

Inquiry into Funding for public research into foreign policy issues
Questions on notice the Australia Indonesia Business Council

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Questions:

Senator FIERRAVANTI-WELLS:

Mr Turtle, perhaps I could ask how much of our relationship with Indonesia is where it is today because we're still in that mentality of foreign aid, if I can put it that way, and it being one of a donor-donee relationship. Also, how far do we have to progress out of that? Whilst the assistance that we do give to China is very important, isn't it time that we consider moving away from that relationship to what is a much more trade based equal-level partnership? Particularly, and secondly, how much can we further use the advantages of the Australia-Indonesia Second Track Dialogue, which I chaired at one stage and which I think was very useful? Please take those questions on notice.

Answers:

1. Australia-Indonesia development cooperation has moved beyond a 'donor-donee' relationship to assisting Indonesia to build its health security, ensure stability despite the shocks of COVID-19 and recover its economy from pandemic disruption. Success in each pillar is undoubtedly in Australia's interests as well as Indonesia's. The Australia Indonesia Business Council naturally focusses on activities under the economic recovery pillar, including improving the business enabling environment, supporting planning and delivery of growth-enabling infrastructure, and growing human capital and economically empowering women to enhance productivity. The Indonesia-Australia Comprehensive Economic Partnership Agreement is unique for an Australian bilateral agreement in that it includes multiple economic cooperation activities that aim to enhance trade and investment and facilitate economic growth. The Comprehensive Strategic Partnership, agreed in 2018 is a complementary platform of peer-to-peer cooperation to enhance economic integration, build people-to-people linkages, strengthen security, sustain maritime prosperity, and contribute to Indo-Pacific stability and prosperity.
2. The Australia-Indonesia Dialogue is an important mechanism for facilitating people to people links, which have proved highly beneficial in deepening the Australia-Indonesia relationship. AIBC supports the expansion of the Dialogue, in particular to build on the ground-breaking work of the Indonesia-Australia Business Partnership Group in developing detailed bilateral business positions on the coverage and content of the Indonesia Australia Comprehensive Economic Partnership Agreement in 2012 and again in 2016.