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# Australia's mine action activities 2011–2012

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Vilaphanh, Team Leader, and the rest of the all-female demining team in Khammouane, Laos  
Photo: Pisay Souvansay

# Introduction

The cost of conflict is enormous, not only through the obvious and immediate toll on lives and property but also in the long-term effects on sustainable development.

Landmines, cluster munitions and other explosive remnants of violent conflict kill and injure civilians long after conflict has ended.

These devices affect development by making land and other resources unusable for growing food or generating income, and blocking market routes and infrastructure development projects. They also hamper efforts to improve health, education and poverty, preventing countries from achieving the Millennium Development Goals.

Mine action is more than removing landmines from the ground—it includes a range of actions from teaching people how to protect themselves from danger in a mine-affected environment to advocating for a mine-free world.

Australia's commitment to mine action is solid. We are party to the *Convention on the Prohibition of the Use, Stockpiling, Production and Transfer of Anti-Personnel Mines and their Destruction*, as well as the *Convention on Prohibitions or Restrictions on the Use of Certain Conventional Weapons*. Australia has also ratified the *Convention on Cluster Munitions* and is working with partner countries to support its implementation.

The Australian Government has pledged \$100 million towards making the world free from landmines, cluster munitions and other explosive remnants of war. The Australian aid program's Mine Action Strategy 2010–14 focuses on four areas:

1. Improving the quality of life for victims, their families and communities
2. Reducing the number of deaths and injuries
3. Helping countries to develop the capacity to manage their own mine action programs
4. Providing effective leadership and advocacy.

Australia's mine action assistance is delivered primarily through bilateral country programs, targeting mine action priorities identified by partner governments. We also work with multilateral bodies such as the United Nations, and through non-government organisations engaged in mine action at country, regional and international levels.

Australia's mine action assistance focuses on the most heavily affected countries in the Asia-Pacific region, while maintaining the flexibility to respond to other emerging needs and priorities.

Recent highlights include:

- helping Jordan and Guinea Bissau become mine free, thereby ensuring that no more of their citizens will be killed or injured by landmines
- helping Uganda become mine-free by the end of 2012 and helping Mozambique be mine-free by 2014
- supporting Sri Lanka to clear more than 554 square kilometres in the north and north east over the last three years, allowing thousands of internally displaced people to resettle
- working in Laos since 1996, we have helped bring down the casualty rate from around 300 people each year to 99 people in 2011
- supporting emergency mine clearance in Libya since the 2011 civil uprising and helping clear more than 125 000 pieces of ordnance and providing mine risk education to more than 46 000 people
- helping 350 000 at-risk Afghans with mine risk education in 2011.

There are many other examples of Australia's achievements in mine action. But with some 72 countries still confirmed or suspected to be affected by landmines and more than 4000 casualties per year, we know a significant challenge remains.

A mid-term review ([www.ausaid.gov.au/Publications/Pages/mine-action-strategy-midterm-review.aspx](http://www.ausaid.gov.au/Publications/Pages/mine-action-strategy-midterm-review.aspx)) of Australia's mine action strategy was undertaken during 2011–12 and found that there was a very positive response to Australia's role in mine action by almost all stakeholders, with many referring to Australia as a 'model donor'.

Australia is now the 6th largest donor to mine action (2011) and remains one of only a few donors with a written mine action strategy. The strategy is aligned with current best practices in mine action such as capacity building in mine affected countries, linking mine action to development and using a range of implementing partners to achieve the desired outcomes.

In 2011–12, Australia provided \$24.3 million to mine action. This document summarises the mine action activities funded by Australia from 1 July 2011 to 30 June 2012, in line with the Mine Action Strategy for the Australian aid program 2010–14.

# Australia's bilateral mine action assistance



## Afghanistan

### Support to mine action in Afghanistan 2011 to 2014

2011–12 contribution: \$10 million  
Total contribution: \$20 million (2011–2014)  
Partner: United Nations Mine Action Service and the Mine Action Coordination Centre for Afghanistan

In 2011, Australia and the United Nations Mine Action Service signed a \$20 million partnership to support mine action in Afghanistan between 2011 and 2014. Australia is supporting the coordination and implementation of activities to meet the annual objectives set out by the Mine Action Coordination Centre for Afghanistan. This includes training Afghan people in mine action activities, mine clearance, increasing awareness of mines and other explosive remnants of war within local communities, and improving services for mine victims and people with disability. From 2013, Australia's funding will help shift mine action responsibilities from the Mine Action Coordination Centre of Afghanistan to the Afghan Government's Department of Mine Clearance.



Jaseem, 12, lost his both legs in a mine explosion.  
Photo: MACCA/ UNMAS/ Afghanistan

We are achieving results. In the first year alone, Australia's support helped community-based demining teams to clear 2.17 square kilometres of contaminated land which directly benefitted more than 3900 people. Australia's contribution has also:

- educated more than 350 000 people
- collected 352 records of mines and explosive remnants of war casualties for entry into a national data base
- trained 1300 teachers to provide mine risk education
- helped 58 students to enrol in three-year physical therapy training courses
- helped upgrade the skills of 105 physical therapists and 50 physiotherapists
- helped provide physiotherapy for 506 patients, 204 of whom were females.



Sheep graze freely in Etmeenan Village of Tani district-Khost province after mines and explosive remnants of war are cleared.  
Photo: MACCA/ UNMAS/ Afghanistan

## Africa

### Mine clearance Mozambique

2011–12 contribution: \$1 600 000  
Total contribution: \$3 million over two years (2012 to 2014)  
Partner: United Nations Development Programme

In 2011–12, Australia provided \$1.6 million through the United Nations Development Programme to support mine clearance under Mozambique's Mine Action Programme. This contribution is the first of a three year commitment of \$3 million. Australian funding is helping Mozambique to clear all known mined areas by March 2014, in accordance with its commitments under the Anti-Personnel Mine Ban Convention. In 2011, there were still 16 million square metres of land suspected to contain mines with the most

heavily affected areas in southern and central Mozambique. Australia's contribution supported the National Demining Institute to free 25 districts of mines in 2012, and will help clear the remaining 17 districts before March 2014.



Mr Albert Augusto, IND Director and Ann Harrap, Australian High Commissioner at the signing of the grant agreement between Australia and Mozambique for support to Mine Action. Photo: AusAID

### Victim assistance for Mozambique

2011–12 contribution: \$103 813  
Total contribution: \$103 813  
Partner: Handicap International

This initiative will produce a comprehensive needs assessment of mine survivors in Mozambique, based upon a representative sampling in Inhambane province. It will provide a clearer picture on living conditions and the challenges survivors faced when trying to access basic services. The findings will be used to develop better victim assistance services in Mozambique.

### Cambodia

#### Clearing for Results phase II (2011–2015)

2011–12 contribution: \$1 995 000  
Total contribution: \$6 000 000 (2012–14)  
Partner: United Nations Development Programme

Clearing for Results is a multi-donor funding facility for mine action. It helps develop the capacity of the Cambodian Mine Action and Victim Assistance Authority to coordinate, regulate and monitor all mine action activities, and to assist the Government's community-driven landmine clearance process. The facility is also helping to integrate mine clearance activities into national and provincial development plans and programmes. Post-clearance monitoring indicates that 80 per cent of cleared land is being used for agriculture. Casualties in the three target provinces (Battambang, Banteay Meanchey and Pailin) were down 43 per cent from the first two quarters of 2011.

## Cambodia Initiative for Disability Inclusion (2010-2013)

2011–12 contribution: \$1 325 000

Total contribution: \$3 585 510

Partner: Australian Red Cross

The Cambodia Initiative for Disability Inclusion is improving the quality of life of people with disabilities by helping address the risks, causes and consequences of disability. A key element of the project is the Disability Inclusion Assistance Fund, which provides grants to non-government organisations to address the needs and rights of people living with disabilities. The program also supports the Cambodian Red Cross to implement mine risk education and risk reduction, such as providing alternative livelihoods to reduce the need for people to work in landmine contaminated areas. Australia's funding in 2011 helped more than 7000 Cambodian people with disability (including landmine survivors) to access disability services including prosthetics and orthotics, wheelchairs, other assistive devices and physical therapy. Mine risk education sessions were held during 2011–12 and reached around 37 250 people.

## Jordan

### Northern Border Mine Clearance Project

2011–12 contribution: \$500 000

Total contribution: \$1.25 million (2009–2011)

Partner: National Committee for Demining and Rehabilitation

Jordan is the first country in the Middle East to have removed all known landmines in its territory in accordance with its international obligation to the Anti-Personnel Mine Ban Convention. More than three square kilometres of areas known or suspected to contain mines were cleared. Australia is continuing to assist Jordan as it undertakes quality assurance work to verify complete clearance within its minefields. A total of 120 quality assurance visits were carried out during the year.



Members of Jordan's all female demining team. Photo: Rohan Titus

## Iraq

### Iraq mine action

2011–12 contribution:	\$200 000
Total contribution:	\$5 million (2010–2012)
Partner:	UN Development Programme

Australia is supporting the manufacture, repair and distribution of prostheses for victims of land mines. We fund the Prosthetic Limbs Centre to provide victims and disabled people with ortho-prosthetic devices, physiotherapy, income generation activities and vocational training opportunities in carpentry, sewing, computing, and livestock herding and psycho-social and reintegration support services. Up to 12 000 people received ortho-prosthetic devices, around 22 000 people benefited from physiotherapy services, more than 9700 people were provided with mobility aids and more than 19 000 people benefited as out-patients, mostly in the Kurdistan region.

### Mine action

2011–12 contribution:	\$1 300 000
Total contribution:	\$2 500 000 (2011–2013)
Partner:	Mines Advisory Group

Australia's contribution is helping Iraq to increase its national and regional capacity to manage and conduct mine action activities and other obligations under the Mine Ban Treaty. The funding will assist the Mine Advisory Group to clear 1.2 million square kilometres of suspected hazardous land; clear 12 minefields and six battle areas; survey and demarcate 20 extra minefields; and identify, remove and safely destroy 100 per cent of explosive remnants of war found within these areas.

## Laos

### Reducing unexploded ordnance risk and improving livelihoods of ethnic communities in Sekong Province

2011–12 contribution:	\$266 802
Total contribution:	\$3.02 million (2007–2014)
Partner:	CARE

This program focuses on helping 20 ethnic villages affected by large-scale unexploded ordnance (UXO) contamination in two districts of Sekong Province. It incorporates UXO clearance, community-based planning and land use allocation, mine risk education, and small scale rural development initiatives to enhance livelihood security. During 2011–12, 477 400 square metres of contaminated land was cleared, helping 3947 villagers.

## Integrated UXO action in Khammouane Province

2011–12 contribution: \$529 387  
Total contribution: \$1.93 million (2006–2014)  
Partner: World Vision

This program is helping to reduce poverty and improve the safety of 24 villages in Mahaxay District, Khammouane Province, affected by unexploded ordnance. This will strengthen the capacity of vulnerable communities to mitigate and manage livelihood risks of food insecurity and unexploded ordnance-contaminated land. In 2011–12, 339 square kilometres was cleared and 2120 items of unexploded ordnance were destroyed, benefiting 13 499 people.

## Local Rehabilitation Services for People with Disability

2011–12 contribution: \$222 179  
Total contribution: \$600 000 (2011–2014)  
Partner: Cooperative Orthotic and Prosthetic Enterprise (COPE)

Australia is helping to provide essential rehabilitation services for people with disability in Laos. Our contribution is improving clinical rehabilitation skills, upgrading facilities to meet increasing demand for services and improving access to services through outreach clinical referrals. In 2011–12, COPE supported 1193 persons with disabilities, providing 634 patients with prosthetic devices and 559 with orthotic devices.

## Support to Quality Management of the UXO Sector

Total contribution: \$2.5 million (2009–2013)  
Partner: United Nations Development Programme

This assistance has helped Laos take a leadership role on the Convention on Cluster Munitions including presiding over the Convention in its first year. Australia is supporting the National Regulatory Authority (NRA) and Lao National Unexploded Ordnance Program (UXO Lao) to improve sector planning, priority-setting and quality assurance of UXO clearance. During 2011–12, a Post-Clearance Impact Assessment Report was produced to help plan and prioritise activities. A comprehensive survey was conducted to track UXO accidents and a casualty tracking system was developed to assist sector planning and UXO survivors.

## Support to clearance operations of the Lao National UXO

2011–12 contribution: \$1 million  
Total contribution: \$3.5 million  
Partner: United Nations Development Programme (UNDP)

Australia's contribution will increase the safety and well-being of people living in communities seriously affected by UXOs by increasing the amount of safe land available for food production and other activities. It will ensure clearance standards are continually met in accordance with the National UXO Mine Action Standards. In 2011–12, UXO Lao released 2938 square kilometres of land which benefitted 466 337 people. It also

destroyed 157 163 items of UXO and conducted 587 risk education activities benefitting 143 447 people, including 77 577 children.



The leader of the all-female Demining team in Sekong (Laos) is giving instructions to her team who are preparing for bomb demolition. Photo: Pisay Souvansay

## Lebanon

### Battle area clearance in Southern Lebanon through MAG

2011–12 contribution: \$500 000  
Total contribution: \$1 million (2010–2011)  
Partner: Mines Advisory Group (MAG)

Australia's funding has helped clear unexploded ordnance and cluster munitions in southern Lebanon. In 2011–12 land clearance helped more than 45 000 people in five villages. We also helped remove 213 cluster munitions and 223 other items of unexploded ordnance from old battle areas, providing local communities with safe access to gardens, agricultural lands and roads.

### Battle area clearance in Southern Lebanon through NPA

2011–12 contribution: \$300 000  
Total contribution: \$300 000  
Partner: Norwegian People's Aid (NPA)

As well as the battle area clearance being undertaken by the Mine Advisory Group, Australia worked with Norwegian People's Aid to clear 716 814 square metres of land

and clear and destroy 1259 cluster munitions. Australia funded one Battle Area Clearance team of eight searchers.

## Libya

### Mine action in Libya

2011–12 contribution: \$2 000 000  
Total contribution: \$3 500 000  
Partner: United Nations Mine Action Service (UNMAS)

In Libya our funding has helped clear and destroy 191 000 landmines and unexploded ordnance, cleared 2650 homes and 75 schools of explosive remnants of war, and educated 153 000 people to help them live more safely under the threat of explosive remnants of war.

## Palau

2011–12 contribution: \$1.35 million  
Total contribution: \$1.35 million  
Partner: Cleared Ground Demining

Much of the unexploded ordnance in Palau is unstable, decaying, and leaking chemicals into the land and sea. One unexploded device on Koror, Palau's largest and most populated island, exploded and damaged a power plant, leaving the area with no power for more than six months and causing significant disruptions to services including in the tourism industry. Since beginning work in Palau two-and-a-half years ago, Cleared Ground Demining has destroyed more than 11 500 dangerous explosive remnants. Australia's funding will improve Palau's capacity to tackle the challenges of explosive remnants of war, prevent casualties, and improve the quality of life for affected families and communities.



Explosive remnant of war which has lain idle for over sixty years has now been found and marked ready for clearance in Palau.  
Photo: Erin Magee, AusAID

## Sri Lanka

Following the end of armed conflict in Sri Lanka, the Australian Government committed \$20 million to mine action and the safe return of internally displaced people. During 2011–12 Australia contributed \$4 million against this commitment. Australia works with a range of demining partners to support mine action and facilitate the safe and rapid resettlement of conflict affected populations in the northern and eastern provinces. We have worked closely with the Government of Sri Lanka to map and locate mines and UXOs, safely remove and destroy mines and UXO, raise community awareness of the risks and presence of UXO to prevent injury, and develop the Sri Lankan Government's capacity to coordinate mine action activities.

In 2011–12, Australia helped survey and clear more than 2.7 square kilometres which is now being resettled and train two mechanics to repair and maintain mechanical demining equipment. Australia's assistance has helped reduce the number of casualties from 47 in 2010 to 17 in 2011.



DASH (a demining organisation working in Northern Sri Lanka and funded by AusAID) mine clearance coordinator provides a briefing on clearance operations to staff in Colombo.

Photo: AusAID

### Integrated humanitarian mine action in Sri Lanka

2011–12 contribution: \$1 660 000  
Total contribution: \$1 660 000  
Partner: Mines Advisory Group (MAG)

This project will survey and clear around 3.6 square kilometres of land in the provinces of Kilinochchi, Vavuniya and Mullaitivu. It will also continue to build the demining capacity of the Government of Sri Lanka. As at mid-August 2012, 1.4 square kilometres

of land had been released back to communities through a combination of technical survey and clearance, and mechanics from the Sri Lankan Government's Humanitarian Demining Unit have been trained to repair and maintain demining equipment.

### **Return and early recovery activities in the northern province of Sri Lanka**

2011–12 contribution: \$1 500 000  
Total contribution: \$1 500 000  
Partner: Swiss Foundation for Demining (FSD)

This project will release around 660 000 square metres of land back to communities in highly contaminated areas in Vavuniya North, Mannar and Mullaitivu districts. By mid-August 2012, the project had cleared 650 507 square metres of land in the northern districts of Vavuniya and Mullaitivu through manual and mechanical clearance.

### **Demining using metal detectors in Mullaitivu and Kilinochchi districts**

2011–12 contribution: \$200 000  
Total contribution: \$200 000  
Partner: Delvon Assistance for Social Harmony (DASH)

This project will release 220 000 square metres of land and enable communities to return to their land in Kilinochchi district. By mid-August 2012, a total of 197 166 square metres had been cleared, communities returned and farming begun. This work destroyed 1041 mines and 101 UXOs and helped 3107 people.

### **Mine clearance for resettlement in northern Sri Lanka**

2011–12 contribution: \$400 000  
Total contribution: \$400 000  
Partner: The HALO Trust

This project will release approximately 180 000 square metres of high-priority residential and agricultural land in eastern Mullaitivu, Jaffna, Kilinochchi and eastern Mullaitivu. By mid-August 2012, 439 320 square metres of residential and agricultural areas in the Jaffna and Kilinochchi districts had been cleared through manual and mechanical demining methods surpassing the initial goal of 180 000 square metres. Clearance also released 44 acres of agricultural land to productive use.

### **Support to Mine Action Programme**

2011–12 contribution: \$240 000  
Total contribution: \$240 000  
Partner: United Nations Development Programme

The project provides technical assistance, coordination and capacity building to the Sri Lankan Government. Project staff helped the government to prioritise mine clearance areas and assign clearance tasks among national and international demining operators. Checks were also conducted to ensure operations complied with Sri Lanka's National Mine Action Standards. An International Technical Advisor based in the Sri Lankan National Mine Action Centre provides training and technical advice to the Centre.



K. Vasantha Kumary is a female deminer working for DASH.  
Photo: AusAID

# Australia's global mine action assistance



The following mine action initiatives were funded from Australia's global mine action program.

## **Mine action research, evaluation and Mine Ban Convention advocacy**

2011-12 contribution: \$1.1 million  
Total contribution: \$2.3 million (2010–2013)  
Partner: Geneva International Centre for Humanitarian Demining (GICHD)

This funding supported GICHD's research and evaluation in topics including land release after clearance, gender in mine action and the connection between mine action and development in Cambodia, Laos, Thailand and Vietnam. Our funding also supported the Mine Ban Convention Implementation Support Unit by sponsoring delegates to attend Convention meetings, providing a victim assistance program and producing a guide to help countries assist the victims of landmines and other explosive remnants of war.

## **Special fund for people with disability**

2011-12 contribution: \$1 million  
Total contribution: \$4 million (2011–2014)  
Partner: International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC)

Australian funding supported the International Committee for Red Cross's Special Fund for the Disabled (SFD). The fund provides physical rehabilitation services in low-income countries and emergency assistance and protection to those affected by conflict and complex emergencies. Maintaining and increasing access to quality rehabilitation services is a priority. The contribution includes \$250 000 for rehabilitation services in Vietnam. In the first half of 2012, SFD provided financial, material, technical and/ or training support to 59 centres in 27 countries. It helped more than 5000 disabled persons by fitting 3385 prostheses and 4757 orthoses and providing 2825 crutches and 70 wheelchairs.

## Landmine and cluster munitions monitoring, reporting and advocacy

2011-12 contribution: \$450 000  
Total contribution: \$1.35 million (2011–2013)  
Partner: International Campaign to Ban Landmines and the Cluster Munitions Coalition

Australia is supporting the International Campaign to Ban Landmines and the Cluster Munitions Coalition to develop and publish annual editions of the *Landmine Monitor* and the *Cluster Munition Monitor*. These reports detail the global landmine and cluster munitions problem, including the use, production, transfer and stockpile of landmines and cluster munitions. The reports track the number of new landmine and cluster munitions casualties, record progress in mine clearance and countries' compliance with the Convention's stockpile destruction requirement, mine risk education and victim assistance. Australia's contribution also supports activities to encourage and assist countries to become state parties to the Mine Ban Convention and the Convention on Cluster Munitions.

## Voluntary Trust Fund for Assistance in Mine Action

2011-12 contribution: \$300 000  
Total contribution: \$900 000 (2011–2013)  
Partner: United Nations Mine Action Service (UNMAS)

Australia is supporting UNMAS to fulfil its role as a focal point for mine action within the United Nations and broader mine action community. UNMAS supported programs in 10 countries and initiated a program to address the mine and explosive remnant of war threat in Libya and Cote d'Ivoire. Continued advocacy efforts, global communications and outreach, threat assessment and monitoring, and donor liaison activities were also supported by Australia's contribution to UNMAS.

## Reducing the threat and impact of landmines

2011-12 contribution: \$209 000  
Total contribution: \$627 000 (2011–2013)  
Partner: Geneva Call

Many of the users of anti-personnel landmines are armed non-state militants fighting internal armed conflicts, often in opposition to States. Geneva Call is engaging with armed non-state militants in countries such as Afghanistan, Burma, India, and the Philippines to encourage them to sign and adhere to a Deed of Commitment banning anti-personnel mines. This Deed mirrors the obligations of the Mine Ban Convention and is proving an effective complement to the Convention. Australia's assistance has enabled Geneva Call to progress and open dialogue with additional armed non-state militants, ensure obligations of the Deed of Commitment are effectively disseminated, and report on the humanitarian impact of landmines.

## Mines Advisory Group

2011–12 contribution: \$163 886  
Total contribution: \$499 439 (2012–2014)  
Partner: Mines Advisory Group (MAG)

Australia is supporting MAG's International Development and Evaluation Team to monitor and evaluate their programs and develop performance frameworks and results reporting in mine action. This will be the central mechanism for achieving maximum efficiency and effectiveness in MAG operations and maintaining its organisational drive for innovation.

## Universalisation and advocacy

2011–12 contribution: \$28 500  
Total contribution: \$28 500  
Partner: Australian Network to Ban Landmines and Cluster Munitions

This initiative encourages countries in the Asia-Pacific region to observe the Mine Ban Convention and the Cluster Munitions Convention. It has produced a book on the impact of unexploded ordnance in eastern Cambodia, *Search of Safe Ground*, to increase understanding of the impact of cluster munitions in the north east of Cambodia and raise awareness of the needs and rights of cluster munition survivors. The book was launched at the Third Meeting of the State Parties to the Convention on Cluster Munitions in Oslo September 2012. The initiative will also include a Forum, to be held in 2013 in Canberra, to promote the accession and ratification of the conventions in the Asia-Pacific region and discuss their implementation.

## UN Completion Initiative

2011–12 contribution: \$1 million  
Total contribution: \$1 million  
Partner: United Nations Mine Action Group, United Nations Development Program and the Danish Demining Group

Australia's contribution helped Uganda become clear of all known landmines by December 2012, thereby meeting its obligation to the Mine Ban Convention. Australia's contribution will also assist Mozambique to declare itself mine free by 2014.



Parts of former Ngomoromo minefield in Uganda already under cultivation.  
Photo: Danish Demining Group