

**AIDWATCH**

**2025**  
**ANNUAL**  
**REPORT**



[www.aidwatch.org.au](http://www.aidwatch.org.au)



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Front image: AidWatch representatives at the Thematic Social Forum on Mining & The Extractive Economy event *Towards a Socio-Ecological and Systemic Transformation in Response to Green Transition Narratives* as part of the People's Summit in Belém, Brazil

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## ABOUT AIDWATCH

**For over thirty years, AidWatch has been a steadfast, independent voice in monitoring Australia's international aid and development efforts.**

Our mission remains rooted in justice and solidarity. Through rigorous research, dynamic campaigns, and targeted advocacy, we stand alongside frontline communities and networks to expose and challenge the mechanisms of Australian foreign policy and development that threaten their lands, waters, and livelihoods.

Aid/Watch continues to shine a light on the injustices and aggressions embedded within these policies, empowering those most affected to reclaim their rights and protect their futures.

### OUR VISION

A world where structural inequalities are dismantled, empowering all people to shape their own destinies within a global framework of justice, mutual respect, and solidarity—both for the environment and for each other.

### OUR VALUES

#### **SOLIDARITY NOT CHARITY**

We stand firmly for global justice and equality, advocating not just for others but for our collective future. We honour diverse perspectives within the global justice movement and are committed to empowering communities by acknowledging and strengthening their agency.

#### **INDEPENDENT & FEARLESS**

As a member-driven organisation, we remain free from government and corporate funding, ensuring our independence. We embrace a diversity of ideas and remain uncompromising in our advocacy for social and environmental justice. Principled and, when necessary, pugnacious, we speak our truth without fear.

#### **INFORMED & TRANSFORMATIVE**

Our campaigns are rooted in real-world experience, supported by rigorous, constructive research. We envision and build alternative futures, drawing on community-level knowledge and capacity. This drives our innovative and creative approach to change.

#### **ACTIVIST & MOVEMENT-BASED**

We are a member-led activist organisation, embedded within regional and international networks striving for global justice. Our campaigns ignite public debate, encouraging engagement with aid, development, land grabbing and militarisation issues, and inspiring active public participation to reshape policies and practices.

## REPORT FROM AIDWATCH CO-CHAIRS

**The year 2025 saw the world plunge deeper into a multi-pronged geopolitical crisis, propelled by the dangerous actions of the leaders of global economic powers and the deeply entrenched Western imperialism which supports those actions. We saw a year marked by ongoing wars, genocides, and increasing environmental and climate chaos.**

Throughout this, Aid/Watch's small team has continued to be staunchly committed to justice, and we have remained vocal and unapologetic in our solidarity with oppressed and occupied peoples - from West Papua to Sudan to Palestine. We stand unequivocally with Palestinians in their ongoing struggle for justice, land, and liberation. The Israeli state's genocidal assault on Gaza, supported and shielded by Western powers including Australia, continues to expose the deep entanglements between militarism, extractivism, and imperialism.

As part of our ongoing *Just Transition Beyond Mining* thematic focus, Liz Downes has continued to maintain the Transition and Critical Minerals Tracker, which serves as a foundation for our advocacy and solidarity work with communities resisting mining across the globe. AidWatch has continued to participate actively in forums, workshops and solidarity exchanges, ensuring the lived experiences and demands of affected communities are brought to the centre of the debate.

We have continued to collaborate with the Yes to Life No to Mining (YLNM) solidarity network, of which AidWatch is a member. Through 2025 we contributed to several major position papers on themes including Just Transition and Militarisation and Mining. In November 2025 co-chairs Liz Downes and Nat Lowrey went to the COP30 in Belém do Pará, Brazil, to attend the grassroots convergence surrounding the summit. Read below for the report of what we achieved.

Our call remains clear: Australia must end its complicity, cut military and aid ties that serve oppressive regimes, and reorient its foreign policy towards one grounded in human rights, international law, and global solidarity.

As we enter an increasingly unstable geopolitical era, with Trumpist foreign policy thinking already shaping Australian security and aid frameworks, we are reminded why AidWatch exists. We are here to resist the subordination of aid to military agendas, to challenge extractive development imposed under the guise of progress, and to amplify the voices of those too often ignored.

In Solidarity  
Liz Downes & Nat Lowrey  
Co-Chairs, AidWatch

## **CAMPAIGNS, ADVOCACY & RESEARCH**

### AidWatch Research Database

#### **Just Transition And Critical Minerals Tracker**

Since 2021 we have developed, updated and used the Critical Minerals Tracker to document the expansions of Australian mining companies from exploration to production in the name of “green growth”. Minerals covered in the database include lithium, copper, nickel, cobalt, rare earths, mineral sands, graphite and uranium. Over the course of the last year we began to see the Australian Government’s critical minerals discourse shift decisively, from decarbonisation and green energy to national security and defence. Due to this shift, and to requests from our global partners, we added two new minerals to the database because of their importance in weapons production supply chains: tungsten and aluminium.

The database currently serves three main purposes: a) to track where the greatest expansion hotspots are domestically and globally; b) to bring attention to Australian companies whose impacts are under-recognised by grassroots watchdogs and solidarity networks; and c) to trace where federal public spending may be linked to these impacts through the fast-tracking of projects without sufficient social and environmental oversight.

We have continued our advocacy and outreach work based on this minerals tracking. In 2025 we held zoom meetings with people from grassroots organisations, including Madagascar and Brazil, whose human rights and environments are being impacted by Australian rare earths and mineral sands projects. Some of these projects have received public funding from the Federal Government and/or from private donors with significant lobby power at the federal level.

In the coming year, with the welcome arrival of some funding, we plan to make the Critical Minerals Tracker the backbone of a new campaign targeting the relationships between Australian critical minerals policy and public “aid” funding in relation to extractive expansions and socio-environmental impacts, focusing on the Pacific region and Asia.

## Monitoring & Advocating for Impacted Communities

### Australia's Lynas Rare Earth Ltd. Supply Chains via Malaysia



Left: Mounting waste dumping area on a flood prone peat swamp in a seasonal wet monsoon region at Lynas Malaysian plant premises.

Lynas is the first rare earth corporation that has secured multi millions public funds. Firstly, a generous soft loan from Japan to complete the construction of the controversial secondary beneficiation plant in Kuantan, Malaysia, created the first supplier of rare earth outside of China. In total, Japan provided close to half a billion in loans and equity for Lynas to date. As trade tensions between US and China deepened, the US government has invested over US\$350 millions in Lynas primarily to ensure that its weapon industry has a secured non-Chinese supplier.

The Australian Government has provided a total of A\$34.8 million to Lynas. China remains a major producer especially of heavy rare earth much needed for the manufacturing of powerful modern weapons of mass destruction.

Lynas first promoted itself as a transition minerals producer before taking advantage of the politically backed lucrative weapon supply chains while enjoying geopolitical favour to secure both public financing and purchasing contracts from USA and Japan while continuing to pollute in Malaysia where environmental and public health protection requirements are seldom enforced. Although Lynas' Kalgoorlie plant is up and running, water and power supply problems have hampered its productivity. Lynas has largely depended on the Malaysian plant to produce a range of separated rare earth oxides and carbonates, which are sold to Japan and China for their final products ready for industrial applications.

Currently, Lynas is seeking a further 10 years operating licence extension in Malaysia and to increase its thorium bearing lanthanide concentrate from 64 kilotonnes to 110 kilotonnes which will leave Malaysia with even more radioactive-hazardous waste and unchecked pollution and health problems. Despite these, Lynas has boasted in its sustainability report to be an ethical and environmentally sound company. Civil society groups in Malaysia are currently preparing rebuttals to Lynas' proposal critiquing its EIA report. The unstable, flood prone coastal peatland is unsuitable for the plant or its waste storage facilities endangering fragile coastal and marine ecosystems, underground water - which many families are using for their daily uses, and damaging the reputation of the region as a dive and eco-tourism hotspot. Malaysians insist on Lynas fulfilling its original licence condition to remove the radioactive waste from the country as it has limited capabilities to manage it safely.

#### References

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## Position Paper

### **Militarisation is Extraction: From Mines to Missiles**

Aid/Watch is proud to have contributed to *Militarisation is Extraction: From Mines to Missiles*, a landmark 2025 position paper by the Yes to Life No to Mining (YLNM) global solidarity network. The paper does what so much mainstream development discourse refuses to: it names the system, traces its logic, and centres the communities paying the price.

The paper's central argument is as stark as it is urgent. Militarisation and extractivism are not parallel crises, they are the same crisis. From cobalt fields in the Democratic Republic of Congo, to silver deposits on Xinka territory in Guatemala, to gold in the Sperrin Mountains of Northern Ireland, the minerals powering modern weapons systems are being ripped from lands whose communities never consented and whose resistance is being met with armed force, surveillance, criminalisation, and murder.

**As the paper puts it with brutal clarity: "From the mines that feed militaries, to the militaries that guard the mines."**

This is not abstract geopolitics. It is the lived reality of Indigenous Peoples and frontline communities across the Global South, and it is a reality in which Australia and Australian corporations are deeply implicated.

The paper is unflinching about the role of Australia and Canada as states that launder militarised extractivism through narratives of energy transition, national security, and strategic resilience. Australian exports of F-35 fighter jet components, including parts for which Australia is the only global manufacturer, have fed Israel's bombardment of Gaza. Australian rare earths feed the same supply chains. This is not a coincidence of geography, it is a policy choice, and it demands accountability.

What gives the paper its power is that it does not stop at diagnosis. It centres resistance: the Xinka community's formal No to the Escobal mine after seven years of consultation, the decades-long West Papuan liberation struggle, Ecuador's Indigenous-led uprising that voted down proposals to gut constitutional Rights of Nature. These are not footnotes, they are the point.

Aid/Watch shares YLNM's conviction that genuine solidarity means more than awareness-raising. It means demanding that Australian corporations and the Australian government be held accountable for the harms their extractive industries inflict on communities worldwide, and standing with those communities in their right to say no.

## NETWORKING & EVENTS

APRN Biennial Research Conference 2025

**Pursuing the path towards peace: People's resistance & collective solutions.**



Attendees of the 2025 Asia Pacific Biennial Research Conference

AidWatch's James Goodman (pictured above, far left in the back row) joined researchers from six Asia-Pacific countries at the Asia Pacific Research Network's Biennial Research Conference under the theme *Pursuing the path towards peace: People's resistance and collective solutions*, in Kathmandu, Nepal from October 31-November 1, 2025. Across two days, discussions converged on how inter-state rivalry, militarized development, and critical-mineral supply chains shape conflicts and civic space, as well as research agendas that foreground rights, accountability, and community-rooted alternatives.

James presented our AidWatch paper *Contesting 'new' extractivism: struggles over critical minerals, green tech and militarism*, which argues that minerals have been ideologically rebranded as "critical" to serve two converging agendas, the green capitalist accumulation and the military-industrial expansion. The energy transition narrative acts as public cover for what is, in reality, state-facilitated resource imperialism.

The paper also highlights resistance, drawing on case studies of the anti-Lynas struggle in Malaysia, Pacific peoples' opposition to deep sea mining, and the Yes to Life No to Mining network's global solidarity work. It argues that the most powerful tool communities have is the refusal to allow land, water, and culture to be weighed against corporate profit. These struggles, the paper contends, are not isolated, they are flashpoints of a broader counter-hegemonic potential, connecting local anti-mining resistance with the wider failure of green capitalist climate policy. As that failure becomes impossible to ignore, the paper sees openings for more genuinely transformative agendas: degrowth, energy democracy, and regenerative economies that don't require someone else's country to be a sacrifice zone,

## COP30, Belém, Brazil

### Belém Dispatches: Standing with the Frontlines at COP30

In November 2025, AidWatch’s Nat Lowrey and Liz Downes travelled to Belém do Pará, Brazil, to participate in grassroots events and convergences around and within the United Nations COP30. We attended as regional coordinators of the Yes to Life No to Mining global solidarity network (YLNM), of which AidWatch is a key organising member.

COP30 was billed as the climate summit that would centre the Amazon, however, on the ground in Belém we witnessed something far more honest: Indigenous People’s, social movements and grassroots activists reclaiming space and defending life where governments and corporations continue to fail.

Inside the official COP venue, militarised fences and riot shields reminded us whose interests are being protected, the so called ‘negotiators’ backed by fossil fuel lobbyists and big corporations who are recycling empty promises.

From the Amazon flotilla, the streets of Belém, and the People’s COP & People’s Summit, we saw the real leadership of this moment. Indigenous women leading climate demands, Indigenous Peoples and grassroots activists calling out the “green transition” for what it is: the Green Lie. Communities refusing to have their territories sacrificed for extraction including, lithium, copper, nickel, and so-called ‘critical’ minerals. Voices insisting that climate policy without Indigenous sovereignty and community power is not climate policy at all.

In Belém we supported YLNM’s goals to “platform the experiences of our members on the frontlines of resistance against extractivism, debunk the greenwashing, expose the false solutions for what they are, and to build alliances with the social movements of Brazil and the world.”

Left: The strategising space for the YLNM Face to Face meeting space on the island of Combú in the Amazon River  
 Right: YLNM meeting 2nd day with regional contact coordination and members



Events we were part of included:

- YLNM’s face to face organisational strategy meeting on the island of Combú in the Amazon River
- A YLNM-hosted event at a community space called Cop do Povo House, *Building a Post Extractive Future*, attended by over a hundred people
- A forum held by *The Thematic Social Forum on Mining and the Extractive Economy*
- *The People’s Summit* plenaries and fora hosted at the University of Pará, and the massive People’s March for Climate Justice which brought 70,000 people through the streets of Belém in a huge show of global solidarity led by Amazonian Indigenous nations.

We met with existing and new allies working in post-extractive spaces in the Asia-Pacific region, and helped to produce three media statements:

- *Defending Life, Defending Land: Communities Call Out Mining’s Human Rights Abuses in the Lead-Up to COP30*
- *The Green Lie: Communities Expose the Myth of “Green” Mining at COP30*
- *Communities Stand for the Rights of Nature: From Ecuador to Ireland to Brazil, Grassroots Voices Unite in Belém*

From the salt flats of Chile to the forests of Indonesia to the deep seas of the Pacific, frontline communities are holding the line against a system that treats land, water, people and more-than-human life as expendable. The images from Belém say it all. Courage. Solidarity. Refusal. A horizon of post-extractive futures already being lived.

The real climate solutions are not behind fences, in corporate pavilions or military lines. They are in the hands of the peoples of the Amazon, the Pacific, West Papua the Andes, Sulawesi, the Levant, Africa, Ireland, the Balkans, and every community rising to protect home.

AidWatch’s Liz, Downes on the far left with YLNM team before the Peoples Summit march



## PEOPLE & PARTNERS

### AIDWATCH Staff

AidWatch is a paid staff since voluntary-run organisation. Due to lack of funds we have not had paid staff since 2022.

### AIDWATCH Committee of Management (CoM)

Nat Lowrey, Co-Chair	Lee Tan, CoM
Liz Downes, Co-Chair	James Goodman, CoM
David McGill, Treasurer	Barry Lalley, CoM
May Kostakis, Public Officer	Ian Oxenford, CoM

### Global & Regional Networks

- Asia Pacific Research Network (APRN)
- Yes to life No to Mining global network (YLNM)
- Asia Pacific Gathering on Human Rights & Extractives
- Asia Pacific Network of Environmental Defenders (APNED)
- Reality of Aid-Asia Pacific
- Thematic Social Forum on Mining & The Extractive Economy (TSF)

### Global Majority Partners (The Global South)

The backbone of AID/WATCH's work are our partners in the Global South. Special thanks to:

- Pacific Network on Globalisation (PANG)
- West Coast Development Foundation, Papua New Guinea (WCDF)
- Save Malaysia! Stop Lynas
- Sahabat Alam Malaysia – Friends of the Earth Malaysia (SAM)

### Partners in Australia

While not a complete list of all collaborators, special thanks to these organisations for collaborating with Aid/Watch over 2024:

- Philippines Australia Solidarity Association (PASA)
- Degrowth Network Australia (DNA)
- Deep Sea Mining Campaign

## **TREASURER'S REPORT**

Financial Report 2025

AidWatch remains in a stable financial position as at 31 December 2025. Total income for the year of \$6k exceeded expenses of \$3k, resulting in a \$3k surplus. AidWatch's activities were mostly undertaken through volunteer work in 2025, resulting in low expenditure. Its income was primarily derived through public donations and membership fees. A total of \$5k in donations were received in 2025 (2024: \$8k).

As at 31 December 2025, AidWatch held Net Assets of approximately \$28k, comprised entirely of cash at bank, with no liabilities.

**David McGill – Treasurer**

3 May 2026

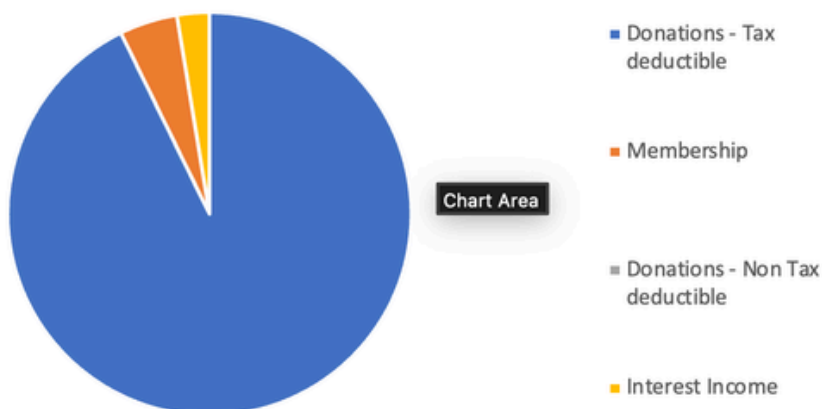
## Statement of Financial Position (Balance Sheet)

<b>As at 31 December 2024</b>		
<b>Accrual Basis</b>	<b>AUD \$</b>	<b>AUD \$</b>
	<b>2025</b>	<b>2024</b>
<b>Assets</b>		
<b>Current Assets</b>		
<b>Chequing/Savings</b>		
Bank Aust -Fund	23,625.41	20,235.36
Bank Aust – Operating	3,197.35	3,197.35
Westpac -Fund Account	1,085.44	1,085.44
Westpac -Operating Account	930.28	930.28
<b>Total Chequing/Savings</b>	<b>28,838.48</b>	<b>25,448.43</b>
<b>Total Current Assets</b>	<b>28,838.48</b>	<b>25,448.43</b>
<b>TOTAL ASSETS</b>	<b>28,838.48</b>	<b>25,448.43</b>
<b>LIABILITIES</b>		
<b>Current Liabilities</b>		
<b>Other Current Liabilities</b>		
Unspent Grant -Full Circle Foundation	0.00	0.00
Unspent Grant -GAIA Foundation	0.00	0.00
<b>Total Other Current Liabilities</b>	<b>0.00</b>	<b>0.00</b>
<b>Total Current Liabilities</b>	<b>0.00</b>	<b>0.00</b>
<b>TOTAL LIABILITIES</b>	<b>0.00</b>	<b>0.00</b>
<b>NET ASSETS</b>	<b>0.00</b>	<b>25,448.43</b>
<b>EQUITY</b>		
Retained Earnings	25,448.43	18,388.17
Net Income	3,390.05	7,060.26
<b>TOTAL EQUITY</b>	<b>28,838.48</b>	<b>25,448.43</b>

## Statement of Comprehensive Income (Profit and Loss)

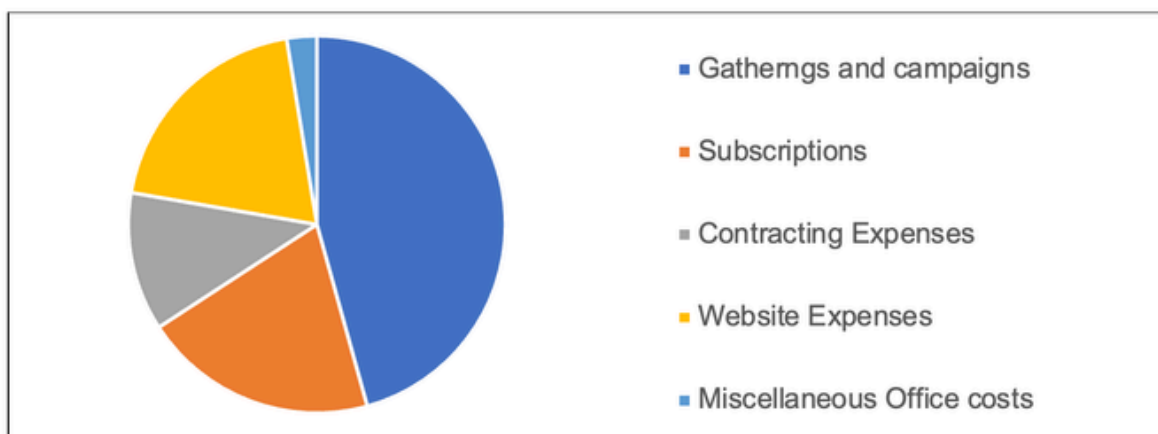
For the year ending 31 December 2025  
Accrual Basis

	AUD \$ 2025	AUD \$ 2024
<b>INCOME</b>		
Donations - Tax deductible	5,486.48	8,217.93
Membership	275.00	275.00
Donations - <u>Non Tax</u> deductible	0.00	840.73
Interest Income	153.36	308.68
Grants - Overseas	0.00	32,084.38
Grants - Aust	0.00	0.00
<b>TOTAL INCOME</b>	<b>5,914.84</b>	<b>41,726.72</b>



## Statement of Comprehensive Income (Profit and Loss)

For the year ending 31 December 2025 Accrual Basis	AUD \$ 2025	AUD \$ 2024
<b>EXPENSES</b>		
Gatherings and campaigns	1,153.57	0.00
Subscriptions	508.32	165.00
Contracting Expenses	300.00	1,421.46
Website Expenses	497.76	575.62
Miscellaneous Office costs	65.14	0.00
Insurance	0.00	420.00
Grant Expenses -Full Circle Foundation	0.00	31,266.24
Grant Expenses -GAIA Foundation, Yes to Life		
No to Mining Gathering and Website	0.00	818.14
Grant Expenses - Tucker Foundation	0.00	0.00
<b>TOTAL EXPENSES</b>	<b>2,524.79</b>	<b>34,666.46</b>
<b>TOTAL SURPLUS / (DEFICIT)</b>	<b>3,390.05</b>	<b>7,060.26</b>
<b>OTHER COMPREHENSIVE INCOME</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>-</b>
<b>TOTAL COMPREHENSIVE INCOME / (LOSS)</b>	<b>3,390.05</b>	<b>7,060.26</b>



# AID WATCH

**JOIN US TODAY!**

AIDWATCH IS AS STRONG  
AS ITS MEMBERSHIP

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SCAN THE QR CODE



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