



Submission No 65

Inquiry into Australia's Relations with Indonesia

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From: Cowan, Lesley (REPS)
Sent: Monday, 28 October 2002 10:16
To: Lawson, Cliff (REPS)
Subject: FW: Indonesia

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-----Original Message-----

From: Vic & Felicity Say [mailto:sayvf@castlemaine.net]
Sent: Friday, October 25, 2002 5:33 PM
To: Committee, JSCFADT (REPS)
Subject: Indonesia

LOTE (Languages Other Than English) programs are changing the culture in Australia in terms of the use, learning and development of languages other than English in the Australian school system - especially the primary school system - and in the community more generally.

I have been involved in Primary school LOTE - Indonesian language programs since 1986 and see a massive change in the culture of parent, student and teacher attitudes.

The current LOTE provision in Victoria has established a base from which to develop rigorous, well staffed programs which provide students with considerable skills in LOTE - however this base level of provision currently falls far short of this potential.

Yet if this country can achieve this potential in the teaching of Indonesian language, it will form one of the planks of a broadly based, community owned understanding of our nearest large neighbor.

The ingredients of rigorous programs in primary LOTE are now in place - but only newly in place.

Of the basic ingredients: sufficient well qualified staff, appropriate materials, school time tabling support and well structured teacher guidelines providing expectations about outcomes are mostly now in place. Of these, the most critically inadequate is that concerning the quality of teachers.

I believe we are half way there!!!!

We are now entering a period in which a new generation of student teachers with higher tertiary entrance scores are about to be 'flooded' into an aging teacher work force. This is in contrast to recent years when teachers often undertook LOTE upgrades to avoid being declared in excess - and when tertiary entrance scores were frighteningly low. Together these factors have meant it has been difficult to get enough high quality staff in enough schools.

LOTE is a demanding area to study and to teach in - it requires staff with high intellectual capacities and skillful class management abilities - the next generation of teachers could provide these staff if the Commonwealth supports the further development of LOTE - Indonesian language. This is vital to the long term aims of the Commonwealth / National program of developing a community understanding of this neighbor with all the complexity that close engagement bring: friendship, critical capacity, analytical dexterity, close collaboration, cultural insight - and so on and on.

To consolidate the LOTE Indonesian programs there needs to be AN ABSOLUTE EMPHASIS on rigorous programs and a clear critique of 'Asian Studies Across the Curriculum' being implemented by LOTE Indonesian staff in the context of token language development which alienates students from the target language because students are not challenged or stimulated by effective teaching or by satisfying outcomes.

We need a review and a whole new wave of commitment based on the above. And it needs to form part of the foundation of a continuing and complex relationship between our two countries.

Yours Faithfully,

Vic Say

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