



Indonesia 'untapped' job market

By MICHELLE WEBSTER

INDONESIA may be famous as a bountiful holiday destination, but it is also brimming with lucrative career opportunities, a visiting West Australian academic says.

In the region last week from Perth, Murdoch University's Professor David Hill, who teaches Indonesian, took time to drum up interest in the language.

Those thinking about future job options, or to expand their skills, he said, could find themselves cracking into a largely untapped employment market.

"Our main trading partners, the Euro zones, the United States and United Kingdom,

have been absolutely pulverised by the financial crisis," Prof Hill said.

"Indonesia has had an annual growth rate of over 6 per cent; by comparison [with our main partners] the Indonesian economy has been absolutely powering along."

With a population of around 238 million, Indonesia offers opportunities in most markets, from tourism and interior design to mining and trade, he said.

More than 400 Australian companies operated in the archipelago, creating high demand for Indonesian speakers.

Sharing the same script as

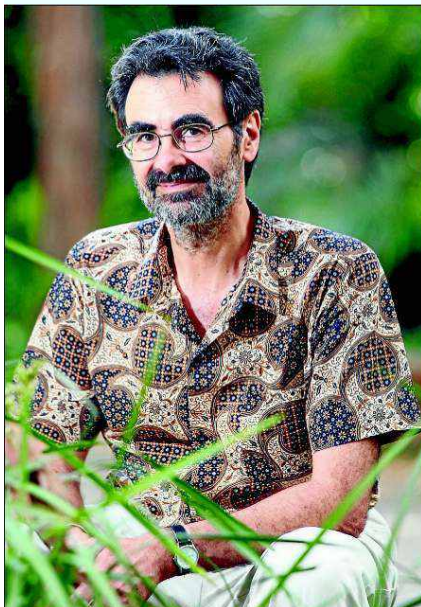
the English language, Indonesian was one of the easier Asian languages to pick up, Prof Hill said.

"You can develop a reasonable competency in Indonesian fairly quickly if you apply yourself," he said.

Prof Hill's own love affair with the language began at school in the 1960s and his passion pushed him to honours and PhD level.

He has lived in Indonesia and says: "It's a beautiful country, it's an extremely exciting place."

The Faculty of Arts at the University of Wollongong offers a minor in Indonesian.



Go north: Prof David Hill says Indonesia offers career options. Picture: ADAM McLEAN