

KEY MESSAGES - AUSTRALIA

The SDGs reflect Australia's values and belief in a 'fair go'.

The SDGs reflect things that Australians value highly and seek to protect, like a healthy environment, access to opportunity and services, human rights, inclusive economies, diverse and supportive communities and our Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures and heritage. Our support for political, economic and religious freedoms, liberal democracy, the rule of law, equality and mutual respect underpin a strong, fair and cohesive society.

Core to the Australian understanding of the SDGs is the Australian value of a "fair go". Like "leaving no one behind", it is a call to action for fairness, justice and equality of opportunity.

This is a 'whole of Australia' endeavour, across the whole Agenda.

The 2030 Agenda is not just for and about government initiatives and activity: it also involves the business sector, civil society, academia, communities, families and individuals. Australians are already contributing to achievement of the SDGs through their work in the care economy, by volunteering, by preserving the natural environment and through their everyday activity. Australia's youth play a crucial role given their potential to deliver on the SDGs into the future and their stake in the realisation of the Goals.

Australia is committed to the 2030 Agenda, including the SDGs and the Addis Ababa Action Agenda on Financing for Development.

Australia is committed to the SDGs as a universal, global undertaking to end extreme poverty and ensure the peace and well-being of people across the world. The 2017 Foreign Policy White Paper highlights Australia's responsibility to contribute to global efforts to reduce poverty, alleviate suffering and promote sustainable development.

Achieving the SDGs is in Australia's interests: it will contribute to lasting global prosperity, productivity and stability. The SDGs are consistent with Australian Government priorities and long-standing efforts across a range of sectors. Likewise, the Addis Agenda's emphasis on issues like trade and infrastructure investment are in line with Australia's approach to driving growth and prosperity.

Our development assistance supports efforts to build a stable and prosperous world, with a focus on infrastructure, trade facilitation and international competitiveness; agriculture, fisheries and water; effective governance; education and health; building resilience and gender equality.

Our response to the SDGs is shaped by our environment, governance systems, institutions, economy, and society.

Australia is a constitutional, democratic federation of states and territories sharing governance and regulatory responsibilities with the national level of Government. Local governments have a vital role in local services and regulation. There is coordination and collaboration between all levels of government, supported by a range of existing institutions and processes that ensure accountability and transparency.

The Australian Government has adopted an approach to the SDGs that is appropriate for our national circumstances, with government policy responsibilities and priorities devolved to the relevant agency and level. Other sectors, including Australia's universities, businesses and civil society, are making substantial efforts to raise awareness, form partnerships and address the risks and opportunities inherent in the Agenda.

The SDGs contain long-standing, complex policy challenges with no simple solutions. They require a joint effort.

Australia has long recognised the role of sustainable development in ensuring the well-being of the country and its people. Government legislation, regulation and policy already drives us towards many of the environmental, social and economic outcomes enshrined in the SDGs. As approaches and circumstances evolve, the SDGs provide a framework through which governments, businesses, organisations and individuals can conceive of a problem or objective and devise collective action through partnership to drive progress.

Australia's economic success, reflected in 26 years of uninterrupted economic growth, is a product of broad-scale economic, industrial and trade-related reforms. But we continue to grapple with difficult long-standing policy challenges, such as improving health, economic, justice and well-being outcomes for Australia's Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples. And we will need to address ongoing or evolving ones, such as assisting workers through transitions related to technological and industrial change.

We have substantial expertise, innovation and experience to share.

Australians are innovators. We have a highly-educated, vibrant and engaged population, shaped by world-class institutions. We have skills, experience and knowledge that can help deliver on the SDGs and have built partnerships across sectors and borders to address them. We have contributed our expertise to the development of the SDG Indicators and are sharing technology to help others develop the data to track and report.