New Burma aid program about people, not politics

Australia’s policy shift will provide assistance where it’s really needed. TREVOR WILSON says

Australians have already contributed about $50 million from a $200 million aid package to Burma. Assurances from the Australian Government that this money will reach the people most in need are good news for those who know the difficulty of getting aid to those who need it most.

Australia already has a well-deserved reputation for being among the most generous of developed countries when it comes to foreign aid. For the most part, that reputation has been well-earned. But the last few years have seen a decline in the effectiveness of aid programs in Burmese detention centers, and concern about the ability of aid organizations to reach people in need.

One of the key players in this process is the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC), which has worked to improve conditions in detention centers in Burma. The ICRC has been able to reach many of these centers, but it has also been challenged by the government’s efforts to restrict access.

Australia’s new approach is a welcome change. It is a recognition that aid programs must be designed specifically to meet the needs of people in need. By focusing on the people, rather than the government, it is a recognition that aid programs must be effective. It is a recognition that aid programs must be accountable.

Australia’s new approach is a welcome change. It is a recognition that aid programs must be designed specifically to meet the needs of people in need. By focusing on the people, rather than the government, it is a recognition that aid programs must be effective. It is a recognition that aid programs must be accountable.