

SUBMISSION TO IA-CEPA INQUIRY

Overview

The IA-CEPA is a welcome development but it emphasizes the business benefits to Australia and in particular the potential market for primary produce. If ratified it will be good news for wheat growers and beef producers, but what's in it for Indonesians?

One answer is better education if universities and VETs set up in Indonesia. However these are likely to be expensive institutions out of reach of the clever and ambitious from poor families. The documents I've seen do not appear to address this issue.

Concerns have been raised by a lecturer in education at Surabaya University, Anindito Aditomo. See: http://theconversation.com/impor-rektor-asing-jalan-pintas-salah-arah-untuk-naikkan-kualitas-universitas-di-indonesia-121319?utm_medium=email&utm_campaign=Terbaru%20dari%20The%20Conversation%20untuk%20Agustus%2012%202019%20-%201383113010&utm_content=Terbaru%20dari%20The%20Conversation%20untuk%20Agustus%2012%202019%20-%201383113010+CID_1ebbf8fd2169bcf1275b5c7e46a20e8d&utm_source=campaign_monitor_id&utm_term=Impor%20rektor%20asing%20jalan%20pintas%20salah%20arah%20untuk%20naikkan%20kualitas%20universitas%20di%20Indonesia

The idea of trainees coming to Australia to sharpen their skills is also commendable. However I question how prepared will these people be for six months in a country with a completely different culture?

Many young Indonesians have little or no overseas experience, may never have been far from their family and are likely to feel lost. Although most will have learned formal English at school few will have strong command of the language. Good pastoral care must be in place ahead of this scheme, and it must be maintained.

The pilot program will start with 100 exchanges in each direction rising to 500 in five years. These figures are miniscule, too small to even scratch the surface.

The Work and Holiday Arrangement is another welcome addition, though again too small. It starts with 1,000 a year and rises to 5,000. The latest figures for the WHA show it's used by 57,000 people from Britain, 35,000 from Korea and 33,000 from Germany. Why the restrictions on Indonesians?

There is a strong nationalist movement in Indonesia which in the past has opposed food imports from overseas and Chinese labor used on major infrastructure projects. There's a lively tabloid press which could stoke criticism of the FTA unless major efforts are made to explain the benefits to ordinary voters.

There's a roadshow being run in Australia to explain the IA-CEPA to business; has thought been given to briefing opinion leaders in Indonesia? The agreement is complex and could be misinterpreted by the malicious for partisan political purposes.

Submitted by Duncan Graham 19 August 2019

Australian journalist living in Indonesia and writing for the English language media

Books: *The People Next Door* and *Tyranny of Proximity*

<http://www.indonesianow.blogspot.com>