

A National Strategic Plan for Indonesian in Australian Universities:

A National Teaching Fellowship
of the Australian Learning and Teaching Council

<http://altcfellowship.murdoch.edu.au/>

Prof. David T. Hill
Murdoch University
dthill@murdoch.edu.au

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'language skills and cultural sensitivity will be the new currency' of the emerging world order.

- General Peter Cosgrove, former defence force chief turned geo-strategic analyst

'If we are going to enable our businesses to take on the best and the brightest in the region and the world, we have got to make sure they have all the skills to do so.'

- Kevin Rudd, former PM.

Overview

Outline the background to, activities during, and possible outcomes of, a National Teaching Fellowship of the Australian Learning and Teaching Council (ALTC) to develop a national strategic plan for Indonesian language in Australian universities.

Premises?

Indonesian language skills are important for Australia's national interest.

Indonesian language learning is contracting in Unis across the country.

There is no overall national strategy to sustain & encourage Indonesian learning.

The university sector – and the country -- would benefit from such a national strategy.

ALTC NTF Program of activities:

visit all Indonesian-teaching unis in Australia
discussion paper
international consultation
national colloquium
strategic plan to put to government &
universities

not an evaluation of specific methodological or pedagogical practices

attempt a comprehensive analysis of the state of Indonesian language teaching and learning within Australian universities

to develop a workable strategic policy for the promotion and development of Indonesian language learning in Australia

to promote the theme of the study within universities, the community, and to government.

Government Policy

In May 2004 the Joint Standing Committee on Foreign Affairs Defence and Trade 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.***

(Near Neighbours – Good Neighbours: An Inquiry into Australia's Relationship with Indonesia, May 2004)

Status in University Funding Agreements

Indonesian and Arabic are designated as 'nationally strategic languages' in university funding agreements with the Australian Government.

Universities are required to seek the Government's approval to close a nationally strategic language permanently.

Some universities have advised the Government that they have experienced weak student demand, resulting in a 'suspension' of Indonesian language units pending future viability of the courses.

To date no university has sought Australian Government approval to close an Indonesian course *permanently*.

Current state of play in Schools*

Primary level: 'contracting'

- 63 per cent of all students studying Indonesian are in the K-6 years.

Junior secondary level: 'extremely high' level of attrition

- 99 per cent of Australian students studying Indonesian have discontinued their study before completing Year 12.

Senior secondary level: 'at risk', low candidature.

- only 1,167 students in Year 12 programs (2009), less than 1% of all Year 12 students.
- 2003-8; WA Year 12 Indonesian (Second Language) students halved (from 148 to 71).
- Nationally there has been a 20% decline in Yr 12 enrolments over 4 yrs between 2005-9

*Michelle Kohler & Phillip Mahnken, *The Current State of Indonesian Language Education in Australian Schools* (Education Services Australia, Carlton South, 2010)



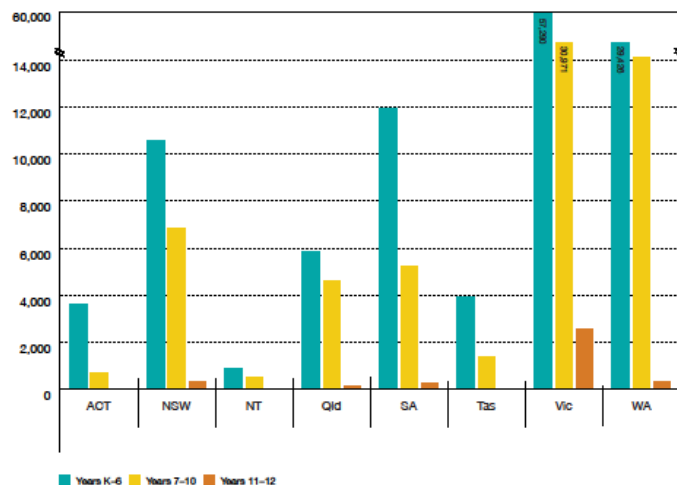
Total number of students enrolled in Year 12 Indonesian (2005–2009)

Year	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009
No. of students	1,907	1,576	1,442	1,311	1,167

'On average, [K-12] student enrolments in Indonesian have declined by at least 10,000 per year in the past four years (based on this data alone) extending to eight years (based on additional data [Liddicoat et al., 2007]). *There is no other language, of the major six languages taught in Australian schools, that is experiencing such a substantial and sustained decline.* (Kohler & Mahnken 2010:19)



Graph 3: Current Enrolments by State and Territory in Grouped Year Levels (K-6, 7-10, 11-12)*



* Figures based on current DEEWR statistics from 2006, 2007, 2008. Does not include SA Independent, NT Independent, NT Catholic.

Summary

It is clear that while the raw numbers of students studying Indonesian situate it as a major language in the Australian schooling landscape, the real story is quite different. Indonesian is experiencing a major problem of retention into the senior years. Despite a strong base in the primary sector and a spread of enrolments across all states and territories, these enrolments are simply not continuing into the senior secondary years. The obvious impact of this trend is a reduction in the critical mass of students required to reach more advanced levels of Indonesian proficiency. It also reduces the potential for Indonesian language programs to contribute to achievement of the NALSSP target of 12 per cent of all students at Year 12 exiting with fluency in a NALSSP language by 2020. On the basis of the data gathered for this report, it will be extremely difficult for Indonesian to contribute to this target unless retention into the senior years is significantly increased.

2.2.2 Enrolments over Time

A major perception among stakeholders in Indonesian language education is that enrolments in Indonesian are subject to the ebb and flow of Australia's relationship with Indonesia. In particular, teachers of Indonesian report the negative impact of specific events in Indonesia, and how these are reported in the Australian media, on student enrolments. It was therefore necessary in this report to examine the long-term trend in enrolments in Indonesian to establish the evidence in relation to this perception.

On the basis of the data that was available, the number of enrolments in Indonesian across Australia has been contracting for many years. Data for the period 2001–2005 indicates that there was a decrease of approximately 10,000 students studying Indonesian over that period. This trend continues into the data for the period 2005–2008 which similarly indicates an average decrease of 10,000 students per year.

Current state of play in Universities

Indonesian EFTSL

Down 12% between 2001 and 2005 (from 641 to 540)

Down 23.8% between 2001 and 2007 (from 628 to 478)

In 2007, only five institutions reported teaching more than 30 EFTSL in Indonesian.

[ASAA 2008 data]

Initial indications of my study

In 2010 only 15 universities have independent Indonesian language programs (down from 24 in 2001*), of which 5 are sustained by a *single continuing staff member*. (*Jeffrey Maximising Report 2002:30)

Enrolments of 25 students in 1st year beginners Indonesian units is regarded as good. Rarely do they exceed 30. Some cases, <15.

Rarely do Yr 12 Indonesian language students continue Indonesian at university; commonly only c. 2/15 2nd years would be post-Yr 12.

Likely that less than 100 students complete a 3 year major annually, with only about 35 on an 'in-country' semester in Indonesia in any semester.

Predict only 1 (2?) uni with more than 30 EFTSL in Indonesian.

Seeking ideas for possible strategies/models?

University/Institutional level:

- e.g. degree structures/requirements, staffing profiles/composition, teaching patterns/locations.

Cross-Institutional collaborations:

- e.g. 'Adelaide model' (Flinders & Adelaide Universities), 'Brisbane model' (Brisbane Universities Languages Hub: UQ, QUT, Griffith), 'UNE model' (UNE, USQ, UoW), 'ANU model' (ANU & Indiana)

National strategies:

- E.g. policy settings (NALSSP for universities, HECS waivers, funding settings, national collaborations/incentives)
- National-level planning: national curriculum, competency rankings, teaching materials bank.

International strategies:

- E.g. Indonesian government role (Teacher assistants, visa incentives, 'Confucius Institute'-style institutional support)

'green shoots'

Reinvestment & replacement of retiring staff

Integration of Indonesian across the university's strategic plan/profile

beneficial links to growing disciplines/programs

Goodwill within the bureaucracy

Examples of productive collaboration

Reversing the decline with new models

- e.g. the Melbourne 'bounce'

Challenges

Accurate data

De-identifying data

Economic modelling cost of inaction

Maximising political impact

Avoiding the report 'graveyard'