



Submission No 50

Inquiry into Australia's Relations with Indonesia

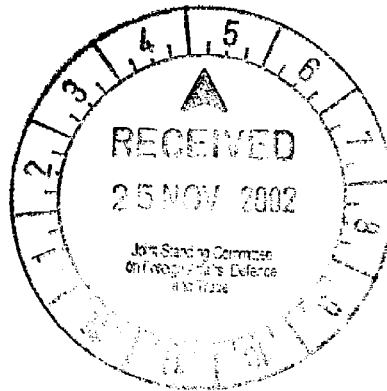
Organisation: Australia Indonesia Institute

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Chairman

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Australia
Indonesia
Institute



12 November 2002

The Hon David Jull MP
Chairman
Joint Standing Committee on Foreign Affairs, Defence and Trade
Parliament House
CANBERRA

Dear Mr Jull

On behalf of the Board of the Australia-Indonesia Institute I am pleased to provide this response to assist your Committee in its inquiry *Building Australia's Relationship with Indonesia*.

The Australia-Indonesia Institute (AII) was established fourteen years ago with the objective of promoting in Australia a greater understanding of Indonesia and promoting in Indonesia a greater understanding of Australia. A key approach to these ends is the enlargement over the longer term of the areas of contact and exchange between Australians and Indonesians.

Over the past decade there has been a dramatic increase in the areas of contact between Australia and Indonesia, in trade, investment, in political exchanges, in media links and especially in student exchanges with some 17,000 Indonesian students in Australia compared with less than 2,000 in the late 1980's. There is now greater knowledge in each country about the other and the Institute believes its activities – which cost the taxpayer barely \$1 million per annum - have played a significant part in contributing to this. But this greater knowledge, in both countries, is still relatively thin and thinly spread. There is 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.

The Institute is managed by a Board of 11 members appointed by the Governor-General on the recommendation of Government and includes representatives from business, the law, media, the arts and academia. The Institute receives program funding from the Australian Government and in 2002/3 received new funding of \$820,000. The total value of Institute activities is significantly greater since most activities involve substantial joint funding.

Among our recent initiatives I would particularly draw attention to our Muslim Exchange program, one aspect of which brings young Indonesian Islamic leaders to Australia to expose them to our successful multicultural society. The attached annual report describes our main activities.

The following are the objectives set by the Board for our main program areas:

Arts and Sport

To cultivate in Indonesia and Australia an appreciation of the quality, diversity and sophistication of the visual and performing arts in the two countries, and to help develop a market in Indonesia for Australian visual and performing arts and Australian expertise. It also aims to encourage relations between Australian and Indonesian sports people and organisations.

Australian Studies

To develop a network of Indonesian and Australian educational and cultural institutions to exchange new ideas, stimulate interest in Australia and broaden understanding of Australian society and policies to the Indonesian people, and their government.

Civil Society

To assist Indonesia to strengthen its civil society by providing non-government groups with training and specialist advice and through support for institution building.

Education and Youth

To build groups of young and potentially influential people in both Australia and Indonesia, who have an understanding and knowledge of the two countries.

Inter-faith

To promote greater understanding of the roles of religion in each other's country.

Media

To encourage improved mutual understanding by helping to foster high-quality, insightful media coverage of Indonesia in Australia and of Australia in Indonesia.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Philip Flood." The signature is written in a cursive style with a long horizontal stroke at the end.

Philip Flood AO
Chairman

Attachment:

Annual Report 2001-02,
Australia Indonesia Institute, 30 September 2002

