

In This Issue

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- Melissa Crouch has just returned from AIYEP, and brought home an invaluable experience.

Indonesia Council Open Conference

Monash University, Caulfield Campus
24-25 September 2007

The ICOC is a multi-disciplinary conference, with particular emphasis on encouraging engagement between newer Indonesianists and established scholars. The 2007 conference will be hosted by the Indonesian Studies Program, Monash University with the support of The Centre for Southeast Asian Studies, Monash Asia Institute, Inside Indonesia, and the Caulfield Campus of Monash University. There will be no registration fee for the conference. Contact: [//indonesiacouncil.anu.edu.au/icoc2007.php](http://indonesiacouncil.anu.edu.au/icoc2007.php)

Muslim Youth as Agents of Change in Indonesia

27-29 November 2007, Klub Bunga Hotel, Batu Malang, Indonesia
Jointly organised by: Leiden University (The Netherlands), The Ministry of Religious Affairs (Indonesia), and Universitas Islam Malang (UNISMA), Indonesia. Deadline to send in abstracts: 15 August 2007. Funds will be made available to selected speakers from Africa, the Middle East and South/Southeast Asia) to cover their travel and lodging expenses. Contacts: M.R. van Amersfoort, youngleaders@let.leidenuniv.nl
Or visit: www.indonesiayoungleaders.org



Puri Ubud (photo A. Heryanto)

Ubud Writers & Readers Festival 2007

25-30 September, Ubud, Bali, Indonesia
The Festival is one of the peak literary events in the Asian region. In 2006, the Festival was named 'one of the world's great book events' by Conde Nast Traveler and 'among the top six literary Festivals in the world' by Harper's Bazaar. Contact: <http://www.ubudwritersfestival.com/>

Australian Scholarship scheme

DEST offers awards to high achievers from participating countries in the Asia-Pacific region to come and study in Australia as well as for Australians wishing to research or study overseas – both at postgraduate and postdoctoral/professional levels. Contact: www.australianscholarships.gov.au/

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photo by A. Heryanto

The Art of Success

part 1: Heidi Arbuckle on art, activism and her new position

For most new graduates, finding a job is never straightforward. Yet in one magic stroke, doctoral candidate and Indonesian tutor Heidi Arbuckle has recently defeated over 100 highly qualified applicants from across the globe to get a full time and highly prestigious employment in the area closest to her heart. On top of that, she will be the youngest Program Officer in the history of the Ford Foundation's 52 years in Indonesia. Below is the first installment of a two-part interview exploring her fascinating journey and achievements.

We heard that you have recently been offered a very prestigious position in Jakarta. Congratulations. Can you tell us a bit about this position?

Thank you. The position is as the Ford Foundation's Program Officer for Media, Arts and Education which means I will be responsible for grant-making in these fields in Indonesia.

Wow. How many people applied for the position?

There were approximately 150 applicants.

How impressive. What is the secret of your success?

I am told the selection committee was impressed with my experience and knowledge of the arts and education sectors in Indonesia. They were also excited about the ideas I had for prioritizing programs that focus on supporting and strengthening

youth, women and grassroots cultural practices and organizations. I think the fact that I am relatively young, therefore presumably energetic, also stood in my favour. On a recent trip to the FF Jakarta office I was told that I will be the youngest program officer in the history of the FF's 52 years in Indonesia.

That must be exciting. Have you applied for other full time positions before?

This is the first full-time position I have applied for. The only other full-time position I had considered was for postdoctoral research.

What an extraordinary achievement. What do you plan to achieve during your term of service in Jakarta?

At this stage what I hope to achieve must be considered in the context of what Indonesian arts, education and media practitio-

ners and organizations need, which is something I'll discover more about once I am in the job. What I hope to be is a good enabler and facilitator of other people's ideas and initiatives.

Some initial ideas include establishing an undergraduate subject on gender, arts and culture at one of the art schools in Indonesia. We will probably develop it at the Bandung Institute of Technology because they have a number of good scholars and activists working on gender and 'traditional' and contemporary arts. I would also like to facilitate the publication and translation into Bahasa Indonesia of the first ever book on the history of women artists in Indonesia. This book is currently being composed by three Indonesian women writers, who are in fact writing it in English first. Aside from strengthening research, resources and access for women in the arts I am also keen to support artist-run-initiatives in Indonesia as way of enabling young artists to develop new work, autonomy and media exposure.

These ideas sound great! What do you consider some of the major challenges ahead of you in achieving such goals?

I am sure that this answer might change once I have started the job but nevertheless I'll provide my initial thoughts on the situation!

The first challenge that comes to mind is working for an US organisation in Indonesia and dealing with people's conceptions and misconceptions about the Ford Foundation and its goals in Indonesia. There seems to be a hangover from the past whereby the Ford Foundation was considered to be the "kaki tangan" or accomplice of the CIA. I experienced this prejudice first-hand recently when a young film-maker told me she would avoid seeking assistance from Ford for this reason.

Secondly, saying no to great projects because the resources simply can never spread far enough.

Another test will be trying to look and move outside the networks and artistic practices already familiar to me. However, this is a challenge I am quite looking forward to.

I may also face some difficulties with the so-called radical Islam and its impact upon women's, cultural producer's and media-maker's creative expression.

Finally, I still have the challenge of completing my PhD whilst working full-time!

Please tell us about your doctoral candidature at The University of Melbourne. What is your doctoral thesis about?

My doctoral thesis focuses on an Indonesian painter called Emiria Soenassa. She was the most prominent female painter in

Indonesia during the 1940s to 1950s. So broadly it's about how this character Emiria challenges our understandings of Indonesian art history, nationalism, and women's agency in colonial and independent Indonesia.



With painting by Emiria Soenassa titled "Dua Putri Menari", in Bali 2004 (courtesy of Heidi Arbuckle)

How did you come to this topic?

I started reading books on Indonesian art history and noted Indonesian painters, but couldn't find any women. Then I saw Emiria's name mentioned in a 1976 publication about Jakarta-based painters, however the author didn't write anything about her life or paintings. Eventually the thesis and Emiria grew out of oral histories and much time wading through archives. What is interesting is that since I've published articles about Emiria, her paintings have started to pop up like mushrooms too.

How intriguing. What would you regard as most important findings of your research?

By investigating Emiria's agency as a female colonial subject involved in producing art my thesis re-frames the dominant ways of understanding the history of Indonesian art, and specifically the male-centred modernist and nationalist narrative. It also re-frames the figure of the abject colonised woman found in current literature and explores the ways Emiria constructed multiple-identities for herself as a way of negotiating the structures that contained her.

And have you been satisfied with the experience of completing your post-graduate study here at this university?

I've been a bit of a leaf in the wind in terms of my time here at the University of Melbourne because I've spent so much time moving to and fro between Melbourne and Indonesia. What I have been most satisfied with here is the access to amazing resources. This is particular so at the Asia Institute. I have experienced great supervision in both the Indonesian Studies and Gender Studies departments.

Can you share some highlights of your time in Melbourne? What are your most memorable moments and your nightmares?

Highlights would have to be my tutoring work and especially my Bahasa Indonesia class this semester, which I have really enjoyed. Nightmares would without doubt include travel warnings and the red tape that inhibits research opportunities.

Do you have any suggestions, tips, or advice for those considering pursuing a postgraduate degree at the Asia Institute?

Choose your supervisor well. My suggestions for choosing the right supervisor would be to research them first! Most scholars have their CV, research interests and list of publications available online so it is not difficult to find out who is researching or publishing in the area you want to write your thesis on. Then I'd suggest contacting the person directly to see if they are available to supervise you, to make sure they are in a position to give you the valuable time that you're going to need for the thesis!

Don't spend forever agonising over your thesis like me. Sometimes I think I'll never be satisfied with what I've written, and the end result is writing a lot but completing nothing. I don't think I'm alone in this syndrome! Yet thankfully over time I am learning to let go and relax a bit more.

Have you lived in Indonesia for more than 6 months before?

I've lived in Indonesia for about 8 years.

Really? When was this? Where were you based and what did you do?

I started living in Indonesia at the end of 1996 when I participated in the ACICIS program. I first went to school at Gadjah Mada then transferred to the Indonesian Institute of Art, or ISI as it is better known, in Yogyakarta because I wanted to study performance traditions. I had a background in theatre and was interested in leaning trance dancing such as jathilan and reyog. Unfortunately at the time ISI didn't offer reyog or jathilan and the Department of Education and Culture wasn't all that excited about the idea. So I decided to move

across to the visual arts and take up painting and batik.

Whilst at ISI I got involved with a bunch of pro-democracy student activist artists who for almost every day between December 1997 and May 1998 flocked onto the campus bus to be shuttled around from demonstration to demonstration in Yogyakarta. The arts students were always welcomed at these demonstrations because of their shrewd ability to make political commentary more palatable either through performance, parody or visual humour. It was during these heady days that I developed a strong sense of emotional attachment to Indonesia and my friends there.

At the end of 1998 I was involved in the formation of the arts collective Taring Padi and lived with them in the abandoned ISI Fine Arts campus in Gampingan, Yogyakarta for 6 years until Taring Padi was forced to move. I was also involved in initiating a women's art collective called Perempuan Eksperimental or "Perek" in 2002.

What is it about Indonesia that has attracted you?

As I mentioned above, it was the friendships that I formed with Indonesians during the compelling times in 1997 and 1998 that kept me in Indonesia for so long. And since then I have gained even more wonderful friends, so naturally I keep going back!

What do you like best about living in Indonesia? What do you like least?

Sambal is definitely a highlight for me, as I am chilly crazy! Sambal is a condiment made from chillies and different combinations of other ingredients such as garlic, red onion, terasi (fermented shrimp), tamarind, candlenut, lime, and tomato, usually ground up in a stone mortar. My favourites are Sambal setan (the devil's sambal), which is excruciatingly hot and Sambal Taliwang, a Lombok-style sambal with delicious terasi flavours.

My least favourite aspects of life in Indonesia include travel warnings, hustlers, floods, and fiskal tax, which is a kind of exit levy paid by all Indonesian citizens and resident foreigners whenever they leave the country.

Nevertheless, I'm looking forward to more time spent in Indonesia in the future. Indonesia is a big place with so much to discover, and a whole lifetime is not long enough for all the different places I'd like to explore there.

In the next issue Heidi speaks on her active involvement in empowering female artists throughout Indonesia.

The Salatiga Program

By Clare Campbell-Hirst

Does learning Indonesian, or any second language for that matter, happen best in the supportive environment of a classroom in Australia? Although a good beginning, all language students should aspire to one day living and learning their language of study in-country. We all want to see in real-life what we read about, use in real-life the communicative skills we are developing and gain the opportunity to be in a context that demands new skills and opportunities for personal growth.

Having learnt Indonesian for several years throughout secondary college and approaching third year at University level my eyes caught the attention of the well-known 'Salatiga Program', an immersion based language course (running from 2-6 weeks) held in Central Java, Indonesia. Prior to that time I had only ever been to Bali and was sure that there must be 'more' to Indonesia than my resort at Nusa Dua, as beautiful as it was! In 2003 I decided that this was exactly what my learning needed – an opportunity to be thrown into the buzzing life of Indonesia first hand, combining study and travel. I opted for the two week language program held at Satya Wacana Christian University. The small town of Salatiga is located between Semarang and Solo in Central Java. Students usually catch flights from Australia to Bali and then transfer to a domestic flight to Yogyakarta. Airport pick ups greet students and bus them to the University. Various accommodation options were available including Homestay, Guest House and the Hostel.

I selected the hostel option. This was a great place to mix with other students and enjoy regular visits from the numerous 'friends' connected to the program. It was generally considered as base camp by all participants and with it's five minute distance from campus, a small clinic nearby, breakfast and dinner catered for daily, hot and cold showers, a laundry service and comfortable rooms it's not difficult to understand why!

Students from Satya Wacana University volunteered their time to look after the international group and we enjoyed dinners together, tours around the small town of Salatiga, visits to rice fields and walking tracks, language practice and campus/cultural orientation. Most students travelled to campus by foot or by dokar, the traditional



horse-drawn transport. Other students reported positive experiences in homestay accommodation and depending on where the house was located could also walk or catch the local angkot (public transportation) to campus.

Students in the program were of all ages and occupations. These included university students, tourists, Customs Officers, flight attendants, business people, teachers, journalists and semi-retired workers. Indeed the cohort was various and made for interesting conversations during language classes. Although the language program was intensive (7am-4pm each Monday-Friday with breaks for meals included) the staff made the experience most worthwhile and were friendly and focused toward student learning needs.

To supplement our classroom learning, we enjoyed various activities including traditional dances performed on campus, a student soccer match with local students, we participated in a traditional 'selamatan' and some students even attended local weddings and weekend visits with new-found friends to nearby towns of Semarang and Solo. Day-trips on the weekends were also organised to Candi Borobudur, Candi Prambanan

and down-town Yogyakarta. We enjoyed becak rides, a visit to the Keraton, shopping along Jalan Malioboro and an opportunity to eat lesehan-style (sitting on a rattan mat and eating by hand) by the side of the road well into the evening. The delicious aroma of satay, ayam goreng and baso tahu coupled with the exhaust fumes of cars and motorbikes in surrounding streets against the backdrop of a sunset sky captured a moment in time like no other in Australia, as we happily ate and talked away with more 'friends'. We undertook dance and gamelan workshops and those who opted for the six week program (which included a mini-research study) created short video productions and sought out networking opportunities with Indonesian professionals in their area of work for interviews and volunteer work exposure in the Indonesian context (where possible). These placement venues included kindergartens, schools, hospitals and clinics, offices, farms and even the house of a local dukun!

The town of Salatiga is a predominantly Christian, relatively peaceful town. The local people are accustomed to seeing international visitors given the University's Intensive Language Program. Going to the market each day, visiting the warnet (internet café) or buying snacks from the street traders are all positive experiences. Typically Indonesian, the guest is always made most welcome and the nothing-is-too-much-trouble attitude resonates in daily life.

In hindsight the two week program limited my involvement and exposure to some experiences. Indeed the four and six week program would offer a more substantial gain. Nevertheless, it really de-

pends on what your personal ambitions and needs are. After finishing in Salatiga I continued on my own journey along the north coast of Central Java into West Java where I finally arrived in Bandung and surrounding areas. Clearly, the Salatiga Program lends itself well to being the starting point of a bigger journey. Other students continued on to Jakarta, Bali and Lombok before coming home to Australia.

I would gladly exchange my mundane suburban life for another 'Salatiga Experience'. So go on, challenge yourself and give 'learning Indonesian' a whole new meaning!

Clare is a University of Melbourne graduate and currently works in Administration with the global property firm, Colliers International. She has taught Indonesian in Melbourne secondary schools and worked as an assessor of Senior Indonesian with VCAA. Clare has lived and worked in Bandung, West Java, as an English teacher and has interests in education, community development and programs supporting Indonesia's most needy, particularly the care and education of young children. She frequently travels to Indonesia.



(photos in this article are courtesy of Clare Campbell-Hirst)

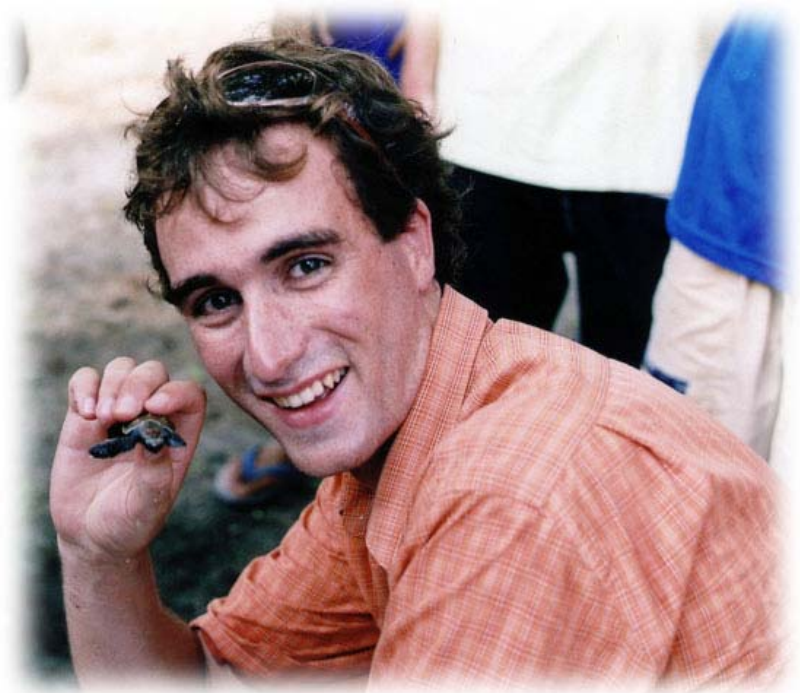
Yogya on My Mind

By Peter Crockett

My *Bapak Kos*, the owner of my student boarding house, in Pogung Baru, Yogyakarta was adamant that I had no hope whatsoever of 'understanding' Indonesia after a six month stay. By the time of my return in July 2006 I had spent most of my stay being somewhat baffled by Indonesia but excited by the refreshingly different way of life.

The Australian Consortium for In-Country Indonesian studies (ACICIS) enabled me to visit Indonesia for the first time in 8 years of language study. It made studying at Universitas Gadjah Mada (UGM) for a semester relatively simple, helping with enrollment, finding accommodation and much more. The city, university, students and society of Yogyakarta made living in Indonesia constantly exciting and interesting.

Yogya's vibrancy defies its small size. The massive student community provided endless activities, nightlife and people to talk to. I enjoyed being told I was not up to scratch to join the rather exclusive UGM Scuba Diving Club. My downfall was an interview where I gave the interviewers answers completely unrelated to their questions. The UGM Swimming Club was somewhat more welcoming however, and when I had the energy to turn up to training, proceeded to make it clear that being Australian does not mean you can swim well. I was beaten regularly in almost every stroke by people one foot shorter than me. This gave me an excuse to eat plenty of *gudeg* (Yogya's own culinary creation) from my favourite *warung* whose *Ibu* enjoyed feeding me enough to last a week at every visit.



Newborn turtle in the Karimunjawa Islands, National Park (courtesy of Peter Crockett)

The Arts Faculty nature lovers club took me on a fantastic hike up 3000 metre Gunung Lawu, on the border between Central and Eastern Java. This trip included an introduction to inter-provincial disco buses, pounding out Indonesian dance music to passengers young and mostly old, whilst reassuring passengers by showing VCDs of spectacular car racing accidents as they roared along impossibly narrow roads.

Nothing however, can compare to the endless nights I spent with friends (and coffees) from all over the archipelago, talking and laughing the night away. Yogya has a plethora of *Warung Kopi*, each with its own style, which buzz till the early hours with students chatting away, strumming guitars and enjoying each other's company. This was how I learnt my conversational Indonesian and what matters to Indonesian students. I spent innumerable, warm, still nights laughing at my difficulties mastering the finer points of Bahasa Gaul the social form of Indonesian which melds regional and international languages, usually unintelligible to the uninitiated.

UGM allows ACICIS students to take courses in almost any faculty. I took my first ever history lectures and a fisheries management subject in addition to three language classes. For a few weeks I barely followed my classes at all, simply noting down new vocabulary which meant little to me outside the sentences it came in. Later however, I was able to follow my lecturers, and even ask some questions. After four months I was ready to take my final exams, and write my final essays.

On the 26th of May, my stay became more than just an 'experience' or addition to my degree, but a confronting firsthand experience of a natural disaster. The central Java earthquake shook Yogyakarta just a week before university students were to sit their exams, flattening whole districts and killing thousands. Indonesia's recent affinity for natural disasters had once again struck, this time at its cultural heart. The response of the local community will amaze me forever. Within a day of the quake a massive and completely ad hoc aid program sprung up across the city.

On every corner, loosely organised groups set up a 'POSCO', which is an abbreviation for 'commando post'. This is the name given to what is actually an aid distribution centre and is one of the many idiosyncrasies of Indonesian. For days the amount of aid they gave, collected and distributed to devastated victims of the quake far exceeded that flowing through official channels. Thousands of students made up many of those who gave their time to victims in hospitals,

the villages and emergency camps.

Six months in Indonesia provides enough experiences and stories to fill several books. There were times of hilarity, when I tried to impress *warung* owners with garbled orders in Bahasa Jawa in front of friends, or took part in traditional Jathilan performances. In my first Jathilan performance (a Javanese dance performed by crazed young men and women overcome by spirit possession) I was decorated with startling eye make-up and a lovely goat-tee after being dragged from the crowd as a 'willing' participant.

Time spent on idyllic islands snorkeling was stereotypically tropical, but waking hours before sunrise to take the *sepeda motor* up to Kaliurang and watch the lava flow down the side of an angry Gunung Merapi was once in a lifetime. Seeing Yogyakartaans pull together in the aftermath of a disaster was a lesson in humanity. My time in Indonesia will long be the most challenging, confronting and thrilling that I have enjoyed.

Peter Crockett has been studying Arts/Science at Melbourne for the last four years, majoring in Indonesian Studies and Marine Biology. His visit to Indonesia in 2006 was provoked by a desire to get to know the country, its incredible marine environment and the people connected to it, but he was somewhat distracted from the latter by Yogyakarta's charms.

The End or Just the Beginning?

The Australian Indonesian Youth Exchange Program 2006-2007

By Melissa Crouch

The Australian Indonesian Youth Exchange Program (AIYEP) 2006-07 came to an end, marked by the program's 25th anniversary celebrations. As one of the Australian participants, I suspect that the conclusion of AIYEP for another year marked the beginning of a new chapter in the relationship between Australia and Indonesia.

For the 18 Indonesian participants, chosen from across the Indonesian archipelago, the program began in Darwin in October 2006. There they spent two months experiencing Australian culture through home-stay and work experience, as well as sharing their own rich culture through performances in local schools. In December, the 18

Australian participants gathered in Darwin to prepare for our two month trip to South Kalimantan with the Indonesian participants.

Our first month was spent in the village of Barikin, South Kalimantan. There our primary focus was on our home-stay experience as well as on initiating community development projects. For the latter, our team of 36 focused on three main areas. The Education Committee taught English in three local primary schools, conducted a health seminar on bird flu prevention and established a reading room/library, complete with over 500 books, open to all.

The Sports Committee built a concrete sports field for the local primary school, conducted various sports activities, including cricket and Australian football, in local schools, and organised a sports carnival during the school holidays. The third Committee held a water filtration workshop to educate the community on options for cleaner water. They

also cleaned and re-constructed roadside gutters (with the help of local army personnel), held a 'clean-up the orphanage' day and facilitated a cooking competition between local neighbourhoods.

Looking back on our time in the village, the highlights were not so much what we were able to achieve, but rather the relationships that we were able to form within the community. We have also taken away valuable lessons on the importance of patience and understanding in situations that depend on cross-cultural communication, as well as the necessity of conducting community consultation.

After a month in the village it was time to move on to our city stay in Banjarmasin. Apart from another home-stay experience, our time was divided between work experience, learning the arts and crafts of South Kalimantan and initiating a community development project. Work experience was tailored to the participants and their areas of study. I was placed in the Islamic Religious Courts; others were teaching in schools, working in government departments, local newspapers or NGOs. For our community project in the city, we installed two water tanks for a nearby area that had recently been burnt down in a fire.

From Banjarmasin we then headed back to Jakarta for the conclusion of the program and the 25th anniversary celebrations of AIYEP, which brought together past and present AIYEP participants, Menpora officials and the Australia Indonesia Institute Board. At the gala dinner held at Hotel Borobodur, I made a passing remark to one of my Indonesian team members that I was 'in heaven' over the lavish buffet dinner, given that our diet over the last two months has largely consisted of rice, fish and fried food. Her response gave testimony to the many challenges our team has experienced through the program: "Yes, well this just shows you how hard it is to get to heaven".

AIYEP did indeed stretch us in many ways as we were often confronted with the unexpected. A classic example was our New Years Eve experience, when the team took an overnight trip to Loksado, a tourist destination situated in the mountains. Shortly after arriving at our accommodation, we discovered

that the place was so new they hadn't yet installed bathrooms, electricity or running water. In addition, we were eaten alive by mosquitos, which all up certainly made for an unforgettable start to the New Year!

Some participants unfortunately took home more than just memories –contracting dengue fever or typhoid. We also took back many experiences to reflect on and unpack. One participant raised the question as to whether anyone had any emotional baggage from the trip, to which another participant replied "Of course, but it is under the 25kg limit so it will still meet the airline luggage requirements"!



Melissa Crouch (photo A. Heryanto)

All up, AIYEP was an incredible way to experience Indonesia and to share the journey with other young Australians and Indonesians. The conclusion of AIYEP 2006-2007 in Jakarta was not the end but rather just the beginning of lifelong friendships and connections between the two countries that will contribute to and strengthen the future relationship between Australia and Indonesia.

Melissa Crouch has completed a Bachelor of Arts/Bachelor of Laws at the University of Melbourne. She is currently working as an Articled Clerk at Lewis Holdway Lawyers. She is also a Research Assistant at the Asian Law Centre, the University of Melbourne, focusing on issues relating to religious minorities, Islamic law and women in Indonesia.

For the Record

Teaching Indonesian in Victoria & Tasmania

An informal reception was held by Asia Institute on 25 May 2007 to strengthen links between academics at the Institute and members of the local community with interest in Indonesia. The reception was immediately followed by a roundtable discussion hosted by Indonesia Program of the Institute. Among those present were Consul General Mr. Budiartman Bahar, Consul Mr. Alberd Pardede (Melbourne) the Cultural and Education Attaché, Mr. Agus Sartono, from the Indonesian Embassy (Canberra), Dr. Penny Graham, Professor Greg Barton, and Mr. Paul Thomas (all of Monash University), Professor Barbara Hatley (University of Tasmania) and Dr. Novi Djenar (La Trobe University). The meeting discussed the state of the teaching of Indonesian language and studies at tertiary level. The DFAT Travel Warning was one of the topics hotly discussed. The meeting concluded with a unanimous commitment to continue the consultation in the near future.***

Nina Rose Lim, Winner of IACS 2007

We warmly congratulate our first-year student Nina Rose Lim for having been successfully selected as one of the four recipients from Australia of the Indonesian Art & Culture Scholarship from the Indonesian govern-

ment. With 46 other recipients from 25 countries across the world, they will be studying in one of four art centres in Indonesia for a total period of two and half months. At the end of the program all participants will attend the National Independence ceremony on 17 August at the Presidential Palace.***

The East Java Mud Flow Forum



(news & photo courtesy of Priyambudi Sulistiyanto, Flinders University)

The Flinders Asia Centre and the Flinders Institute Asia Pacific jointly organised a 2-day forum (1-2 June 2007), examining the causes, consequences and implications of the mudflow disaster. On 29 May 2006 a drilling operation in Sidoarjo, East Java, tapped into a pocket of hot mud more than 3 km below the earth's surface. A joint-venture of Lapindo Brantas (owned by the Bakri family), Medco Energi (owned by the Panigoro family) and Adelaide-based Santos was responsible for the operation. The hot mud flowed from the drill site at 5,000 m³ a day, and increased to more than 175,000 m³ by October 2006. One year on, the mud has buried several villages, housing estates, farm lands, and nearly 100 factories, schools, mosques, shops and offices. More than 50,000 people have lost their homes and many more have lost their livelihoods. The Forum at Flinders was probably the first forum to bring together such a diverse group, which included geologists, crisis experts, journalists, political scientists, activists, corporate people, and an artist, asking what can be learned from the unnatural disasters or improve the long-term capacity to assist victims in Sidoarjo. ***

In The Next Issue:

- *Putu Oka Sukanta: survivor of the 1965 massacre, one of the worst tragedies in history.*
- *Heidi Arbuckle on her politically engaged art activities to empower female artists.*
- *Andy Fuller comments on Punksila and The Histrionics performance in Melbourne.*
- *Justin Wejak on the recent book banning as a tip of the anti-communism iceberg.*