



# KABAR

## AIA News Australia Indonesia Association

October - December 2014

Established in 1945

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Confessions of a People Smuggler  
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### PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

Hi Everyone,

Spring has sprung, the grass has risen (and so have the weeds!). Our attention turns to our gardens and outdoor activities, with warmer temperatures and longer days, and soon to be Daylight Saving Time.

The shooting down of MH17 over the Ukraine, with the tragic loss of almost 300 people, and the inability to conduct a proper investigation, was a stark reminder of the consequences of military conflicts. This has been heightened by the atrocities carried out by the mass murderers in northern Iraq and Syria, who use religion to try to justify their actions. The international community are rightly outraged, and rallying to support those communities whose lives are threatened. The prospect of Australian military engagement has heightened, as is the threat of terrorism on our own soil.

But life in Sydney goes on pretty much normally, with passions aroused by football. The Sydney Swans were unfortunately beaten in the AFL Grand Final, and we look forward to the NRL Grand Final next week, a clash of the Bulldogs and the Rabbitohs.

The presidential election in Indonesia went smoothly with Joko Widodo (Jokowi) elected as the new president with Jusuf Kalla (JK) as his Vice President. JK has visited Sydney several times in past years and is familiar to the Indonesian community in Sydney. We look forward to Jokowi visiting Australia for the G20, and visiting us in Sydney at some time in the future. His rival, Prabowo Subianto was not gracious in defeat, and challenged the electoral result, but was overridden by the Constitutional court. The demographics of the presidential election were quite interesting. Whilst Jokowi has support of the common people, Prabowo has the support of the middle and upper levels of society and of the urban population. It will be interesting to see if Jokowi can win over these groups and to win over parliament.

**AUSTRALIA INDONESIA AWARDS 2014**  
*presented by the Australia Indonesia Association of NSW*

Honouring Australians who have made significant contributions to the greater understanding and friendship between Indonesians and Australians.

**AWARD PRESENTATION DINNER**  
6.30pm Saturday 29 November 2014  
Blueberry Hill Room, Canterbury Leagues Club  
26 Bridge Rd, Belmore

**Bookings and Payment**  
Online by clicking on button:  
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Presentation of AIA CommBank Scholarships  
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Net proceeds to Nusa Tenggara Association NTA

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awards@australia-indonesia-association.com

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We should also take this opportunity to thank outgoing President SBY for his role in stabilizing the political and economic climate in Indonesia over the past 10 years, and in his handling of relationships with Australia. The Indonesian Ambassador is back in Australia and we are now awaiting the arrival of the new Indonesian Consul General to Sydney in the next few weeks. The Acting Consul General, Nicolas Manoppo has done an excellent job since the previous Consul general left earlier this year to take up an Ambassador position in Fiji.

Over the past few months we have seen lots of Indonesian activity in our local community. August is always busy with Independence celebrations organized by the Consulate and various Indonesian community groups. The ANU recently hosted its annual Indonesia Update in Canberra and a mini update in Sydney the Lowy Institute. There were some interesting speakers and perspectives on the political, economic, foreign policy, and security aspects in Indonesia. Also last week, the Indonesian Investment Coordinating Board (BKPM) held an Investment Forum in Sydney. In July, the AIA held its Winter Dinner at the Rasa Bandung restaurant, with a good turnout of members and friends, including new and returning members.

As I mentioned in previous Kabars, we have launched the “Australia Indonesia Awards” to recognize and honour Australians who have made significant contributions to the greater understanding and friendship between Australians and Indonesians. The Australia Indonesia Awards this year will be made in three (3) categories

- Media – journalism, film, documentary, social media
- Education – schools, tertiary, institutions
- Arts – Music, dance, painting, literature

An independent selection panel has been established, chaired by Mr Bill Farmer AO, the former Ambassador to Indonesia, and comprises 5 independent persons well respected within their fields and have an understanding of the existing relationships between Australians and Indonesians. Nominations were called for in July, with nominations closing on 15 September. I am pleased to report that we had over 40 nominations, which are currently being assessed by the Selection Panel. The names of the nominees will be released shortly, with the finalists and the winners in each category being presented with their awards at

our [Gala Presentation Night](#) to be held on 29 November. Should be an exciting night. Several sponsors have helped with this Awards program, including our major sponsor Commbank, together with Coca Cola Amatil, Crown Holdings, Netfare Travel, and Indomedia (full page notice in the September [Indomedia](#) magazine).



AIA has been a regular sponsor of the “Kompetisi Siswa” organized by the NSW Education Department, to promote the Indonesian language and culture within NSW schools. I was fortunate, along with John Luxton, to participate in the judging of the artwork, drawings, video presentations submitted by students from all ages. Some refreshing and very creative submissions were made.

Applications were called for our scholarships, including the “Lottie Maramis” Scholarship, and the “AIA Commbank” Scholarships. The “Lottie Maramis” scholarship is for a NSW Year 12 student going on to University, whilst the “AIA Commbank” Scholarships are for Year 10/11 students to attend a 2-week “Immersion Course” in Yogyakarta. Applications closed on 19 September and are currently being assessed. The winners will be presented with their scholarships at the Gala Presentation Night on 29 November. We are grateful to Commbank for their support, and also to the many teachers and staff in NSW schools for encouraging their students to apply.

Our membership and Facebook membership continue to grow. Welcome to our new member Jeffrey Mellefont, and to the 200 new Facebook members who joined in the last 3 months. We now have close to 1,000 Facebook members. [Check it out](#)

## WHERE IS MY HOME, LAPINDO?

By Neil Smith

In 2007 the AIA supported an art exhibition with the Indonesia artist Jumjadi and others at the Bondi Pavilion. A group of students came to us with the concept that involved a man-made installation portraying a site called Lapindo in East Java. Like many people, I had little knowledge of the disaster that had unfolded near Sidoarjo in East Java.



In August 2014 my wife and I were in east Java visiting family at Mojokerto. As we were close now to Lapindo we thought to go visit. Our guide was a family member, Mas Eko. This is what we found. Arriving in the morning before the heat of the day we notice a 10m high earth pack wall. Next to the wall ran a railway with a highway running adjacent to it as far as one could see. On the other side of the highway were derelict buildings overtaken by nature. We stopped at a place where a group of people were milling around some protest signs about Lapindo, hanging on the earth packed wall. After stepping out of the car we were asked to go on the back of motorbikes to view the mud site.

When we were taken up to the top of the dirt wall, we could view a large lake. Through the lake ran a row of bent power cable stanchions. Their cables were hanging in the water. The air had a bitumen smell to it. We went around the lake on the bikes to a sea of dry mud a flat area with a moonscape appearance. Around half a kilometre from where we were standing you noticed masses of grey gas clouds. A spout of liquid mud would jump in the air about 5 to 10 meters every minute through the gases. We were not too far from the mud rim of this amazing landscape. Should you walk another couple meters towards the flying mud, you would quickly sink. The mud around us was

moving as one walked on it. After some time out on the mud flat we returned as the heat of the day was coming on strong now. To visit on a full moon would be something but bring a guide and torches.

After the trip out on to the mud flat, we sat under some shade of a tree. The victims of this tragedy told their stories as they smoked *kretek* cigarettes. Most smoked my brother in-laws packet. They said that first a massive drill rig arrived to drill for gas. It was covered in lights for night work. Other than that, they didn't know what was happening. Then in August 2006 all the crew from the drilling rig disappeared leaving the rig standing there. Two days later we were informed not to light any fires for cooking or anything. The message was sent through the imams and they were told that some may have to leave their homes soon. Then each day food parcels were handed out to each family. After a couple days a fountain of hot liquid mud shot into the air and didn't stop. It didn't take long before the houses, factories, shops, streets and rice paddies were covered with the mud. One spoke about how he watched the mud come into his house, first covering the floor and then up to the windows and then the roof disappeared. All he could do sit and watch. Now he has lost his home and his land and, he says, his future. Under this mud are the graves of his parents and family. My children's school is now away. Many of them lost everything. What do you think happen to the elderly? Where did they go?



When ask what happen on the political side, the Lapindo victims became angry. One lad jumped to his feet and said no politician local or national has come near us. "Our president SBY came but we weren't allowed to meet him. It feels like as if they want us to go away and disappear. As for the legal side we had a court case and won outright against those responsible. We received some form of compensation. Everyone received the same amount regardless what you lost. Those that had a successful business employing people received the same as someone working for him in a small house. Then they informed us about skill training to help with finding new employment. After some training we were left to find employment our



self, . We didn't receive any help with the emotional problems that we faced .Our families were broken up looking for housing, employment, schooling and what to do with our elderly parents."

When I ask who do you see responsible for this, a middle aged woman yelled out the name 'Bakri'. The others became unsettled when they heard the name. One of our bike riders in his 50s explained that the people have witnessed too many people die from stress and suicide. Too many had enough and couldn't cope. Then we asked how the drilling company were allowed to come into your district. They explained that they had a court case against the company and it became clear that the company performed the operation here without a permit.

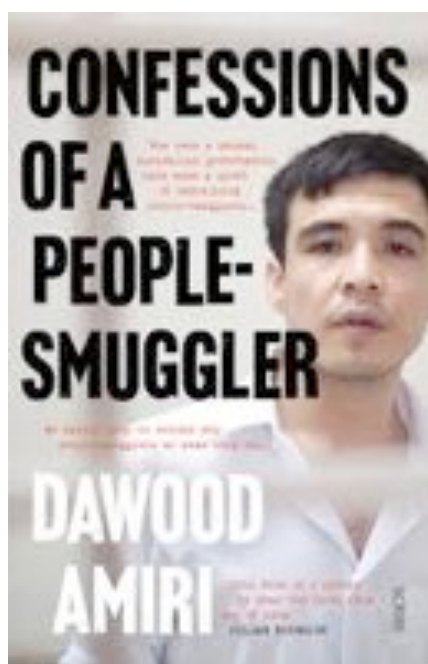
The area had been geologically surveyed and the mud formation underneath the area was known. The company had made a bad judgment when the drill reached a certain depth, a suppressant gas should be applied down the drill shaft and additional support for the drill shaft. Neither was used at this drill site correctly. They all said yes we won the court case but life is still a struggle. Then all had a laugh. The name Lapindo was part of the exploration company's name of Lapindo Brantas. Another interesting point, the drill rig was under Australian company called Santos.

I ask about all the houses abandon on the lower side of wall. They told us that because gases were escaping out

the ground that set many building on fire. Then they were all told to leave the area as the water and air was contaminated. Looking down the highway that runs next to the wall was a scene of despair seeing all the business, officers, schools and homes left as waste for as far I could see. Now where all the families lived, vines and young trees slowly cover thousands of buildings. From the wall on the west, a flat plain runs out with a large cone shaped volcano dominating the landscape.

When you look up the road there are thousands of buildings gone to waste. The gas has brought a renewed business interest into the area. The local people don't trust those business people bidding for the gas. In the future, this area may be found as an arch logical site and dug up for tourist to view – like Pompeii in Italy for example. The guides were hoping that people would be interested to visit for it brings an income in. As for myself I thought it was worth a visit. As we parted, one fellow remarked that many people come from different places around the world to visit. They take photos, talk about what is wrong then leave for their home. 'But, where is my home?' the man asked.

## CONFESSIONS OF A PEOPLE SMUGGLER



In February 2013 Dawood Amiri was sentenced to six and a half years in an Indonesian prison for people smuggling.

Behind bars, he has penned his memoir, *Confessions of a People Smuggler*, a sensitive, compelling and revelatory tale highlighting the moral ambiguities of the people smuggling trade.

Twenty-nine year old Dawood Amiri is an Afghani of Hazara ethnicity, a group who have a long history of persecution. His story is typical of young Hazara men who are fleeing oppression. As a clever and educated young man, Dawood was chosen by his family to make the journey. He left his mother and siblings in Kabul in 2010 and travelled to India then on to Malaysia and Indonesia. His final destination was to be Australia.

After being arrested after trying to board a rickety boat to Christmas Island, Dawood spent time in an Indonesian immigration detention centre. He felt the frustration of being an asylum seeker at the mercy of international organisations and global politics. When his money eventually ran he turned to people smuggling.

As an agent in a larger people smuggling network, he was involved in gathering passengers and logistics. Dawood was arrested in 2012 over the tragic death of 96 asylum seekers and refugees who drowned at sea 90 nautical

miles from Christmas Island in June 2012. This disaster hangs heavily over Dawood as he serves out his jail sentence in prison in West Java.

Dawood's candid account of his role in the network and his motivation for getting people on boats bound for Australia are both intriguing and revealing.

The book is peppered with fascinating and disturbing anecdotes of his own personal journey that leads the reader to question Australia's hard-line immigration policies and the demonization of people like Dawood.

In the book's final chapter he presents the moral argument for people smuggling and admonishes to the governments of First World countries for spending huge sums of money in blocking the entry of desperate people – people who are driven to find a peaceful new home by “the love they have for their families and their fierce wish to ensure their survival.”

Dawood has ultimately accepted his own predicament. He is comforted knowing that some of those he helped reach Australian shores are safe and can now contribute to their

new country.

Dawood's words are simple yet poignant as he describes the stark reality of those struggling to survive in a world where the odds seem to be constantly stacked against them.

*Dawood Amiri was encouraged to write the book by Sydney Morning Herald's Jakarta correspondent Michael Bachelard. Prior to being arrested, Dawood married an Indonesian woman and they now have a young son, both of whom visit him regularly in prison.*

Published: 27/08/2014

price: AUD \$24.99

ISBN-13:9781925106091

Publisher: [Scribe Publications](#)

## Reflections on a trip down memory lane – Indonesia

By Yohanna Cocks

It was great to go back to familiar places and be reminded of the things that make a place so unique! Recently I made a trip back to Indonesia for a holiday which came 8 years since I last visited this country.

It was an interesting time to visit with lots happening in Indonesia - after the election, during the end of the fasting month and into Idul Fitri, and just before Indonesian Independence Day.

I'm very thankful for the way I was able to pick up most of the language again that was helpful in catching *pete-petes* and *becaks* and of course bargaining!

Going back to Makassar (known for its Phinisi sailing boats) brought back many memories of my childhood. Seeing the houses I lived in, going to church and visiting the hospital I was born was great. Catching up with friends was fantastic and good to chat about the last few years!

Some of the big changes in the city included how the airport has changed (new location), bigger shopping centres and large developments making this city more affluent than in the past.

As I travelled through Java (and was reminded of what real traffic jams are like!), it was wonderful seeing breath taking picturesque sights and helping out those who are doing it tough by being an encouragement to them.



Most importantly, I am thankful for the relationships and friendships made with people over the three weeks. The hospitality of locals was incredible as they shared their lives, possessions and food. Lots of locals enjoyed practicing English too and were happy to go out of their way and help! Some of this happened because of time spent with specific individuals in the past in walking beside them. This reaps the benefit of deepened relationships and respect, mutual understanding and trust.

As I reflect on this holiday, and saw how locals were engaging in welcoming foreigners like myself, I believe that there is real potential in growing the relationship between Australia and Indonesia. As one of our closest neighbours, there is so much that can be done in building closer ties for economic, social, educational and political reasons. I believe it would be great for more Australians to take a greater interest in Indonesia and see them as friends. Having a good working relationship between Australians and Indonesians will do wonders as we live in a world of globalisation

## EVENTS

**4 October, AIA dinner, 6.30pm Grace Hotel Brasserie, York St Sydney.** More information contact John Luxton on 9417 5474



**AIA**  
Australia Indonesia Association

**MAKANAN MALAYSIA**  
**Sydney Food Festival**

**5 Chefs from Kuala Lumpur**  
**Saturday 4 October 2014, 6:30 PM**  
**Grace Hotel Brasserie**

**THE GRACE HOTEL**  
**York St, Sydney**

Banquet Style  
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Non members \$60pp

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Enquiries: John Luxton 94175474  
Lini Kuhn 0412561053

**1-5 October 2014, Ubud Writers' Festival**

After a wonderful 10-year anniversary celebration, the Ubud Writers & Readers Festival sets its sights on 2014 and looks forward to the 11th Ubud Writers & Readers Festival, **October 1–5, 2014**. In 2014 the UWRF will honor Saraswati, the Hindu patron goddess of learning, with the theme 'Wisdom & Knowledge'. More information: <http://www.ubudwritersfestival.com/>

**25 October at 5.30pm Malam Trivia 2014**

Second annual Malam Trivia run by the Australia Indonesia Youth Association. Underwood Café, Paddington. Further information on [www.aiya.org.au](http://www.aiya.org.au)

**25 November AIA Award Night**



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If you wish to purchase this or any of the other Equinox book/s, please contact Melanie Morrison at [melaniemorrison@bigpond.com](mailto:melaniemorrison@bigpond.com).



## Answers

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**Contributions to Kabar**

We welcome all contributions to *Kabar* from both members and non-members. If you have recently been to Indonesia, eaten at an Indonesian restaurant, read a book or attended an Indonesia-related event, please feel free to write an article including photos. Send all material to Melanie at [melaniemorrison@bigpond.com](mailto:melaniemorrison@bigpond.com).

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*The AIA Newsletter is produced by the Australia Indonesia Association. Statements made in this publication do not necessarily represent the view of the Association or its members. For editorial, distribution, advertising and membership contact the AIA secretariat. The next deadline is December 20 2014.*

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**To foster and promote friendship, understanding and good relations between the peoples of Indonesia and Australia**

**Bercita-cita membina persahabatan, saling pengertian dan hubungan antar-masyarakat yang erat antara Indonesia dan Australia**

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