

Humanitarian assistance

The Humanitarian assistance component of engagement with Asia25 shows a continued downward trend since 2006, with a modest fall of 1.7% in 2010. While engagement with the ROW rose by 11.4% in 2010, engagement with Asia dominates Australia's humanitarian assistance programs.

Australian humanitarian assistance engagement with Asia escalated during the East Asian financial crisis in the late 1990s, and spiked again following the Indian Ocean tsunami in December 2004 before moderating more recently.

The 1.7% decline in 2010 was driven primarily by a 14.7% decline in Australian NGO delegates active in Asia, as well as a much more modest decline in peacekeeping activities. These declines offset modest increases in the number of students offered AusAID and Defence Force scholarships to study in Australia, and the number of medical staff and teachers working in Asia longer term. Official development assistance to Asia was virtually unchanged in 2010.

The rise in engagement with the ROW was driven primarily by an increase (of 47.6%) in the number of NGO delegates and volunteers operating in those countries; the other items rose more modestly, with the exception of official development assistance which fell very marginally.

Figure 14: Humanitarian assistance component

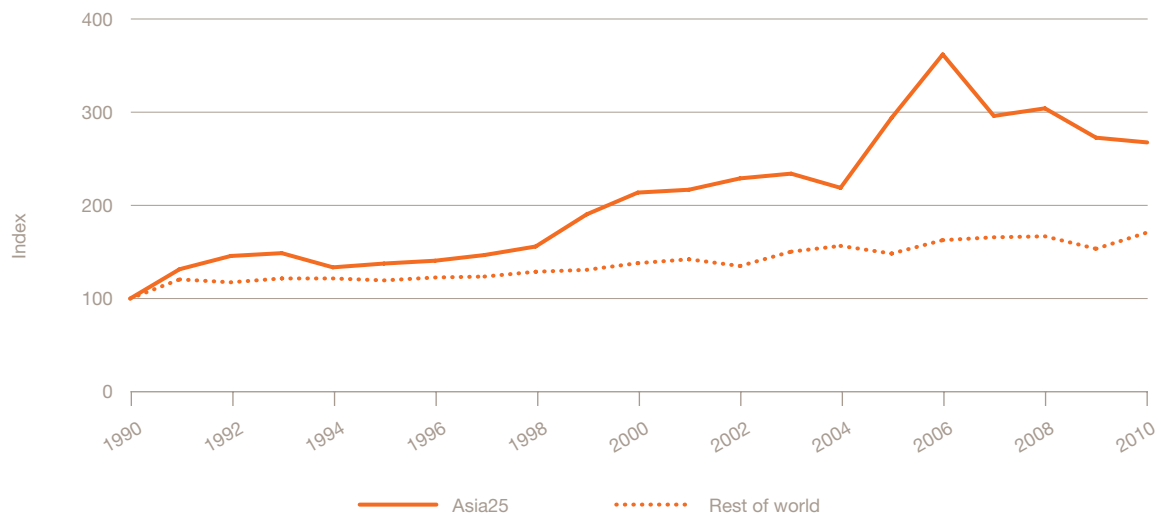


Table 10: Index trends for Humanitarian assistance component

	1990	1995	2000	2005	2009	2010	% change 2009–10
Asia25	100.0	137.8	213.5	293.7	272.1	267.5	-1.7
ROW	100.0	119.4	138.3	148.0	153.4	170.9	11.4

Last year AusAID spent just over \$3.8 billion in official development assistance (ODA) to overseas countries, with \$1.2 billion of this spent in Asia. The biggest single recipient of ODA in Asia in 2010 was Indonesia (accounting for 38% of Asian ODA, with much of this spent on education), followed by the Philippines, Vietnam and East Timor, each with shares of around 8 to 10%.

Following a review of Australia's aid program the Foreign Minister announced in July 2011 that Australia's aid budget would increase significantly to more than \$8 billion over the next five years, with Australia's nearest neighbours remaining the priority.

NGO delegates included in the Humanitarian assistance Component are representatives of Médecins Sans Frontières and the Red Cross. The Australian Red Cross, working in conjunction with Red Cross partners in Asia, engages in projects across a range of countries focused on community health; preparing for and recovering from disasters; developing the skills of our regional partners; and preventing the spread of HIV Aids. The work of Médecins Sans Frontières Australia in Asia, which is funded by Australian donors, is directed towards HIV Aids, tuberculosis and primary healthcare projects in Cambodia, China, Laos, Burma, Thailand and the Philippines.

AusAID and Defence scholarships were offered to more than 2500 Asian students in 2010, with Indian students accounting for a third of these. The next most significant participant countries were Vietnam, the Philippines and Pakistan, which together accounted for around a quarter of all student scholarships awarded. The alumni from these programs play an important role in developing cultural and economic links between Australia and the region.

What 'Humanitarian assistance' measures

This component comprises the data on:

- total Australian AusAID Official Development Assistance (ODA) to eligible partner countries in Asia (by country)
- number of long-term and permanent passenger movements by doctors, nurses and teachers to Asia (by country)
- number of Australian volunteers in Asia working for the Red Cross Australia and Médecins Sans Frontières Australia (by country)
- number of Australian members of UN Peacekeeping Forces in Asian countries (by country)
- number of student scholarships offered by AusAID or Defence to study a full-time course in Australia (by country).