



**Centre for Democratic Institutions**

**Training for members of the Research and Information Service of the  
Indonesian Parliament  
June and August 1999 and February 2000  
Canberra**

Democratic transition in Indonesia has brought a host of opportunities and challenges. Key among these is a new role for the National Parliament. In the new, more vigorous environment, bills introduced into Parliament are subject to lively debate and Parliamentarians are conscious of the need to be informed about a range of issues.

Indonesia has long had a research and information service within the National Parliament, but with the recent reforms the role of that service has changed considerably and the demands upon it have increased. In the new political environment, greater debate on policy issues means that Members of Parliament have a greater need for impartial and accurate information from the parliamentary research service.

In January 1999, CDI commissioned a scoping study of the research capacity of the Indonesian Parliament, undertaken by Dr Stephen Sherlock. The resulting report identified several areas in which CDI could assist PPPI, including through the provision of short term training opportunities in Australia for members of PPPI.

Australia is fortunate to have a highly professional and well-resourced library and research service within the Federal Parliament. The Department of the Parliamentary Library also has considerable experience in working with and assisting developing countries in strengthening their research services.

In order to assist Indonesia's PPPI to fulfil its new role and responding to the needs of Parliamentarians, CDI in co-operation with the Department of the Parliamentary Library of the Federal Parliament of Australia, provided a series of work placements for members of PPPI.

Twelve members of PPPI came to Australia in three groups of four during 1999 and early 2000.

**Group 1: 14–25 June 1999**

HTSP Siregar  
Sali Susiana  
Darmadi  
Inosentius Samsul

**Group 2: 16–27 August 1999**

Hariyadi S.I.P  
Siti Nur Solechah  
Puteri Hikmawati  
Widya Chalid

**Group 3: 28 February–10 March 2000.**

Adirini Pujayanti  
Riris Khatarina Panjaitan  
Novianto Murti Hartono  
Damayanti

Prior to departure, CDI, in co-operation with the Indonesian–Australian Language Foundation, provided participants with a programme of English language training and cultural awareness. This ensured that participants, most of whom had not previously visited Australia, had some understanding of what to expect upon their arrival in Australia.

Participants spent two weeks with the Department of the Parliamentary Library, observing the activities of the Library and Research Service, visiting different areas within the research service, attending lectures on issues of interest and meeting with counterparts.

The strength of the placements was the very practical nature of the training. The Indonesian participants were able to experience another research service in action, ask questions and identify what practices might enhance their own ability to respond to the needs of members of the Indonesian Parliament. Participants were given a mentor, with whom to discuss issues at length and had the opportunity to work closely with the group or section that focuses on their own area of expertise.

Feedback from each of the groups was extremely positive, indicating that participants found great value in the opportunity to gain an insight into the workings of another parliamentary research service. Participants have maintained contact with their counterparts at the Department of the Parliamentary Library and with CDI. Consequently this project has successfully initiated ongoing professional and personal relationships, to the benefit of all concerned.