# 6

# At the heart of the relationship - people

- 6.1 At the heart of Australia's relationship with Indonesia is the relationship between the people of Indonesia and the people of Australia. One of the strongest themes that appeared in the evidence received during the course of this inquiry was the importance of the people-to-people links in building Australia's relationship with Indonesia. It was a theme stressed by the myriad government agencies that made submissions to this inquiry, by teachers and academics and by individuals.
- 6.2 The value of building strong people to people relationships in all aspects of the bilateral relationship, be they political, diplomatic, bureaucratic, academic, or between institutions, teachers, students or individuals, has been convincingly demonstrated by the success of the cooperation between Indonesian and Australian police following the Bali bombings, a cooperation grounded in the good relationships that have been built up over time between officers from both forces.
- 6.3 While the evidence received during the course of this inquiry suggests that the relationship at this level is reasonably strong, the Committee firmly believes that there is the potential for further strengthening of the relationship through improving the people-to-people links. Governments have an important role to play in this.
- 6.4 The Committee considers that Australia should give priority at this point in time to two particular areas in strengthening people to people links: namely, increasing mutual understanding and facilitating communication. In pursing these aims, strategies should be used which will have maximum impact in terms of reaching large numbers of people. Moreover, these efforts should be made at every level in which Australians and Indonesians engage.

# Increasing understanding and facilitating communication

- 6.5 Australia and Indonesia have vastly different backgrounds and cultures. Such differences promise potential for rich exchanges. They can also lead to poor communication, misunderstanding and mistrust. Better mutual understanding is in the interests of both countries.
- 6.6 It is difficult to assess the perception that Indonesians generally speaking have of Australians. Impressions are made in all of our interactions by our leaders and elected representatives, by visiting officials, by students and holiday makers. Our mode of being in Indonesia and in our interactions with Indonesians is much affected by the level of our understanding of the Indonesian nation and its culture and complexities. The perception Indonesians have of Australia can only be enhanced if we are seen to be genuinely making an effort to improve our understanding of Indonesia. Similarly we must provide opportunities that allow Indonesians to better understand Australians. Building a relationship is a two-way process.

# Australia-Indonesia Institute

- 6.7 At the outset of this chapter, the Committee acknowledges the role of the Australia-Indonesia Institute (AII). The AII features in much of the evidence received during this inquiry about deepening mutual understanding and promoting people-to-people links. Many of the strategies discussed below relate to or resemble programs in which the AII has played a part.
- 6.8 Established in 1989, the Australia-Indonesia Institute has as its objective the promotion of a greater understanding in Australia of Indonesia and a greater understanding in Indonesia of Australia. Many of the AII's programs are undertaken in collaboration with other Australian organisations across a range of areas including education, civil society, culture and arts, religion and the media. According to the Chairman of the AII, Mr Philip Flood AO, the focus is particularly on 'young people, on the media, on the arts and on Islamic issues'.<sup>1</sup>
- 6.9 The Committee is impressed by the breadth of the activities outlined in the AII's 2002-03 Annual Report and earlier reports. Whilst aware that many of the organisations involved in joint activities also contribute financially, the Committee considers that much is achieved for relatively little funding. From its inception in 1989 to 1996-97, the Australian Government funded the AII \$1 million dollars annually. In 1996-97 funding was

reduced to \$900,000 and in 2002-03 reduced to \$840, 000. Funding was further reduced in 2003-04 to \$780,000.  $^{\rm 2}$ 

6.10 Notwithstanding its considerable achievements, the Committee heeds the following remarks made by Professor Virginia Hooker in a submission to this inquiry.

The projects supported by the Australia-Indonesia Institute have made valuable contributions to improved understanding between small groups of people but in a nation the size of Indonesia, the impact is really minimal.<sup>3</sup>

6.11 The AII itself suggested that while there is now greater knowledge of each other in both countries, 'this greater knowledge, in both countries, is still relatively thin and thinly spread'. It added:

There is still a long way to go before there is deep knowledge in the political, business, media and military elites. Moreover the fact of greater knowledge only partly promotes greater understanding. Two such different neighbours with different political, intellectual and cultural traditions will always have difficulty dealing with each other. As the recent abominable events in Bali make clear, Indonesia is vital to Australia's security and our security demands a much more intimate knowledge of Indonesia.<sup>4</sup>

6.12 An examination of the most recent annual reports of the AII reveals an extremely wide range of projects. Given the importance of building the relationship, the Committee considers that funding to the AII should be substantially increased to enable it to maintain the breadth of the range of programs it supports, to provide for continuity of successful core programs and to enable it to significantly extend its reach.

- 3 Submission No 10 , p 2
- 4 Submission No 50, p 1-2

<sup>2</sup> Correspondence dated 29 July 2003

#### **Recommendation 17**

The Committee recommends that the Australian Government increase funding to the Australia Indonesia Institute to enable it to maintain both the breadth of the range of programs it supports, to provide for continuity of successful core programs and to enable it to significantly extend its reach.

## The role of education in improving understanding

- 6.13 The quality of our engagement with our neighbour is critically affected by our endeavours to understand and communicate. In the Committee's view, the importance that we attach to the relationship must be matched by a comparable level of effort towards building our capacity for an enhanced relationship. Many of the suggestions made in submissions regarding how best to do this relate in one way or another to education.
- 6.14 Professor Hill, Director, Australian Consortium for 'In-Country' Indonesian Studies (ACICIS) outlined to the Committee the importance of preparing to engage with Indonesia in all aspects of the relationship and the critical role of education in equipping us to do so.

It is imperative that Australia invest now to ensure that the community at large is optimally prepared for engagement with Indonesia at all levels and in all aspects of economic, political, cultural and social life. Australia must develop both the *specialist* expertise in all relevant areas of the bilateral relationship in addition to a *broadranging* community understanding of, and appreciation for, Indonesia. We need both fluent speakers of Indonesian, and a broad yet differentiated knowledge of the societies and cultures of our region amongst the general population. To achieve this, the government must designate the study of Indonesia and Indonesian language as a *strategic national priority*, and allocate funds for teaching and research accordingly.

Such skills and understanding must be deeply rooted in our primary and secondary education. It is at this level that the breadth must be provided, through stimulating, accessible and carefully graded materials and teaching skills to support studies of Indonesia and Indonesian language. These skills must be enhanced and brought to fruition in *tertiary institutions*, which must provide the advanced, more specialised, research-based expertise in both Indonesian language and communities, as well as lesser Indonesian regional languages of strategic or scholarly importance.<sup>5</sup>

- 6.15 Maintaining Australia's expertise on Indonesia and expanding the level of understanding about Indonesia through research and education is crucial if Australia is to continue building its relationship with Indonesia over the long term. The Committee considers Australia's commitment to this should be demonstrated by:
  - continuing support for Indonesian studies in Universities and expanding research opportunities;
  - restoring NALSAS; and
  - increasing opportunities for Australian students to study in Indonesia.

#### Support for Indonesian studies in universities

- 6.16 Australia has over the years built a considerable body of knowledge and expertise about Indonesia, knowledge that is drawn on to inform much of our engagement at formal and institutional levels.
- 6.17 Of particular note is the Indonesia Project, an international centre of research and graduate training based in the Division of Economics at the Australian National University. Established in 1965, the highly respected project monitors and analyses recent economic developments in Indonesia. The Project obtains its core funding from the Australian National University and also receives an annual grant from the Australian Government through AusAID.<sup>6</sup> The Committee considers that this program is of immense value.
- 6.18 Commenting on the breadth of experience of the members of the Indonesia Project appearing before the Committee, Professor Mackie pointed out that it had taken 'thirty years or more' to build up this kind of expertise and stressed that 'if there is a danger that Indonesian studies is crumbling in parts of Australia, it is not now that the price will be paid: it is in 10, 20 or 30 years'.<sup>7</sup>
- 6.19 On a similar note, Professor Hill from Murdoch University, reported that many of the 'leading lights' of the 1970s had either passed away or retired while some of the 'next generation' scholars had been 'lured overseas by

<sup>5</sup> Submission No 53, p 2

<sup>6</sup> Http://rspas.anu.edu.au/economics/ip/

<sup>7</sup> Transcript of evidence, Thursday 1 May 2003, p 207 (Professor Mackie)

better funding and research opportunities'. Citing results of the 2002 assessment of the state of Indonesian Studies in Australia report by the Asian Studies Association of Australia (ASAA), *Maximising Australia's Asia Knowledge: Repositioning and Renewal of a National Asset*, Hill stated:

Indonesian studies is undergoing a grave decline around the country, with staff and student numbers contracting or stagnant in many institutions. While there are some upswings, the ASAA Report documents plummeting enrolment figures in key universities since 1998. In some of these, enrolments have roughly halved since 1997 and 2001! Given the overwhelming geo-political and economic significance of Indonesia for Australia's future wellbeing and security, this represents extremely poor management of our intellectual resources.<sup>8</sup>

6.20 Pointing out that Indonesian studies was not included in the full research priorities announced by the Australian Research Council in December 2002, Professor Hill made a case for doing so.

On that point, these four research priorities include, first, safeguarding Australia. But despite that title and the concern within it for issues of terrorism and invasive diseases, pests and those sorts of perceived threats to Australia, there is really no recognition within that priority area that Australia's security wellbeing hinges on us having the knowledge within the Australian community to be able to work with and understand Indonesia as quite obviously the throughput or the exit point for a variety of influences that would come to Australia, such as boat people, smuggling and various kinds of issues. It would not be an extremely huge departure for those strategic areas to have included a recognition of regional knowledge – that is, knowledge of South-East Asia and Indonesia specifically – as contributing part of the safeguarding of Australia to be included in that fourth research priority.<sup>9</sup>

6.21 Professor Hill suggested that Indonesian Studies be designated a strategic national priority and that the Australia Research Council and the Department of Education, Science and Training be instructed to recognise this in prioritising funding for both research and teaching.<sup>10</sup>

<sup>8</sup> Submission No 53, p 3

<sup>9</sup> Transcript of evidence, Monday 23 June 2003, p 345 (Professor Hill)

<sup>10</sup> Submission No 53, p 6

#### **Recommendation 18**

The Committee recommends that Indonesian Studies be designated a strategic national priority and that the Australia Research Council and the Department of Education, Science and Training be requested to recognise this in prioritising funding for both research and teaching.

#### NALSAS (National Asian Languages and Studies in Australian Schools)

- 6.22 According to the Asia Education Foundation, 'Indonesia, the 4<sup>th</sup> most populous nation offers a rich source for the study of the arts, Islam, cultural diversity, post-colonial society etc - an education that does not address study of these cultures is intellectually limited and euro-centric'.<sup>11</sup>
- 6.23 A key issue that emerged during this inquiry was the impact of the cessation of Commonwealth funding for NALSAS on the study of Indonesian language and related studies. Nearly 38 percent of submissions received in the inquiry expressed a view on this issue. The Committee has therefore gone to some trouble to explore this program further and sets out a summary of its findings below.

#### Background

6.24 In February 1994 the Council of Australian Governments (COAG) considered the report *Asian Languages and Australia's Economic Future,* prepared by the COAG Working Group on a National Asian Languages/Studies Strategy for Australian Schools.<sup>12</sup> This Report emphasised that a national Asian languages and cultures strategy should be developed in the context of second language provision, and put forward a 15 year plan aimed at producing an Asia-literate generation to boost Australia's international and regional economic performance.<sup>13</sup> This report received bipartisan agreement across all levels of state and federal

<sup>11</sup> Submission 43, p 4

<sup>12</sup> Council of Australian Governments Working Group on Asian Languages and Culture, *Asian Languages and Australia's Economic Future*. Report Prepared for the Council of Australian Governments on a Proposed National Asian Languages/Studies Strategy for Australian Schools. Brisbane, Queensland Government Printer, 1994.

<sup>13</sup> D Henderson, 'Meeting the National Interest through Asia Literacy – An Overview of the major stages and debates 2003', *Asian Studies Review*, vol. 27, no. 1, March 2003, pp.23-53.

government, and although it stated that a parallel investment was needed in Asian studies, it did not afford equal emphasis to these studies.<sup>14</sup>

- 6.25 The Commonwealth then allocated funding for the 1995-1998 quadrennium for its share (50%, matched by States and Territories) of the National Asian Languages and Studies in Australian Schools (NALSAS) strategy. The implementation of the strategy began in 1995. The Strategy aimed to support enhanced and expanded Asian languages and Asian studies provision through all school systems in order to improve Australia's capacity and preparedness to interact internationally, in particular, with key Asian countries.<sup>15</sup>
- 6.26 The National Asian Languages and Studies in Australian Schools Strategy was part of the Schools Languages Programme (somewhat confusingly also referred to as the LOTE in Schools program), which also included the Languages Other than English (LOTE) Element.<sup>16</sup>
- 6.27 NALSAS funding was paid to government education authorities, Catholic Education Commissions and Associations of Independent Schools. Funds were allocated on a per capita basis within the amount specified in the Act, and were to be applied by education authorities to enhance and expand the targeted Asian languages and Asian studies provision for school students.<sup>17</sup>
- 6.28 The Federal Government contributed around \$210 million to the NALSAS Strategy from 1994 to 2002.<sup>18</sup> The distribution of those funds between the various elements of the Commonwealth Languages Program is depicted in the table below.

<sup>14</sup> D Henderson, 'Meeting the National Interest through Asia Literacy – An Overview of the major stages and debates 2003', *Asian Studies Review*, vol. 27, no. 1, March 2003, pp.23-53.

<sup>15</sup> Department of Education, Science and Training 2004, *National Asian Languages and Studies in Australian Schools Strategy*, <a href="http://www.curriculum.edu.au/nalsas/about.htm">http://www.curriculum.edu.au/nalsas/about.htm</a>

<sup>16</sup> The Australian Government provided a total of \$52 083 000 under the School Languages Programme for 2002. (Department of Education, Science and Training, *Financial Assistance Granted To Each State In Respect Of 2002 States Grants (Primary and Secondary Education Assistance) Act 2000*, Commonwealth of Australia, Canberra, 2003. DEST Number: 6568RESD03A)

<sup>17</sup> Department of Education, Science and Training. *Financial Assistance Granted To Each State In Respect Of 2002 States Grants (Primary and Secondary Education Assistance) Act 2000,* Commonwealth of Australia, Canberra, 2003. DEST Number: 6568RESD03A

<sup>18</sup> Submission No 120, p 1

Year	NALSAS	Community Languages Element	Priority Languages Element	LOTE
	\$ million	\$ million	\$ million	\$ million
1994-1995	2.80	10.74	3.7 (approx)	
1995-1996	10.22	10. 95	4.00	
1996-1997	10.06	11.20	4.08	
1997	30.44	12.06	4.49	
1998	21.56	12.61	4.70	
1999	44.44	13.30	4.95	
2000	29.96	14.28	5.32	
2001	30.01			20.57
2002	30.43			21.65
TOTAL	209.91	85.14	31.24	42.12

Table 6.1Commonwealth funding to the School Languages Program as a whole, and the<br/>breakdown of those funds to the LOTE component for the duration of the NALSAS program, 1994-<br/>2002

Source Submission No 120, p 1 DEST

6.29 The review of the Languages Other than English Program found that 'State and Territory contributions to NALSAS at least matched that of the Commonwealth, and in the larger state government systems were much more than that."<sup>19</sup>

6.30 A NALSAS Taskforce was set up by the Ministerial Council on Education, Employment, Training and Youth Affairs (MCEETYA) in late 1994 to "develop, support and monitor implementation of the strategy".<sup>20</sup> The Taskforce was a cooperative initiative between the Commonwealth Government, State and Territory Governments and non-government education authorities. The responsibility for implementation of the strategy rested with the state and territory educational authorities in the partnership.<sup>21</sup>

6.31 Using regional forecasts, Indonesian was identified as one of four Asian languages of most benefit to Australia's economic future, and therefore to

<sup>19</sup> Erebus Consulting Partners, *Review of the Commonwealth Languages Other Than English Programme*, a report to the Department of Education, Science and Training, December 2002, p.131

<sup>20</sup> NALSAS Strategy Phase 2 Strategic Plan, 1999-2002, p. 1 (available from the DEST website at <a href="http://www.curriculum.edu.au/nalsas/pdf/strategy.pdf">http://www.curriculum.edu.au/nalsas/pdf/strategy.pdf</a>>)

<sup>21</sup> NALSAS, Partnership for Change: The NALSAS Strategy – interim progress report of the first quadrennium of the NALSAS strategy 1995-1998. MCEETYA, Melbourne, 1998, p. 3

be given priority in Australian schools.<sup>22</sup> The identified languages were to be given priority in Australian schools through to the year 2006 with participation targets set in line with that timeframe.

- 6.32 The Commonwealth initially provided funding for the first four years of the strategy with further funding to be subject to evaluation. <sup>23</sup> Five percent of the Commonwealth funds were used for national collaborative projects and support for the NALSAS secretariat, while the balance was provided to education authorities on a per capita basis.<sup>24</sup> According to MCEETYA, this provision of funds to national collaborative activity and projects to encourage "partnership activity among jurisdictions and the non-duplication of projects or initiatives addressing the national strategy"<sup>25</sup> has provided a cost-effective way of developing products with national significance and applicability.
- 6.33 In 1996, continued government support for the NALSAS program was expressed, and in 1999 a further \$90 million was allocated to be spent by 2002.<sup>26</sup> According to DEST, the 1999-2000 Portfolio Budget Papers stated that the Australian Government commitment was for three years and 'that the Commonwealth will have provided funding under the Strategy for seven years by which time it should have become self-sustaining'.<sup>27</sup>
- 6.34 On 2 May 2002, the Office of the Minister for Education, Science and Training, Dr Brendan Nelson, confirmed that there would be no further provision of Commonwealth money under the NALSAS strategy in the 2002 budget.<sup>28</sup>
- 6.35 The Australian Government continues to support Indonesian language learning through the remainder of its School Languages Programme which assists to improve the learning of Asian, European and Indigenous languages in schools and communities. For the period 2001 – 2004, the

<sup>22</sup> The other three priority languages identified were Chinese (Mandarin), Japanese and Korean.

<sup>23</sup> NALSAS, Partnership for Change: The NALSAS Strategy – interim progress report of the first quadrennium of the NALSAS strategy 1995-1998. MCEETYA, Melbourne, 1998, p. 2

<sup>24</sup> NALSAS Strategy Phase 2 Strategic Plan, 1999-2002, p. 1 (available from the DEST website at <a href="http://www.curriculum.edu.au/nalsas/pdf/strategy.pdf">http://www.curriculum.edu.au/nalsas/pdf/strategy.pdf</a>>)

<sup>25</sup> NALSAS, Partnership for Change: The NALSAS Strategy – interim progress report of the first quadrennium of the NALSAS strategy 1995-1998. MCEETYA, Melbourne, 1998, p. 3

<sup>26</sup> C Mackerras, 'The end of NALSAS but not of Asian languages study' *Australian Language Matters*, Vol. 10 no. 2 April/May/June 2002

<sup>27</sup> Submission 120, p 1

<sup>28</sup> C Mackerras, 'The end of NALSAS but not of Asian languages study' *Australian Language Matters*, Vol. 10 no. 2 April/May/June 2002

Australian Government is providing over \$20 million per annum for the School Languages Programme.<sup>29</sup>

- 6.36 The DEST submission outlines the following as other areas of continued funding support for language teaching:<sup>30</sup>
  - \$4 million over the next four years for the new Endeavour Language Teacher Fellowships (intensive, in-country study programs for languages teachers);<sup>31</sup>
  - \$1.2 million over the next three years to improve the quality of Asian language teaching through a national professional development program for teachers;
  - \$3 million towards the development of online curriculum resources for the teaching of Indonesian and two other Asian languages, through the Le@rning Federation, a joint initiative of the Commonwealth, State and Territory and New Zealand Governments; and
  - \$1.2 million annual core grant to the Asia Education Foundation to work with schools to support studies of Asia across all curriculum areas.

#### **Evaluations and Value of NALSAS**

6.37 In discussing the value of NALSAS, DEST asserted that:

As well as redressing an imbalance between European and Asian languages in schools, the Strategy contributed to a significant increase in the study of the priority NALSAS languages, (including Indonesian) at primary and secondary school levels. It also contributed to deeper knowledge of Asian cultures.<sup>32</sup>

#### Partnership for Change Report

6.38 The report on the first quadrennium of the NALSAS strategy (1995-1998), *Partnership for Change*<sup>33</sup> highlighted significant activities and achievements in the first four years of the NALSAS Strategy. The report noted that student participation in Asian languages had increased by more than 50%

<sup>29</sup> Submission 115, p 3

<sup>30</sup> Submission 115, p 3

<sup>31</sup> Indonesia is not one of the countries of destination for Fellowship recipients, for January 2004 because of current DFAT travel advice to Indonesia

<sup>32</sup> Submission 115, p 2

<sup>33</sup> NALSAS, Partnership for Change: The NALSAS Strategy – interim progress report of the first quadrennium of the NALSAS strategy 1995-1998. MCEETYA, Melbourne, 1998

from 1995 to 1997 and that approximately 2 500 teachers had been trained in Asian languages.<sup>34</sup> Figure 1 shows the increase in students studying Indonesian over this period.



Figure 6.1 Total Student Enrolments: NALSAS Priority Languages



- 6.39 At the time of the report, the Commonwealth had agreed to continue its funding at the rate of approximately \$30m a year to the end of 2002.<sup>35</sup>
- 6.40 The NALSAS Strategy Phase 2 Strategic Plan for the quadrennium 1999–2002 was developed following the release of the Partnership for Change report and focussed on the four strategic areas of curriculum delivery, teacher quality and supply, strategic alliances, and outcomes and accountability.<sup>36</sup>

<sup>34</sup> NALSAS, Partnership for Change: The NALSAS Strategy – interim progress report of the first quadrennium of the NALSAS strategy 1995-1998. MCEETYA, Melbourne, 1998 p.9

<sup>35</sup> NALSAS Strategy Phase 2 Strategic Plan, 1999-2002, p. 1 (available from the DEST website at <http://www.curriculum.edu.au/nalsas/pdf/strategy.pdf>)

<sup>36</sup> NALSAS Strategy Phase 2 Strategic Plan, 1999-2002, p. 2 (available from the DEST website at <http://www.curriculum.edu.au/nalsas/pdf/strategy.pdf>)

Evaluation of the National Asian Languages and Studies in Australian Schools Strategy Report

- 6.41 In January 2002 Erebus Consulting Partners released their report to the Commonwealth Department of Education, Science and Training, *Evaluation of the National Asian Languages and Studies in Australian Schools Strategy*. This report, commissioned by DEST, was an evaluation of progress in the second quadrennium (1999 – 2002) of the NALSAS Strategy.<sup>37</sup>
- 6.42 This report found that NALSAS funding had contributed to achievements including:
  - an increase in the number of schools teaching a NALSAS language;
  - a considerable increase in the number of students studying a NALSAS targeted language;
  - an increase in the number of teachers teaching an Asian language and upgrading their qualifications to teach an Asian language; and
  - an increase in the number of schools and teachers including studies of Asia in their curriculum.<sup>38</sup>
- 6.43 According to the report, State and Territory stakeholders believed the program would wither and die within a very short time if program funding was not continued. Of critical importance were the training and professional development programs for teachers.
- 6.44 Further, this report asserted that the program could not continue without its Commonwealth funding:

The overall conclusion to be drawn from the evidence available to this evaluation is that, while significant progress continues to be made towards the achievement of the NALSAS agenda, the program is not yet at a stage where continued implementation would be sustained by jurisdictions without continued Commonwealth funding support.<sup>39</sup>

<sup>37</sup> Erebus Consulting Partners. *Evaluation of the national Asian languages and studies in Australian schools strategy*, a report to the Department of Education, Science and Training, January 2002

<sup>38</sup> Erebus Consulting Partners. Evaluation of the national Asian languages and studies in Australian schools strategy, a report to the Department of Education, Science and Training, January 2002, p. xii

<sup>39</sup> Erebus Consulting Partners. Evaluation of the national Asian languages and studies in Australian schools strategy, a report to the Department of Education, Science and Training, January 2002, p. xii

- 6.45 The report also claims that a greater loss than a reduction in funds could arise from the symbolic loss of status that would occur if Asian language and Asian studies were no longer a national priority area.<sup>40</sup>
- 6.46 However the report also suggested that continued funding to support the program, as it was at the time funding ceased, is not justified as "it should not be assumed that the work is stable or complete". In fact the evidence collected in the development of the evaluation report suggests that there are "few reasons why any school or school sector could not teach studies of Asia or an Asian language in some way if they chose to do so".<sup>41</sup>
- 6.47 The report argued that the rationale (and need for) the NALSAS program needed re-examination and restatement in order to bring the Strategy to a point where the outcomes would be self-sustaining, rather than remaining the same at the end of another cycle of funding.<sup>42</sup>

... there should be no expectation that a project such as this should continue indefinitely, ... while some further funding would appear prudent to protect the investment thus far, such funding should be extended with the aim of ensuring the self-sustainability of the project outcomes.<sup>43</sup>

- 6.48 Suggested components of a restated program include more realistic targets being set for students studying a NALSAS language, and a concentration of future funding on the consolidation of Indonesian, Chinese and Japanese (as Korean studies in Australian schools lag far behind the other three in economic importance)<sup>44</sup>.
- 6.49 The NALSAS report recommended that:

to capitalise on the gains made thus far and to ensure that they become further embedded into the curriculum of Australian

- 42 Erebus Consulting Partners. *Evaluation of the national Asian languages and studies in Australian schools strategy*, a report to the Department of Education, Science and Training, January 2002, p xiii
- 43 Erebus Consulting Partners. *Evaluation of the national Asian languages and studies in Australian schools strategy*, a report to the Department of Education, Science and Training, January 2002, p xiii
- 44 Erebus Consulting Partners. *Evaluation of the national Asian languages and studies in Australian schools strategy*, a report to the Department of Education, Science and Training, January 2002, p xv

<sup>40</sup> Erebus Consulting Partners. *Evaluation of the national Asian languages and studies in Australian schools strategy*, a report to the Department of Education, Science and Training, January 2002, p xiii

<sup>41</sup> Erebus Consulting Partners. *Evaluation of the national Asian languages and studies in Australian schools strategy*, a report to the Department of Education, Science and Training, January 2002, p xiv

schools, Commonwealth funding for the NALSAS strategy be continued for a further quadrennium in declining annual amounts.<sup>45</sup>

- 6.50 The associated recommendations included:
  - MCEETYA making a strong commitment to the NALSAS objectives through a national position statement;
  - strategic planning for NALSAS to retain the four focus areas of the current plan, but to more clearly identify desired outcomes (not outputs) to be achieved;
  - strategic planning and funding for the next NALSAS program cycle (2003-06) be focussed on ensuring self-sustainability by the end of the period;
  - the overall balance of funding for studies of Asia and Asian languages within the budget remain commensurate with that of the quadrennium 1999-2002;
  - consideration given to concentrating resources on three priority languages rather than the original four;
  - the middle years of schooling be targeted for sustained development; and
  - links between Asian languages and studies of Asia to be made more explicit in curriculum material development and professional development programs
- 6.51 In response to this report, the Ministerial Council on Education, Employment, Training and Youth Affairs agreed to the preparation of a national statement and a four-year plan on languages education in July 2003, for consideration at its meeting in 2004.<sup>46</sup>

#### **Review of the LOTE Program**

- 6.52 Between August and December, 2002 an external review was conducted into the Commonwealth Languages Other Than English (LOTE) Program. The report presenting the findings and recommendations was published in December 2002.<sup>47</sup>
- 6.53 Until recently, the "LOTE in Schools Program" comprised both the National Asian Languages and Studies in Australian Schools Strategy and

<sup>45</sup> Erebus Consulting Partners. Evaluation of the national Asian languages and studies in Australian schools strategy, a report to the Department of Education, Science and Training, January 2002, p 95

<sup>46</sup> Submission 115, p 3

<sup>47</sup> Erebus Consulting Partners, *Review of the Commonwealth Languages Other Than English Programme*, a report to the Department of Education, Science and Training, December 2002

the LOTE element; however the review under discussion here focussed on the LOTE element.

- 6.54 The LOTE element supports language programs in schools (including European, Asian and Indigenous languages) at all levels of schooling across all sectors, as well as community language programs (such as insertion classes in regular school hours and after-hours ethnic schools), intended to "maintain the languages and cultures of students from a language background other than English and to increase students' awareness and understanding of those languages and cultures".<sup>48</sup>
- 6.55 At the time the report was published, the Commonwealth allocated \$50 million a year for its "LOTE in Schools Program" (\$20 million for the LOTE element and \$30 million for the NALSAS Strategy). Continued funding for the LOTE element has been provided for in the States Grants agreements until December 2004.
- 6.56 The LOTE report was influenced strongly by the *Evaluation of the NALSAS Programme*,<sup>49</sup> and so the recommendations of the LOTE report were similar to those in the NALSAS report, except that the NALSAS program had been discontinued by the time the second report was prepared. The recommendations included that:
  - a new National Policy or Statement on Languages Education be developed through MCEETYA. ... to address the purposes, nature, value and expected outcomes of languages learning;
  - activities associated with the former NALSAS Strategy be subsumed into the wider LOTE action plan and National Policy Statement on LOTE; and
  - the overall quantum of LOTE Element funds for 2003-04 be maintained at the same level as for 2002.<sup>50</sup>
- 6.57 Following the review of the School Languages Program in 2002, continued funding of \$104 million<sup>51</sup> for the program over the next four years was announced in the 2003 Budget.<sup>52</sup>

 <sup>48</sup> Erebus Consulting Partners, *Review of the Commonwealth Languages Other Than English Programme*, a report to the Department of Education, Science and Training, December 2002, p. vii

<sup>49</sup> the report was also influenced strongly by a national seminar conducted by the Australian Principals Associations Professional Development Council, entitled *Working Together on Languages Education* (Melbourne 30-31 May, 2002)

Erebus Consulting Partners, *Review of the Commonwealth Languages Other Than English Programme*, a report to the Department of Education, Science and Training, December 2002, p. 196.

#### Issues

6.58 A number of issues were raised in the evidence in relation to the discontinuation of Commonwealth funding of the NALSAS program. These are discussed below.

#### Understanding and interacting with the region

- 6.59 It seems only logical that studies of Indonesia and Indonesian language will assist with improved understanding of the country and its culture. Any program that can improve the reach of such studies should therefore have a greater impact on the Australia/Indonesia relationship and improve interactions across a range of business, social or cultural experiences.
- 6.60 The Westralian Indonesian Language Teachers Association (WILTA) states that the NALSAS initiative during 1995 2003 enabled Australia to move some way towards achieving success through "enhancing and expanding Asian languages and Asian studies through all school systems in order to improve Australia's capacity and preparedness to interact internationally, in particular, with key Asian countries."
- 6.61 WILTA suggests that what will help this region live in peace and harmony, is giving young Australians "the ability to understand and relate with the Indonesian people and culture, and them with ours, and for this knowledge and understanding to be shared with families and friends".<sup>53</sup>
- 6.62 The Nusantera Bookshop submission reported that the Chief of the Defence Force, General Peter Cosgrove, told Australian school principals on 30 May 2002, he was "especially encouraged to learn that … Indonesian [is] among the four priority languages designated under the Commonwealth national Asian Languages and Studies in Australian Schools Program,"<sup>54</sup> as our ability to understand these cultures is what "our future prosperity and security will depend on".<sup>55</sup>

<sup>51</sup> Submission 115, p 3

<sup>52</sup> B Nelson, *Government boosts language teaching and education*, Dr Brendan Nelson, Department of Education, Science and Training. 13 May 2003 (MINBUD 34/03)

<sup>53</sup> Submission 112, p 3

<sup>54</sup> Submission 31, p 4

<sup>55</sup> Address by The Chief Of Army Lieutenant General Peter J. Cosgrove Ac, Mc. To The Australian Principals Association Professional Development Council (Apapdc), Melbourne 30 May 2002

#### Decline in Indonesian studies and language teaching

- 6.63 The Asia Education Foundation (AEF) claims that notwithstanding the additional funding provided by the Commonwealth, a recent study showed that at least 50% of Australian schools either do not teach about Asia at all or if they do so, only superficially. In 2000, only 5.5% of Year 12 students learnt an Asian language, of this 1.2% studied Indonesian language.<sup>56</sup>
- 6.64 This area does not appear set to improve in the near future. Professor Mackie, of the Australian National University, claims that the existing corps of specialists with real knowledge and experience of Indonesia, is shrinking as the older members retire, and could suffer "serious attrition over the next decade or so because ... fewer junior academics [are] obtaining permanent positions". Not enough younger people coming through to replace those leaving, means Australia is "in danger of badly eroding a valuable national asset which has taken over forty years to build up".<sup>57</sup>
- 6.65 This issue also relates to that of understanding and interacting with the region as Professor Mackie states:

The decline in Indonesian language teaching in Australian schools and universities in recent years is an extremely important matter because of its adverse implications for the sustainability of our analytical capacities on matters Indonesian.<sup>58</sup>

6.66 An issue associated with the decline in Indonesian teaching is the impact this has on the businesses supplying teaching and other resources to this area.

#### NALSAS funding

- 6.67 The Committee received many submissions which were strongly supportive of the NALSAS program including 19 which explicitly asserted that the program should continue.<sup>59</sup>
- 6.68 WILTA claims the success of NALSAS:

...will be short lived if the job is left unfinished ... the hard work and money already invested will be wasted. We must persevere with this injection of funds for longer so that a whole generation of

<sup>56</sup> Submission 43, p 3

<sup>57</sup> Submission 91, p 6

<sup>58</sup> Submission 91, p 5

<sup>59</sup> Submissions numbered: 13, 18, 31, 32, 34, 35, 43, 53, 64, 66, 67, 68, 69, 71, 72, 73, 74, 75, and 112

school students will have, for the duration of their schooling, been provided with ample opportunities to develop a greater understanding of the need to be culturally literate and have opportunities to learn an Asian language of great importance to Australia.<sup>60</sup>

6.69 The Nusantara Bookshop submission maintains that there will be a larger impact than just on the students and teachers:

The loss of specific and dedicated NALSAS or NALSAS-like support will diminish the Commonwealth's actual and perceived commitment to Australia as an Asia-literate society. ... Inevitably, it will be perceived by other education authorities across Australia as a diminution of commitment, which will contribute to a nationwide collapse of Indonesian language teaching, and the emaciation of providers, both commercial and non-commercial, of related goods, services and activities.<sup>61</sup>

- 6.70 WILTA stresses that funding is particularly required to continue and expand projects such as those providing in-country experiences for teachers and students of Indonesian language and providing increased professional development and support for teachers in both language and methodology.<sup>62</sup>
- 6.71 The AEF also holds the view that programs that offer expert input, incountry study, exchange and sharing of professional expertise, are required, but goes further to claim this will shift the curriculum away from being predominately euro-centric.<sup>63</sup>
- 6.72 Nusantara asserts that a reinstatement by the Commonwealth of dedicated funding for Bahasa Indonesia will:
  - strengthen the position of Bahasa Indonesia in Australia at a time when events in Indonesia have eroded support among some sections of the community;
  - give certainty and support not only to teachers in a difficult period, but to specialised suppliers of goods, services and activities whose role has been critical to the success of the NALSAS strategy; and

<sup>60</sup> Submission 112, p 1

<sup>61</sup> Submission 31, p 1

<sup>62</sup> Submission 112, pp 1-2

<sup>63</sup> Submission 43, p 2

- help to end the confusion arising from the mixed messages emanating from our nation's leaders, by providing a leadership role at the forefront of a national strategy to make Australia Asia-literate.<sup>64</sup>
- 6.73 DEST reported that in 1994 about 100 000 students in 1 500 schools were studying Indonesian and by 2001, Indonesian was the third most popular language studied in Australian schools, with 316 877 students studying Indonesian in 1 768 schools across Australia.<sup>65</sup>
- 6.74 However the LOTE review found that 'compared to most other OECD countries, Australian students receive far less LOTE instruction than their counterparts elsewhere. In other countries, second language learning begins in earnest much earlier in the curriculum, is given more hours per week of instructional time and continues throughout the school life of the student'.<sup>66</sup>

#### Conclusion

- 6.75 The NALSAS Strategy is described as a truly national approach between the Commonwealth and States and Territories, as all education authorities entered into bilateral agreements with the Commonwealth to work towards the Strategy's objectives with Commonwealth funds and their own resources. The Commonwealth allocated funding for its share of the NALSAS Strategy from 1994 to 2002.<sup>67</sup>
- 6.76 After looking into the issue of Asian studies and languages in Australian schools, the Committee appreciates that the NALSAS program has had considerable impact on studies of Indonesia and Indonesian language since the program's inception in 1995, and also on teachers and associated industries in this area. The particular strengths of the program are evident in the coordinated national program which provides dedicated support for teacher professional development and in-country exchanges.
- 6.77 The Committee is concerned that the cessation of NALSAS effectively means a substantial overall drop in funding for Asian languages, including, of course, Indonesian. The Committee is not convinced that it is appropriate for a requirement to be attached to an educational strategy

<sup>64</sup> Submission 31, p 4

<sup>65</sup> Submission 115, p 3

Erebus Consulting Partners, *Review of the Commonwealth Languages Other Than English Programme*, a report to the Department of Education, Science and Training, December 2002, p. x

<sup>67</sup> Erebus Consulting Partners, *Review of the Commonwealth Languages Other Than English Programme*, a report to the Department of Education, Science and Training, December 2002, p. ix

such as NALSAS that it ultimately be self-sustaining. It notes DEST's advice that while the original COAG report which gave rise to the strategy outlined targets to be reached by 2006, 'it did not indicate that the program was expected to become self-sustaining'.<sup>68</sup> NALSAS represents a commitment to better equipping Australia to engage more productively, harmoniously and effectively with its neighbours in the region. Quite simply, it is in Australia's national interest to sustain its investment in NALSAS or equivalent programs.

#### **Recommendation 19**

The Committee recommends that NALSAS (the National Asian Languages and Studies in Australian Schools program) be restored, or a program with similar aims and an equivalent level of funding be established.

#### Increased Opportunities for Australian students to study in Indonesia

- 6.78 As discussed in Chapter 4, approximately 18,000 Indonesian students study in Australian education institutions The Committee has already made clear its support for the existing programs that provide such opportunities for these students.
- 6.79 Having Indonesian students studying in Australia not only generates valuable export income. It also creates goodwill and provides the opportunity for enhancing the relationship through better understanding. As pointed out by Professor Hill, Director of the Australian Consortium for "In-Country" Indonesian Studies (ACICIS), many students return to positions of prestige and influence within their community'. <sup>69</sup>
- 6.80 Given the number of Indonesian students who already have the opportunity to study in Australia, the Committee is particularly interested in efforts to increase opportunities for Australian students to study in Indonesia. In evidence before the Committee, Professor Hill, pointed out the 'paucity of Australian students studying in Indonesia'.

Last semester, from universities all around Australia, we had only, to the best of my knowledge, 14 Australian students studying in

<sup>68</sup> Submission No 120, p 1

<sup>69</sup> Submission No 53, p 4

Indonesia. So it was less that 0.2 per cent by comparison with the number of Indonesians studying in Australia.<sup>70</sup>

- 6.81 In this context, the Committee was interested to learn of the work of ACICIS. Established in 1994, ACICIS provides a means through which Australian students from member universities (numbering 19 at June 2003), can 'undertake a semester's study at an Indonesian university for credit towards their Australian degree'.<sup>71</sup> Since 1995, more than 500 students have taken the opportunity with 167 having spent a full year studying in Indonesia.
- 6.82 To date ACICIS has received only a very small amount of funding from the Federal Government, including a small project grant from the Australia-Indonesia Institute and following approaches to the Department of Eduction, Science and Training in 2003, some funding to enable ACICIS to operate securely for another 12 months.
- 6.83 Were ACISIS better funded, Professor Hill suggested, it would be much more able to 'bring to the community's attention the opportunity to study in Indonesia'. According to Professor Hill, 'there is no reason why we should not have in Indonesia not just dozens but hundreds of Australian students, building up to thousands'.<sup>72</sup>
- 6.84 Professor Hill estimated running costs and salary costs for ACICIS to amount to approximately \$100,000 to \$130,000 per year and placed this figure in the context of the \$400 million per annum generated for the Australian economy by Indonesian students coming to Australia.
- 6.85 In the Committee's view, it is extremely important that Australian students are given the opportunity and encouragement to study in Indonesia. Australian students who do so ultimately enrich not only their own but Australia's expertise and understanding of Indonesia and the Indonesian language. As young ambassadors for Australia, they also send a strong signal of our interest in Indonesia, and through their interactions, present opportunities for Indonesians to increase their understanding about Australia and Australians.

<sup>70</sup> Transcript of evidence, Monday 23 June 2003,p 344 (ACISIS)

<sup>71</sup> Submission No 53, p 4

<sup>72</sup> Transcript of evidence, Monday 23 June 2003, p 347 (ACICIS)

#### **Recommendation 20**

The Committee recommends that additional funding be provide to the Department of Education, Science and Training to enable it provide an annual grant to the Australian Consortium for 'In-Country' Indonesian Studies, for running and salary costs.

### **Understanding Islam**

- 6.86 Indonesia is a complex country and there is much to understand. At this point in time, the Committee considers it most important that Australians have greater understanding of the role of religion in Indonesian society and in particular the moderate nature of Islam as practised by the vast majority of Indonesians. In this context, the Committee notes the observation made in the submission from Australian Volunteers International that 'in an otherwise deep and multidimensional people-to-people relationship there remains a profound lack of information and understanding amongst Australians about Islam, in general, and Islam in Indonesia'.<sup>73</sup> By the same token, the Committee suggests, it is important that Indonesia has a better understanding of the tolerant and multicultural nature of Australia.
- 6.87 The efforts that have been made in this respect to date appear, quite understandably, to focus on current and future leaders in both communities. These efforts include the activities supported under the AII's Inter Faith program and its Australian Studies Program.

#### **Inter-faith Program**

6.88 Under the Australia-Exchange Program, the AII has supported a series of visits to Australia by leading Indonesian Islamic community leaders. Under this program, 'eight participants drawn from a broad range of Indonesian educational, political and non-government organisations visited Australia in three groups' this year.<sup>74</sup> The Institute also sponsored visits to Australia for leaders of the two largest Islamic organisations in Indonesia, Nahdlatul Ulama (NU) and Muhammadiyah. The Committee has been fortunate to have had the opportunity to meet in Australia with both leaders as a result of these visits.

<sup>73</sup> Submission No 44, p 8

<sup>74</sup> Australia Indonesia Institute, *Annual Report 2002-03*, Commonwealth of Australia, Canberra, 2003, p 18

#### The Australia-Indonesia Young Leaders Dialogue

- 6.89 As part of its Australian Studies Program the AII has supported an Australia-Indonesia Young Leaders' Dialogue organised by the Asia-Australia Institute of the University of New South Wales and the Habibie Centre.
- 6.90 The Dialogue brings together participants from politics, the media, academia, the military, government and non-government organisations. The first Dialogue was held in Bogor, Indonesia, in May 2002.<sup>75</sup> The second dialogue was held in Bowral, Australia, in May 2003 with a theme of 'Mutual Trust and Cooperation in an International, Regional and Local Climate of Fear and Insecurity: Building an Achievable Action Agenda.<sup>76</sup>
- 6.91 Committee member Senator Payne was present at both dialogues and attested to their value in 'enabling participants to form very valuable working relationships and a far greater understating than we would otherwise have of the importance that both sides place on very different issues.'<sup>77</sup> Senator Payne also noted that the Dialogue has led to some online discussions and that some chat groups have been set up. Such initiatives provide a low cost means for continuing engagement.
- 6.92 The Committee commends the efforts that have been made to date to increase understanding of the religious and social values in both countries. It considers, however, that much more needs to be done. In evidence before the Committee, AII Chairman, Mr Philip Flood AO, expressed his views relating to the scale of effort needed to make a difference.

A lot is being done by various arms of government to make clear that Australian policy is one of opposition to terrorism, not opposition to Indonesia and not opposition to Islam. I do not think we are doing enough ... that this Islamic program we have started really needs to be run on a much larger scale ... Bringing 12 people here is a drop in the bucket. I would like to see us bring in 100 or 200 young Islamic leaders.<sup>78</sup>

6.93 The Committee considers that the programs that are in place are of immense value and should be significantly expanded. The Committee

<sup>75</sup> Australia Indonesia Institute, *Annual Report 2001-02*, Commonwealth of Australia, Canberra, 2002, p 13

<sup>76</sup> Australia Indonesia Institute, *Annual Report 2002-03*, Commonwealth of Australia, Canberra, 2003, p 15

<sup>77</sup> Transcript of evidence, Tuesday 5 August 2003, p 409 (Senator M Payne)

<sup>78</sup> Transcript of evidence, Tuesday 5 August 2003, p 404 (AII)

recommends that the AII budget be substantially increased to enable it to conduct this work.

#### Meeting with Muslim leaders in Jakarta 2004

- 6.94 During its recent visit to Jakarta, the Committee was fortunate to meet with Muslim leaders including Dr Iman Addaruutni, Member of Parliament, National Mandate Party; Mr Fajrul Falaakh, Executive Member, Nahdlatul Uluama (NU) and Mr Abdul Mu'ti, Chairman, Muhammadiyah Youth.
- 6.95 The Muslim leaders shared information and insights on a range of issues including the role of Muhammadiyah universities, the relationship between local universities and the central organisation and with the Government; the independence politically of members of Muhammadiyah; the prevalence of corruption and the Muhammadiyah and NU joint program on anti corruption; and the importance of opportunities to deepen understanding and to establish cultural links through programs such as the Muslim Exchange Program.

#### Enhancing understanding of Islam in the wider community

6.96 While the Committee appreciates the initial focus in efforts to increase our understanding of the role of religion in Indonesian society being on leaders, current and future, is it also concerned that efforts be made to reach out into the wider community.

#### Extending reach through schools

- 6.97 Schools are an extremely important vehicle for significantly increasing Australia's understanding of the moderate nature of Islam in Indonesia. The Committee appreciates that schools are already dealing with a very crowded curriculum. Notwithstanding this, governments should encourage teachers to take the opportunities that exist within the curriculum to develop activities around fostering a better understanding of the role of religion in Indonesia. Teachers will be more inclined and better equipped to do this if they are provided with appropriate resources.
- 6.98 Schools should also be encouraged to develop links with schools in Indonesia. Some schools are already engaged in doing this. For instance, as reported in the most recent AII Annual Report, Burgmann Anglican School in Canberra, having constructed a dedicated Indonesian Language

and Cultural centre, will expand its program though connection with a sister school in Bandung.  $^{79}\,$ 

6.99 The Committee proposes that MCEETYA develop a strategy for promoting understanding of Islam in Australian schools, and of creating ways of and encouraging Australian schools to establish sister school links with schools in Indonesia.

#### **Recommendation 21**

The Committee recommends that the Ministerial Council on Education, Employment, Training and Youth Affairs, develop a strategy for promoting understanding of Islam in Australian schools, and of creating ways of and encouraging Australian schools to establish sister school links with schools in Indonesia including Muslim schools.

Commitment to deepening understanding of Islam

- 6.100 The tragedy of the Bali bombing brought many individual Australians and Indonesians in contact with each other in an immediate and unforgettable way, forging relationships born out of shared grief. For those families, and for those who watched media coverage of the reactions in both countries, new understanding of each other has developed and with that a greater appreciation of what we have in common.
- 6.101 The Bali bombing was, as have been other wanton acts of terrorism before and since, a product of ignorance, intolerance and misunderstanding. Australia's response as described in other parts of this report has been multifaceted. In addition to all the practical and constructive ways in which Australia has responded to that event, the Committee believes that we should send a strong signal of our intent to do what we can, in however small a way, to address the things that gave rise to such horror.
- 6.102 October 12 2002 was a day in which the histories of our two countries came together in a way they had not previously. The Committee considers that it would be fitting on this day in future years for Australians to not only remember those lost and injured and to acknowledge those that helped at the time of the crisis and since, but to commit ourselves to making substantial and sustained efforts to deepen our understanding

<sup>79</sup> Australia Indonesia Institute, *Annual Report 2002-03*, Commonwealth of Australia, Canberra, 2003, p 17

and appreciation of Indonesian society. Australia will be perceived as tolerant and multicultural by its actions more than its words.

#### **Recommendation 22**

The Committee recommends that on October 12 in this and future years, Australians not only remember those lost and injured in the Bali bombings, but commit ourselves to making substantial and sustained efforts to deepen our understanding and appreciation of Indonesian society.

#### The role of the media

- 6.103 One of the issues raised with Muslim leaders during the Committee's visit to Jakarta was the role of the media in improving understanding of Islam. Young Muslim leaders explained to the Committee that the portrayal in the media of Islam, and the media's failure to distinguish between Muslims generally and radical elements such as the Taliban, was offensive. A plea was made for the western media to give Muslims the right to have the benefit of the doubt.
- 6.104 The Committee and the Muslim leaders discussed the importance of the mass media getting more understanding of Islam and of the East. In this context, the Committee was very pleased to learn, on its return to Australia, of a program being undertaken by the Asia Pacific Journalism Centre. The Asia Pacific Journalism Centre is an Australian based not-for-profit organisation with 'the mission to help journalists develop and share professional skills and insights in a changing world'.<sup>80</sup> Its work is informed by the belief that 'effective journalism is closely linked to good governance, respect for human rights and international understanding'.<sup>81</sup> It conducts professional development programs, exchanges and visits and innovation seminars.
- 6.105 As a pilot program under the APJC's exchanges and visits portfolio, it has established an APJC Fellowship. Based on the US Jefferson Fellowship model, the program will provide opportunities for 'Australian and other journalists in the region to learn firsthand about other cultures and societies'. The inaugural program, starting in late May 2004, focuses on Islam in Indonesia. The program's broad goals are to provide participants with 'up-to-date information on Islam in Indonesia - its social and cultural

<sup>80</sup> Submission No 123, p 1

<sup>81</sup> Submission No 123, p 1

role as the major religion and connections domestically and internationally with political life – and to permit participating journalists to share insights on reporting news to do with Islam.'<sup>82</sup>

- 6.106 Participants will travel through East and Central Java, 'visiting pesantren (boarding schools) and other Islamic communities, calling on universities and think tanks, meeting Islamic and civic leaders, and having discussions along the way with local editors and journalists, and amongst themselves'.<sup>83</sup>
- 6.107 The APJC applied for but did not receive funding from the AII. Financial support for the program is being provided by the Myer Foundation.
- 6.108 The Committee considers such programs are an extremely important way of enhancing the media's understanding of Islam and through their extended reach, the general community. An insensitive and inaccurate portrayal of Islam in the west is indeed offensive and damaging to relationships.
- 6.109 Elsewhere in this report, the Committee supports the promotion of visits and exchanges by parliamentarians and teachers as a means of deepening not only their own understanding but through them the people that they influence. In this context, the Committee strongly endorses the aims of the APJC Fellowship program, specifically in respect to its focus on Indonesia. The program, at least for the foreseeable future, should be conducted on an annual basis. The significant extension of funding to the AII recommended earlier in this chapter should facilitate it providing support to the APJC for this purpose.

# Expanding opportunities for communication though exchanges and visits

6.110 Although practicalities will always dictate that exchanges and visits are limited to fairly small proportions of the population, they provide an excellent means for individuals to simultaneously deepen their understanding of the other culture and establish personal links. The effectiveness of exchanges as a vehicle for improving understanding in the community more broadly and building the relationship between the two countries depends in large part on the capacity of the individuals to

<sup>82</sup> Submission No 123, p 2

<sup>83</sup> Submission No 123, p 1

present themselves as ambassadors while away, and to share with their home community their new insights and experience on return.

- 6.111 To counter the necessity of limiting exchange/visits in number, exchange programs should be targeted, in particular, to areas in which the individuals who take part will be in a position on their return to share their understanding and insights with others (such as students and professionals in the fields of education, health and the media) or who have the capacity to influence public thinking such as parliamentarians.
- 6.112 The Committee has discussed in earlier sections of this report the value of parliamentarians, students, student teachers, and young leaders having opportunities to visit and work with counterparts in each others' countries.
- 6.113 The Committee has also discussed the value in extending existing programs, such as the Government Sector Linkages Program (GSLP), that provide opportunities for exchanges and visits between government officials and professional and trained staff in other highly relevant areas.

#### Private sector exchanges and work experience programs

6.114 Opportunities for professional exchanges should not be limited to government employees. According to Professor Hooker:

The opportunities for professional exchanges are almost unlimited. The impact and benefits to be derived from several months of practical experience in the other nation would be manifold. One can think of exchanges of medical staff, lawyers, bankers and insurance agents, police (as has already begun in the aftermath of the Bali tragedy), school teachers and so on. The problem to date has been that it is relatively easy to send Australians to Indonesia where the costs are not very great but much harder to select Indonesians to come as exchangees to Australia. Nevertheless, there does exist a strong network around Australia which could now be called upon to identify Indonesians who would benefit from an extended period in Australia and feed their experiences back into the community.<sup>84</sup>

6.115 As mentioned in other places in this report, a number of teacher exchange programs have been undertaken. The Committee has urged the expansion

of such programs. It also urges that similar programs be developed for other professions, particularly in areas that are the focus of Australia's aid efforts in Indonesia, including health and governance. In keeping with the view that the responsibility for developing a strong bilateral relationship rests not just with government, the Committee urges professional associations to play their part in promoting better understanding with their counterparts in Indonesia.

#### **Australian Volunteers International**

- 6.116 No organisation is better entitled than Australian Volunteers International to comment on the value of exchange programs in promoting people-to-people links.
- 6.117 With over 50 years of continued presence in Indonesia, AVI's program 'has played a significant tole in facilitating the development of people-topeople relationships, leading to ongoing links being established in educational, cultural and commercial fields'.<sup>85</sup>
- 6.118 Exchange programs are mutually beneficial in a variety of ways. They not only result in the transfer of skills and enhanced capacity, but enable greater cross cultural exchange, deepen understandings and establish connections not only for the individuals involved but also for the wider communities of which they are part.
- 6.119 Mr Richard Smith, Australia's Ambassador to Indonesia at the time, described in November the value of the AVI program as follows:

There's a tradition of regarding volunteers as somehow part of our aid program. My experience of over 30 years tells me that they're very much more than that. Certainly we do hope that Australians who come to Indonesia or anywhere else as volunteers, are able to help, to leave something behind, to show that they've made a difference. But more than that, there's no question that the volunteers take away at least as much as they leave, and that Australia is a very significant beneficiary of that ... That's the sort of linkage, the linkages between people beyond just the government, that not only make a difference and always have, but increasingly will in the future as our two societies progressively democratise.

# Building the relationship through culture, heritage and the arts

- 6.120 Although there were some exceptions, one of the most surprising and disappointing aspects of the evidence received during this inquiry was the scant recognition that appears to have been given to the importance of culture and the arts in building bilateral relationships. The exceptions relate to the heritage and conservation area, and to significantly broader cultural and arts engagement at the State and Territory levels.
- 6.121 Indonesia has an extraordinarily rich and diverse cultural and artistic heritage. Australia has a vibrant arts and cultural sector and a strong sporting tradition. The arts and cultural dimensions of both countries provide extremely fertile ground for productive cooperation and rich exchange in any bilateral relationship as recognised by the Western Australian Government as follows:

Arts and culture can play a vital role in developing long lasting bonds between people and regions. They are an important dimension of foreign affairs, acting as tools of communication for both government and the community. They help to promote understanding and respect of cultural difference and are invaluable assets in creating goodwill, which is essential to the establishment of ongoing and mutually beneficial trade relations.<sup>86</sup>

- 6.122 The Committee considers that substantial efforts need to be made to realise more fully the enormous potential of culture and the arts to increase understanding, enhance appreciation, build links, create markets and strengthen ties between Australia and Indonesia.
- 6.123 In evidence before the Committee and in its second submission, DCITA placed the responsibility for determining priorities for engagement with other countries firmly in the arena of the cultural agencies which are part of its portfolio. It explained that 'within the parameters of broader Government policy, the portfolio's cultural agencies set their own priorities for engagement with other countries. The level of engagement is dependent upon whether appropriate infrastructure exists and the level of interest in Australia and its cultural activity within a particular region'.<sup>87</sup>
- 6.124 DCITA advised that 'Indonesia has not, at present, been identified as a key target market for all of the portfolio agencies' and explained 'this is based on the decision by agencies to capitalise on their presence in existing

<sup>86</sup> Submission No 33, p 10 (WA Department of Premier & Cabinet)

<sup>87</sup> Submission No 108, p 2

markets and to build on relationships that have been developed within a particular region.'88

- 6.125 The Committee considers this regrettable. Australia's efforts to engage culturally with Indonesia should reflect the importance that we attach to the relationship. Given the proximity of Indonesia to Australia, its significance in terms of security and its actual and potential significance economically, Australia should be doing considerably more to expand the arts and cultural aspects of the relationship.
- 6.126 Nowhere in the evidence to this inquiry is the need for a whole-ofgovernment approach to building the relationship with Indonesia more apparent than in the area of culture and the arts.
- 6.127 As mentioned by DCITA, Indonesia has not been identified as a priority area. The submission from the Australia Council provides a short list of activities that the Australia Council supports which specifically relate to Indonesia. It also notes that it is the main funder of Asialink residences each year, through which a number of Australian artists are supported to undertake residences in Indonesia. The submission confirms the Committee's sense that little attention has yet been paid to specifically developing an arts relationship with Indonesia.
- 6.128 The Australia Council pointed out that 'establishing artistic and market development relationships in Asia is often more difficult than in other regions, and requires good knowledge of local cultural, artistic and market dynamics.'<sup>89</sup> In the Committee's view, this supports the necessity of expanding the efforts that are being made and of maintaining a degree of continuity once they have been established.
- 6.129 A whole-of-government approach to building the relationship with Indonesia would better ensure that instruments as useful as the arts and culture for building that relationship are not overlooked.
- 6.130 The Committee recommends that DCITA actively promotes in the agencies within its portfolio a commitment to building a relationship with Indonesia.

<sup>88</sup> Submission No 108, p 3

<sup>89</sup> Submission No 105, p.1

#### **Recommendation 23**

The Committee recommends that the Department of Communications, Information Technology and the Arts actively promotes in the agencies within its portfolio a commitment to building a relationship with Indonesia.

- 6.131 The low profile of culture and the arts in the bilateral relationship is also reflected by the fact that there is no related Working Group in the Australia Indonesia Ministerial Forum. As mentioned in Chapter 1, the Australia Indonesia Ministerial Forum has a number of working groups covering trade, industry and investment; the environment; education and training; health cooperation; agriculture and food cooperation; science and technology; transport and tourism; marine affairs and fisheries; legal cooperation; and energy and minerals. The omission of arts, heritage and culture from this array is curious but possibly explained by the original purpose of the Australia Indonesia Ministerial Forum.
- 6.132 To the extent that the Australia Indonesia Ministerial Forum represents an umbrella under which Australia's engagement with Indonesia across a broad range of areas comes together, the omission is significant with some consequences. For instance, arts and cultural organisations are unlikely to receive funding from the GSLP, because the GSLP is designed to support the AIMF. Yet the sorts of connections and activities that the GSLP allows would be highly beneficial to arts and cultural organisations.

# **Recommendation 24**

#### The Committee recommends that the Australia Indonesia Ministerial Forum establish a Working Group on Arts, Heritage and Culture.

6.133 While arts and cultural organisations do have access to other sources of funding for such connection building and technical cooperation activities, these are very limited. The key organisation to which they have access is the AII. In 2002-03, for instance, \$211,082 (29.7%) of the AII total expenditure of \$848,582 was on arts and culture.<sup>90</sup> In 2001-02, the arts and

<sup>90</sup> Australia Indonesia Institute, *Annual Report 2002-03*, Commonwealth of Australia, Canberra, 2003, pp 26-30

sports program was allocated \$117,980 (16%) of total expenditure.<sup>91</sup> While these sums represent a reasonable proportion of the AII's funding, they are small amounts of money.

#### **Recommendation 25**

The Committee recommends that the Australia Indonesia Institute receive additional funding to expand its efforts in promoting culture and arts.

6.134 Arts and cultural organisations can also receive support from Asialink, a non academic department of the University of Melbourne, supported by the Myer Foundation and the University of Melbourne. Asialink's aim is to promote understanding of the countries of Asia and create links with Asian counterparts.<sup>92</sup> The Committee commends the work of Asialink in building the relationship with Indonesia through greater cultural and arts links.

## Individual agency efforts

6.135 Some of the cultural agencies in DCITA's portfolio made their own submissions to the inquiry or contributed to DCITA's original submission. These included the Australian Sports Commission, the National Library and the Australian National Maritime Museum

#### **Australian Sports Commission**

- 6.136 The Australian Sports Commission (ASC) described having made good progress towards establishing a very positive bilateral relationship in sport between Australia and Indonesia between the years 1992-1999. Funded largely by the AII, and under the auspices of the Australian Indonesia Sports Program (AISP), the ASC conducted 31 sports activity projects.
- 6.137 The major projects in which the ASC was involved included the establishment of a centre of sporting excellence in IKIP Surabaya and a sports training network of 13 IKIPs throughout Indonesia; the

<sup>91</sup> Australia Indonesia Institute, *Annual Report 2001-02*, Commonwealth of Australia, Canberra, 2002, pp 30-35

<sup>92</sup> www.asialink.unimelb.edu.au/asialink/index.html

establishment of an Indonesian talent identification scheme and the conduct of a consultancy which led to the report 'A Plan for the development of Sport in Indonesia'. Its last major project 'involved the key Indonesian sports agencies together for the first time to work on sports administration as the first step to establishing a sport education system.'<sup>93</sup>

- 6.138 The ASC proudly asserted in its submission that 'after years of work the relationship grew to a point where Indonesian sports authorities trusted ASC expertise and the excellence of the Australian sporting system'.<sup>94</sup>
- 6.139 Sadly, the Committee learned, the decline in the Indonesian economy and the increasing political and civil unrest in Indonesia in the later 1990s 'led to a situation where activities were curtailed or placed on hold and then eventually ceased. Funding from the Australia-Indonesia Institute was also redirected away from sport at this time and the ASC was required to return all unexpended funds to the Australia-Indonesia Institute'.<sup>95</sup>
- 6.140 The Committee considers it regrettable that the Australian Sports Commission's efforts in Indonesia ceased. It notes that its MOU with Indonesia, while inactive, is still current. It notes also the Australian Sports Commission's strong interest in rekindling the relationship.
- 6.141 Sport is deeply embedded in the Australian culture. Australians are proud of their sporting achievements at home and abroad. Sport is unrivalled in Australia for achieving broad participation. Sport is a time honoured way of bringing people of diverse backgrounds together.
- 6.142 Sport, as such, can make a valuable contribution to building the cultural relationship between Australia and Indonesia. Wherever possible, programs to encourage this aspect of the relationship, such as those previously run by the Australian Sports Commission in Indonesia, should be maintained on an on-going basis. To enable this, a proportion of the Australia -Indonesia Institute annual funding should be dedicated to furthering the sports relationship. The level of funding should be sufficient to enable the ASC to resume activities to at least the level it had established before funding was withdrawn in 1999.
- 6.143 The Committee has earlier recommended that funding to the AII be substantially increased in order to enable it to fund programs across all

<sup>93</sup> Submission No 40, p 7

<sup>94</sup> Submission No 40, p 10

<sup>95</sup> Transcript of evidence, Tuesday 5 August 2003, p 424 (ASC)

aspects of the arts and cultural relationship and to maintain successful programs on an on-going basis.

#### **Recommendation 26**

That a portion of the increased funding recommended earlier for the Australia Indonesia Institute be dedicated to the furthering of the sports relationship between Australia and Indonesia.

#### Heritage and Conservation

6.144 Various submissions alerted the Committee to Australia's potential to contribute to institution building in Indonesia and to building the bilateral relationship through cultural heritage initiatives. Some very significant work has already been undertaken in this area over long periods of time.

#### The National Library

- 6.145 The National Library has operated an Acquisitions Office in Jakarta for over the last 30 years, establishing in that time, a 'world class research collection on contemporary Indonesia.'<sup>96</sup> The collection includes over 160 000 monographs, 250 newspaper titles, 5 000 journal articles and several thousand sheets of microfiche as well as maps and films.
- 6.146 In 2002, an MOU between the National Library of Australia and the National Library of Indonesia was signed. The MOU 'aims to reaffirm and strengthen the longstanding cooperation between the two national libraries and covers collaboration in the acquisition of Indonesian publications, the creation of bibliographic (cataloguing) records for Indonesian titles and the preservation of Indonesian publications'. The Committee commends the National Library for its work in this area and concurs with the National Library's own assessment that 'its in-country representation is contributing to the important cultural, economic and political links between Australia and Indonesia'.<sup>97</sup>

#### The Australian National Maritime Museum

6.147 In its submission to the inquiry, the Australian National Maritime Museum (ANMM), suggested that 'museums –particularly those with a social history approach that focuses on the people and cultures behind

<sup>96</sup> Submission No 30, p 1

<sup>97</sup> Submission No 30, p 2

events, like the Australian National Maritime Museum –can play a significant role in educating Australians about their nearest neighbour in ways that counteract misunderstandings and stereotypes.' <sup>98</sup> The Museum described its own efforts to do this, efforts which include research and collection activities, exhibitions, lectures, publications and cultural/history tours to Indonesia. Its focus is on 'the maritime-mediated relations between the two countries, past and present, and on the cultural exchanges arising from these links.'<sup>99</sup> The Committee affirms the value of such initiatives in enhancing Australians' appreciation of aspects of Indonesia's history and culture and of fascinating and important aspects of our engagement over the centuries.

#### Cultural heritage

- 6.148 The efforts of the National Library and ANMM are example of activities which not only benefit Australians by increasing our understanding or by preserving resources for understanding but which also contribute to the conservation of Indonesia's cultural heritage.
- 6.149 The evidence put to the Committee by AusHeritage underscored the importance of cultural heritage and its management, as reflected internationally by the 2001 ASEAN Declaration on Cultural Heritage, and the development by the World Bank of a policy for cultural heritage impact assessment of physical cultural resources.<sup>100</sup> The submission noted that Indonesia had declared 2003 as Indonesia Heritage Year.
- 6.150 Indonesia, AusHeritage, suggests, is 'taking the management of its cultural heritage very seriously and is looking to the international community for assistance in this monumental task'.<sup>101</sup> Australia, AusHeritage claims, is well placed to assist.<sup>102</sup>
- 6.151 Stressing the importance of cultural sensitivity in the relationship, AusHeritage suggested that Australia could 'define itself in a manner that emphasises sensitivity to the cultural values of our neighbour' and urged that cultural heritage management be given a key place Australia's cultural relationship with Indonesia.

Making the conservation of those values, and the cultural heritage that is their manifestation, a central part of the relationship will

<sup>98</sup> Submission No 11,p 2

<sup>99</sup> Submission No 11, p 1

<sup>100</sup> Transcript of evidence, Wednesday 30 April 2003, p 108 (AusHeritage)

<sup>101</sup> Submission No 8, p 3

<sup>102</sup> Submission No 8, p 2

reinforce the key foundations for Australia's public diplomacy, aid and trade programs. <sup>103</sup>

- 6.152 AusHeritage called for a cultural heritage component to be included in all projects of a political, strategic, economic and social nature in which Australia engages with Indonesia.<sup>104</sup>
- 6.153 The Committee endorses the importance of demonstrating cultural sensitivity in our engagement with Indonesia and concurs with AusHeritage about the value of cultural heritage management and Australia's capacity to contribute in this area.

#### **Recommendation 27**

The Committee recommends that AusAID examine and report on the value and budgetary implications of adding cultural heritage as a third crosscutting issue in its program.

# Expanding mutual understanding in the broader community through the media

6.154 While the programs mentioned earlier in this chapter will all contribute to increasing mutual understanding and to opening pathways for greater communication between the peoples of Australia and Indonesia, the Committee considers that the medium that has the most power to enhance mutual understanding both immediately and in the long term is the broadcasting media.

#### Responsibilities of the media

- 6.155 Before referring to the role the media, and in particular to the ABC's contribution to this inquiry, the Committee notes that the portrayal of events by the media, and the ABC in particular, was cited on a number of occasions as one of the concerns about the bilateral relationship expressed by senior Indonesian political leaders during the Committee's visit to Jakarta earlier this year.
- 6.156 Reforms in Indonesia in recent years have allowed the development of a robust press, an essential condition for practising democracy. Notwithstanding this, the Committee considers that the capacity to influence is a privilege that imposes a responsibility to adhere to high

<sup>103</sup> Submission No 8, p 2

<sup>104</sup> Submission No 8, p 7

standards of reporting. Much hard work can be undone quickly by careless reporting.

- 6.157 Having made this point, the Committee welcomed the submission from the Australian Broadcasting Corporation, some aspects of which have already been referred to in the previous chapter.
- 6.158 The Australian Broadcasting Corporation has a long standing engagement with Indonesia, an engagement encompassing Radio Australia, ABC News and Current Affairs, the new ABC Asia Pacific television service and, in recent times, ABC content sales.<sup>105</sup> A further arm of engagement is ABC International.

#### **Radio Australia**

- 6.159 Of all the avenues of its engagement, the ABC's involvement via radio has been the most enduring and, to date at least, the one with the greatest reach. Radio Australia's audience during the 1970s and 1980s was estimated to be 20 million people across Indonesia, an audience not only larger than the ABC's audience in Australia at the time (or since) but larger than the entire Australian population at the time.
- 6.160 Much of this audience was lost with the closure of Radio Australia's transmitters in Darwin in 1997. Despite such setbacks and the continued limitation of shortwave broadcasting capacity, Radio Australia has been able to begin to regain its audience. This has been achieved with the aid of additional transmission funding provided by the Australian Government, and innovative program formats and delivery methods. The ABC estimates its reach in Indonesia is now approximately 6.5 million.
- 6.161 In describing the operation of Radio Australia, the ABC claimed that Radio Australia's programs, particularly those broadcast in Indonesian, have 'become a vital conduit for better mutual understanding between a growing number of Indonesians and the people of Australia".<sup>106</sup> Radio programs such as those featuring aspects of Australian life or those involving talkback segments between Australian and live audiences in Indonesia provide an invaluable means of presenting Australia to Indonesia.
- 6.162 The submission also asserted that Radio Australia is becoming a 'platform for the delivery of educational material aimed at Indonesian audiences on key development and political issues such as health, the environment,

<sup>105</sup> Submission No 24, p 1

<sup>106</sup> Submission No 24, p 5

globalisation, regional autonomy, governance and media and democracy'.<sup>107</sup> Through such programs as well as its news and current affairs coverage and associated on-line materials, Radio Australia provides for many Indonesians a window to Australia and Australian attitudes.

- 6.163 The Committee considers that radio's immediacy and friendliness make it an extremely powerful means of reaching into Indonesia and promoting grater understanding of Australia.
- 6.164 Radio Australia also plays an important role in enhancing Australians knowledge and understanding of Indonesia through its regular ABC news and current affairs program, its Asia Pacific Program and its on-line news and information gateway, goasiapacific.com.
- 6.165 The ABC's submission reports a growing demand for Radio Australia's program material and suggests ways of making the most of current opportunities. These include:
  - increasing local Radio Australia representation in Indonesia and Indonesian-speaking producers on the ground in Indonesia in order to lift Radio Australia's profile and to enable it to compete effectively with major foreign competitors such as BBC World Service, Voice of America and Deutsche Welle;
  - providing a longer term funding framework for educational radio/online activities;
  - increasing reach by generating TV programming in Indonesian along the lines of the present integrated radio-TV and online service on offer from other broadcasters such as Voice of America;
  - integrating educational public awareness material, such as Radio Australia's recent radio and website series on federalism and regional autonomy, into Australia's broader political and economic development effort directed at Indonesia;
  - taking advantage of short wave capacity directed at Indonesia and broadcast on multiple frequencies like the BBC or Voice of America; and
  - increasing staff and production capacity to enable Radio Australia to better respond to the growing demands for radio programs from Australia in Indonesian. <sup>108</sup>

<sup>107</sup> Submission No 24, p 1

- 6.166 The Committee brought to its consideration of these suggestions the view that Radio Australia is an extremely powerful and relatively cost-effective means of communicating Australia's voice and spirit to the people of Indonesia. Priority should be given to measures which will significantly extend the reach of Radio Australia, preferably at least to levels enjoyed in the 70s and 80s.
- 6.167 Radio Australia's current reach is obtained through direct short-wave broadcasts and through local relays by means of arrangements with a number of affiliate stations. According to the ABC, direct short wave broadcasts remain the most cost-effective means of reaching large Indonesian audiences.<sup>109</sup> They also 'provide an independent means of reaching listeners should local relays come under political pressure to cease or curtail rebroadcasts.'<sup>110</sup>
- 6.168 The Committee supports the continuation of additional funding for transmission from the Federal Government. It also sees merit in the ABC's suggestion that 'Radio Australia could take advantage of spare short wave capacity directed at Indonesia and to broadcast on multiple frequencies.'<sup>111</sup>

#### **Recommendation 28**

The Committee recommends:

- that the Federal Government continue providing additional funding for transmission for Radio Australia; and
- that the Australian Broadcasting Authority examine and report on the cost and feasibility and implications of Radio Australia taking advantage of spare short wave capacity directed at Indonesia and broadcasting on multiple frequencies.
- 6.169 The Committee also considers that the Radio Australia's reach would be significantly increased if more program material was produced in Indonesian. (The ABC cited surveys that indicated that the use of the Indonesian language to reach Indonesian audiences had a six times better reach than the use of English<sup>112</sup>).

<sup>109</sup> In 2001 Radio Australia received an additional funding grant of \$8.4 M over three years. Submission No 24, p 2

<sup>110</sup> Submission No 24, p8

<sup>111</sup> Submission No 24, p 8

<sup>112</sup> Submission No 24, p 7

Senator Alan Ferguson Chair 12 May 2004