



## **Submission No 105**

### **Inquiry into Australia's Relations with Indonesia**

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# AUSTRALIA'S RELATIONS WITH INDONESIA

## AUSTRALIA COUNCIL RESPONSE



### 1. BACKGROUND

Interest in and activity with Asia is strong across all Boards and Divisions of Council. In particular, there has been much interest in Japan, China (particularly Hong Kong), South Korea, Singapore and India. In recent years, Indonesia has been important for artists and organisations supported by CCDB and ATSIAB. (spell out)

Most Boards have developed or are developing proactive international initiatives, usually in conjunction with the Audience and Market Development Division of the Council, Asialink or other funding partners. Some of these are country or region-specific (the CCDB/ Asialink/Kelola Foundation partnership in Indonesia; the Dance Board's support for a secondment to The Esplanade performing arts centre in Singapore; the Literature Board/AMD/Asialink Literature Touring in Asia program) while others are focussed on overseas market development (the Theatre Board/AMD *Playing the World* program; the Music Board/AMD *International Pathways* program).

Australian organisations such as Asialink and the DFAT-funded bilateral councils (Australia China Council, Australia Japan Foundation, Australia Indonesia Institute, Australia India Council and Australia Korea Foundation) and Asian organisations such as the Kelola Foundation in Indonesia and the Japan Foundation, play a crucial role in brokering and supporting ongoing artistic relationships. Many of these organisations also provide substantial funding and co-funding for artistic activity.

Individual artists and arts managers / entrepreneurs of Asian background also play a very important role in initiating strong relationships with individual countries. In most cases these relationships are reliant on external funding, but some entrepreneurs (e.g. In Sub Lim and Choicemaker literary agency in South Korea) have developed commercially viable links.

It should be noted 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. Often, lack of knowledge of opportunities, networks and structures in Asian countries is cited as a potential barrier to any increased engagement by Australian arts and artists. The work done by Asialink in establishing and maintaining strong information networks and links across the Asian region has been immensely important – including in the areas of education and public affairs.

## 2. SPECIFIC AUSTRALIA COUNCIL ACTIVITY IN INDONESIA

### **Arts Development Division (incorporating the Community Cultural Development Board, Dance Board, Literature Board, Music Board, New Media Arts Board, Theatre Board and Visual Arts/Craft Board)**

The Australia Council is the main funder of Asialink residences each year in Literature, Visual Arts/Craft and Performing Arts. Through this program, a number of Australian artists are supported to undertake residencies in Indonesia. In addition, the Community Cultural Development Board funds an Australia-Indonesia exchange program with Asialink. More detailed information on this program should be obtained through Alison Carroll at Asialink.

In addition Council has supported the following activities:

#### Community Cultural Development Board

A number of grants have been given to individual Australian community cultural development workers to work on projects in Indonesia, through these would not have had a significant influence on anything outside the immediate communities and artists involved in the projects.

#### Literature Board

Two grants have been awarded to Indonesian publishers to translate and publish the following Australian literary works:

*Contemporary Australian Short Stories* (ed) Geoffrey Dutton,  
(Yayasan Obor Indonesia, 1994)

*My Place* by Sally Morgan  
(Yayasan Obor Indonesia, 1993)

#### Theatre Board

The Theatre Board funds Performing Lines, which managed the 2002 performances of *The Theft of Sita*, an Australian-Indonesian collaboration. The production toured to Melbourne, Zurich, Aarhus, Berlin and Rotterdam in 2002, and to Sydney, New York and London in 2001.

#### Visual Arts/Craft Board

The Queensland Art Gallery is funded for the Asia Pacific Triennials, which contain an Indonesian component. The most recent event was in 2002.

The Wollongong City Gallery was funded to tour *Trackink Cloth*, an Australian textile exhibition to Denpasar, Yogyakarta and Jakarta in 2002.

### 3. AUDIENCE AND MARKET DEVELOPMENT DIVISION'S ENGAGEMENT IN ASIA

The Audience and Market Development Division (AMD) has provided funding to Performing Lines to assist with *The Theft of Sita* (an Australian-Indonesian collaboration) international tours to Berlin, as part of *artsaustralia berlin 02*, Zurich and Aarhus in 2002, and to New York, as part of the *Next Wave Down Under Festival* at the Brooklyn Academy of Music in 2001.

AMD also corresponded with the Australian Embassy in Indonesia, regarding possible Australian participation in the JakART festival, a performing arts festival in Jakarta. AMD provided advice on Australian artists and companies in the region at the time, and looks forward to working with the Embassy and JakART in the future.

AMD's international market development work to date has tended to focus on established major markets and includes substantial initiatives in Asia (primarily Japan), Europe (Germany, Spain, France, Italy, UK) and North America (US and Canada). The Division has also worked in conjunction with Boards on the market development aspects of such activities as the Festival of Pacific Arts and provided support and funding for the arts components of major government country promotions in India (1996), the UK (1997 and 2000) and China (Shanghai 2002).

AMD has been and continues to be involved in a number of initiatives designed to gather market intelligence on and improve access for Australian cultural "product" in specific markets in Asia – these include the Bungei Shunju publishing initiative in Japan in 2002 (co-funded by AMD, the Literature Board and the Australia Japan Foundation), the Asialink Literature Touring in Asia tours to Asia (China, South Korea and India in 2002, co-funded with the Literature Board) and Asialink's Australia Japan Visual Arts Exhibition Initiative (co-funded by the Australia Japan Foundation). Consideration is also being given to the establishment of additional Arts Market Development contract staff positions in key overseas markets, following the success of pilot initiatives in Japan in 1999 and Germany in 2000-2002.

The Australia Council recognises the importance of further developing significant bilateral relations, activities and programs with Indonesia, particularly in the light of the upcoming 30<sup>th</sup> anniversary of Australia's dialogue partnership with the Association of South East Asian Nations (ASEAN).

The Australia International Cultural Council (AICC) has identified South East Asia as one of their four priority regions for the promotion of Australian culture, and this 30<sup>th</sup> anniversary presents a platform to showcase Australia's diverse cultural excellence through a targeted cultural promotion in the region.

Australia's profile at arts festivals in the region, particularly at the prestigious Bangkok International Festival of Music and Dance, has been increasing over the past few years, and this festival, along with the Singapore Arts Festival, provide high profile platforms for possible Australian cultural performances.

The Australia Council had planned to attend the Asian Arts Mart in Singapore in June 2003, as part of an investigation of key international performing arts markets, including CINARS (Montreal), APAP (New York), Tokyo Performing Arts Market and Osaka Performing Arts Market. Due to the outbreak of the SARS virus Council was not able to participate in the Mart in 2003. Council's decision took into account the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade's travel advisories for SARS affected countries and therefore, the formal obligations and responsibilities the Australia Council has in this matter. This decision was deeply disappointing for Council and those involved in the Asian Arts Mart. We believe the Asian Arts Mart is a critically important and internationally significant event in this region, and we very much look forward to our engagement with the event in the future.