.gov.au/keyaid/mdg.cfm

Australian Government
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Australia's aid in fragile and conflict-affected states

To support long-term peace and opportunities for development, Australia's efforts focus on building more responsive states, preventing violent conflict and building more resilient communities. Photo: RAMSI

Australia supports the Mindanao Commission on Women to influence public policy and public opinion about peace and development. Through participation in formal peace negotiations, the Commission plays a major role in promoting peace and ensuring peace negotiations and poverty reduction programs respond to the needs of Mindanao women and girls. Photo: AusAID

Fragility and conflict are priority issues for Australia's aid program. Within our region, fifteen of our nearest neighbours are among the world's least developed countries. The majority of Australia's aid goes towards helping fragile states. Seven of the top ten recipients of Australian aid are considered fragile.

Fragile states are countries where the government has limited capacity, or will, to provide basic services and security to its citizens and the relationship between the government and its citizens is weak. These states lack the institutions needed to resolve conflict peacefully. Few fragile or conflict-affected countries have achieved a single Millennium Development Goal and many are unlikely to do so by 2015.

Our focus on fragile states is considered a defining feature of Australia's aid program. We have a long history of delivering aid in these complex settings and have learnt much from our engagement. We have developed innovative, practical approaches to get the best value for money for our aid program and to make a real difference in reducing poverty. We share these experiences with the international community and continue to learn from others.

Promoting development is much harder in fragile states. Poverty rates are 20 per cent higher in countries affected by violence; economic performance is weak; there are high rates of criminal violence; and transnational threats such as drug and arms trafficking are more likely. As a result, aid delivery is more costly and more complex.

Australia's development goal

The fundamental purpose of Australian aid is to help people overcome poverty. This serves Australia's national interests by promoting stability and prosperity in our region and beyond.

Many of the world's poorest and most vulnerable people live in fragile and conflict-affected states. Our approach to aid in these countries is to help build states that are more responsive to their people, through providing opportunities for development and poverty reduction as well as support for long-term peace and stability.

International experience over the past decade has taught us that new aid approaches are needed. Australia has played a strong role in generating international consensus on best practice in this area.

Lessons learned have included:

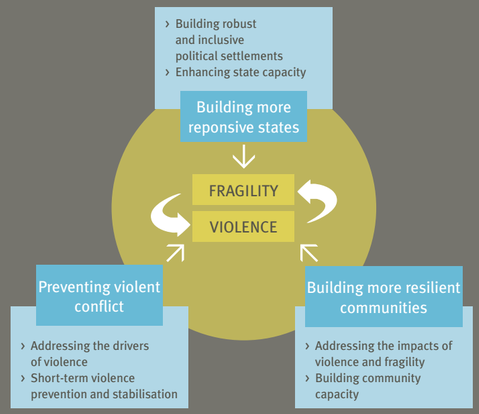
- development assistance alone cannot solve fragility and violent conflict, but it can play an important role in helping develop capable and accountable states
- fragility and violent conflict are closely linked—large-scale violence is more likely in fragile states and can be part of a cycle that is difficult to break
- development assistance will be more effective if part of a broader approach, including security and diplomatic activities, and efforts to promote a thriving economy
- the risk of doing harm through poorly designed aid is high

Left: Royal Solomon Islands Police Force female officers march down the main street of Honiara on International Women's Day, 2010. Although Solomon Islands women's capacity for leadership is strong, there are few women in decision making positions. By supporting women's leadership potential and removing barriers through legislative reform, the Regional Assistance Mission to Solomon Islands (RAMSI) helps Solomon Islands to establish gender equality for all its citizens. Many Australian Government agencies contribute to the Pacific-wide RAMSI, including AusAID, Department of Foreign Affairs and the Australian Federal Police. Photo: RAMSI

Above: A village court in operation in Papua New Guinea's Eastern Highlands province. Access to justice and gender equality are closely linked development issues. Australia's assistance to the law and justice sector has seen a significant increase in the number of new women village court magistrates recruited and trained across the country, up from 10 in 2004 to 500 in 2010. Australia also assists police to respond to family and sexual violence. Photo: Roger Wheatley/AusAID

Below: Graffiti in the streets shows the long struggle for freedom in Timor-Leste. Justice is a critical issue for peacebuilding, statebuilding and development. Photo: David Haigh

Aims and objectives in fragile and conflict-affected states and situations



Australia's approach to fragility and conflict

Aim 1: Building more responsive states

For long-term stability, a strong government needs to ensure security and justice, deliver services and allow political debate. Australia helps states to meet the needs of its citizens. For example:

- rebuilding infrastructure is a critical need in areas emerging from violent conflict. In Bougainville, Australia supported the rebuilding of more than 600km of roads, which also created 200 permanent jobs and 10,000 local contracts. In Timor-Leste, AusAID's national infrastructure program provided short-term employment for 70,000 young people across the country.
- parliamentary electoral reform is critical to the development of an impartial electoral framework. In Burundi, consensus was reached on an Independent National Electoral Commission and a new electoral code. Australia helped build the Commission's capacity and ensured civil society participation.

Aim 2: Preventing violent conflict

Conflict prevention is necessary in fragile states when effective institutions do not exist to manage tensions peacefully. Examples include short-term peacekeeping and longer-term building of formal and traditional law and justice institutions. AusAID and the Australian Federal Police (AFP) support countries through strengthening police, prisons and courts. For example:

- police are deployed to countries including Solomon Islands, Timor-Leste, Cambodia, Afghanistan, Sudan and South Sudan, to contribute to reconstruction programs and United Nations peacekeeping missions.
- in Cambodia, AusAID and the AFP have helped police, communities and non-government organisations to work together to reduce crime rates and improve community safety.

Above: Women sell their produce at a market in Lilongwe, Malawi to generate income for their families. By supporting better livelihoods and training youth, aid programs help to reintegrate ex-combatants and provide women and men with opportunities for the future. Australia supports peacebuilding initiatives across Africa, including through the United Nations Peacebuilding Commission. Photo: Stephen Morrison/Africa Practice

Below: Tunisia, 2011—Children are particularly vulnerable in situations of fragility and conflict. Here a boy stands with six-year-old Saida in a transit camp near the border with Libya. They are both from Somalia. Saida, who is holding a teddy bear, has been a refugee all her life. As an infant, she and her parents fled the conflict in Somalia. When she was eight months old, they resettled in Sudan, and two years later they moved to Libya. Now they are on the move again. Photo: UNICEF/NYHQ2011-0413/Marta Ramoneda

Aim 3: Building more resilient communities

Strong communities, with the capacity and internal strength to cope with and recover from challenges, are crucial to peacebuilding and statebuilding. Australia helps promote reconciliation, economic recovery and service delivery through:

- community driven development, involving youth, women and groups from different sides of a conflict. In Indonesia and Nepal, Australian support has increased women's involvement in formal conflict resolution and mediation processes.
- building an innovative and vibrant private sector to drive economic recovery. In Iraq, Australia draws on its dry-land farming expertise to help improve agricultural productivity.
- developing leaders capable of driving their own country's development. The Australia Awards scholarships educate leaders about addressing challenges including poverty reduction, infectious disease, climate change, transnational security, maternal and child health, gender equality, and good governance.

Changing the way Australia works

Effectiveness is the cornerstone of Australia's aid program. AusAID continues to look for ways to improve its approach to helping people overcome poverty. In countries that suffer from fragility and conflict, Australia will work to adapt and refine its approach. This includes:

Managing risk—a continued investment in the development of good risk identification, mitigation and management strategies, including more frequent and regular monitoring.

Increasing understanding—understanding the context in which we are working is critical. This includes building knowledge of who to engage with and how, and assessing how best to balance risks with opportunities.

Translating knowledge into practice—flexible AusAID processes and structures, appropriately skilled and trained staff and ensuring local knowledge is captured within planning processes.

Prioritising and sequencing—making decisions about where to target Australian assistance based on good contextual analysis is the key to effective assistance in fragile and conflict-affected states. Australia will continue to consolidate aid programs with fewer, larger programs in fewer sectors.

Building institutions and processes—helping partner countries strengthen their mechanisms for non-violent conflict resolution is important. Longer-term planning and commitment is needed to not inadvertently undermine local capacity and institutions.