



9 August 2022

Senator The Hon Penny Wong  
Foreign Minister  
PO Box 6100  
Parliament House  
Canberra ACT 2600

Dear Minister

**Re: Australia's Investment in the Global Polio Eradication Initiative**

On behalf of Global Citizen, Results Australia, UNICEF Australia, Rotary International and Polio Australia, we are writing to urge the Australian Federal Government to consider a strong financial commitment to the Global Polio Eradication Initiative (GPEI) to reflect Australia's long-standing commitment to achieving a polio-free world.

We fully support the GPEI's request for Australia to make a new, increased commitment to the GPEI of **at least AUD \$25 million this year as part of a multi-year commitment worth AUD \$80 million in 2022-26**. Given Australia's current investment is set to expire this year, now is the time to once again demonstrate Australia's world-leading support for polio eradication.

The GPEI is one of the most effective global health organisations in history, having achieved 99.9% polio eradication worldwide over three decades. In 2020, the continent of Africa was certified polio-free after the dedicated and sophisticated work of this global health coalition.

Ridding Africa of polio, like India, was once thought to be an insurmountable challenge. But the technical expertise of the GPEI and the consistent support of donors including Australia, which has contributed more than USD \$100 million since the GPEI's inception, have enabled these remarkable achievements in global health security.

The exceptional capabilities of the GPEI were once again demonstrated as the pandemic began to take hold in the developing world, where GPEI surveillance and other health infrastructure were employed to monitor and suppress COVID-19 in developing countries.

Though we held concerns for the trajectory of polio eradication during this time, the GPEI has maintained a high level of control over the wild polio virus, with only eighteen confirmed cases this year — some of the lowest levels on record.

Though this is encouraging news, we cannot ignore the persistent threat of polio in our Pacific neighbourhood. Both Papua New Guinea and the Philippines have experienced outbreaks of polio in recent years.



As ever, the GPEI was ready to respond rapidly to the outbreak, and PNG has since been declared polio-free once again, though still vulnerable to re-infection.

But Papua New Guinea and other nations like it in our region remain vulnerable to further outbreaks of polio. This is why Australia's continued support of the GPEI is critical not only to support our international development agenda, but also to secure the health and well-being of Australians in years to come.

At a time of such global health uncertainty, the eradication of polio is within reach — more so than for any other infectious disease. Successful eradication would mark only the second time in human history that we have successfully eradicated an infectious disease.

We urge you as Foreign Minister, and the Federal Government, to seriously consider an increased investment to the GPEI to foster a huge step in regional and global health, and to secure Australia's position as a global health leader once again.

We are eager to speak more about this issue with you or your office, and we encourage you to reach out to William Naughton-Gravette on 0430 113 345 or via email at [william.naughton-gravette@globalcitizen.org](mailto:william.naughton-gravette@globalcitizen.org), to set a time for us to discuss further.

Thank you for your consideration.

Yours sincerely

**Sarah Meredith**  
Regional Director (Oceania)  
Global Citizen

**Negaya Chorley**  
CEO  
Results International Australia

**Tony Stuart**  
CEO  
UNICEF Australia

**Jessie Harman**  
Director, 2021-2023  
Rotary International

**Gillian Thomas OAM**  
President  
Polio Australia