

**THE NATIONAL INTEREST AND THE DECLINE
AND FALL OF INDONESIAN LANGUAGE
LEARNING IN AUSTRALIA**

**KEPENTINGAN NASIONAL DAN
PENURUNAN PENGAJARAN BAHASA
INDONESIA DI AUSTRALIA**

**PREPARED BY HUGH PASSMORE
FOR THE EMBASSY OF THE REPUBLIC OF INDONESIA
MAY 2009
AUSTRALIAN NATIONAL INTERNSHIPS PROGRAM**

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Acknowledgements

Preface

Executive Summary

Chapter One :

Introduction 1

Chapter Two:

Indonesian Studies and the National Interest 3

Chapter Three:

The Status of Indonesian Studies in Australia 7

Chapter Four:

The State of Indonesian Language Learning in Australia 11

Chapter Five:

Reasons for the Decline in Indonesian Language Learning 18

Chapter Six:

Strategies to Arrest and Reverse the Decline 25

Chapter Seven:

Conclusion 35

Annotated Bibliography 37

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

An 8,000 word research report does not simply appear out of thin air. As much as it may require blood, sweat and tears, it would never be a polished product without the guidance, advice and patience of others. As such, a series of acknowledgements are in order.

First, I thank Mr. Robert Campbell and Mrs. Cheryl Wilson for giving me the opportunity to participate in such a well run and professional program such as the Australian National Internship Program.

Second, I warmly thank all the staff of the Indonesian Embassy for their friendliness, speaking practice, and kindness. Particular note must be made of the special contribution of the members of Education and Culture Section, namely Ms. Sarah Dinsmore, Bapak Soegito, Mr. John Davenport and Mr. Sadewa Herwindu. *Terimah kasih banyak.*

Third, I owe deep gratitude to Mr. George Quinn whose advice, scholarship, and fiery passion for the Indonesian language convinced me that this research needed to be done.

Fourth, I thank all my friends and family. My catchall excuse, 'Sorry, can't make it, got to finish the ANIP report', is no longer valid.

Finally, I owe particular thanks to my institutional supervisor, Mr. Yoni Utomo, whose neverending assistance, good humour, and offers of food provided me with the drive and will to finish.

PREFACE

This report was prepared for the Indonesian Embassy as part of the Australian National Internships Program. Over a period of three months, the author spent two days a week working at the Embassy assisting with miscellaneous tasks and preparing the report. The report's topic was developed in consultation with the Indonesian Embassy. The Indonesian Embassy is very concerned with the decline in Indonesian language learning in Australia. In many respects, the Embassy has taken it upon itself to promote Indonesian language learning in Australia through a program of teacher's assistants and the hosting of various conferences for Indonesian language teachers. However, the Embassy indicated to the author that there appeared to be a fundamental lack of understanding as to the reasons why so few students were studying Indonesian; moreover, given this absence, what could be done to increase the number of Australians learning Indonesian. These two problems provided the impetus for the report. The report adopted a holistic approach to examining this problem by placing it within a broad, historical context. Further, it seeks to articulate the reasons why the decline in Indonesian language learning has broad, negative ramifications in Australia. Thus, the report seeks not only to give the Embassy a deeper understanding of the problem and some possible strategies with which to address it, but also communicate to a wider Australian audience that it is both a critical and pressing issue requiring urgent attention.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Given the shared interests in security, economics and trade, and the wider Asia-Pacific region, Australia's fortunes cannot be separated from those of Indonesia. The presence of these shared interests leave Indonesia and Australia no choice but to engage with each other. Australia's quality of engagement with Indonesia is determined by its ability to communicate with, and understand, Indonesia. These qualities are, in turn, a function of the level and quality of 'Indonesia-knowledge' in Australia. Australia cannot develop a high quality level of engagement with Indonesia without a large body of 'Indonesia-savvy' Australians. However, in the last ten years, there has been a significant decline in the number of school and university students studying Indonesian. This threatens the viability of a long-term, mutually beneficial relationship between Australia and Indonesia.

Indonesian's status in the Australian education system primarily revolves around its economic utility. During the 1990s, the number of students studying Indonesian increased dramatically. However, since 2000, there has been a marked decline in the total number of students studying Indonesian in Australia, particularly at the Year 12 and tertiary level. This decline must be placed within a wider context of a general negative trend in the number of students studying a Language other than English in the past 10 years.

The reasons for the sharp decline in student numbers are quite clear. First, the narrowing of career prospects in Indonesia since the Asian Financial Crisis convinced many students that Indonesian was no longer an economically relevant language. Second, the Australian Government's Travel Advisory for Indonesian has made it impossible for school groups to make educational trips to Indonesia. This inability to experience Indonesian culture firsthand has had a deleterious impact on the motivation of students to study Indonesian. Third, the Australian media has presented a series of negative and simplistic images of Indonesia to the Australian community. The tractions of these negative images in the wider community mean that few parents want their children to learn Indonesian. Finally, the termination of the 'National Asian Languages and Studies in Australian Schools'

funding, which provided \$208 million for the study of Asian languages between 1994 and 2002, had an immediate impact on Indonesian school enrolments.

There are a number of possible strategies that could be undertaken to increase the number of students studying Indonesian. The rationale presented for the study of Indonesian must be expanded. The current sole focus on the economic utility of Indonesian degrades the educational and social value of the study of Indonesian. Further, the very validity of the thesis that Indonesian language skills will result in increased export success is highly questionable. The fact that an Australian speaker of Indonesian has significant career opportunities outside the field of business must be highlighted. The issue of accessibility can be circumvented through private exchanges, encouraging travel to other Indonesian speaking regions such as Brunei and Malaysia, and a more comprehensive cultural outreach program in Australia that brings Indonesian culture to Australian students. Practical strategies, such as continued Government funding, different incentive structures to study Indonesian, and increased study opportunities at the tertiary level all offer avenues with which to increase student numbers. Unfortunately, the impact of negative images of Indonesia in the Australian community is not susceptible to an easy remedy. It is impossible to stop the media presenting negative images of Indonesia, however it is extremely easy to increase the number of positive images of Indonesia presented to the Australian community.

These strategies all offer viable avenues to increase the number of students studying Indonesia. However, their potential success is a function of several factors. First, there needs to be widespread recognition of the need to increase the number of Indonesian language learners. Second, the exact goals of these strategies should be both clear and realistic. Third, those parties interested in the revival of Indonesian language learning must become articulate advocates on behalf of Indonesian language learning. Further, they must seek a sustained engagement with the mainstream Australian community. Given the fulfilment of these conditions, a strong concerted effort to increase the number of students studying Indonesian in Australia has every chance of success.

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

The last five years have witnessed a significant amount of public discussion about the state of Indonesian language learning in Australia. On the whole, the consensus is that the situation is dire. It appears Indonesian studies¹ in Australia has reached its nadir; fewer and fewer students are studying Indonesian at an advanced level. Aspinall (2009) argues that the decline in Indonesia knowledge over the past ten years in Australia has resulted in a vastly smaller cohort of ‘Indonesia savvy’ Australians which threatens Australia’s special relationship with Indonesia. Similarly, Lindsey (2007) argues that there is a strong connection between the decline in Indonesia knowledge in Australia and the majority of the Australian community’s ‘fear and loathing’ view of Indonesia.

Recently, this prognosis of crisis has been articulated at an official level. At a February 2009 Australia-Indonesia conference, the Australian Prime Minister, Mr. Kevin Rudd, stated that, ‘Australia needs to do better, a lot better in our level of Indonesian language studies, in the development of Indonesian studies within our universities and in our schools’ (Hill 2009a). This urgent concern has translated into practical action. The Government recently announced the creation of National Asian Languages and Studies in Schools Program (NALSSP), which will provide \$62.4 million in funding over three years for the study of Mandarin, Korean, Japanese and Indonesian. These grim diagnoses beg several questions: why is it so important that Australians learn Indonesian? Where does Indonesian stand in the Australian education system? What is the exact nature of the decline in studies of Indonesian in Australia? Why are so few students choosing to study Indonesian? What can be done to increase the number of students studying Indonesian? It is these questions that this report will address.

¹ ‘Indonesian language studies’ and ‘Indonesian studies’ are used interchangeably in this report. Unless noted otherwise, they both refer to the study of the Indonesian language.

Chapter 2 discusses the reasons why it is in Australia's best interest to have Australian students studying Indonesian. Australia and Indonesia have a number of mutual interests, in terms of security, economics and trade, and the wider Asia-Pacific region, which are built on a foundation of people-to-people links. The benefits of these connections can only be realised by high levels of engagement. Chapter 3 presents a historical narrative of the role of Indonesian in the Australian education system. In the last twenty years, Indonesian, placed within a wider rubric of 'Asian languages', has been strongly promoted on the grounds of its economic utility. Chapter 4 provides a statistical analysis of Indonesian language enrolments in both the school and tertiary level over the past twenty years. This analysis indicates that fewer students are studying Indonesian in Year 12, and even fewer students decide to continue on to university level studies of Indonesian. Chapter 5 examines the reasons for the significant decrease in the number of students studying Indonesian. The primary reasons include inaccessibility, reduced funding, a narrowing of economic opportunities in Indonesia, and the negative perceptions of Indonesia in Australia. Chapter Six discusses some of the possible strategies that could be used to arrest and reverse the decline in Indonesian language enrolments in Australia. Chapter Seven concludes by examining the future of Indonesian studies in Australia.

CHAPTER TWO

INDONESIAN STUDIES AND THE NATIONAL INTEREST

As is widely acknowledged, the destinies of Australia and Indonesia are inextricably intertwined. As the world's third largest democracy, the world's fourth most populous state, and one of the global centres of Islam, Indonesia matters greatly to Australia. It is a geopolitical reality that in terms of security, economics and trade, and the wider Asia-Pacific region, Australia's fortunes cannot be separated from those of Indonesia.

THE SHARED INTERESTS

i) Security

Australia and Indonesia's shared interest in security and stability was forcefully brought home by the Bali bombings. The internal stability and external posture of Indonesia holds immense geopolitical significance for Australia. The Australian Defence Association notes that,

In strategic terms, Indonesia is part of Australia's shield and our highway to the world. Fundamentally, Indonesia's external security is inseparable from Australia's and this reality should determine Australia's security relationship with Indonesia. In effect, Australia has the choice of treating Indonesia as a likely adversary or potential ally. In the Association's view, this choice is no choice at all. Policy must be directed towards ensuring that Indonesia remains an ally based upon a recognition of shared security interests. (Foreign Affairs Sub Committee 2004: 37)

The growing spectres of terrorism, people smuggling and trans-national crime means that Australia and Indonesia will have a strong shared interest in future security cooperation.

ii) Economics and Trade

The health of the Indonesian economy is important to Australia not only in terms of direct trade but also because of the strong correlation between economic prosperity and stability in the region. Indonesia is Australia's 10th largest export market and 8th largest source of imports. Further, Indonesia is also an important destination for Australian investment. According to Austrade, in 2004 more than 400 Australian firms maintained a significant presence in Indonesia and Australian investment in Indonesia equalled approximately \$3 billion (Foreign Affairs Sub Committee 2004:74). In terms of aid and development, Indonesia is Australia's largest development partner and aid recipient with an average program of around \$500 million a year (Cook 2009: 1). Clearly, the economic futures of Indonesia and Australia are strongly connected.

iii) Regionalism

There is a strong regional dynamic to the Australia-Indonesia relationship. Indonesia is widely perceived as the anchor of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) and one of the few ASEAN members not openly hostile to the involvement of Australia in the region. Further, both Australia and Indonesia are warily watching the rise of China in the region and have a strong common interest in the stability and openness of the Asia-Pacific economy. One recent example of this regionalism was the strong cooperation between Australia and Indonesia in the promotion of a concerted international effort on climate change (MacIntyre & Ramage 2008: 47).

A RATIONALE FOR ENGAGEMENT AND EDUCATION

Given the strong interests shared by Australia and Indonesia, increased engagement through the development of mutual understanding and engagement is critical. In 2003, the Indonesian Foreign Minister, Dr Hassan Wirajuda, noted that,

[i]f we are neighbours by dictate of geography, then we are neighbours forever. There is no divorce between countries with common borders...The only rational choice is to engage each other in a stable, mutually beneficial and equitable, long-term relationship. (2003)

It is easy to forget that the foundation of Australia's engagement with Indonesia is a strong network of people-to-people links. The largest drivers of engagement are not the respective governments, but rather the strong flows of tourist, businesspeople and students between the two countries. The quality of Australia's engagement with Indonesia is determined by its attempts to understand and communicate with Indonesia. The best tool with which to increase understanding and facilitate communication is education. It is only with education that Australians could begin to understand those elements of Indonesian culture that have clearly left the Australian community confused in the past ten years. For example: the dynamic of Islam in Indonesia; the Indonesian court system; and, Indonesia's strong attachment to territorial integrity. Whilst studies of Indonesia, its culture and history, are highly beneficial, their full potential is only realised when they are combined with Indonesian language studies. According to Professor David Hill, the Director of the Australian Consortium for 'In-Country' Indonesian Studies (ACICIS),

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 broad ranging community understanding of, and appreciation for, Indonesia...To achieve this, the government must designate the study of Indonesia and Indonesian language as a strategic national priority. (Foreign Affairs Sub Committee 2004: 144)

The resilience of Australia's long-term relationship with Indonesia is dependent on the success of this endeavour. Aspinall (2009) argues that a large pool of 'Indonesia savvy' Australians has historically formed the 'connective tissue' of the Australia-Indonesia relationship. The depletion of this 'connective tissue' is particularly dangerous at this point in time as Indonesia is undergoing fundamental changes. According to MacIntyre & Ramage (2008) Indonesia is becoming a 'normal country': it is a stable, competitive democracy, achieving solid rates of economic growth, under competent national leadership. However, as this metamorphosis is occurring, Australian knowledge and understanding of Indonesia is at a historic low. A 2006 Lowy Institute poll of Australian attitudes towards Indonesia revealed that most Australians did not realise Indonesia was a

democracy. Further, a significant proportion of the respondents believed that Indonesia was controlled by the military, was a dangerous source of Islamic terrorism, and posed a distinct military threat to Australia (Cook 2006). Australia cannot develop a high quality level of engagement with Indonesia when the majority of the Australian community has a latently hostile view of Indonesia, mostly informed by a combination of misleading stereotypes, erroneous fears and a fundamental lack of reliable information about Indonesian in the public domain. Given this reality, it is clearly in Australia's best interest to have a sizeable cadre of individuals who are fluent in Indonesian and attuned to Indonesian culture.

CHAPTER THREE

THE STATUS OF INDONESIAN STUDIES IN AUSTRALIA

The Rudd Government's recent NALSSP strategy has placed a strong focus on the teaching of Asian languages, including Indonesian, within the Australian education system. This focus is not novel. The NALSSP represents the most recent addition to a large corpus of reports, advocacy statements and language policies that focus on the teaching of Asian languages in Australia. The decision to teach a foreign language does not occur in a vacuum. It involves deliberate decisions about the future status of that language. In order to correctly ascertain the status of Indonesian within the Australian education system, it is necessary to examine the historical rationale for Indonesian language studies in Australia.

- Auchmuty Report (1971)

This Report was the first piece of policy advice to recommend the expansion of the teaching of Asian languages, particularly Japanese and Indonesian, in the Australian education system. The Report recognised the growing importance of the Asian region to Australia's wider economic and strategic interests. Its rationale for the expansion of Asian language learning was, 'a reorientation of Australia's relations with Asian countries and a reappraisal of Australia's traditional attitudes towards Asia' (1971: 11).

- FitzGerald Report (1980)

The FitzGerald Report was commissioned by the Asian Studies Association of Australia in 1978. In contrast to Auchmuty (1971), FitzGerald explicitly posited that Asian languages and cultures should be studied for both their intrinsic intellectual worth and their economic and strategic utility. Significantly,

FitzGerald highlighted the need to address dominant community attitudes that failed to recognise the importance of 'Asia-knowledge' in Australia.

- Lo Bianco Report (1987)

This Report, titled the 'National Policy on Languages', formed the first official government language policy. The policy acknowledged the internal (identity) and external (economic) significance of languages in Australia. The Policy was notable for its lack of specific reference to the teaching of Asian languages. However, the Report did note that, 'All Australians conducting business in non-English speaking countries...will be greatly advantaged by having language skills and cultural knowledge appropriate to the task' (Lo Bianco 1987: 49).

- A National Strategy for the Study of Asia in Australia (1988)

This Report, commissioned by the Asian Studies Council, was a direct response to the perceived lack of attention on Asian languages contained in the 'National Policy on Languages'. The Council, rather than promoting the study of Asia for humanistic reasons, presented a comprehensive economic argument for the massive expansion of Asian language learning in Australia. The Council noted that, 'The proper study of Asia and its languages is about national survival in an intensely competitive world' (1988: 2).

- Garnaut Report (1989)

This Report, titled 'Australia and the North East Asian Ascendancy', primarily advocated macro and micro economic reforms that would align the Australian economy with the shift in global trade to Asia. This Report specifically placed Asian Studies within this rubric of wider economic reform by arguing that, 'Australia's long term success in getting the most out of its relationships with Asia depends more than anything else on the scale and quality of its investment in education (1989:317).

- Ingleson Report (1989)

Commissioned by the Asian Studies Council to report on the state of Asian studies in Australia, this Report reiterated the previous lobbying efforts contained in 'A National Strategy for the Study of Asia in Australia' (1988). It argued that a massive expansion in Asian studies was required if Australia was to remain economically competitive in the region.

- Australian Language and Literacy Policy (Dawkins 1991)

This policy, like its predecessor, the 'National Policy on Languages', contained no special emphasis on Asian languages. Rather, its focus was overwhelmingly on the link between English literacy and economic and social participation. Like the National Policy on Languages, general assertions were made in the policy about the connection between Australia's trade position and knowledge of LOTE.

- Asian Languages and Australia's Economic Future (Rudd 1994)

This Report argued that Australia lacked the appropriate export culture, cooperative attitudes and Asia-knowledge necessary to ensure Australia's economic future. The Report, operating on the assumption that there is a relationship between linguistic skills and export success, advocated a massive school based expansion of the teaching of four trade-priority Asian languages: Chinese, Korean, Japanese and Indonesian. The result of this Report was the Federal 'National Asian Languages and Studies in Australian Schools' (NALSAS) program. NALSAS set aspirational targets that by 2006, 60% of students in Years 10 and 15% in Year 12 will be learning one of the four key languages. Although meant to run until 2006, the strategy was terminated prematurely in 2002. From 1994 to the end of 2002, the Australian Government had provided over \$208 million to support the strategy.

- National Asian Language and Studies in Schools Program (2008)

In form, function and rationale, the NALSSP is an exact replica of NALSAS. NALSSP sets an aspirational target that, by 2020, at least 12% of students exit

Year 12 with fluency in one of the target Asian languages (Mandarin, Chinese, Indonesian and Korean) sufficient for engaging in trade and commerce in Asia and/or university study. The policy will provide \$62.4 million in funding over a three year period from 2008-09 until 2010-11.

This review indicates first a strong realisation in recent decades, at least in relevant policy and academic circles, that Australia needs to engage with the Asian region. It also demonstrates that, in the early 1970s and 1980s, the study of Asian languages were promoted as a means of intellectual enrichment and enmeshment with the wider Asian region. However, in the late 1980s, this logic began to shift to pure economic instrumentalism. An Asian Studies lobby with a vested interest in the spread of Asian language learning promoted the study Asian languages solely on the basis of their economic utility. At the same time, government policy began to position education as a means of increasing international competitiveness. Although the National Policy on Languages (1987) and Australian Language and Literacy Policy (1991) paid little specific focus to Asian languages, the Rudd Report (1994) adopted this economic instrumentalist rationale wholesale. As Henderson argues, the link between the utilitarian outcomes of Asian languages and government policy to integrate the Australian economy into Asia marginalised the intellectual, philosophical and cultural rationales for the study of Asian languages (2008: 177). The recent launch of the NALSSP strategy demonstrates that this logic still holds much sway.

CHAPTER FOUR

THE STATE OF INDONESIAN LANGUAGE LEARNING IN AUSTRALIA

On the whole, since 2001, fewer and fewer students have been studying Indonesia. This problem is particularly acute at the Year 12 and tertiary level. However, before examining these four trends, it is important to note that this report's statistical analysis has been limited by the paucity of data available. Over the past 20 years, four general trends in Indonesian language enrolments can be identified. Collection of data for this report has revealed that some of the most basic statistics about LOTE in the Australian education system are not routinely collated or retained. Slaughter notes that few to no national statistics exist for the study of LOTE, let alone the study of Indonesian, in the past ten years (2007b: 305). As such, this report uses other representative samples, in particular Indonesian enrolments in the ACT², as an indicator of the general statistical trend post-2001. However, it must be recognised that due to the lack of contemporary national data, it is impossible to draw authoritative conclusions on the recent trends in Indonesian enrolments. This problem is particularly acute at the school level.

TREND 1 - Fewer and fewer students are choosing to study LOTE either at school or university.

Superficially, the culture of language learning in the Australian education system appears quite vibrant; over 47% of government school students were studying a LOTE in 2005 (Liddicoat et al 2007: viii). However, this figure primarily reflects the fact that language

² The ACT was chosen as a data collection point for two main reasons. First, it has the most contemporary data. Second, the Indonesian Embassy in Canberra has a particular interest in Indonesian language learning in the ACT.

study is often compulsory up until Year 8. A more accurate picture is available by examining the participation rates for non-compulsory LOTE studies, namely, Year 12 and tertiary-level students. In the late 1960s, almost 40% of Year 12 students studied a LOTE. However, by 2008, less than 13% of Year 12 students studied a LOTE (Group of Eight 2008: 2). A similar trend is visible in the tertiary sector. Whereas in the mid 1960s, nearly 30% of Bachelor of Arts students studied a LOTE, the Australian Academy of Humanities estimates that, in 2008, only 5-10% of university students were studying a LOTE (2008: 12).

TREND 2 - From 1994 to 2001 there was a strong increase in total school Indonesian enrolments. It appears that after 2001, there has been a gradual decline in total enrolments. ACT data suggests a large part of that decline may have been attributable to a general decline in LOTE learning

Table 1 demonstrates the steady increase in total Indonesian enrolments between 1969 and 2001. A large part of this increase from 1994 to 2001 is attributable to the NALSAS funding which ceased in 2002. Whilst there is no national data for enrolment levels after 2001, Liddicoat notes that between 2001 and 2005, total Indonesian enrolments in the government system dropped from 211,003 students to 170,273 students, a 19% decline (2007: 35).

| Year | Total Enrolments |
|------|------------------|
| 1969 | 3,421 |
| 1975 | 13,472 |
| 1988 | 24,925 |
| 1991 | 45,497 |
| 1994 | 90,000 (est) |
| 2001 | 316,877 |

Table 1 – Total Combined Indonesian Enrolments in Australian Primary and Secondary Schools

Sources: Worsley 1994, Slaughter 2007b.

Table 2, showing total ACT Indonesian enrolments between 1997 and 2003, offers an interesting sample of the recent decline.

| Year | Total Indonesian Enrolments | Total LOTE Enrolments | Indonesian enrolments as % of total LOTE enrolments |
|------|-----------------------------|-----------------------|---|
| 1997 | 5151 | 24702 | 20.85% |
| 1998 | 4829 | 23322 | 20.70% |
| 1999 | 5004 | 22200 | 22.54% |
| 2000 | 5020 | 22086 | 22.78% |
| 2001 | 4807 | 21538 | 22.32% |
| 2002 | 4562 | 20318 | 22.45% |
| 2003 | 3949 | 18486 | 21.36% |

Table 2 – Total Combined Indonesian Enrolments in ACT Primary and Secondary Schools 1997-2003

Sources: ACT Education and Community Services 1999, 1998, 1999, 2000, 2001, 2002, 2003.

Total ACT primary and secondary school enrolments peaked in the year 2000 with 5020 enrolments and then began a steady decline with only 3949 students enrolled in 2003 – a 21% decline over a four year period. Whilst alarming in absolute terms, this decline must be placed within the context of a 16% decline in total LOTE enrolments over the same period. Indonesian enrolments as a percentage of total LOTE enrolments remained

relatively static over the period 1997-2003. These results correlate with the data in Victoria where student enrolments in Indonesian in government schools declined by 19% between 2000 and 2005, significantly more than the 7% decline in total LOTE enrolments (Slaughter 2007a: 304). The data from the ACT and Victoria suggests that total Indonesian school enrolments have experienced a negative trend within the wider declining trend in school LOTE learning.

Trend 3 - From 1991 until 2000 there was a significant increase in both the total number of Year 12 students studying Indonesian and the percentage of Year 12 LOTE students studying Indonesian. It appears that both of these figures have dramatically decreased in the last eight years.

Figure 1 represents national data for Year 12 Indonesian enrolments for the period 1982 till 2000. In the period 1990 until 2000, there was an 89% increase in Year 12 Indonesian enrolments. During the same period, the number of Year 12 students studying a LOTE increased by only 15%.

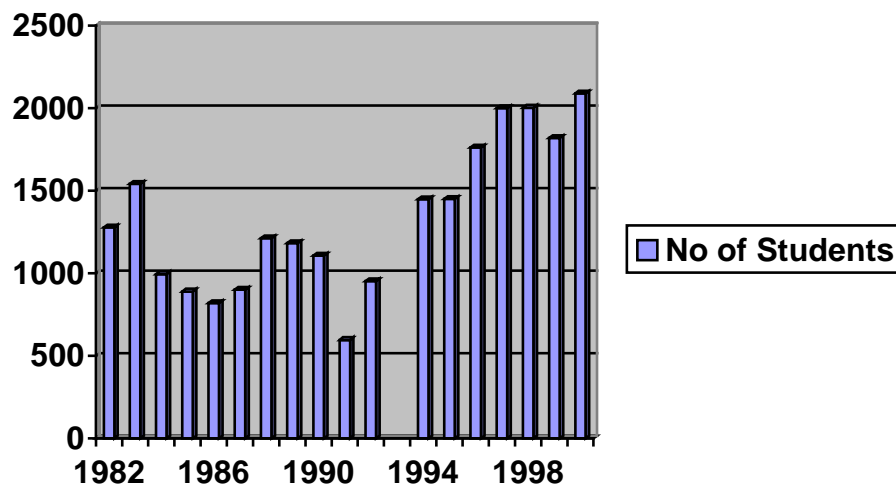


Figure 1 – National Year 12 Indonesian Enrolments 1982-2000

Sources: Rudd 1994, EREBUS 2002a

Figure 2 demonstrates that Indonesian increased its dominance as a percentage of total LOTE enrolments during the same period.

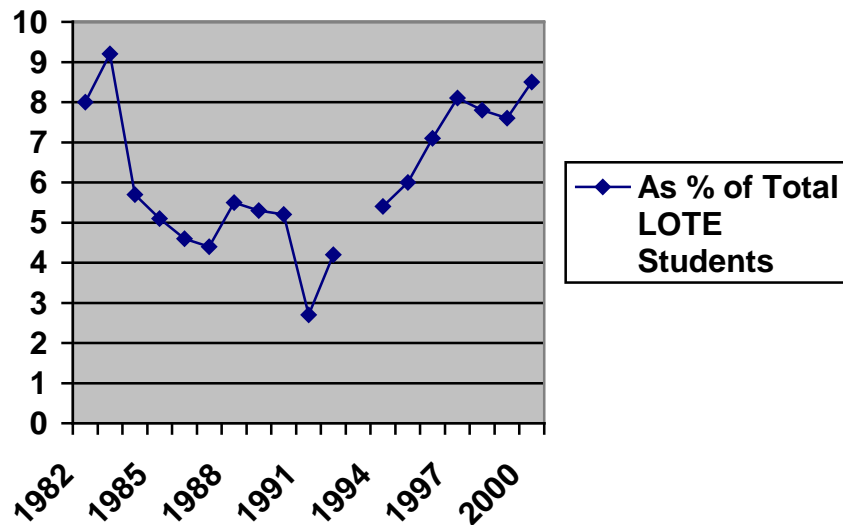


Figure 2 – National Indonesian Year 12 Enrolments as a % total of Year 12 LOTE Enrolments 1982-2000.

Sources: Rudd 1994, EREBUS 2002a

There are no national figures for Year 12 enrolments post-2000, but the level of Indonesian Year 12 enrolments in the ACT suggest a dramatic decline. Table 3 shows total Year 12 enrolment figures, and where available, total Year 12 LOTE enrolments, in the ACT between 1999 and 2008.

| Year | Total Year 12 Indonesian Enrolments | Total Year 12 LOTE Enrolments | Indonesian enrolments as % of total Year 12 LOTE enrolments |
|------|-------------------------------------|-------------------------------|---|
| 1999 | 44 | 399 | 11% |
| 2000 | 43 | 417 | 10.3% |
| 2001 | 30 | 396 | 7.6% |
| 2002 | 25 | 423 | 5.9% |
| 2003 | 21 | 442 | 4.8% |

| | | | |
|------|----|----|----|
| 2004 | NA | NA | NA |
| 2005 | 28 | NA | NA |
| 2006 | 26 | NA | NA |
| 2007 | 20 | NA | NA |
| 2008 | 21 | NA | NA |

Table 3 – Total Year 12 Indonesian and LOTE Enrolments in the ACT 1999-2008

Sources: ACT, Community Services and Education, 1999, 2000, 2001, 2002, 2003, 2005, 2006, 2007, 2008.

In the period 1999 to 2008, there was a 52% decline in total Year 12 Indonesian language enrolments in the ACT. Given the small sample size, it could be argued that the ACT data is not truly representative and, thus, not significant. However, the ACT data closely correlates with Slaughter’s findings that NSW Year 12 Indonesian enrolments declined by 43% between 2000 and 2005 (2007b: 304). Data for total Year 12 LOTE enrolments in the ACT is only available for the period 1999-2003. This data presents a similarly dramatic decline in enrolments. The number of Year 12 students studying a LOTE actually increased over this period. However, whereas in 1999, Indonesian students represented 11% of total Year 12 LOTE enrolments, by 2003 this figure had dropped to 4.8% of total LOTE enrolments.

Trend 4 - In the last decade there has been a dramatic decline in the number of tertiary students studying Indonesian

There are two separate sets of figures on the recent decline in tertiary-level Indonesian enrolments, which, albeit not exactly congruent, demonstrate the same negative trend. White and Bauldauf found a 12% decrease in national Indonesian EFTSL (Equivalent Full Time Student Load) between 2001 and 2005, from 641 to 540 (2006: 14). More dramatically, McLaren found a 24% decline in EFTSL between 2001 and 2007, from 628 to 478 (2008: 2). Exacerbating this problem, LOTE retention rates at university are

particularly low. The Australian Academy of Humanities estimates that, on average, only 25% of students who begin a language in first-year will follow the whole sequence through to third-year (2008: 15). Clearly, in the last 10 years, fewer and fewer students have chosen to study Indonesian at university, and even fewer have pursued it to the third-year.

CHAPTER FIVE

REASONS FOR THE DECLINE IN INDONESIAN LANGUAGE LEARNING

Fewer and fewer students, when given the choice in Year 12 or at university, are choosing to study Indonesian. In order to develop strategies with which to increase the number of students studying Indonesian, it is necessary to examine the underlying reasons why students are choosing not to continue studying Indonesian. There are a number of key reasons including: economic irrelevance; inaccessibility; the impact of fluctuations in the Australia-Indonesian relationship; and, the reduction in Government funding for Asian languages.

1. Economic Irrelevance

Slaughter (2007a) and Worsley (1994) both note that one of the strongest motivating influences for senior secondary students continuing their Indonesia studies was the belief that it would further their career prospects. This in part reflects the economic promotion of the language in the late 1980s and 1990s. In the early 1990s, Indonesia was seen as a growing economic powerhouse of Southeast Asia. However, with the Asian Financial Crisis of 1997, Quinn notes that Indonesia shifted from being an Asian dragon, an export oriented economy with high levels of growth and enormous opportunities for foreign investment, to the sick man of Asia (2009: 4). Accordingly, a trend developed whereby many schools discontinued Indonesian because it no longer met ‘the demands of their clientele’ (Slaughter 2000b: 96). Parents want the greatest educational return from their investment in their child’s education. Given the weakness of the Indonesian economy and the resultant narrowing of employment opportunities for speakers of Indonesian, particularly in the field of business, many parents simply do not want their child studying an ‘economically irrelevant’ language such as Indonesian.

2. Inaccessibility

The lack of physical access for Australian students and teachers to Indonesia has had a dramatic impact on the number of students studying Indonesian. The inaccessibility is a direct result of the Federal Government's Travel Advisories for Indonesia. Since the 2002 Bali Bombings, in which 88 Australians were killed, the Australian Government has continuously positioned the Travel Advice at Level 4, one below Iraq and Afghanistan, of a 5-stage advice system. The Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade (DFAT) website advises that travelers,

Reconsider your need to travel to Indonesia, including Bali, at this time due to the very high threat of terrorist attack...If you decide to travel to Indonesia, you should exercise extreme caution. (DFAT 2009)

The efficacy of the Travel Advisory system is questionable given that in 2008 more Australians visited Indonesia than in any other year over the past ten years (ABS 2009). Nevertheless, the final decision to send students and teachers to Indonesia is the responsibility of respective State and Territory Departments of Education. Given the level of risk implied in the Federal Government's Travel Advice, and, consequently, the overly prohibitive cost of insurance, these respective Departments refuse to allow students and teachers to travel to Indonesia.

The inaccessibility of Indonesia for secondary students weakens their motivation to continue studying Indonesia. Teacher responses indicate that previously, when students were able to make trips to Indonesia and were given an opportunity to experience the Indonesian culture and people, they would return to Australia with boundless enthusiasm and a real will to learn (Slaughter 2007a: 98). Currently, for many secondary students, Indonesia remains an abstract concept, much like a museum, stuck in an outdated textbook. Indonesia's contemporary culture remains remote; it is still presented as a series of *wayang kulit* and *gamelan* performances. It is difficult to convince a fickle secondary student to continue studying a language of a country and culture which they are not allowed to experience first-hand.

At the tertiary level, the impact of the Government's Travel Advice is much smaller. This primarily reflects the work of the 'Australian Consortium for In-Country Indonesian Studies' (ACICIS). Established in 1994, ACICIS offers a means through which students of 19 Australian member universities can spend six to twelve months as students at an Indonesian university. As adults, tertiary students are able to sign a legal waiver which permits their universities to place them in Indonesia. Since 1995, 900 students have studied in Indonesia through the Consortium (ACICIS 2009). Whilst there are excellent structures for Australian tertiary students to study in Indonesia, the absolute number of students is small as so few students end up continuing Indonesian up to the tertiary level.

3. The Australia-Indonesia Relationship: Malaise and media hysteria

The turbulent and eventful nature of the Australian-Indonesia relationship in the last ten years has helped to create a highly negative image of Indonesia in the Australian community. A series of events, some relatively innocuous, have been manipulated by the Australian media so as to appeal to the most ignorant and prejudiced views of the Australian community. Mackie notes that news reports about Indonesia are too often presented in a sensationalist and adverse way' (2007:108). The media has presented four main themes, all negative and simplistic, to the Australian public.

i) Indonesia as violent and aggressive

The Indonesian occupation of East Timor by Indonesia was widely recognized in Australia. The strong media attention given to the killing of the Balibo 5, the Santa Cruz massacre, and the 1999 violence crystallized the image of Indonesia as an aggressive and violent nation into mainstream Australian opinion. Further, the Australian involvement in East Timor in 1999 was developed into a 'white knight' narrative – the generous and honest Australian nation coming to the aid of a small, Christian country oppressed by an aggressive and inherently violent Muslim nation.

ii) Indonesia as a centre of Islamic radicalism and terrorism

According to Quinn, the 2002 Bali bombings, the 2004 Australian Embassy bombing and the 2005 Bali bombings helped to unlock a deep prejudice towards Islam in the Australian community (2009: 4). A combination of a genuine lack of understanding of the overwhelmingly tolerant nature of Indonesian Islam and the xenophobia espoused by talkback radio helped to create an image of Indonesia as a thriving hub of Islamic terrorists.

iii) Indonesia as corrupt

In the wake of the 2005 arrest of Schapelle Corby in Bali for drug smuggling, public anti-Indonesia hysteria peaked in Australia. The media attempted to demonstrate the clear corruption of the Indonesian court process and the lack of natural justice received by Ms. Corby. Although subsequent revelations have thrown doubt on Ms. Corby's innocence, the Australian media went to great lengths to develop a simplistic 'innocent victim / corrupt aggressor' narrative without trying to communicate the fundamental differences between the Australian and Indonesian legal systems.

iv) Indonesia as a financial disaster

The Asian Financial Crisis cemented the idea of Indonesia as an economic disaster in the Australian community. Whilst the Asian Financial Crisis certainly had a dramatic impact on Indonesia's economic development, the media fails to portray the fact that this event represented an aberration in Indonesia's impressive record of economic development over the past thirty years. In the last seven to eight years, Indonesia has recorded consistently strong rates of GDP growth between 5-7% per annum (CIA 2009). Additionally, from 1975 to 2005, Indonesia's Human Development Index, the United Nations statistical measure of human development, increased from 0.471 to 0.728 (UNDP 2009).

The media portrayal of Indonesia has contributed to a perception by the Australian public that Indonesia is violent and aggressive, ethically bankrupt and corrupt, economically

backward, and a centre of Islamic terrorism. The strength of these perceptions is clear in the polls of Australian attitudes towards Indonesia (see Cook 2006, McAllister 2005). In Slaughter's survey of Indonesian teachers in Australia, 84% of the respondents identified the aforementioned series of socio-political events as contributing to a negative image of Indonesia within the teaching community, the student community, and most importantly, the parental community (2007b: 89). It is these negative images that impact upon the decision whether to study Indonesian. At the secondary school level, students have limited autonomy in choosing their subjects; it is often the perceptions of their parents that dictate final subject choice. As such, the generally negative image of Indonesia held by the mainstream Australian community mean that many parents would rather their child learn a language other than Indonesian at school.

The following two teacher responses are symptomatic of this problem:

- 'I've been teaching Indonesian since 1997. So since the East Timor massacre, the Bali bombing...I had really, really bad responses, mainly from parents actually, and the kids sort of go along with their parents because the kids themselves have no idea.'
- 'I have a lot of kids who want to do Indonesian but I have parents who come to me and say there is no way that my child will be doing Indonesian. Because, not so much that it's even a language, but that it's Indonesian...for the first time, parents are saying, 'I don't want my child to do it. I don't want my child learning the language of terrorists.' (Slaughter 2007b: 92)

4. Reduced Federal Funding

Enrolments in Indonesian language have historically increased in line with increased Government assistance. The best example of this assistance was the NALSAS program which ran from 1994 to 2002. Figure 3 demonstrates that the NALSAS strategy was remarkably successful in increasing the absolute number of school students studying Asian languages, in particular Indonesian.

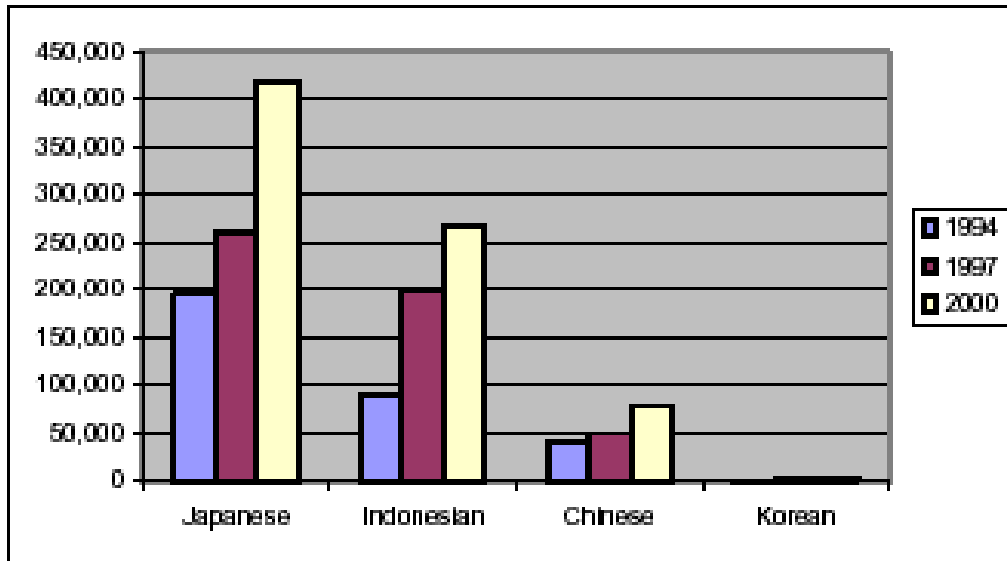


Figure 3- Growth in enrolments in NALSAS Languages, 1994-2000.

Source: EREBUS Consulting Partners 2002b:xii

According to the Department of Education, Science and Technology, in 1994 there were just under 100,000 students studying Indonesian, however, by 2001, this number had increased to 316877 students (Foreign Affairs Sub Committee 2004: 160). However, whilst growth in total numbers of students is laudable, the best indicator of the success is the number of students completing Year 12 Indonesian. Figure 4 show a clear increase in the number of Year 12 students studying Indonesian between 1994 and 2000.

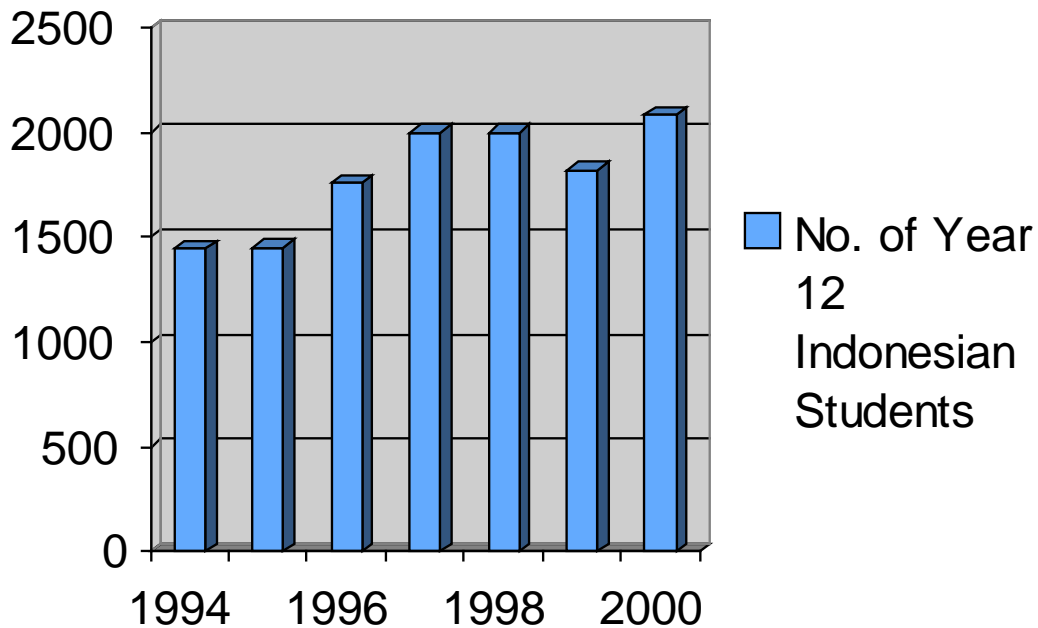


Figure 4 – Total Year 12 Indonesian Enrolments, 1994-2000.

Source: EREBUS 2002a

Funding commitments clearly contribute to the level of enrolments. The NALSAS program, despite being scheduled to run until 2006, was terminated in 2002. The impact was immediate. Whereas 211,003 students were studying Indonesian across all government sectors in 2001, this figure was 170,273 students in 2005, a 19% decline in enrolments (Liddicoat et al 2007: 35).

Beyond the practical issue of reduced funding, the early termination of the NALSAS program was also highly symbolic. Henderson argues that the NALSAS program represented a cultural transformation of the Australian education system that recognized the educational and strategic benefits of a long-term commitment to Asian languages in schools (2007: 15). The termination of the NALSAS program was indicative of a decreased commitment to Australia as an ‘Asia-literate’ society. It implicitly suggested Asian languages, including Indonesian, were no longer important.

CHAPTER SIX

STRATEGIES TO ARREST AND REVERSE THE DECLINE

A Questionable Logic

Since the early 1980s, the lobbyists for Indonesian studies have focused on its economic utility. This logic has informed both the NALSAS and NALSSP programs. However, strong consideration needs to be given to the use of a broader rationale for the promotion of second language learning. Whereas previously languages were studied for a combination of their educational, social and economic utility, the shift to a singular focus of economic value devalues these other important benefits of language learning and leaves language learning vulnerable to the volatility of the global economy. It came as no surprise that, with the Asian Financial Crisis, the momentum to promote ‘Asia literacy’ in Australia was greatly weakened (Pang 2005: 194). Above all these factors, the economic rationale that characterises the official promotion of Indonesian in Australia is fundamentally flawed on two accounts. First, it relies on a questionable connection between export success and foreign language ability. Second, it does not develop a strong concept of language fluency and the requirements of business in Indonesia.

i) The Nexus Between Export Success and Linguistic Ability

The Rudd Report (1994) operates on the assumption that there is a positive relationship between levels of linguistic skills and export performance. The Report argues that one factor affecting export success are the ‘subjective’ resistances to trade arising from country-specific psychological and institutional dynamics such as the legal system or the culture of negotiations. The Report posits that differences in culture and language impact upon the cost of overcoming subjective resistances to trade. Thus, by increasing language skills, the cost of overcoming subjective resistances to trade will be reduced and the international competitiveness of Australian firms will be increased. Whilst theoretically attractive, there is no empirical evidence to support this assertion. It is impossible to

demonstrate a cause-effect relationship between language skills and effectiveness in international trade as the relevant variables are so numerous as to preclude rigorous, unequivocal empirical studies.

A large portion of the Rudd Report's theoretical foundation rests on the Stanley Report (1990). Stanley argues that the relationship between export success and language skills is clearly evident in the connection between the Austrade Export Award Winners and their high levels of linguistic ability (1990: 5). This highly specific example is used to extrapolate a general conclusion that there is a strong, general link between export success and linguistic ability. However, this assertion contradicts the main results of Stanley's own survey on the attitudes of 500 Australian export businesses towards the utility of foreign languages. The large majority of the survey's respondents did not view language skills as integral to export success. Writing in his capacity as head of the Australian Language and Literacy Council, Cavalier asserts that,

[a] mischief is abroad which exaggerates the economic importance of language study. It is a mischief whose twin is the hoary notion that languages, like our schools and their curriculum, should be only an extension of the transient needs of our economy. (1994: vii)

Cavalier undertook a survey of the executives of Business International, a business organization which seeks to build the focus of Australian business on exports and the potential of international trade. In the survey, not one respondent regarded language as more important in making a sale than product, price, reliability or service. Language ability is rarely pre-eminent in determining international business success, but rather its importance to business lies as an ancillary skill. According to the survey results of both Cavalier (1994) and Stanley (1990), it is cultural adaptability, not language ability *per se*, that is a significant determinant of export success.

ii) Language Fluency and Trade

NALSSP has an aspirational target that 12% of students exit Year 12 with fluency in one of the target languages sufficient for engaging in trade and commerce in Asia or further

university study. The concept of a Year 12 student of Indonesian possessing a sufficient level of fluency to engage in trade and commerce in Indonesia is unrealistic. The United States' Foreign Service Institute (FSI) has identified five levels of language proficiency (Jackson & Kaplan 1999: 73).

1. *Elementary proficiency*
2. *Limited working proficiency*
3. *General professional proficiency*
4. *Advanced professional proficiency*
5. *Functionally equivalent to an educated native speaker* (Jackson & Kaplan 1999: 73)

The FSI's research has found that a native speaker of English, with no prior knowledge of Indonesian, and possessing an above aptitude for learning languages, will require 900 class hours to reach a Level 3 proficiency in Indonesian (Jackson and Kaplan 1999: 78). Cavalier notes that for complex business interactions in Indonesia, such as negotiations, no less than Level 4 proficiency is required (1994: 6). However, a student who has studied Indonesian from Year 7 until third-year university will, on average, have experienced less than 900 hours total class time. Thus, the majority of university graduates in Indonesian, excluding those who have spent significant time in-country, simply do not possess an adequate level of linguistic proficiency for undertaking business in Indonesia. This point is clear in the comment of Geoff Norris, an executive of Dow Chemicals, which works extensively in Indonesia.

What are you going to learn if you do four years of Malaysian at a university in Australia?...If you are going to be a sales person, for example, the probability of your Malay being acceptable in nuances for a Malay buyer is extremely unlikely. The fact you speak Malay, and speak it reasonably, he would think is nice. But it would not influence his purchasing decision. (Cavalier 1994: 12)

Worsley, in his research on Australian businesses in Indonesia, notes that most Australian firms believe that it makes better business sense, in terms of cost and efficiency, to hire Indonesians with a knowledge of Indonesian business culture and market and provide

them with the business skills they lack (1994:12). This reflects the simple fact that very few Australians can be expected to possess the language fluency required for business in Indonesia.

A New Rationale for Learning Indonesian

A new rationale for learning Indonesian, beyond the possibilities it offers in business and trade, must be developed and promoted. As has been demonstrated, the idea that learning Indonesian will increase Australia's exports or directly lead to a commercial position in Indonesia is fundamentally flawed. Furthermore, the use of the current rationale leaves Indonesian enrolments at the mercy of the vagaries of the world economy. It is the development of personal interest based on an understanding of other cultures and peoples, and the development of a better understanding of their own society, as well as other societies, and the learning of a language code, that are the primary benefits of learning a language. Indonesian has a few added advantages:

- i) Indonesian's simple structure and Latin script make it a relatively easy language to begin learning.
- ii) Indonesian is the language of over 220 million people and home to both an incredibly diverse culture and spectacularly beautiful archipelago of over 17,000 islands.
- iii) Indonesian offers a means of access into a unique contemporary youth culture that is an eclectic mix of Eastern, Western and Islamic influences.
- iv) Indonesia is situated on Australia's doorstep and is a fascinating and inexpensive country to travel in.

Beyond this rationale, it is naïve to assume that adolescent students will choose to study Indonesian out of some altruistic concern for the 'national interest'. The reality that many students choose a LOTE based on future career opportunities must be recognised. Rather than emphasising the lack of business opportunities in Indonesia for Australians, it would be extremely beneficial to highlight the multitude of careers outside of business that are available to Indonesian graduates. More so than nearly any other foreign language, an

Australian speaker of Indonesian has significant career opportunities in the fields of tourism, academia, defence, development and intelligence. Early secondary school students and first year university students need to be convinced of the utility of Indonesian. One possible strategy is the creation of an 'Indonesian Careers Group' consisting of a small group of relatively young professionals who have made use of their Indonesian skills in a wide variety of fields. This group could visit schools and universities to demonstrate the boundless opportunities the study of Indonesian presents for Australian students.

Accessibility

The issue of Indonesia's accessibility to Australian students is fraught. A creative approach is necessary to address the barriers imposed by the current lack of inaccessibility.

A fixation on downgrading the Travel Advisory is not helpful. No matter how flawed the Travel Advisory, it is a political reality that it is highly unlikely the Travel Advisory will be downgraded in the near future. In a recent Press Conference, the Australian Foreign Minister, Mr. Stephen Smith, justified the continuation of the Stage 4 Advisory on the basis that the government continued to receive credible threats of terrorism (AusAid 2009). The Travel Advisory does not have a large impact on the tertiary sector, where the ACICIS program provides an excellent avenue from which to access Indonesia. Rather, the central problem is its impact secondary school students. Alternative strategies must be pursued that aim to increase the number of students getting an 'authentic' taste of Indonesia. Furthermore, these efforts also need to be targeted at teachers. The problems of access are just as acute for teachers as they are for students. The Indonesian Embassy in Canberra has held two Indonesian Language Teacher Seminars over the past twelve months. A constant theme of these conferences was the very low morale of Indonesian teachers (Indonesian Embassy 2008). Unmotivated teachers create unmotivated students.

The liability issues of student travel to Indonesia can be circumvented by offering exchange systems outside the official education system; this is one strategy for increasing

accessibility. Since 2008, the Australian Indonesian Association of Victoria has offered a six-week exchange program for secondary school students in Jogjakarta (Victorian Indonesian Language Teachers' Association 2009: 19). In its first round, the scheme received nine Victorian secondary school students. Whilst a positive development, the size and scope of such activities is limited by the fact that they are not integrated into the formal education system.

Another possible strategy to address the problems posed by the lack of accessibility is to 'rebrand' Indonesian as a regional language spoken in Singapore, Indonesia, Malaysia, and Brunei, all places Australian schools face no travel restrictions. There are two common objections to this scheme. First, the argument that Indonesian is vastly different from the form of Malay/Indonesian spoken outside of Indonesia. Whilst it is true that the Indonesian spoken in Malaysia is different from that spoken in Indonesia, it is also true that the Indonesian spoken in Jakarta is different from that spoken in West Papua. The central issue is not which variety of Indonesian students learn but rather how an in-country experience can be provided that will give students the motivation to continue their studies of the language.

Second, some argue that these alternative destinations do not provide a true picture of Indonesia. There is some merit in this argument. Singapore is most definitely not Indonesia. Ultimately, students need to live in Indonesia to truly experience Indonesia. However, this should not justify inaction; there exist alternative methods to deliver the 'real Indonesia' to Australian students. Indonesian culture does not operate in a vacuum. By meeting ordinary Indonesians living in Australia, Australian students are able to get a 'taste' of Indonesian culture. Thus, the focus should be on strategies to increase the level of interaction between Australian students and Indonesians living in Australia.

A further strategy worth exploring is the creation of a national body which could educate Australians about Indonesian culture and language and foster interest in these fields. Mahnken, writing nearly twenty years ago, bemoans the lack of an 'Indonesian Cultural Institute', along the lines of the *Alliance Francaise*, which could act as a patron, funnel of

information, and positive reinforcer of Indonesian language learning (1990: 31). There is still no 'Indonesian Cultural Institute' in which Australian students are able to meet everyday Indonesians and experience contemporary Indonesian culture. In 2009, the Indonesian Embassy in Canberra provided funding for a group of Indonesian language assistants, primarily young students from Indonesia studying at ANU or the University of Canberra, to regularly assist in Indonesian classes throughout Canberra. This scheme focused less on improving learning outcomes as opposed to giving school students the opportunity to interact with young, personable Indonesians. Recently, an Australian-Indonesian Language Exchange Group, SELAI, was set up in Canberra targeted at ANU and University of Canberra students. Such efforts, albeit small, have the potential to make a large impact when replicated across the country. Whilst the Travel Advisory does preclude many young Australian students from experiencing Indonesian culture in Indonesia, it does not stop Indonesian culture being brought to them.

Continued Funding

Government assistance must be an important component of any strategy to arrest the decline in Indonesian language learning in Australia. In the financial year 2009-10, a new round of funding, \$62 million over a period of three years, will commence under the guise of the NALSSP strategy. Whilst this is a very positive development, Professor Kent Anderson, a member of the NALSSP Reference Group and Dean of the ANU Asian Studies Faculty, argues that the size and duration of this funding will not make great inroads into addressing the fact that only 6% of Year 12 students study an Asian language (Asian Studies Association of Australia 2009). The idea that the strategy will be achieve 'self-sustainability' in three years is not realistic. Whilst great gains were made in the 8 years of the NALSAS strategy, the termination of this funding meant that these gains were not permanently realised and a sharp reversal in enrolments occurred. There is a clear mandate for government intervention in the case of the 'market failure' occurring in Indonesian studies; in order for Indonesian to thrive, it requires 'protection' in the form of funding. The fundamental shift proposed in the NALSSP strategy requires a long-term funding commitment.

Shifting Incentive Structures and Diversifying Study Opportunities

There are a variety of practical measures that can be undertaken to address the decline in the number of tertiary students studying Indonesian. The first involves modifying the incentive structure encountered by Year 12 students when they choose their school subjects. The ANU has recently established a scheme whereby students who studied an Asian language in Year 12 receive 5 points towards their university entrance score if they choose to continue their language study at ANU. Another possible means with which to change the incentive structure, albeit much more costly, is to reduce or waive the HECS fees faced for Indonesian courses. This would provide a clear financial incentive to study Indonesian as a language at university.

Another practical measure to increase the number of tertiary students studying Indonesian is to increase the opportunities to study Indonesian at university. Currently, in most Australian universities, a student can only study Indonesian if they are enrolled within a certain faculty. For example, at the ANU, a student completing a Bachelor of Asian Studies/Bachelor of Commerce will be able to study Indonesian, whereas a student completing a Bachelor of Arts/ Bachelor of Commerce will not be able to study Indonesian. Such demarcation serves no clear purpose. Robinson argues that,

Rather than concentrating our efforts on producing 'Indonesianists', we should be ensuring that large numbers of administrators, lawyers, accountants, journalists, film and TV producers, teachers and business executives have a coherent element of Indonesia related skills and knowledge in their degree (1990: 16).

Similarly, the Head of ACICIS, Professor David Hill, suggests that there exists a strong potential for growth from students outside of Indonesian Departments – the focus should no longer be on language students *per se* (2009b). ACICIS has recently established both an in-country journalism professional practicum and a development studies practicum which are open to students with no prior study of Indonesian. It is believed that, at the end of these programs, participants will be motivated to study Indonesian and continue that study either back in Australia or Indonesia. Such innovative and practical approaches

bode well for the development of the number of university students pursuing Indonesian studies.

Image and Indonesian Studies

Arguably the most difficult problem to address is the ‘image problem’ of Indonesia in the Australian community. This report has argued that there is a strong connection between the decline in the knowledge of, and interest in, Indonesia in Australia and the proliferation of negative images of Indonesia in Australia. Arguably, the best means to combat this image problem is to have more Australians studying Indonesian and developing an understanding of the Indonesian culture. Yet, it is due to the negative images of Indonesia in Australia that fewer and fewer students are studying Indonesian. This presents a difficult conundrum.

The role of the media in this problem is central. It cannot be expected that the commercial media will stop seeking out ‘bad news’ stories on Indonesia. Mackie notes that the Australia-Indonesia Institute has been trying for 18 years to address the stark imbalance and ignorance of commercial media reporting on Indonesia (2007: 108). Whilst they have had some small pockets of success amongst the better informed journalists, the overall impact has been negligible. Whilst it appears impossible to stop the flow of negative images of Indonesian in the public domain, it is easy to increase the flow of positive images of Indonesia.

Mahnken (1990) argues that Indonesia and the Indonesian language needs an ‘image overhaul’. A public relations campaign to build a positive public perception of the study of Indonesian by the Asian Studies Council or the Asia Education Foundation would do wonders for redressing the proliferation of negative images of Indonesia. Further, for far too long Indonesian has been the monopoly of an academic elite. The rationale for studying Indonesian needs to be translated into community and adolescent idiom. Indonesian must not be allowed to become a form of Latin – an exclusive language studied an elite few and mocked by the wider community.

A large part of the image problem for Indonesia is the fundamental lack of depth in the Indonesia-Australia relationship. Student numbers are hostage to the normal ebb-and-flow in the socio-political relationship of two neighbouring nations. Slaughter provides an interesting analogy of France-Australia relations in the early 1990s (2007b: 94). During this period, France was the Australian commercial media's 'public enemy number one'. France had previously blown up a Greenpeace vessel in New Zealand and was testing nuclear weapons in Australia's Pacific backyard. Mirroring the Corby incident, public outrage and indignation were rife, accompanied by calls to boycott travel to France and French imports. However, Slaughter makes the interesting note that school enrolments in French language actually increased during this period. This primarily reflected the fact that community levels of understanding and appreciation of French culture were very high. The France-Australia relationship had a sufficient amount of depth to weather short-term political squalls. Australia and Indonesia need to develop this kind of relationship. A relationship with enough ballast such that innocuous events such as the arrest of an Australian in Indonesia for smuggling drugs will not have a flow on effect on the study of Indonesia in Australia. This is a difficult task because, as was asserted at the start of this report, the best method with which to increase the depth of the relationship is increased education and understanding.

CHAPTER SEVEN

CONCLUSION

Indonesian language learning is clearly in decline in Australian schools and universities. This decline is incongruent with Australia's national interests. Reduced student numbers are primarily attributable to the problems of inaccessibility, reduced Government funding, the perception of Indonesian as economically irrelevant, and the strong position of simplistic media stereotypes of Indonesia in the wider Australian community. However, these problems are not intractable. This report has identified several possible strategies, some small scale, others quite dramatic, to increase the number of students in Australia studying Indonesia. The potential success of these strategies rests on several conditions being filled.

First, there needs to be a widespread realisation at both the highest levels of government and within the mainstream Australian community that it is in Australia's national interest to have a large body of Indonesian speakers. The decline in the number of students studying Indonesian must be perceived as a crisis and its reversal a national priority.

Second, the goals must be clear. It is important to get as many students as possible studying Indonesian at the highest levels of possible. A few years of Indonesian study in primary school and early secondary school is highly beneficial because it arms students with increased cultural sensitivity, and, albeit little fluency, a greater understanding of Indonesia. However, it is the serious pursuit of Indonesian into Year 12 and university that provides the most benefit to both the student and the Australian community. It is only at this level that Australians can become truly 'Indonesia savvy'.

Third, the goals should be realistic. It must be recognised that the general trend of declining LOTE study impacts upon the study of Indonesian. Further, Indonesian is in 'competition' with the heavy promotion of other Asian languages; the 'pulling power' of Indonesian will probably not be as great as Mandarin or Japanese in the next twenty years.

Finally, key stakeholders such as the Government, the Asian Studies lobby, Indonesian teachers, students, and academia, must become articulate advocates for the study of Indonesian. Just as there is a failure of the mainstream Australian community to engage with Indonesia, there is a failure by the Indonesian language learning community to engage with the mainstream Australian community. Insulation will not protect the Indonesian language learning community. Its survival is dependent on its ability to communicate to a wider audience in Australia the fundamental message that Indonesian is an excellent language to learn.

Given the fulfilment of these conditions, a strong concerted effort to increase the number of Australian studying Indonesian has every chance of success.

REFERENCES

ACT Education and Community Services (1999) *1999 LOTE Survey Bulletin* Canberra:
ACT Department of Education and Community Services

- This source provides an overview of LOTE enrolments in the ACT school system in 1999.

ACT Education and Community Services (2000) *2000 LOTE Survey Bulletin* Canberra:
ACT Department of Education and Community Services

- This source provides an overview of LOTE enrolments in the ACT school system in 2000.

ACT Education and Community Services (2001) *2001 LOTE Survey Bulletin* Canberra:
ACT Department of Education and Community Services

- This source provides an overview of LOTE enrolments in the ACT school system in 2001.

ACT Education and Community Services (2002) *2002 LOTE Survey Bulletin* Canberra:
ACT Department of Education and Community Services

- This source provides an overview of LOTE enrolments in the ACT school system in 2002.

ACT Education and Community Services (2003) *2003 LOTE Survey Bulletin* Canberra:
ACT Department of Education and Community Services

- This source provides an overview of LOTE enrolments in the ACT school system in 2003.

Asian Studies Association of Australia (2009) 'Profile: Kent Anderson', *Asian Currents*,
February 2009. Available at <http://iceaps.anu.edu.au/ac/asian-currents-09-02.html>
[Accessed on 3 May 2009]

- Interview of Professor Kent Anderson, the Dean of the Faculty of Asian Studies at ANU, as to his thoughts on the future development of Asian studies in Australia.

AusAid (2009) *Press Conference Transcript: Australia and Indonesia: Partners in a New Era*, February 2009. Available at http://www.ausaid.gov.au/media/release.cfm?BC=Speech&ID=7988_3327_8790_9239_5872 [Accessed on 5 May 2009].

- Transcript of a Press Conference between the Australian Foreign Minister, Mr. Stephen Smith, and the Indonesian Foreign Minister, Dr Hassan Wirajuda, which covered a wide range of different aspects of the bilateral relationship.

Australian Academy of Humanities (2008) 'Beginners' LOTE (Languages other than English) in Australian Universities: an Audit Survey and Analysis', Available at www.humanities.org.au/Resources/Downloads/Publications/OccasionalPapers/BeginnersLOTEAudit.pdf [Accessed on 28 April 2009]

- This source details the weak state of LOTE learning in Australian universities. It has a particular focus on first-year LOTE courses and the extremely low rates of retention in university language departments.

Australian Bureau of Statistics (2009) *Short term movements, Indonesia*, Available at <http://www.abs.gov.au/ausstats/abs@.nsf/featurearticlesbytitle/6BA4CBB182F7C2B1CA2574400012A52D?OpenDocument> [Accessed 6 May 2009]

- This source provides data on the number of short-term arrivals to and from Indonesia in three-month intervals over the past ten years.

Australian Consortium for In-Country Indonesian Studies (2009) *What is ACICIS*. Available at http://www.acicis.murdoch.edu.au/hi/what_is_acicis.html [Accessed 28 April 2009]

- This source succinctly explains the role of ACICIS in the Australian university system as the primary facilitator of ‘in-country’ exchanges in Indonesia for Australian university students.

Asian Studies Council (1988) *A National Strategy for the Study of Asia in Australia*, Canberra: Australian Government Publishing Service.

- This source forms a part of the Asian Studies Council’s push for the expansion of Asian language teaching in the Australian education system. Whilst quite long, its central thrust is that learning Asian languages will make Australia more internationally competitive.

Aspinall, E (2009) ‘Lost in Translation’, *Inside Indonesia*, 20th February 2009.

- This source provides a succinct argument as to why it is important to have Indonesian speakers in Australia. The author uses the example of the 2006 tsunami, in which it was very difficult to find Australian staff for the emergency relief effort who were fluent in Indonesian, to demonstrate the need for Indonesian speakers.

Auchmuty, J. (1970) *The Teaching of Asian Languages and cultures in Australia*, Canberra: Government Printer.

- Auchmuty’s Report is extremely interesting because it represents the first piece of government policy advice to clearly and articulately advance the argument for the teaching of Asian languages in the Australian education system.

Central Intelligence Agency (2009) *World Fact Book: Indonesia*, Available at <https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/geos/id.html> [Accessed 3 May 2009]

- This source provided basic economic growth figures for Indonesia over the past decade.

Cook, I (2006) *Australia, Indonesia and the World: Public Opinion and Foreign Policy*, Sydney: Lowy Institute for International Policy.

- A broad survey of Australian attitudes to the world, in particular Indonesia. This source is also particularly useful because it also surveyed Indonesian opinions of the Australia-Indonesia bilateral relationship.

Cook, M (2009) *Australia and Indonesia: Partners in a New Era*, Lowy Institute Perspectives, Sydney: Lowy Institute for International Policy.

- This source provided a general summary of the proceedings at the February 2009 Australia-Indonesia Conference which was held to encourage frank and informal discussion on the future of the bilateral relationship.

Dawkins, J. (1991) *Australia's Language – Australian Language and Literacy Policy*, Canberra: Australian Government Publishing Services.

- This source is the successor policy to the 'National Policy on Languages'. It is notable for its lack of treatment of the role of Asian languages in the Australian education system.

Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade (2009) *Travel Advisory: Indonesia*, Available at: <http://www.smartraveller.gov.au/zw-cgi/view/advice/Indonesia> [Accessed 1 May 2009]

- Provides details of the Department's Level of Travel Advice to Indonesia and also provides other practical advice for Australians travelling to Indonesia.

Embassy of the Republic of Indonesia (2008) 'Report – Bahasa Indonesia Conference', Education and Cultural Section, Saturday 25 October 2008.

- This source forms a summary of the proceedings of the October 2008 Bahasa Indonesia Conference held at the Indonesian Embassy in Canberra. This Conference provided a forum for teachers of Indonesian to meet and voice their opinions about the future of Indonesian language learning in Australia.

EREBUS Consulting Partners (2002a) *Evaluation of the National Asia Languages and Studies in Australian Schools Strategy*, Melbourne, Department of Education, Science and Training.

- An extremely extensive review of the NALSAS strategy from 1999 till 2002 that examined on its success in achieving its main goals to increase student numbers and teacher numbers. The report recommended that funding be extended for the third quadrennium.

EREBUS Consulting Partners (2002b) *Review of the Commonwealth Languages other than English Programme*. Melbourne: Department of Education, Science and Training.

- This source provided an in-depth review of LOTE education in the Australian school education system. It was particularly useful because it placed NALSAS within a wider rubric of LOTE learning in the education system.

FitzGerald, S. (1980) *Asia in Australian Education*, Canberra: Asian Studies Association of Australia.

- The FitzGerald Report provides an extensive rationale for the widespread study of Asian languages that rests on the dual focus of intellectual enrichment and economic utility.

Foreign Affairs Sub Committee (2008) *An Inquiry into Australia's Relationship with Indonesia: Report of the Foreign Affairs Subcommittee of the Australian Parliament's Joint Standing Committee on Foreign Affairs, Defence and Trade*, Canberra: Australian Government.

- This source was particularly useful as it provided an incisive, contemporary analysis of the current bilateral relationship. Further, it was strongly enriched by the vast number of submissions received from the Australian community.

Garnaut, R. (1989) *Australia and the Northeast Asian Ascendancy*, Canberra: Australian Government Publishing Service.

- This source primarily advocates economic reform to align the Australian economy with the growing economic power of the Northeast Asian region. Consequently, Garnaut recommends the learning of Asian languages to facilitate this shift in Australia's future trading patterns.

Group of Eight (2009) *Languages in Crisis: A Rescue Plan for Australia* Canberra: Group of Eight.

- The Group of Eight, Australia's peak body for elite research universities, argues that LOTE learning in Australia is in a perilous state and offers some practical measures to revitalise language learning in Australian universities.

Henderson, D (2007) 'A Strategy Cut-Short: The NALSAS Strategy for Asian Languages in Australia', *Foreign Language Teaching* 4 (1): 4-22.

- Henderson analyses the success of the NALSAS strategy from an academic perspective. She discusses the wider symbolism of the NALSAS strategy and posits that it is represented a paradigm shift in the previously Euro-centric Australian school system.

Henderson, D. (2008) 'Politics and Policy Making for Asia Literacy: The Rudd Report and a National Strategy in Australian Education' *Asian Studies Review* 32: 171-195.

- Henderson tracks the development of the NALSAS strategy by analysing the manner in which Mr. Kevin Rudd, the classic 'entrepreneurial bureaucrat', was able to position that strategy at the COAG level and thus ensure its success at the State level.

Hill, D (2009a) 'Encouraging signs on Asian Front', *The Australian*, February 25

- This source provides an interesting opinion piece from Professor. David Hill on the most recent developments in the push for Asian languages in the Australian education system.

Hill, D (2009b) Discussion on Future Directions of ACICIS. [email] (Personal Communication, 15 May 2009)

- This source was extremely useful as the Head of ACICIS, Professor. David Hill, provided an incisive discussion of issues of liability and university exchanges to Indonesia as well as a short discussion of the potential directions of the ACICIS program.

Ingleson, J. (1989) *Asia in Australian Higher Education*, Kensington: University of New South Wales.

- One of the primary rationales for the Asian Studies lobby promotion of Asian languages, namely economic utility in the Asia-Pacific region, is extensively argued in this piece.

Jackson, F. & Kaplan, M. (1999) *Lessons learned from fifty years of theory and practice in government language teaching*. In Alatis, J. & Tan, A. (eds) "Georgetown University Roundtable on Languages and Linguistics 1999" Washington: Georgetown University Press.

- This source, based on the extensive work of the Foreign Service Institute, discusses the general nature of proficiency in LOTE and also describes the number of hours required to reach a Level 3 proficiency in Indonesian/Malay.

Liddicoat, A et al (2007) 'An Investigation of the State and Nature of Languages in Australian Schools', *Research Center for Languages and Cultures Education*, University of South Australia.

- A very contemporary analysis of the state of LOTE learning in the Australian school system. The statistics provided had a broad focus and did not generally allow any specific focus on levels of Indonesian enrolment.

Lindsey, T (2007) 'Relaxed, comfortable and risible', *The Australian Literary Review*, 7 March 2007.

- Lindsey, an Indonesianist from the University of Melbourne, critically questions the Australian community's broad apathy to the strong decline of Indonesian language learning in Australia.

Lo Bianco, J. (1987) *National Policy on Languages*, Canberra: Australian Government Publishing Service.

- The first formal language policy in Australia which has a dual focus of preserving 'community languages' whilst ensuring the majority of the Australian community has access to the opportunity of foreign language learning.

MacIntyre, A & Ramage, D (2008) *Seeing Indonesia as a normal country: Implications for Australia*, Canberra: Australian Strategic Policy Institute.

- The ASPI provides a easily digested analysis of Indonesia's transformation into a 'normal country' over the past ten years. It also posits that Australia must begin to comprehend and respond to the ramifications of this transformation.

Mackie, J (2007) *Australia and Indonesia: Current Problems, Future Prospects*, Sydney: Lowy Institute for International Policy.

- This source provides a strong historical discussion of the Australia-Indonesia relationship. Mackie uses this discussion to provide an analysis of the potential direction of the relationship whilst making the case for increased Australian engagement with Indonesia.

Mahnken, P (1990) 'Indonesian Studies in Australian Schools: a tragic-comedy in three decades', *Asian Studies Review*, 13 (3).

- Mahnken, a class teacher of Indonesian in Tasmania, provides an incisive analysis of exactly why, in the face of competition from other subjects and the generally poor LOTE culture in Australia, it is so difficult to convince students to study Indonesian.

McAllister, I (2005) *Representative views: Mass and Elite Opinion on Australia Security*, Canberra: Australian Strategic Policy Institute

- This source demonstrates the clear disjunction between elite and mass opinions of Indonesia in the Australian community. Interestingly, elite opinion was measured by a survey of potential ALP and Liberal Federal candidates.

McLaren, A (2008) 'Asian Language Enrolments in Australian Higher Education 2006-7', Asia Institute University of Melbourne.

- McLaren provides a statistical analysis of LOTE enrolments in Australian universities over the past five years. Whilst useful, the statistics were limited by a lack of historical perspective.

Pang, D (2005) 'Educating for Location? The policy context of 'becoming Asia Literate' in five Western countries/regions in the 1990s, *Comparative Education* 41 (2): 171-198.

- Pang examines the different approaches to Asia-education in the USA, Canada, UK, New Zealand, and Australia. Interesting to note that for a period of time in the 1990s, Australia seemed to have the strongest program of Asia education.

Quinn, G (2009) *Sepuluh Tahun Surutnya Studi Bahasa Indonesia pada Institusi Pengajian Tinggi di Australia: Sebab Musasbab dan Upaya Pemulihannya*, Chapter prepared for an as yet untitled Festschrift in honour of Professor Isamu Shoho edited by Hiroki Nomoto

- This unpublished article, prepared for a future Malaysian book on Malay/Indonesian, offers a detailed critique of the decline in Indonesian language learning by one of Australia's foremost Indonesianists.

Robinson, R (1990) 'Studying Asia in Australia: Keeping Indonesian on the Agenda', *Asian Studies Review*, 13 (3).

- Robinson examines the direction of Indonesian language learning in Australian in the 1990s. This source was extremely useful because, in contrast to other sources, it argued that Indonesian language learning should refrain from becoming a specialist expertise, but rather its offering at the university level should be diversified as much as possible.

Rudd, K. (1994) *Asian Languages and Australia's Economic Future: A report prepared for the Council of Australian Governments on a proposed national Asian languages/studies strategy for Australian schools*. Brisbane: Queensland Government Printer.

- This report formed the basis of the NALSAS strategy. It is extensive and well argued. Much of the content focuses on the practical measures of instituting a nation wide language policy.

Slaughter, Y (2007a) 'The rise and fall of Indonesian in Australian Schools: Implications for Language Policy and Planning', *Asian Studies Review* 31: 301-322.

Slaughter, Y (2007b) *The Study of Asian Languages in Two Australian States: Considerations for Language-in-Education Policy and Planning*, Ph.d, School of Languages and Linguistics, University of Melbourne.

- Both of Slaughter's articles provide an extensive, albeit similar, analysis of the key reasons why secondary school students are no longer studying Indonesia. The sources' immense value derived from the extensive student and teacher surveys of attitudes towards Indonesian language learning.

United Nations Development Programme (2009) *Statistics of the Human Development Report*. Available at <http://hdr.undp.org/en/statistics/> [Accessed 5 May 2009].

- This source provided statistics on the increase in Indonesia's HDI over the past thirty years.

Victorian Indonesian Language Teachers' Association (2009) *Suara VILTA*, No.2, 2009.

- *Suara VILTA*, the voice of the Victorian Indonesian Language Teachers' Association, is a quarterly magazine that details Indonesian language learning in Victoria. Useful for its description of the private exchange system for secondary school students being run by the Australia Indonesia Institute of Victoria.

White, P & Baldauf, R (2006) 'Reexamining Australia's Tertiary Language Programs: A Five Year Retrospective', Brisbane: The University of Queensland.

- White and Balduaf provide an in-depth statistical analysis of tertiary LOTE enrolments over the past five years. They make particular mention of the fact that analysis is limited by extremely poor systems of data collection.

Wirajuda, N. (2003) *Keynote Address*, Asia Society AustralAsia Centre, Foreign Policy Update Luncheon, Melbourne, August 22, 2003.

- This speech, by the Indonesian Foreign Minister, Dr. Hassan Wirajuda, articulates the exact reasons why it is critical that Indonesia and Australia seek balanced and mutually beneficial engagement.

Worsley, P (1994) *Unlocking Australia's Language Potential: Profile of 9 Key Languages in Australia (Volume 5: Indonesian/Malay)*, Canberra: National Languages and Literacy Institute of Australia.

- This source was extremely useful. Although dated, it provides the most comprehensive analysis of Indonesian in the Australian education system. Its focus encompasses the history of Indonesian language learning in Australia, statistical trends in enrolments, and the importance of Indonesian for business and trade.