



## **Submission No 75**

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

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Committee Secretary  
JSCFADT  
Department of House of Representatives  
Parliament House  
Canberra ACT 2600

23<sup>rd</sup> October 2002

**SUBMISSION: RE: NALSAS strategy**

Dear Joint Standing Committee,

I am writing to you in regard to the axing of the NALSAS program. As Indonesian Second Language Chief Assessor for Victorian VCE exams, I am in constant contact with schools and teachers of Indonesian language and feel it my duty to inform the committee of my concerns.

I believe it is extremely important that this program continue, especially in the current political/regional climate. It is absolutely vital that we improve our relations with Indonesia and other countries in the Asia-pacific region. Australia's position in this region is going to become more and more obvious in the near future. We should be increasing our support and funding of Asian languages in schools, especially the Indonesian language. Now is not the time to scale down either Federal or State support. Now is the time to receive support from the Federal Government to promote the teaching of these languages in schools.

Initially there might be a backlash against studying Indonesian, in review of the recent events in Bali. It is therefore absolutely vital that those schools who have benefited so greatly from the NALSAS program not have their funding reduced at such a critical time. This year we have 914 VCE Indonesian Second Language students. It would be a sad state of affairs that due to the withdrawing of NALSAS funding, combined with general unease in the community, if these numbers were reduced by half. But this is the reality. Already some schools have contacted me saying that they are really concerned that the numbers in the junior levels will be so reduced due to lack of funding that it will be hard to keep the VCE classes going. They are crying out for government support and promotion of Indonesian.

Now more than ever we need our population to be able to communicate with our closest neighbours. I therefore can only plead that the Joint Standing Committee seriously consider this matter and look at increasing support to LOTE teachers in this area and specifically in making sure that the NALSAS program continues.

Yours sincerely,

Linda Hibbs  
Indonesian Second Language, Chief Assessor for Victoria

