



**Asian Studies Association of Australia, Inc.**

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Mr Russell Chafer  
Secretary  
Joint Committee of Public Accounts and Audit  
Parliament House  
CANBERRA ACT 2600

Dear Mr Chafer

**SUBMISSION TO THE INQUIRY INTO THE EFFECTS OF THE ONGOING EFFICIENCY DIVIDEND ON  
SMALLER PUBLIC SECTOR AGENCIES**

I write on behalf of the Asian Studies Association of Australia to draw your Committee's attention to the serious consequences of the efficiency dividend on the activities of the National Library of Australia.

The imposition of the efficiency dividend has forced the Library to plan to wind back a number of activities, including its long-standing programme of collecting contemporary Indonesian-language publication by means of a dedicated office in Jakarta with a trained Australian librarian.

This collection programme, which has no parallel within Indonesia itself, has made the National Library a premier collection of Indonesian material and a priceless resource for Australian researchers on a vast range of topics concerning contemporary Indonesia. I need hardly point out to you the importance to Australia of maintaining a high level of expertise on developments in contemporary Indonesia.

Although the National Library is not proposing to cease its collection of Indonesian material, acquisition will now be undertaken by locally-engaged staff who will have neither the librarianship training of present and past holders of the post, nor the well-developed sense of Australia's collection needs that comes from an Australian background. The consequence of this cutback is likely to be a decline in the quality of the NLA's Indonesia collection and thus a reduction in the accessibility of essential research materials for Australian scholars.

A further damaging consequence of the winding back of the acquisitions programme is that the NLA will cease to purchase Indonesian publications on behalf of Australian university libraries. Currently six Australian university libraries -- Murdoch, Monash, Flinders and Melbourne universities, the ANU and UNSW@ADFA -- obtain Indonesian language materials primarily through the NLA's acquisitions programme. The programme has been cost-effective and has been a great example of a national cultural institution providing direct assistance to other parts of the Australian community.

The materials acquired by these universities through the programme play an essential role in teaching and research training on Indonesia in Australia as whole, and they cannot adequately be replaced by use of the inter-library loan system from the NLA. There is no way that the NLA's

programme can readily be replaced – no commercial firms offer a comparable service and universities themselves lack the resources to emulate the NLA's operations.

The unintended consequences of the efficiency dividend for Indonesian Studies in Australia are thus severe, and they come at a time when Australia's interests are as deeply involved in Indonesia as at any time in our history and when it is imperative to provide adequate support to the study of Indonesia in Australia.

I would be most grateful if your committee would address these consequences in its final report.



cc Ms Jan Fullerton, Director-General of the National Library of Australia