

**NATIONAL COLLOQUIUM ON THE FUTURE OF INDONESIAN LANGUAGE
IN AUSTRALIAN UNIVERSITIES**

Statement by Member for Cannington

MR W.J. JOHNSTON (Cannington) [12.54 pm]: I was pleased to attend part of the National Colloquium on the Future of Indonesian Language in Australian Universities, held at Murdoch University from 9 to 11 February 2011. The national colloquium was organised by Professor David Hill of Murdoch University as part of an Australian Learning and Teaching Council fellowship. The colloquium brought together representatives of every Australian university that teaches the Indonesian language. I always find it very interesting that many Australians discuss our relationship with China, but our relationship with Indonesia does not receive a balanced coverage. Unlike China, Indonesia is a democracy; it is our nearest neighbour and it is the sixteenth largest economy in the world. It will be crucial to the future of Australia and Western Australia. The national colloquium recognised the real difficulties facing the teaching of Indonesian language in our universities. However, it was great to see the energy and enthusiasm of the participants. Investment in Indonesian language skills is in the national interest of all Australians. I congratulate Professor David Hill for organising the colloquium and thank Liam Prince and his team of volunteers for its smooth operations.

My attendance at the colloquium again emphasised to me the need for the commonwealth to review the travel warning to Indonesia as it makes it more difficult for students to study in-country, which is important for language development. I also acknowledge the work of Karen Bailey from Balai Bahasa Indonesia Perth and I look forward to attending its third anniversary dinner tomorrow night.