



21 July 2015

Minister for Foreign Affairs Julie Bishop  
Parliament House  
CANBERRA 2600

Dear Minister

I write on behalf of Australian Quakers to urge greater effort by the Government to promote educational and cultural links between Indonesia and Australia. We are pleased that the Government has stated its plan to enhance such links through the new Colombo Plan, and acknowledge that there are significant links through the Australian Centre for Indonesian Studies at Monash University and similar activities at ANU and Melbourne universities, and CSIRO.

Duncan Graham, an Australian author living in East Java, in an article in the Fairfax press on 15 July, affirmed the value of other Australian initiatives such as the Bamboo Micro Credit scheme set up by Peter Johnston, the formation of the Indonesia Institute by former WA trade commissioner Ross Taylor, and the publication in the Indonesian language of a book about the Battle of Surabaya by historian Frank Palmos.

He drew attention, however, to the bureaucratic restrictions placed on Indonesians seeking working holiday visas to Australia (restrictions not placed on applicants from other countries) – including a cap on numbers, high application fees, and requirements for functional English, a letter of support from their government, and the need to possess \$5000. He said that the number of Australians going to Indonesia under the Australia Indonesia Youth Association scheme was well below the numbers that applied.

We are concerned that non-military initiatives are not being developed to their full potential, and urge you to examine the current schemes to see whether they can be made more effective in building peaceful people-to-people relationships between Australians and Indonesians.

In peace

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Julian Robertson".

Presiding Clerk

**Australia Yearly Meeting**

The Religious Society of Friends  
(Quakers) in Australia Inc.  
Incorporated in the ACT  
PO Box 556 Kenmore  
Queensland 4069  
Australia

Tel (07) 3201 2685  
Email [ymsecretary@quakers.org.au](mailto:ymsecretary@quakers.org.au)  
Web [www.quakers.org.au](http://www.quakers.org.au)  
ABN 16 036 715 933