

From: Jemma Purdey
Sent: Wednesday, 16 July 2008 3:22 PM
To: Committee, JCPAA (REPS)
Subject: Submission: Concern over Cutbacks to National Library's
Indonesia Acquisitions

Dear Committee Secretary,

I have recently heard the disturbing news that the National Library is planning major cutbacks in its Indonesian Acquisitions Project. These cuts are a consequence of the current inquiry into the effects of the ongoing efficiency dividend on smaller public sector agencies. It appears that the NLA's representative in Jakarta will be replaced by locally engaged staff and that collecting on behalf of other Australian libraries will cease.

This initiative has two serious consequences: it means that the intensity of buying for the national collection is likely to decline, so that the NLA's own collection will not achieve the same high standards that it has in the past. And smaller libraries around the country will lose the capacity to collect contemporary Indonesian material seriously. Alternatives to the NLA system are likely to be considerably more expensive and rather less effective.

As a participant library in the Indonesian Acquisitions Program, Monash Library is to be formally informed by the National Library of Australia of the cancellation shortly.

Monash has been a participant in the Program since its inception in 1973. All our new books and current serials and newspapers, as well as other items requested by staff, are acquired through the Program, which is run by the National Library's Jakarta office. There is currently no alternative effective method for acquiring new Indonesian publications. Cancellation of the Program will significantly reduce the research value of the Monash Indonesian studies collection and will have a major impact on the many scholars at Monash and from around Melbourne and Australia as a whole, who make use of the Monash Library's Indonesian language collection, as well as on Indonesian studies undergraduate and postgraduate students.

This decision seems to fly in the face of the Rudd government's pledge to support and encourage the study of Asian languages and societies in our schools and universities. This should be a time of intensive building and consolidating of our Indonesian language resources in Australian libraries, for which the Indonesian Acquisitions Program plays a vital part.

Yours Faithfully,
Dr Jemma Purdey
Australian Postdoctoral Fellow
Centre of Southeast Asian Studies and the School of Political and Social Inquiry
Monash University