



Australia pledges millions in aid to PNG, Pacific

By Online Editor

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Australian Treasurer, Wayne Swann

Australia will provide \$US480 million in aid to Papua New Guinea next year, making it the second largest aid recipient after Indonesia.

The Australian Treasurer, Wayne Swan, delivered his fourth budget and the first for Prime Minister Julia Gillard's Government, on Tuesday.

The budget includes increasing foreign aid to \$4.8 billion in 2012.

The Australian Government says PNG still faces serious challenges despite the longest period of economic growth in history from its resources sector.

Australia says PNG is unlikely to meet any of the millennium development goals by 2015, and aid will be repositioned to focus on PNG's struggling health and education sectors.

It says the importance of aid to PNG's revenue is declining as its mining sector grows.

Australia will also invest an additional \$125 million over four years towards education programmes in the Pacific.

The funding will help strengthen early childhood education, develop over 7,500 teachers as well as improving the school curricula and providing high-quality learning materials.

It will also help strengthen over 150 local training providers, resulting in an annual stream of over 4,000 graduates.

The government says the funding will help more children to complete primary school, improve learning outcomes and make young people more employable.

SOURCE: AUSTRALIAN NETWORK/PACNEWS