

## EDUCATION, SCIENCE AND TRAINING

### SENATE LEGISLATION COMMITTEE - QUESTIONS ON NOTICE 2007-2008 BUDGET ESTIMATES HEARING

**Outcome** 5 - Research and Innovation

**DEST Question No. E122\_08**

Senator Evans provided in writing.

**Question:**

Is it the case that in its May 2004 Report the Parliamentary Joint Standing Committee on Foreign Affairs, Defence and Trade commented that maintaining Australia's expertise on Indonesia and expanding research and education about Indonesia was crucial to our relationship with that country?

Wasn't it also recommended that Indonesian studies be "designated a strategic national priority"? What has occurred in response to those recommendations?

**Answer:**

*Research and Education*

To improve Australia's expertise relating to Indonesia the Australian Government has designated Bahasa Indonesian as a 'nationally strategic language' for the purposes of funding agreements with universities. This means that a university cannot close a course in Bahasa Indonesian without the approval of the Australian Government. This condition has been in providers' funding agreements made under the *Higher Education Support Act 2003* since 2006.

The Australian Research Council (ARC) has funded research projects that will promote the expansion of knowledge about Indonesia by Australia. Further information about ARC projects is available on the ARC's web site: <http://www.arc.gov.au/>

The Prime Minister has agreed to National Research Priority Standing Committee's recommendation that there was no pressing need for a review of the priorities because it was too early to measure and evaluate the benefits of the NRP's. The review will occur in 2009 rather than 2006-07, as initially planned. The 2009 review will examine the feasibility of including other priority areas within the NRP framework.