



SEEKING JUSTICE: Mt Beauty residents Piers and Margaret Hartley joined forces with other members of the Micah Challenge to meet with federal politicians in an attempt to persuade the Australian Government to increase overseas aid. Pictured (from left) are Lea Davis, Piers Hartley, Sophie Mirabella (MHR Indi), Margaret Hartley, and Greg Brown.

Call for more support to poor

By HARVEY DIKE

MT BEAUTY residents Piers and Margaret Hartley have been meeting with MPs in Canberra's Parliament House this week in an attempt to persuade the government to increase its International Development Assistance (IDA).

Piers and Margaret were in Canberra as part of "Voices for Justice", a gathering of about 270 campaigners from around Australia and the Pacific who want to see the Australian Government act on issues of extreme poverty, and the group spoke with over 130 politicians over four days.

"In times of economic uncertainty, we must remember that it's the poorest of the poor who will be worst affected," Piers said.

"The World Bank estimates 300,000 more children will die each year if the global financial crisis continues, and by increasing Australia's IDA to just 70 cents in every \$100 of our national income, we could

help save the lives of millions of people in extreme poverty.

"The present government's commitment falls far short of what is needed."

Piers and Margaret met with Sophie Mirabella (MHR, Indi), who expressed interest and support for the issues.

"I am particularly concerned about achieving millennium development goals that relate to maternal and child health," Ms Mirabella said.

"I am shocked that annually over eight million children die before their fifth birthday from largely preventable diseases."

Attempts to get first world governments to increase their overseas aid is being co-ordinated by Micah Challenge, a coalition of Christian churches with 140 million members worldwide who were part of the campaign to Make Poverty History, and who are now working together on 'Voices for Justice'.