



Submission No 70

Inquiry into Australia's Relations with Indonesia

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Lawson, Cliff (REPS)

From: Cowan, Lesley (REPS)
Sent: Friday, 25 October 2002 9:22 AM
To: Lawson, Cliff (REPS)
Subject: FW: Australia's relationship with Indonesia.

-----Original Message-----

From: Peter Pritchard [mailto:petbet@impulse.net.au]
Sent: Thursday, October 24, 2002 8:43 PM
To: Committee, JSCFADT (REPS)
Subject: Australia's relationship with Indonesia.

May I strongly urge The Committee to take steps to truly embrace a cordial role in associating with our Indonesian neighbours. A few years ago found me taking up teaching Indonesian in Government schools. I remember completing this major in extra studies back in the 70's thinking one day it may be useful. In light of recent tragic events I strongly believe that all prior misconceptions, doubts and indifferent attitudes held by Australians should be reviewed so we can learn to understand our Indonesian friends.

We are an isolated continent with an immense population of truly superb diversity to our north which we have reluctantly declined to engage in a variety of enterprises. After our terrible ordeals in the second World War a sad approach was taken towards Asian nations in general by the Australian public. Business men tended to talk down to trading partners and we progressed slowly until Japan emerged as a most successful trading partner. We have much to offer one another and a more concerted effort to share our skills in technology, infrastructure and other systems we regard as a way of life, can only bring around further strong ties with other nations in Asia. We have become a multicultural society and we need to make other near nations fully aware of our true intentions to develop our diverse community life. In recent federal decisions to eliminate funding into the areas of LOTE and Asian studies in schools was shortsighted and economically naive. I feel that that decision was taken without a real understanding of the youth of this country and their future roles in this region. Other global incidents, in addition to Kuta Beach, should alert authorities to the need to educate Australians about our Asian neighbour's way of life. They too have had to go through many changes in recent years. They too have the pain of trying to oust or stop terrorist groups raiding Christian communities in Sulawesi and Kalimantan. Thousands have been killed over recent years. I do encourage the committee to approach new bilateral meetings with true candour and warmth to share our feelings, skills and talents for the betterment of mankind in this region, Peter Pritchard.

