



## **Submission No 24**

### **Inquiry into Australia's Relations with Indonesia**

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**JOINT STANDING COMMITTEE ON FOREIGN  
AFFAIRS, DEFENCE AND TRADE**

**INQUIRY INTO AUSTRALIA'S RELATIONS WITH INDONESIA**

**SUBMISSION FROM THE AUSTRALIAN BROADCASTING  
CORPORATION**



Australian  
Broadcasting  
Corporation

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## **ABC Executive Summary**

The ABC has a record of engagement with Indonesia through Radio Australia, ABC News and Current Affairs, ABC International Training, the new ABC Asia Pacific television service and, most recently, through ABC Content Sales. It is noteworthy that the ABC has a history of sixty years broadcasting to Indonesia.

In this submission, the ABC provides relevant information in relation to the Committee's Terms of Reference in general and, in particular, as it relates to broadcasting and to the social and cultural aspects of the bilateral relationship with Indonesia.

### **Radio Australia**

- Radio Australia's first broadcasts in Indonesian took place during World War II. Millions of Indonesians have since learned about Australia and learned English through Radio Australia.
- Radio Australia broadcasts daily in English and Indonesian and, for many Indonesians, Radio Australia provides a major source of information on political and economic developments in Australia and in the broader Asian region.
- Additional funding provided by the Australian Government in 2000 has enabled Radio Australia to equip a number of Indonesian affiliates with satellite downlink facilities for the live replay of news and current affairs programs.
- Radio Australia is registering audience growth through local relays, while direct short wave broadcasts remain the most cost-effective and the major broadcast platform to reach large Indonesian audiences. Direct short wave broadcasts also provide an independent means of reaching listeners should local relays come under political pressure to cease or curtail rebroadcasts.
- There is a strong demand for educational materials from younger Indonesians and Indonesian Radio stations are interested in having greater access to more Radio Australia program materials. Radio Australia's trusted coverage of Asian and Australian affairs is particularly in demand.
- Radio Australia's reach into Indonesia via short wave, satellite and on local radio stations (through 24 affiliate stations) has significantly increased since 1998. A recent survey conducted in May-June 2002 indicated that Radio Australia has 6.5 million listeners.

### **ABC Asia Pacific Television Service (ABCAP)**

- ABC Asia Pacific Television Service (ABCAP) is a new television and multi media platform transmitting to the Asia Pacific region which commenced transmission on 31 December 2001. The Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade awarded ABCAP a five-year contract in August 2001.
- Indonesia was the first country in the region to begin formally transmitting ABCAP in February 2002.
- ABCAP has an awareness factor of 4.5 per cent amongst high-income earners in Indonesia, ABCAP's target audience. ABCAP ranks ninth in a list of 20 international channels and these early findings provide a solid basis on which to build a strong and growing Indonesian audience.
- ABCAP is an integral tool in building Australia's relationship with Indonesia through programming that not only sheds light on Australia, but also promotes a greater awareness and understanding and builds bridges of shared concern and shared vision.

### **ABC News and Current Affairs**

- ABC News and Current Affairs has been represented in Indonesia full-time since 1959 and has maintained its presence except during a sustained period of strained relations from 1980-1991.
- In 2002, ABC News and Current Affairs enjoys virtually unrestricted access to all parts of Indonesia.

### **ABC International Training**

- ABC International Training has had a history of involvement with aid in the Asia Pacific region dating from the Colombo Plan in the 1950's. From 1999-2000 onwards, most ABC training activities with Indonesia have been funded by AusAid via various projects.
- Recent training initiatives have been prompted by requests from existing government-run radio and television broadcasting systems in Indonesia.
- Training workshops with ABC trainers have placed emphasis on a practical understanding of the western media model exploring how skills and the principles of fair, accurate and unbiased reporting might be applied in the Indonesian context.

**ABC Program Sales Worldwide (Asia)**

- The ABC is well respected in Indonesia and ABC Program Sales recently visited Indonesia in July 2002 to interest potential clients in purchasing ABC programs. Potential buyers in Jakarta were keen to know more about the ABC and its operations.
- The ABC's objective is to introduce and increase its program sales in Indonesia. Most recently, the TV program genres that attracted most interest were ABC Natural History, Drama and Children's programs.

**Issue of Concern**

- While opportunities for the ABC to develop its relationship with Australia have been overwhelmingly positive, a current and immediate concern shared across the ABC is the draft broadcast bill currently before the Indonesia Parliament. This relates to the rebroadcasting of foreign news programs as this has serious implications for the rebroadcast of Radio Australia and ABC Asia Pacific Television Service. The ABC is monitoring this situation closely and DFAT is keeping the Corporation advised.

## **Building Australia's Relationship with Indonesia**

The ABC welcomes this opportunity to make a submission to the Committee's inquiry into Australia's relationship with Indonesia. The ABC has a record of engagement with Indonesia through Radio Australia, ABC News and Current Affairs, ABC International Training and the new ABC Asia Pacific television service.

The *Australian Broadcasting Act 1983* guarantees the editorial and administrative independence of the Corporation from the Government. The ABC Board is charged with the duty to 'monitor the independence and integrity of the Corporation'.

The ABC Asia Pacific television service is editorially independent but is funded directly from the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade. All other services are funded within existing appropriations expended under the oversight of the ABC Board.

### **ABC RADIO IN INDONESIA**

#### **RADIO AUSTRALIA**

##### **Background**

Radio Australia broadcasts daily to Indonesia in English and Indonesian. For many Indonesians, Radio Australia is the main window on Australia and Australian attitudes and provides a major source of information on political and economic developments in the broader Asian region.

Increasingly, Radio Australia is becoming a platform for the delivery of educational material aimed at Indonesian audiences on key development and political issues such as health, the environment, globalisation, regional autonomy, governance and media and democracy.

The reach of Radio Australia into Indonesia via short wave, satellite and on local radio stations (24 affiliate stations) has significantly increased since 1998. A recent survey conducted in May-June 2002 by Intermedia Research on behalf of the International Broadcasting Bureau (Voice of America, Radio Free Asia) indicated that Radio Australia had 6.5 million listeners. Similarly, Radio Australia's online education material is now available to a network of libraries and educational institutions in Indonesia on the Internet and/or via CD ROM.

Radio Australia's present total staff establishment in 2002 is 77, with an operational budget of \$7.8M and a transmission budget of \$5.6M per year.

## **History - Sixty Years of Broadcasting to Indonesia**

Radio Australia's first broadcasts in Indonesian took place on 10 August 1942 during World War II. This was three years after the initial creation of Radio Australia at the outbreak of war in 1939. A group of Indonesian exiles were the first to broadcast to the Japanese-occupied Netherlands East Indies.

Over the years, millions of Indonesians have learned about Australia and learned English through Radio Australia. Political leaders such as former Indonesian President Gus Dur and the Speaker of the Parliament Amin Rais, as well as thousands of senior government officials, diplomats and ordinary Indonesians acknowledge the important role played by Radio Australia in informing and educating them over the years.

In the 1970s and 1980s an estimated audience of 20 million people across Indonesia listened regularly to Radio Australia's Indonesian short wave broadcasts. A team of some 30 Indonesian language broadcasters were employed in the ABC's Melbourne headquarters; most were very popular and became household names throughout Indonesia.

In July 1996, Radio Australia had a staff of 144. It was broadcasting to Asia on multiple frequencies from five transmitters in Darwin for 96 hours a day. This included 35 hours of transmission a day in English, and 14 hours in Indonesian. Radio Australia produced seven hours of daily programming with a staff of 18 Indonesian broadcasters.

In 1997, the government closed the Radio Australia transmitters in Darwin and Radio Australia's voice fell silent throughout most of Asia, including Indonesia. Only the Eastern part of the Indonesian archipelago continued to be serviced by Radio Australia transmitters in Shepparton (Victoria).

Following budget cuts in 1997, a team of eight staff was retained to broadcast three hours a day to Eastern Indonesia. The Radio Australia short wave broadcasts transmitted from Shepparton were too weak to be heard adequately in the populous regions of Central and Western Indonesia, and the capital of Jakarta.

### **Building new audiences**

Over the past five years, Radio Australia's Indonesian broadcasters have broken new ground in delivering programming to Indonesia. Despite limited short wave broadcasting capacity, Radio Australia is now reaching new audiences and has come up with innovative program formats and delivery methods to respond to Indonesia's changing political and media environment.

In January 2001, following an additional transmission funding grant from the government of \$8.4M over three years, Radio Australia resumed short wave broadcasts from transmitters in Darwin, Saipan and Taiwan. Short wave broadcasts in Indonesian originate from commercial transmission operators in

Darwin (Voice International, based in the UK), Taiwan (Central Broadcasting System) and Saipan (International Broadcasting Bureau). These target mainly the major population centres of Java, Sumatra, Kalimantan and Sulawesi.

These broadcasts to Indonesia total 4.5 hours a day in Indonesian and seven hours a day in English. In order to maximise audience reach, broadcasts are spread throughout the day from early morning to mid-afternoon. Broadcast duration varies from two hours (morning) to 30 minutes (five times a day, including three repeats).

Radio Australia's Indonesian service now has the second highest annual audience reach with 5.2 per cent of the population. This represents an audience reach of 8.4 million Indonesians.

### **Building relationships**

Building on its long-standing reputation, Radio Australia has developed a growing network of affiliate 'partner' stations throughout Indonesia that rebroadcast its programs. Short of adequate on-shore transmission capacity in Australia, Radio Australia has proactively engaged Indonesian media organisations and has concluded a number of rebroadcasting arrangements

These relationships are non-commercial and mutually beneficial. They are based on goodwill fostered by personal contacts and the supply of program material. Affiliate stations have free access to Radio Australia program material and provide Radio Australia with valued access to growing local FM audiences.

The deregulation of the Indonesian media environment since 1998 has triggered a significant expansion in the number of local FM stations in Indonesia (over 1,000). As a result, this has created opportunities for content providers such as Radio Australia to respond to an increasing Indonesian demand for quality information and educational content.

Radio Australia programs are supplied to partner stations, either as pre-recorded programs on CD or via Radio Australia's satellite service on the Panamsat 8 satellite, which also carries the ABC's Asia Pacific Television service.

### **A growing network of local relays**

Additional transmission funding provided by the Australian government in August 2000 has enabled Radio Australia to equip a number of Indonesian affiliates with satellite downlink facilities for the live relay of time-sensitive news and current affairs programs. As a result, Radio Australia's Indonesian language broadcasts are now being relayed live every day via satellite in 14 Indonesian cities, while a total of 24 affiliates are rebroadcasting programs on a weekly basis.



Despite a proposed broadcasting bill at present before the Indonesian Parliament seeking to limit the amount of foreign programming now available on local radio and television airwaves, Radio Australia is moving ahead with the installation of further satellite downlinks and live relays.

Indications are that proposed restrictions on live relays of foreign programs can be circumvented by slightly delaying rebroadcasts. Moreover, the implementation or 'socialisation' of the new law if or when it is passed is likely to take some time. Indonesian affiliate stations have been lobbying actively to avoid the proposed restrictions affecting the Radio Australia broadcasts. (See also, Para 8 - Issues, below).

Meanwhile, the recent Intermedia Research audience survey indicates Radio Australia is back among the three major international broadcasters present in Indonesia, alongside BBC World Service and Voice of America (VOA). The survey credits Radio Australia with an annual audience reach of 6.5 million in Indonesian and four million in English. Regular weekly audience is estimated at three million listeners.

This is well behind the BBC but on a par with VOA, although the better-resourced American network is gaining rapidly in popularity. Both broadcasters (BBC and VOA) have invested considerable resources in recent years into their broadcasts to Indonesia. They boast local representation in Jakarta to promote their services and have teams of reporters on the ground. The BBC and Voice of America transmit their broadcasts on multiple short wave frequencies and boast hundreds of affiliates, whereas Radio Australia usually transmits on two frequencies with only 24 affiliates. BBC's and Voice of America's production capacity is, respectively, twice and three times that of Radio Australia's.

The following tables (1 & 2 below) provide locations of Radio Australia live relays and rebroadcasts:

**Table 1 – Radio Australia Live Relays via satellite PanAmSat 8:**

<b>Station</b>	<b>Location</b>
Radio Kazuma, 1170 AM	Aceh
Radio Unisi, 104.75 FM	Yogyakarta
Radio Bonanza, 90.05 FM	Kediri
Radio Swara Sentosa Pratama, 103.7FM	Makassar
Radio Delta FM, 99.5FM	Jakarta
Radio Swara Duta Citra Irama, 100.2FM	Sumedang
Radio Mara Ghita 106.85 FM	Bandung
Radio Mix 91.1 FM	Medan
Super Radio 102.3 FM	Denpasar, Bali
Radio Rajawali	Bandar Lampung
Mesra International Transmission	Kalimantan
Jakarta News 97.4 FM	Jakarta
Radio Orama Sol	Manado
Radio Warna 99.1 FM	Maluku Utara

**Table 2 - Rebroadcasts of Radio Australia CD material and talk-backs:**

Radio Suara Surabaya	Surabaya
Sonya 106.5 FM	Medan
Radio Global	Lumajang, Bali
Radio Riper	Lombok
Kiss FM 104.75	Medan
Radio Andika	Kediri
Indah Pesona Prima SIPP FM	Padang, W Sumatra
Best FM 96	Cikajung, Garut, Java
Bhasa FM	Situbondo, Java
PT Radio Gema Surya	Ponorogo, Java

### **Presenting Australia**

Radio Australia programs, particularly broadcast in Indonesian, have become a vital conduit for better mutual understanding between a growing number of Indonesians and the people of Australia. In the darkest hours of the East Timor crisis in 1999, when Australia was at pains to explain its position to Indonesians, Radio Australia's Indonesian broadcasters maintained a unique channel of direct communication with Indonesian audiences. Through interactive talkback programs with local affiliate stations in Jakarta, Medan and Bandung, they were able to explain Australia's position and concerns.

These regular talkback segments between Australia and live audiences in Indonesia have now become a popular feature of Radio Australia's links with its network of partner stations. They complement regular programming on various aspects of Australian life, including the popular *English from Australia* series. They also project a contemporary image of Australia as a vibrant multicultural democracy, an outward-looking economy, and as a centre of excellence for learning.

Radio Australia's recent (Intermedia Research) Indonesia audience survey indicates that respondents see Australia in a largely positive light, particularly by younger people. This positive view is even more strongly held among those who listen to Radio Australia regularly.

### **Sharing knowledge**

Radio Australia is fulfilling its role as an international and independent public broadcaster by addressing the information and educational challenges arising from recent major political and economic changes in Indonesia.

In cooperation with leading Australian universities and institutions involved in Asia, and more particularly in Indonesia, Radio Australia is producing

educational series for radio and the Internet on key issues affecting the lives of Indonesians, such as economics, globalisation or regional autonomy.

Last year, as Australia celebrated its *Centenary of Federation*, Indonesia was working through the ups and downs of its decentralisation policy. To help Indonesians better understand how Australia was and is addressing some of its own state-federal issues, Radio Australia joined forces with Victoria University and Gaja Mada University in Indonesia to produce an innovative bilingual radio and online series.

This initiative, the *Federasi Australia, Otonomi Indonesia* project, supported by the Australia-Indonesia institute, was launched earlier this year. Radio programs of the series have now been distributed for rebroadcast to partner stations in Indonesia. CD-ROM copies of the educational website accompanying the series will soon be made available to a range of educational institutions in Indonesia.

### **Mutual understanding**

Through the *Asia-Pacific* program (heard domestically in Australia on Radio National and ABC NewsRadio), and through *goasiapacific.com*, the online news and information gateway, Radio Australia also fosters a better understanding of Indonesian and Asian affairs here in Australia. The program is the only regular radio program in Australia providing daily specialist coverage of Asia and the Pacific and, in particular, Indonesia.

In a further attempt to foster a better understanding among Australians of Indonesian and Asia-Pacific affairs, this year Radio Australia launched a new initiative aimed at Australian audiences. The inaugural Radio Australia *Asia Pacific Lecture* series, presented by internationally renowned academics exploring key issues in the region, was launched in September 2002 in Melbourne and will move to Sydney and Canberra over the next couple of months. The series will be broadcast on Radio Australia and Radio National at the end of this year.

In early October 2002, respected Indonesian studies expert Professor Merle Ricklefs discussed *Islam and Southeast Asia* with strong references to Indonesia. Earlier in the year, in conjunction with the completion of the *Federasi Australia, Otonomi Indonesia* project, Radio Australia brought an Indonesian academic specialist in regional autonomy issues to Melbourne for a public lecture.

### **Issues**

Competition from major international broadcasters such as the BBC World Service and Voice of America is intensifying. Radio Australia has no physical presence in Indonesia, based in Melbourne and transmitting to Asia from Darwin. Within Indonesia, Radio Australia is reliant upon local radio stations for rebroadcasting. Radio Australia's current production and transmission capacity does not match that of its competitors and Radio Australia is

therefore restricted in its ability to compete effectively in terms of transmission within the Indonesian archipelago. This limits the opportunities for Australia's voice to be heard adequately across the whole region.

The draft broadcast bill currently before the Indonesian Parliament raises serious concerns about the rebroadcasting of foreign news programs and has serious implications for the rebroadcast of Radio Australia. The Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade has recently advised that should the bill be enacted, one outcome would be a substantial loss of audience for Radio Australia that is now heavily reliant on FM frequency rebroadcasting in Indonesia. (See comment, p. 9).

### **Opportunities**

- Indonesian radio stations are interested in having greater access to more Radio Australia program material. Radio Australia's trusted coverage of Asian and Australian affairs is particularly in demand. This coverage provides a more accurate portrait of Australia and Australian attitudes than that provided by local media outlets. Live talkback sessions with Indonesian audiences have proved an effective way of engaging directly large numbers of Indonesians across the country, especially young people. Local Radio Australia representation in Indonesia and Indonesian-speaking producers on the ground are required to lift this profile to take advantage of these opportunities and to compete effectively against major foreign competitors such as BBC World Service, Voice of America and Deutsche Welle.
- Radio Australia's educational websites and radio series on globalisation, and economics have generated a very positive response from affiliate stations. There is a strong demand for such educational material, particularly from younger Indonesians. A longer term funding framework for educational radio/online activities is required in order to take advantage of present opportunities.
- The use of the Indonesian language to reach Indonesian audiences remains very popular compared to the use of English (six times better audience reach according to latest surveys). In spite of an increasing number of Indonesians learning and speaking English, the vast majority of radio and TV audiences rely on Indonesian for information and education. This is the case particularly in rural areas. Building on the popularity of its programs, Radio Australia is now receiving requests for TV programs in Indonesian. Consideration needs to be given to the generation of such TV programming in Indonesian, along the lines of the present integrated radio-TV and online service on offer from other broadcasters such as Voice of America.
- Radio Australia's recent educational radio series and website on federalism and regional autonomy was very well received. However, it was produced in isolation from other Australian civics and governance education initiatives in Indonesia. Consideration needs to be given to

integrating such successful educational public awareness material into Australia's broader political and economic development effort directed at Indonesia.

- While Radio Australia is registering audience growth through local relays, direct short wave broadcasts remain the most cost-effective and the major broadcast platform to reach large audiences in Indonesia. Direct short wave broadcasts also provide an independent means of reaching listeners should local relays be under political pressure to cease or curtail rebroadcasts. In order to compete effectively with its competitors, Radio Australia could take advantage of spare short wave capacity directed at Indonesia and broadcast on multiple frequencies like the BBC or Voice of America.
- The increasing demand for Indonesian language material from Indonesian broadcasting affiliates and the continuing interest in Australia is an encouraging indicator. At present, Radio Australia's limited production capacity forces the repeat of several broadcasts daily (one and a half out of four and a half hours daily). Radio Australia would be in a better position to respond to the growing demand for radio programs from Australia in Indonesian if it had increased staff and production capacity.

## **ABC ASIA PACIFIC TELEVISION SERVICE (ABCAP)**

### **Background**

ABC Asia Pacific (ABCAP) is a television and multi media platform transmitting to the Asia Pacific region. Transmission commenced on 31 December 2001, following the awarding of a five-year contract from the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade in August 2001.

Broadly, the mission of ABC Asia Pacific is to promote Australia's regional interests and the objectives of international broadcasting as stated in the ABC Charter.

To be relevant to the region, ABCAP has broadened its mission by including special programming, mainly news and current affairs, which examines issues, concerns and matters of common interest to members of the regional community. Education programming, with an emphasis on learning English, has also been included because of the widespread regional demand for such programming.

### **ABCAP's Relationship with Indonesia**

It is pleasing to note that Indonesia was the first country in the region to begin formally transmitting ABCAP. This occurred in February 2002. The two pay operators, *Kabelvision* and *Indovision*, both offer ABCAP as part their range of

offerings of international and national channels. *Kabelvision* is broadcast through a cable network and *Indovision* by satellite to DTH subscribers. *Kabelvision* is restricted to subscribers in Jakarta, while the reach of *Indovision* covers much of the Indonesia archipelago, including the hotels of Bali and East Timor.

Recent research has brought encouraging findings for ABCAP, given that it has only been broadcasting for around nine months. ABCAP has an awareness factor of 4.5 per cent amongst high-income earners in Indonesia, ABCAP's target audience. This translates into the fourth most known international channel. Top of the list is CNN with an awareness factor of around 7.5 per cent. In terms of reach, ABCAP ranks ninth in a list of 20 international channels. These early findings provide a solid basis on which to build a strong and growing audience in Indonesia.

To further promote ABCAP in Indonesia, a radio advertising campaign will soon begin in Bahasa, highlighting the education programming, particularly the English learning component.

### **Issues**

One potential difficulty is the intended introduction of legislation in the Indonesian Parliament that is set to limit the amount of news and current affairs material aired by local broadcasters and rebroadcasters. The legislation appears to restrict some sporting events as well. The impact of the legislation on pay operators is still somewhat unclear. ABCAP is monitoring the situation closely with DFAT and with ABCAP's retransmission partners in Jakarta. (See comment, p. 7).

### **Future Developments**

The on-line activities of ABCAP complement and enhance the television service available in Indonesia. A considerable amount of material from our programming can be sourced on ABCAP's web site. A separate website for our education programming, *Nexus*, has a large amount of material useful for students who wish to learn more than is currently put to air.

ABCAP's ambitious web site *Ask Australia* portal gives students and anyone interested in any aspect of Australia, the opportunity to ask questions on a wide variety of topics and, within 48 hours or so, receive a detailed response.

ABCAP is an integral tool in building Australia's relationship with Indonesia through its range of programming that not only sheds light on Australia to promote greater awareness and understanding, but also, through its relevant programming, builds bridges of shared concern and shared vision.

## **ABC NEWS AND CURRENT AFFAIRS**

### **History**

ABC News and Current Affairs has been represented in Indonesia full-time since 1959, except during a sustained period of strained relations extending from 1980 to 1991.

### **ABC News and Current Affairs Presence in Indonesia**

The ABC was initially a single correspondent post in Jakarta reporting mainly for Radio and, from the 1960s, began making contributions for ABC TV from time to time.

In the early years, the main events in terms of ABC news reporting included the Konfrontasi between Indonesia and Malaya (as it was then), the attempted 'Communist coup' in 1965 which the Indonesian Army put down under the command of General Suharto, the start of the Suharto presidency in 1968, and the Indonesian invasion of East Timor in 1975.

In 1980, the Indonesian government refused to renew the working visa of ABC journalist Warwick Beutler, then the ABC's correspondent in Jakarta. This move effectively shut the ABC out the country. Hopes of a return to Indonesia of a permanent ABC presence were thwarted again in 1985 by a controversial press article that appeared in the *Sydney Morning Herald* concerning the Suharto family.

In 1991, Indonesia allowed the ABC to resume a full-time reporting presence in Jakarta, but access to sensitive locations like East Timor was severely restricted. In 1995, reflecting a wider interest in Indonesia and greater access throughout the country, the ABC upgraded its Jakarta bureau with the appointment of a full-time cameraman.

In 1998, unrest in Jakarta and elsewhere in Indonesia led to the resignation of President Suharto and the advent of the presidencies of Bacharuddin Jusuf (B J) Habibie, Abudarraham Wahid, and the current President, Megawati Sukarnoputri. This period also saw the rise of sectarian troubles, and a referendum in East Timor to vote on the separation from Indonesia in favour of independence.

In 2000, such was the intense news activity in Indonesia that the ABC increased its presence in Jakarta to two full-time correspondents. This establishment continued until the end of 2001 when news activity subsided and relative stability returned. The ABC then reverted to one bureau correspondent in Jakarta. In 2002, the full-time camera presence was discontinued in favour of a part-time arrangement.

In October 2002, in order to report fully on the tragic bombing event that occurred in Bali, extra reporting and production resources for ABC Radio and

Television were flown in from the ABC's Sydney and Bangkok offices to Bali and Jakarta to provide comprehensive reportage.

### **Current situation**

In 2002, the ABC enjoys virtually unrestricted access to all parts of Indonesia, although the ABC has itself declared some areas off-limits to its correspondents because of security fears, particularly in locations where Christian and Islamic extremists operate.

## **ABC INTERNATIONAL TRAINING AND INDONESIA**

### **Background**

The ABC has a history of involvement with aid in the Asia-Pacific region dating from the Colombo Plan in the 1950's.

ABC managers and staff who train broadcasters in other countries have a unique opportunity to engage with other broadcasters in their own cultures. Similarly, ABC staff are placed in a unique position to gain a local perspective on events and issues that would otherwise be viewed from a distance. It is reasonable to assert that journalists and broadcasters who have worked in other countries are usually more sensitive to the nuances of events and less prone to practice 'parachute journalism' of which other western (including Australian) reporters are sometimes accused.

The Indonesian media is undergoing a period of profound change and liberalisation instituted by the post-Suharto Governments, and ABC Training has been involved in a number of activities that have been directly related to that change.

### **ABC Training Activities 1999 – 2002**

Most training activities with Indonesian broadcasters in this period have been funded by *AusAid* via various projects. These include:

- The first training activity held in May 1999 by ABC Training, in conjunction with Murdoch University and the Centre for Democratic Institutions (CDI), with participants from Radio/TV Republik Indonesia (R/TVRI). This initiative was prompted by a request from Indonesia for a program of training to equip managers within the existing government-run radio and television broadcasting system, R/TVRI, with the skills to oversee its transformation towards a 'public service broadcast' model.

The program brought 15 senior R/TVRI managers to Australia to take part in a series of seminars and workshops at Murdoch University and with senior ABC managers, discussing a range of issues for modern



public service broadcasters. The objective was to promote a shift in the managerial paradigm for the R/TVRI team, necessitated by adjustment from a system where they had been directed to broadcast specific material, to a system where they would need to make independent and far-reaching decisions about their editorial and programming philosophy and content.

- The process had a positive outcome and was repeated (with variations) in the following year (2000) with a different group.

There was evidence, gained from formal evaluations and anecdotally, that the participants in these groups acquired a very different perspective on the Australian media, and that they were in a better position to understand the independence of the Australian media and how it was exercised. This had some implications for their own situation, notably in the development of the media laws then being considered.

- A third training activity was held in 2002, when a group of managers from TVRI visited Perth, Melbourne and Sydney. This workshop took a further step and was aimed at developing participants' understanding of public service broadcasting and the variety of legal, political and financial frameworks within which this can develop. The workshop was held in conjunction with Murdoch and Curtin Universities and CDI.
- In May/June 2002, an eight-week workshop was held at the ABC in Melbourne, in association with RMIT International and RMIT University. The course was conceived by TVRI in association with the AusAID-funded Indonesia-Australia Specialised Training Project Phase II (IASTPII). The course was undertaken by a group of journalists, producers and marketing managers from TVRI, and its main objectives were linked to the transition of TVRI from its status as a state broadcaster to the commercial public service broadcasting model.
- Currently (October/November 2002), another workshop for journalists from a number of different Indonesian radio, television and print organisations is being held. Trainers and workshop leaders are drawn from the ABC and from RMIT, funded by IASTPII. The content is focused on the craft of journalism in the context of independence and within constraints imposed by media law and ethical considerations.

The emphasis in these workshops has been placed on a practical understanding of the western media model, with detailed exploration of how learned skills and the principles of fair, accurate and unbiased reporting might be applied in the Indonesian context.

- From July to October 2002, the ABC also cooperated with Internews Indonesia in providing work placements/internships for a number of Internews staff from their Jakarta-based training organisation.

## **Issues**

In the course of managing these projects it has been noted, from formal evaluations and from anecdotal information, that individuals from Indonesia engaging in the training activities have experienced development in their perceptions and understanding of western media models. From a perception that independence for a public broadcaster is not possible, and that independence from Government control entails complete freedom, participants have achieved a more complete and, in some instances, an in-depth understanding of the cultural, legal, ethical and commercial context for Australian media, in particular the independent public broadcasters.

Participants have sought to apply some of these principles to their own work, but have been aware of the difficulties, given the cultural and political differences as well as commercial realities. It is evident that the changes in media regulation in Indonesia, and the commercialisation of the media and public broadcasters are already having far-reaching effects. Training activities have played a part in informing individuals in Indonesian media organisations about the ramifications of media independence and different operational models.

## **Opportunities**

In addition to designated training activities, there is ongoing contact with Indonesian broadcasters via short visits arranged with ABC International Relations, during which Indonesian broadcasters meet and talk with ABC managers and staff. This contact will continue.

The contact to date between the ABC and individuals from the Indonesian media has been positive and productive on both sides. Given the importance of the links between Australia and Indonesia, and in light of the ABC's Charter responsibilities and its desire to promote staff development, opportunities for training involving close and personal contact with members of the Indonesian media will continue to be actively pursued.

## **ABC TRADE WITH INDONESIA**

The Australian Broadcasting Corporation is well respected in Indonesia and ABC Program Sales Worldwide (Asia) recently visited Indonesia (July 2002) in order to interest potential clients in purchasing ABC programs from the ABC's wide-ranging program sales catalogue.

Potential buyers in Jakarta were very keen to know more about the ABC and its operations. There was also interest expressed in the role of the ABC's Asia Pacific television service in the region. The ABC's objective is to introduce

and grow program sales in Indonesia, selling ABC content to Free to Air Television broadcasters as well as Pay Television companies.

It is noted that the Free to Air TV market in Indonesia is very crowded with much speculation amongst buyers that there will be a rationalisation in the next two years. The Pay Television take up is very small in Indonesia, with a resistance to sign up fees.

The TV program genres that registered most interest came from the ABC's Natural History unit, ABC's Children's titles and ABC Drama.

Content sales since 1999 to date (2002) of ABC programs to Pay Television companies in Indonesia:

- (Natural History), *Australia Wild*, 'Night of the Bogongs', sold to the National Geographic channel.
- (Drama), *Time & Tide*, sold to Hallmark Entertainment Pay TV.
- (Children's), *Bananas in Pyjamas*, sold to Disney Asia Channel.

Content sales of ABC programs to date to Free To Air Television in Indonesia:

- (Children's), *Bananas in Pyjamas* sold to Rajawali Citra Televisi. All three series of half hour programs have been licensed for Free to Air Television for a period of two years.

## **Opportunities**

The ABC's most recent sales trip in July 2002 was very positive, with a genuine interest shown from buyers of programs produced by the ABC. Many VHS preview tapes have been despatched to all major Free to Air stations and the ABC is confident that this exposure to the Indonesian market will result in eventual sales.