

# Australia lifts Ebola donation to \$16 million

October 2 2014, by Rod McGuirk

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Australia more than doubled its donation to the fight against Ebola in West Africa to 18 million Australian dollars (\$16 million) on Thursday, but resisted demands to send personnel.

Foreign Minister Julie Bishop said an additional AU\$10 million had been provided in response to a United Nations' appeal for \$50 million to meet needs over the next month.

"The government has assessed that, at this stage, financial contributions are the best and most efficient way Australia can make a rapid contribution to the global response and support front line health services in the affected countries," Bishop said in a statement.

The Doctors Without Borders aid group and the Australian opposition party have called on the government to send a medical team to assist in a worsening doctor shortage in West Africa where the worst-ever outbreak of Ebola has killed more than 3,300 people.

The Australian charity Save the Children on Thursday called on Australia to follow the United States' example by sending troops.

President Barack Obama last month announced 3,000 U.S. troops will be sent to Liberia to set up facilities and form training teams to help the Africans treat Ebola victims.

But Bishop said Australia does not have the capacity to evacuate any Australian who became infected with the viral disease. The government

would not send Australians unless they could be safely evacuated.

She told parliament on Wednesday that Australia did not have a plane suitable for evacuating an Ebola patient. Even if Australia did, the 30-hour flight from West Africa would be too long for effective medical treatment.

Australia was asking other governments if it could use their aircraft to evacuate an Australian Ebola patient to a hospital closer to West Africa, she said.

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