

## Ukraine pleads for cash as Australia ranks among stingiest donors



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Ukraine is pleading for the Albanese government to send cash, ammunition and replacement Bushmaster armoured vehicles as it struggles to repel Russia's invasion, with new figures showing Australia has been one of the least generous supporters of the wartorn nation.

Since Russia's invasion in February 2022, Australia has provided Ukraine with \$US1.15 (\$1.76 billion) in aid, according to the Kiel Institute for the World Economy, a German non-profit. That amounts to 0.07 per cent of Australia's GDP, ranking the country 35th out of the 41 nations tracked by the organisation in terms of assistance provided to Kyiv. The figures include military, humanitarian and direct financial assistance.

The only jurisdictions that contributed a smaller share of GDP were Taiwan, Turkey, New Zealand, South Korea, China and India. Beijing and New Delhi provided no aid at all to Ukraine and have been accused of supporting Moscow by continuing to purchase Russian crude oil.

Ukrainian ambassador Vasyl Myroshnychenko said Ukraine was grateful for the aid Australia had provided, but stressed the war was ongoing and Kyiv still needed support.

"Definitely, ammunition is the No 1 priority. If you can donate some of yours, great. If you can't, please help us buy it from other providers, primarily the US in this particular case," he told *The Australian Financial Review*.

"Australia has a vested interest in ensuring that Russia fails in Ukraine and we hope we can work together on delivering that."

The administration of Ukraine president Volodymyr Zelensky [is grappling with a major corruption scandal](#) that threatens to undermine the confidence of its western allies after independent investigators last week released damning claims that senior figures

were taking kickbacks on construction projects to protect power stations from Russian missile attacks.

Australia last announced a fresh round of support for Ukraine in December 2024, when Foreign Minister Penny Wong travelled to Kyiv to announce \$66 million to assist Ukraine's reconstruction efforts and \$10 million to provide energy to the country.

Australia has supplied Bushmaster vehicles to be used by combat medics in the battlefield in eastern Ukraine.

European countries have been Ukraine's most generous supporters, seeing Russia's invasion as an existential threat to their own security. Denmark has provided support to the tune of 3.4 per cent of GDP, making it the most generous supporter of Kyiv. Estonia, Lithuania and Latvia have also provided support worth more than 2 per cent of GDP.

The most generous non-European countries have been the US (0.56 per cent of GDP), Canada (0.76 per cent) and Japan (0.32 per cent).

Myroshnychenko said the No 1 priority for Australia was to make a financial contribution to the Priority Ukraine Requirement List, a 17-nation funding mechanism that pools money to buy high-priority weapons for Kyiv including ammunition, long-range missiles and artillery.

He also urged the Albanese government to donate de-mining equipment and provide more military vehicles, including Bushmasters and Hawkeis.

"Bushmasters have become a symbol of Australia's support. One-hundred-and-twenty were donated, but most of them have been destroyed or need to be fixed at the moment, so we would appreciate any help with that," Myroshnychenko said.

Bushmasters, which can carry nine infantry soldiers, have been credited with helping Ukraine gain the initiative as part of fast-moving tactics challenging Russian positions.

A spokeswoman for the Albanese government said it continued to assess options for further assistance and was working closely with international partners and the government of Ukraine.

"The Albanese Government remains steadfast in its support for Ukraine. We have long called for Russia to end its illegal and immoral war," the spokeswoman said.

"Australia continues to engage with international partners to bring this war in Europe to an end. This includes the prime minister participating in recent meetings of the Coalition of the Willing."

She said Australia remained the largest non-NATO contributor of military assistance to Ukraine, though this metric excludes other forms of aid including humanitarian and direct financial assistance.

Australia deployed an E-7A Wedgetail and about 150 personnel to Europe from July to October 2025, operating alongside British crews to help secure a key gateway for aid into Ukraine under Operation Kudu.

Malcolm Davis, a senior analyst in defence strategy at the Australian Strategic Policy Institute, said the war had been at a stalemate for some time, with the Russians slowly enveloping Pokrovsk, which would then give them a decisive position to take the rest of the Donetsk region.

“The Russians are making slow, grinding progress at very high cost in the number of casualties. Ukrainians are fighting back very hard, particularly in terms of attacking Russia’s industrial base [through] long-range strikes,” he said.

“But the key concern I have is that if the US decides to end its military support for Ukraine under the Trump administration, then I think the Ukrainian ability to resist the Russians would start to fall apart very quickly.”

In July 2024, the Albanese government announced its single largest donation of almost \$250 million worth of military assistance, including air defence missiles, anti-tank weapons, boots, and artillery.

The government in October 2024 also pledged to donate 49 soon-to-be-retired Abrams tanks, though the full complement has yet to be delivered to Ukraine.

Davis said Australia should be doing a lot more for Ukraine than it currently is.

“We should be looking to increase the amount of military aid we give them, as well as financial assistance. We should be doing more in terms of training and working with them on advanced technologies such as autonomous systems,” Davis said.

Davis said support should go beyond just giving away old military equipment. Australia should also work with Ukraine to help improve the country’s ability to manufacture equipment fast and contribute to training its troops.

“Obviously, we have to be cognisant of our own needs. We can’t afford to be suddenly giving them ammunition and ... that we might need one day. But at the same time, ensuring that Russia doesn’t win in Ukraine is absolutely vital, so I think this is important for us to do more,” he said.

Aside from aid, Australia has also imposed over 1400 sanctions in response to Russia’s invasion, including on individuals propping up Russia’s administrations in eastern Ukraine and Crimea and on entities across Russia’s defence, transport and finance sectors.