



Tuesday, 29 November 2022

Coordinator  
International Development Policy  
Development Policy Section  
Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade  
RG Casey Building  
John McEwen Crescent  
Barton ACT 0221  
Australia

**Submission to Australia's New Aid and Development Policy**

**Dear Sir/Madam**

Thank you for the opportunity to provide input into Australia's to the New International Development Policy which seeks to set the long-term direction for Australia's international development engagement.

Live & Learn is a network of local organisations in the Pacific region committed to directly disrupt the drivers of dangerous climate change and support community in building resilience to climate change and natural disasters through.

Being localised in the Pacific and community focussed, we recognise that the survival of Pacific Island communities *depends* on the health and resilience of natural ecosystems. Many ecosystems are being degraded at an unprecedented rate placing current and future communities at great risk of food and water insecurity which will lead to migration.

Time is running out for communities to adapt.

The Pacific Community (formerly the South Pacific Commission) forecasts declines in coastal fisheries production due to the effects of climate change are expected to reduce the availability of food and livelihood opportunities for coastal communities. Up to 75% of productive inland fisheries responsible for up to 90% of the protein intake of rural communities are under current decline. A collapse of these ecosystems will lead to catastrophic consequences and undo development gains that have been achieved for past decades. Such collapse is also happening within forest dependent communities in Solomon Islands, Papua New Guinea and Vanuatu where logging and mining are interwoven into the national economy with very few replacement economies being proposed.

Against this background, the Live & Learn Pacific Network is calling on the Australian Government for the new International Development Policy to be *localised and nature positive* placing Indigenous People at the centre.

Live & Learn has been working in 11 Pacific Island Countries (PICs) for the past 30 years on a core principle that “*localising development efforts leads to outcomes that lasts*”. Australia’s new International Development Policy needs to acknowledge the existing resourcefulness of Pacific Islanders, the strength of Pacific Islands culture, the power of local Indigenous Knowledge and understanding local perspectives of what sustainable change looks like. The challenges facing the Pacific can best be addressed by building strength from within and allowing space for Pacific Islands Governments, Provincial Governments and local communities to lead and localise development solutions. This includes the building vertical relationships between communities, and provincial and national governments. Targeted development research underpins such localisation works and most importantly Australia’s new International Development Policy cannot be predicated on a paradigm through which Australia is doing development to the Pacific.

Acknowledgement is very important. Acknowledgement of what people already know, the strengths they have and the systems that are already in place to drive their own development. The new Development Policy need to acknowledge strength in our Pacific friends and work from a position of this strength. Understanding and acknowledging local context should be the basis for any development policy and practice.

Live & Learn is recommending that Australia’s new International Development Policy to be framed through a [nature positive](#) paradigm. With time running out for Pacific Islanders to adapt to climate change Australia needs to place nature based solutions to climate change as a priority of international development cooperation. This will encourage us to think differently about our place in the world. It is a foundation for good governance, long-term stable societies and healthy economies. It is a paradigm that values our common future and provides a new business model based on regeneration, resilience and recirculation – not degradation, destruction and pollution. A nature positive policy goal is important if humanity is to survive the impacts of climate change.

Farming, overfishing, mining and deforestation have now reached such a scale that they are reducing the resilience of the biosphere – the thin veil on the surface of Earth where life thrives. About half of habitable land on Earth is used for farming, resulting in the world's single largest source of greenhouse gases and ecosystem destruction. We are also exceeding [planetary boundaries](#), creating a dual nature and climate emergency. A nature positive approach contributes to solving both. At its heart, the goal is to halt and reverse the destruction of nature by 2030 with a full recovery of a resilient biosphere by 2050.

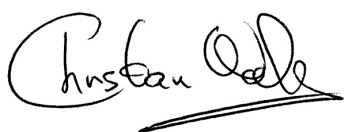
The G7, 88 heads of state have signed the [Leaders Pledge for Nature](#) to reverse loss of biodiversity by 2030. It is also a goal supported by 126 Nobel Laureates in the [Our Planet, Our Future statement](#). More than [700 businesses](#) have called for nations to reverse loss of nature as soon as possible. In the finance sector, the new [Taskforce on Nature-related Financial Disclosures](#) will help direct investments towards a nature positive future. And faith and youth leaders have issued manifestos calling for this decade to be a turning point towards living in harmony with nature.

The [Future of Nature and Business](#) report's estimates that a nature positive economy can unlock \$10 trillion of business opportunities by transforming the three economic systems that are responsible for almost 80% of nature loss: food, infrastructure and energy. A nature positive development policy must include relevant, actionable targets that capture nature's complexity and connectivity from genes to ecosystems. It will need targets to enhance the resilience of the processes that support life – the water, nitrogen, carbon and phosphorus cycles, to name just four. And it must be fair. Without equitable management of the global commons, we will not succeed.

The world has missed the 1.5°C target as outlined in the Paris climate agreement and have 5% chance of maintaining temperatures under 2.0°C target. If all pledges are kept we may stabilise the climate at 2.7°C which will deliver catastrophic consequences for atoll islands in the Pacific hence climate change adaptation and resilience through nature-based solutions is of paramount importance. This must be reflected in the new International Development policy. A nature positive goal is not only necessary and beneficial in its own right; it is a prerequisite for pacific Islanders to stay in their home countries and avoid mitigation to other countries. An important step towards this is to aim to protect 30% of the land and ocean by 2030. The G7 committed to this goal, paving the way for an international agreement with targeted commitments. later this year in Montreal in Canada, when nations will meet to agree goals to protect biodiversity as part of the United Nations Convention on Biological Diversity.

Key leaders of nature positive development will be Indigenous People as they hold extensive knowledge of managing local ecosystems sustainability. With a progressive nature positive International Development Strategy, the Australian Government and the Australian people could lead the international effort to sustain and regenerate the planet and ensure the survival of communities in the Indo-Pacific region.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Christian Nielsen", with a horizontal line underneath.

Christian Nielsen (Executive Director)