



**Centre for Democratic Institutions**

**The Transition to Publicly  
Accountable Broadcasting in Indonesia**

Murdoch University, Perth and The Australian Broadcasting Corporation, Perth and  
Sydney

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An important aspect of Indonesia's move to greater democratisation is the transformation of state owned television and radio into public broadcast institutions, which are independent and publicly accountable. In response to this need the Centre for Democratic Institutions, in conjunction with Murdoch University and the Australian Broadcasting Corporation (ABC), undertook a one-week intensive course for 15 broadcasters and broadcast managers from RRI (Radio Republik Indonesia) and TVRI (Televisi Republik Indonesia).

This initiative was prompted by a request from the then Indonesian Director General of Radio, Television and Film for a programme of training to equip managers within the existing government-run radio and television broadcasting system with the skills to oversee its transformation towards a 'public service broadcast' model. As such this project was the result of a client driven initiative.

The project brought together the academic strengths of Murdoch University and the ABC's practical experience, both national and international, to respond to a need identified by the Indonesian government as part of its extensive and difficult process of political transition.

The course aimed to:

- train broadcast managers to operate in accordance with the public broadcaster model; and
- enable a shift in their managerial paradigm to far greater independence in editorial and programming decisions, content and philosophies.

The training course involved both:

- an academic component to increase participants' knowledge and understanding of different facets of public broadcasting; and
- a workplace component where participants observed and interacted with professional managers and broadcasters.

To achieve its objectives the first part of the course was delivered at Murdoch University and the second at ABC premises in Perth and Sydney. During the first three days participants were introduced to a variety of frameworks through which the

relationship between public broadcasting and democratic societies have been conceptualised. The international market research company A.C. Neilsens provided part of the training and materials on the third day of the program, which dealt with the issue of public broadcast in an increasingly commercialised market. On the final two days, five of the participants travelled to Sydney to meet their Australian counterparts and discuss with them the functions of the national broadcaster within the Australian democracy. The rest of the participants remained in Perth and focussed on the functioning of regional ABC stations.

The training was provided by a group of highly qualified broadcasters, senior broadcast managers and trainers, advertising executives and senior academics from Law and Media Studies at Murdoch and Curtin Universities. Thus, the participants came in contact with a wide range of skills and qualifications. They were introduced to professional colleagues in the industry in Australia, and it is anticipated that these connections will produce various levels of collaboration beyond the limits of this project.

Teaching is most valuable when it brings out the best in both the trainers and the trainees. In this instance there is little doubt that the Australian academics and the ABC senior staff involved gained from the international professional contacts they made through this workshop. All of the trainers were most impressed with the Indonesian participants' highly active engagement with materials presented throughout the course, their professional competence and fluency in English.

### **Course Evaluation**

Anonymous participant evaluation of this training programme, undertaken by Murdoch University at the conclusion of the course, indicated a high level of satisfaction among participants. The inclusion of a practical component to allow hands on experiences in the Australian context was considered to be particularly beneficial. Participants noted that they had been provided with skills and strategies that could be utilised within their own work contexts.