



UNIVERSITAS
GADJAH MADA



THE UNIVERSITY OF
MELBOURNE

Australia-Indonesia in Conversation



**Managing COVID-19
& 'Post'-Pandemic Challenges**

July 21–22 2021



Australia-Indonesia in Conversation

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Australia and Indonesia have long enjoyed a strong, stable bilateral relationship as close neighbours in the Asia-Pacific with many shared political, economic and social interests. The COVID-19 pandemic has highlighted the considerable scope for engagement and debate between Australia and Indonesia on global and local issues of concern for both countries and for new opportunities for audiences in Indonesia to further engage with developments in Australia.

Universitas Gadjah Mada (UGM) in partnership with The University of Melbourne (UoM) hosted a mini-conference on July 21-22, 2021, consisting of a series of round table panel discussions held over two half-day sessions for Indonesian and Australian academic, policy maker and practitioner audiences: Australia-Indonesia in Conversation. The conference sought to further enhance bilateral partnerships and shared knowledge, experiences and insights through round table discussions involving diplomats, academics and community workers as well as Q&A from audiences into each country's responses to the crises resulting from the COVID-19 pandemic. The hosts of the conference have strong ties and an ongoing history of collaboration as well as being partners in the Australia-Indonesia Centre and many other initiatives. Four sequential panels were held online over two half-day sessions.

Conference Convenors



Dr Poppy S. Winanti is the Vice Dean of Collaboration, Alumni and Research Affairs at the Faculty of Social and Political Sciences, Universitas Gadjah Mada (UGM) and a senior lecturer at the International Relations Department in the faculty. Her research interests cover global and regional trade relations in global political economy; conflict and political economy of natural resources and extractive industries; Indonesia's economic diplomacy; and South-South Cooperation.



Dr Wawan Mas'udi is the Dean of the Faculty of Social and Political Sciences, Universitas Gadjah Mada and a senior Lecturer at the Department of Politics and Government Studies. His research interests revolve around political leadership, populism, citizenship, and local politics and decentralization. In this current COVID-19 pandemic, together with a research team from the Faculty of Social and Political Sciences, he has published some policy recommendations on how the Indonesian government should respond to the pandemic.



Dr Rachael Diprose is a Senior Lecturer in the School of Social and Political Sciences (SSPS) in the Faculty of Arts at the University of Melbourne and is the Co-Convenor of the University's Indonesia Forum. She teaches in the Master of Development Studies program and is also the SSPS representative that supports collaborations and partnerships with Indonesian universities, government and civil society organisations. She has published widely for both academic and applied audiences from her research in Indonesia, Southeast Asia and West Africa. Her research has focussed on the multidisciplinary themes of inequalities, inclusion, gender and development; peacebuilding and conflict transformation; multi-level governance and political settlements; and the political economy of different dimensions of rapid social and economic change.



Associate Professor Kate McGregor is a historian of Indonesia, based in the School of Historical and Philosophical Studies, specialising in the history of modern Indonesia. The focus of her research to date has been on the Indonesian military, the Cold War, colonial violence, memory and activism, Indonesian women and the Japanese occupation. She is currently President of the Asian Studies Association of Australia and Deputy Associate Dean International Indonesia for the Faculty of Arts at the University of Melbourne.

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From Universitas Gadjah Mada:

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From the University of Melbourne:

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- Aaron Abud-Rouch, Digital Communications Officer, External Relations, Faculty of Arts, the University of Melbourne
- Bronwyn Anne Beech Jones, Administrative Assistant and PhD candidate in History, the University of Melbourne
- Jonathan Peter Tehusjarana, Administrative Assistant and PhD candidate in History, the University of Melbourne

For more information about the Australia-Indonesia in Conversation conference, visit our website: <https://arts.unimelb.edu.au/e/australia-indonesia-in-conversation>

To read the University of Melbourne's official media piece on the conference: <https://arts.unimelb.edu.au/news/australia-indonesia-in-conversation-covid-19-and-post-pandemic-challenges>

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**Panel 1: Australia-Indonesia in
Conversation:
Regional Cooperation in Response
to Global Challenges**

Dr Wawan Mas'udi



Dr Wawan Mas'udi, is the Dean of the Faculty of Social and Political Sciences, Universitas Gadjah Mada and a senior Lecturer at the Department of Politics and Government Studies. In this current COVID-19 pandemic, together with a research team from the Faculty of Social and Political Sciences, he has published some policy recommendations on how the Indonesian government should respond to the pandemic.

In his opening remarks, Dr Mas'udi:

- Welcomed all to the first Australia-Indonesia in Conversation conference in the context of the immense challenges posed by the COVID-19 pandemic in July 2021.
- Outlined the challenges of overburdened health systems, coordinating an effective response and ensuring the most vulnerable are supported.
- Explained the importance of universities for innovation and thought leadership, especially during a crisis.

Sharing insights from both countries

Personal and collective tragedy and hardships: Dr Mas'udi emphasised how for many who are attending this forum, COVID-19 has also been a personal tragedy, as many might have lost family members, relatives, friends and colleagues in their fight against the virus.

Unprecedented test: The pandemic has been an unprecedented test not only to the health system, but also to socio-political and economic systems, both domestically and internationally. Some countries have responded quickly to the pandemic, but others, including Indonesia, have faced great difficulties.

Challenges in responding to the COVID-19 pandemic in Indonesia

Indonesian health system in crisis: COVID-19 has caused a major crisis for the Indonesian healthcare system, as hospitals across its many provinces are overburdened by large numbers of patients. The government's efforts to maintain the capacity of its health services have faced challenges due to the government budget limits and that Indonesia's health-related services and industries are highly dependent on imports and supplies from other countries.

Tests for governance systems: The pandemic has also created tests for governance systems, especially in terms of policy choices, political leadership in managing the crisis, and for coordination among government agencies, both at the local and national level.

Increasing inequality: COVID-19 has also had significant socioeconomic impacts for Indonesian society. It has widened the gap between the rich and the poor, especially in health access and capacities to sustain livelihoods and minimum standards of living.

Social assistance programs hampered: Dr Mas'udi identified that the Indonesian government has disbursed trillions of Rupiah in an effort to maintain social safety nets, assist small and medium enterprises, and carry out other social programs. But, unfortunately, he explained, the implementation of these programs has been hampered by corruption, a highly bureaucratized system, and in some cases, the misallocation of budgets.

Social solidarity and initiatives: Dr Mas'udi emphasized how despite limited government capacity to respond to the pandemic, social solidarity has increased. For instance, citizens, especially communities and businesses have collected donations and provided support to help protect the most affected and vulnerable groups in their communities.

Universities and cooperation during the pandemic

Digital connectivity: In discussion about how universities can continue to innovate during the pandemic, Dr Mas'udi explained that the pandemic has provided more opportunities to conduct research and community service. "While the physical border may be closed, the digital borders can never be closed." Access to digital tools and data has led academic communities to experiment with new ways of conducting research and collaboration.

Knowledge for change: Dr Mas'udi explained that this conference has been organized not only to strengthen cooperation between Universitas Gadjah Mada and the University of Melbourne, but also to understand the challenges faced by our governments and societies during this pandemic. It is hoped that this forum will produce recommendations needed by governments, and trigger real action to help fellow community members that are facing the threat of COVID-19.

The Reverend Professor Russell Goulbourne



The Reverend Professor Russell Goulbourne is Dean, Faculty of Arts at the University of Melbourne, a position he has held since 2019. Professor Goulbourne leads a Faculty in which collaboration with our partners in Indonesia specifically and Asia more broadly is a strategic priority, and evident in joint research, Masters programs and other initiatives. Professor Goulbourne has published and taught extensively on major figures in French intellectual culture of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries.

In his opening remarks, Professor Goulbourne:

- Underlined the solidarity of those in the Faculty of Arts at the University of Melbourne with their Indonesian colleagues and friends, particularly during the Delta wave.
- Emphasised how this conference builds on a strong history of collaboration and mutual support between Universitas Gadjah Mada and the University of Melbourne.

Mutual challenges

Pandemic impacts shared across borders: Professor Goulbourne emphasised that this is a particularly critical time for both countries in dealing with the impacts of the pandemic. Professor Goulbourne stressed how colleagues in Australia are conscious that these impacts are escalating in Indonesia. Given the crisis that everyone is living through, he emphasised how this conference is all the more important because it gives an opportunity to discern a way forward, through cooperation and looking together toward the future.

Bolstering collaboration

Strong and deep collaboration: Professor Goulbourne conveyed how this conference builds on a strong history of collaboration and mutual support between Indonesia and Australia, specifically between Universitas Gadjah Mada and the University of Melbourne. The Faculty of Arts and the Faculty of Social and Political Sciences have multiple close links, including joint Masters degrees, UGM graduates studying PhDs at the University of Melbourne, reciprocal study abroad programs, jointly taught subjects, initiatives for UGM scholars to teach into Melbourne subjects and joint research.

Strategic significance of Indonesia: This conference initiative is indicative of the strategic significance that the University of Melbourne places on its relationship with partners in Indonesia, and the difference that this collaboration can make to students and society more broadly. In discussion about current collaborative initiatives, Professor Goulbourne explained how bringing Indonesian thought leaders into classrooms can further work with and through the University of Melbourne student cohort to create change. Professor Goulbourne concluded that he hopes that Australia-Indonesia in Conversation initiative can continue into the future and become a series.

Mr Muhammad Syarif Alatas



Mr Mohammad Syarif Alatas is currently serving as the Deputy Chief of Mission of the Embassy of the Republic of Indonesia in Canberra, a role he has served in since July 2020. He also serves as the Chair of the Indonesian National Coordination Team of South-South Cooperation (SSC), which consists of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Ministry of National Development Planning (Bappenas), Ministry of Finance, and Ministry of State Secretariat.

In his presentation Mr Alatas, provided insights into cooperation following the elevation of the Australia-Indonesia relationship into a Comprehensive Strategic Partnership as well as engagement carried out subsequent to the signing of the 2020-2024 Plan of Action during President Joko Widodo's visit to Canberra in February 2020. In his address, Mr Alatas touched on:

- Bilateral support during the pandemic and new opportunities for economic cooperation for pandemic recovery opened by the Indonesia-Australia Comprehensive Economic Partnership Agreement (IA-CEPA).
- The importance of ongoing multilateral engagement for regional pandemic recovery and equal access to vaccines.
- Indonesian priorities, including the increase of vaccine supply.

Australia-Indonesia collaboration in COVID-19 mitigation and recovery

Health and the economy are dual priorities. Mr Alatas explained that in regards to health, Indonesia and Australia continue to work together to achieve equal and open access to health systems and treatment for those infected with COVID-19. He also emphasised how cooperation underway to deal with the economic impacts of the pandemic and for rebuilding a more resilient post-pandemic economy.

Strategic bilateral cooperation during the pandemic: Mr Alatas highlighted that Australia has consistently extended support to Indonesia since the onset of the pandemic. In early July 2021, Australian Foreign Minister Marise Payne announced a support package of 1000 ventilators. At the time of the conference, Australia planned to send other medical equipment and supplies, including oxygen concentrators and 2.5 million vaccine doses. Australia had also previously provided 100 non-invasive ventilators and associated equipment, alongside health equipment provided to the Indonesian military by the Australian Department of Defence.

Civil society organisations in pandemic responses: Mr Alatas identified the key role that CSOs have played in increasing community literacy about COVID-19. Universities have also played an important role providing joint research between Indonesian and Australian institutions on matters such as vaccines, which he argued will also be crucial for accelerating post-pandemic recovery.

Encouraging economic growth with IA-CEPA. The Indonesia-Australia Comprehensive Economic Partnership Agreement (IA-CEPA) entered into force on July 5, 2020. Mr Alatas was pleased to note that Australia was one of Indonesia's export destinations that maintained positive growth during the

pandemic, managing a 7.6% increase in Indonesian exports in 2020. Bilateral trade between Indonesia and Australia in the second quarter of 2020 also increased to 60.4%.

Multi-stakeholder collaboration for a strong recovery: Mr Alatas emphasised that Indonesia and Australia will continue to work closely in responding to the pandemic while further strengthening cooperation bilaterally, regionally, and multilaterally. “To get through these difficult times, there is no option but to have strong cooperation and collaboration with all stakeholders and countries.”

Regional collaboration

Building on strong multilateral foundations: Mr Alatas went on to discuss how Australia and Indonesia will maintain their focus on regional and multilateral fora for pandemic responses, including through ASEAN—Australia became a Strategic Partner of ASEAN in 2014. Australia and ASEAN’s relationship is guided by the Plan of Action to implement the ASEAN-Australia Strategic Partnership (2020-2024). Mr Alatas noted how multiple ASEAN-Australia discussions have been held in 2020 and 2021.

ASEAN-Australia collaboration in health and economic recovery: Mr Alatas identified the need for cooperation in health-related industries in ASEAN countries affected by COVID-19. Australia and ASEAN have agreed to closely cooperate in post-pandemic recovery efforts by sustaining trade and investment, minimising disruptions to regional and global supply chains, and minimising the risk posed by the global economic recession. Australia has also contributed to the ASEAN COVID-19 response fund and the establishment of the ASEAN Centre for Public Health Emergencies and Emerging Diseases.

Trade agreements important to overall recovery: Mr Alatas discussed the important role the ASEAN-Australia-New Zealand Free Trade Area will play in accelerating regional recovery. The Regional Comprehensive Economic Partnership (RCEP), signed by ASEAN member states and their trade partners like Australia in November 2020, will also be a crucial element in COVID-19 recovery, as it establishes the world’s largest regional value chains. RCEP would cover a market of 2.2 billion people, almost a third of the world’s population. Australia and ASEAN are both committed to accelerating the ratification of RCEP.

Multilateral collaboration: equal vaccine access

Leadership in vaccine procurement and equity initiatives: Mr Alatas highlighted Australia and Indonesia’s role in the COVAX AMC and vaccine procurement for COVAX member nations. He pointed out that as a Co-Chair of COVAX, Indonesia’s Foreign Minister Retno Marsudi alongside colleagues from other nations led a meeting of COVAX where she reaffirmed Indonesia’s commitment to the program.

Unity and inclusiveness in the recovery agenda: Mr Alatas also noted that Indonesia will hold the Group of 20 (G20) presidency in 2022, and that in the G20 meeting on June 29, 2021, Indonesia called for “unity and inclusiveness,” and better global governance in managing the post-COVID-19 economic recovery and food security. On 16 July 2021, leaders of Australia and Indonesia attended the APEC Informal Leaders’ Summit and pursued an agenda of global economic recovery by encouraging a wider public dissemination of COVID-19 vaccines.

Supply key for vaccination in Indonesia: The priority of the Indonesian government is to vaccinate its 180 million citizens. This requires a steady supply of vaccines, and as such the government is looking to increase the nation's vaccine production capacity.

Indonesian-produced vaccines from imported materials: The first initiative to increase supply that Mr Alatas outlined was cooperation with Sinovac that has allowed Biopharma, a state-owned pharmaceutical company, to obtain raw materials from Sinovac to then convert this into Coronavac vaccines. Mr Alatas stated that as of 21 July 2021, Indonesia had around 80 million units of vaccine raw materials.

Domestically-developed vaccine: Mr Alatas outlined a second option, namely, for Indonesia to develop its own vaccine. Vaksin Merah Putih (the Red and White vaccine), is a result of a collaboration between the Eijkman Institute for Molecular Biology and Biopharma. Another vaccine, the Nusantara vaccine, is also still being developed.

Indonesia as a future vaccine hub: Indonesia plans to become a regional hub for vaccine production in the future, but Mr Alatas stressed that "close cooperation" between the government and different nations and institutions is needed to make this a reality, and the current priority remains vaccinating the country's large population.

Mr Stephen Scott



Mr Stephen Scott commenced his assignment as Deputy Ambassador at the Australian Embassy Jakarta in June 2021. Prior to this he was Assistant Secretary of the Humanitarian and Refugee Policy Branch since 2015. He has also served as a Senior Adviser on North Asian and North American affairs for Foreign Minister Marise Payne, Acting Chief Innovation Officer and Assistant Secretary of the Consular Policy Branch – where he led the teams for the Egypt, Libya, Christchurch and Japan consular emergency responses in 2011. Since joining DFAT in 1994, Stephen has served overseas in the Philippines, Indonesia, China, and Malaysia.

In his presentation, Mr Scott spoke about:

- Australia’s ongoing support for Indonesia throughout the pandemic, supported by the strong structures of the bilateral relationship.
- The different forms of engagement from different stakeholders through different mediums that have strengthened the relationship between Australia and Indonesia.
- Future partnership opportunities between the two countries.

Support during the pandemic

Ongoing support for Indonesia. Mr Scott opened by outlining the many ways in which Australia has worked with Indonesia since the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic. This includes providing personal protective equipment (PPE), targeted health assistance in the form of oxygen tanks and ventilators, and a \$1.5 billion concessional loan to Indonesia. He also noted contributions to the COVAX Initiative and \$100 million dollars to the Quad Vaccine Experts Group.

Prioritising support for the vulnerable. Mr Scott emphasised the need to support the most vulnerable, particularly the unemployed who do not have a means to support their families. Scaling-up humanitarian support through Australia’s development partners is a current priority for Australia’s support to Indonesia.

Strong bilateral architecture

The bilateral relationship is multi-level and based on a strong foundation. Mr Scott stated that the Australia-Indonesia relationship has been built over many decades and is resilient, having withstood highs and lows. The relationship starts at the highest level with a commitment to annual leaders’ meetings, which is reinforced by ministerial relationships, including in talks between both foreign ministers and the Indonesia-Australia Economic, Trade and Investment Ministers’ meeting.

2022 G20 Bali Summit: Mr Scott emphasised how Indonesia’s hosting of the G20 in 2022 is “an enormous opportunity and potentially comes at a pivotal time for the global economy”. It is also an important venue of cooperation. To support this, Australia has already seconded staff to work with the Indonesian Ministry of Finance to help organise the G20 Summit.

Strengthening bilateral trade architecture. In July 2021 at the Indonesia-Australia Economic, Trade and Investment Ministers’ meeting, IA-CEPA ECP Katalis was announced. Mr Scott explained that this

\$40 million dollar program will provide financial capacity to facilitate trade and investment between the two countries. This program can be used to unblock any bottlenecks, and cut any problematic red tape, which will be very important in economic recovery.

Multiple forms of engagement

Blended engagement for dialogue: Mr Scott explained the importance of Track 1.5 dialogues which bring together government officials with leading academics and businesspeople and other sectors to exchange ideas, including about trade, forced migration and security. Similarly, Track 2 dialogues are held between leaders in various sectors, with government support. These ideas, he stressed, can feed into the Indonesia-Australia Comprehensive Strategic Plan and its implementation: “without the constraints of government sometimes new ideas can be introduced which can percolate upwards.”

Virtual spaces have maintained people-to-people ties: Mr Scott discussed how important people-to-people organisations, such as the Australian Consortium for In-Country Indonesian Studies (ACICIS), have been running practicum programs virtually to maintain engagement. Indonesia has been by far the largest market for Australian students through the New Colombo Plan, with 100,000 Australians completing short courses and study.

Future partnership opportunities

Expanding the existing business partnership: Mr Scott highlighted that for two of the world’s top 15 economies, there is still much that can be done to grow Australia-Indonesia business partnerships. He emphasised how now is the time for the Australian business sector to provide the things that Indonesia might need to fuel its strong growth and development.

The pandemic has impacted important sectors: Mr Scott explained the pandemic impacts on the tourism sector that is worth over \$4 billion a year, with 3.8 billion of that going to Indonesia. He noted that 1.4 million Australians visited Bali in 2019. Similarly for Australia, the education sector was worth nearly \$1 billion. In contrast, merchandise trade has held up remarkably well which is a good thing and hopefully will provide a basis for the diversification of the bilateral trade relationship moving forward.

New sectors have the potential to enhance the relationship: Mr Scott stressed the potential of new sectors for collaboration, such as green energy and decarbonisation. In the medical space, there is also potential for collaboration between provincial governments and Australian medical companies to strengthen the health system. Collaborations such as the World Mosquito Project, led by Monash University, are doing ground-breaking research and have had encouraging trial results about dengue fever. This was facilitated by philanthropic funding from Indonesia in the early stages.

Omnibus Law on Job Creation opens opportunities for investment: Mr Scott explained that the Indonesian Omnibus Law and regulations ease Australian investment in Indonesia. For instance, the changes will allow Indonesian students to study on campus in Indonesia and finish their degrees in Australia. This will provide more cost-effective options for students, therefore increasing the accessibility of tertiary education which is incredibly important for Indonesia’s progression from a middle income to developed economy.

Future digital and technological collaboration: Mr Scott concluded by offering remarks on potential collaboration between Australian medium sized enterprises and savvy Indonesian digital platforms. This sector has been supercharged by the pandemic and the necessity of working, learning, and connecting online. He stated, “there is potential for relationships in the next ten to twenty years with Indonesian leaders in this field to drive opportunity for Indonesia and Indonesians.”

Drg Ika Dewi Ana



Drg Ika Dewi Ana, M.Kes., Ph.D. is the Vice Rector of Universitas Gadjah Mada (Research and Community Service). Drg Ika Dewi Ana has two research outputs – on CHA Bone Graft and CHA-based Hemostatic Sponge) – that have been translated into the market in Indonesia by a university holding company and state-owned pharmaceutical company. She previously held several executive positions at Universitas Gadjah Mada, including Director of Partnerships, Alumni and International Affairs and Director of the Centre of Academic Innovations.

In her presentation, Drg Ika spoke about:

- The important role of universities in translating innovations.
- How UGM has served the community prior to and during the pandemic, and how UGM plans to continue to do so in a post-pandemic setting.
- Lessons learned from collaborating with government and industry throughout the pandemic.

Drg Ika began by emphasising how the conference was an important platform to share knowledge and experience, continually preparing UGM in its quest to educate the next generation of leaders and to contribute to society.

Translating innovation into real life solutions

Contributing to scholarly understanding: UGM academics have co-authored numerous reports published by both UGM press and international publishers focusing on their experiences in adapting education, research and community service practises throughout the pandemic, with a view to preparing for a post-pandemic setting.

Increasing pandemic literacy in communities: UGM has also published and disseminated knowledge, practical guidelines, and COVID-19 research to the community through its digital press platform. Efforts to heighten community literacy on COVID-19 and public health have included the publication of guidelines and modules in Indonesian and local languages.

Innovating amidst the pandemic: In the beginning of Indonesia's first total lockdown in April 2020, UGM, in collaboration with other universities, accelerated the transitional steps in developing and adopting the RI-GHA19 COVID-19 rapid test kit, which is now widely used within the community.

The first university in Indonesia to produce ventilators ready for clinical use: UGM has also innovated by developing emergency ventilators and ICU ventilators, now widely used in different hospitals. Despite efforts among many different universities to develop ventilators at the start of the pandemic, to date UGM ventilators have been the most successful in their translation to clinical use.

GeNose—from analysing food quality to screening COVID-19: UGM has also been able to develop the GeNose mobile electronic nose, which has been widely covered in Indonesian media. Research on GeNose began in 2007, focusing on the development of an electronic nose to identify and analyse the quality of coffee and other food products.

Adapting GeNose to new demands: When there was a need to accelerate innovation in developing COVID-19 diagnostic tools, UGM supported researchers to run clinical trials using GeNose to identify COVID-19 in consultation with the Ministry of Health. Throughout the process, strategic consortiums involving industry, the government and universities have been developed. According to results from a sample of more than 3,000 patients, GeNose is sensitive and specific enough to be used as a diagnostic tool and now available in the market to help diagnose COVID-19 cases.

Universities can aid communities with support from government, industry and collaborators

Translating innovations into real solutions: Drg Ika emphasised how much easier country-to-country collaboration has become through online collaboration, despite the challenges of the pandemic. She discussed the issues faced by UGM in translating innovation into real life applications prior to the pandemic. She explained that though cooperation between universities, industry, and government has long been encouraged, it has been difficult to realise. The pandemic has seen acceleration in this cooperation, allowing universities to more quickly bring their innovations into practice in real life settings.

Government support for innovation is critical: Drg Ika noted that the government has been supportive of innovation throughout the pandemic. For example, the Ministry of Health was open in discussing the exact procedures needed to translate the university's innovation into useful products for the community, such as in the case of GeNose.

Serving the community throughout the pandemic: Drg Ika emphasised that this spirit of innovation must be continued in a post-pandemic setting. Serving the community must be the focus of this spirit. UGM has a long history of community service, which has developed into a student community service model in collaboration with local and national governments as well as industry, working together to develop Indonesian communities. Through this framework, UGM students have collaborated with many local communities throughout the pandemic, helping them realise community goals. Drg Ika concluded by saying that this showed that the pandemic "cannot be a handicap in continuing research and community service."

Professor Vedi Hadiz



Professor Vedi Hadiz is Director and Professor of Asian Studies at the Asia Institute and an Assistant Deputy Vice-Chancellor International at the University of Melbourne. In this role he has assisted the university to build stronger relationships with Indonesia, including its universities and government, as outlined in the University of Melbourne Indonesia Strategy (2019). Professor Hadiz's research interests revolve around political sociology and political economy issues, especially those related to the contradictions of development in Indonesia and Southeast Asia more broadly, and more recently, in the Middle East.

In his presentation, Professor Hadiz:

- Expressed solidarity with Indonesian colleagues and friends during the challenging and tragic circumstances of the Delta wave.
- Called for the momentum in collaboration between academic communities to be maintained in creative ways during the pandemic.
- Underlined the importance of Australian and Indonesian universities collaborating as equal partners.

Connecting in hard times

Global pandemic means we have common interests: Professor Hadiz framed his remarks around the sad circumstances of the increasing infection rates in Indonesia. He stated that the pandemic demonstrates to us how interconnected we are: "A country can be an island. A country can have very many islands. But there is no country in the world that is not interlinked with the rest of the world." He described how we are connected by common interests and how we cope and fight against this virus in ways that were probably not envisaged by the original prophets of globalisation in the 1980s and 1990s.

Acknowledging differences and privilege: Professor Hadiz described his role as Assistant Deputy Vice-Chancellor International as guiding, leading and initiating cooperation between the University of Melbourne and various universities and other institutions in Indonesia. He emphasised how difficult it is to be so far away in living in different circumstances to friends and colleagues who are facing immense challenges during the Delta wave.

Maintaining momentum in cooperation

Cooperation between university communities has increased recently: Cooperation between Indonesia and Australia is longstanding and has gone on for many decades through the ups and downs of the relationships between the two countries. Cooperation in the academic sector has recently been undertaken in a more serious manner compared to previous decades. Professor Hadiz underlined how important it is to maintain this momentum in the midst of circumstances that pose impediments to cooperation as it used to be undertaken.

Innovation and creativity: Professor Hadiz explained that it is necessary to find more innovative ways to make cooperative schemes viable and successful. One of the challenges in doing this is bureaucratic red tape in both countries. He highlighted that loosening up some of these restrictions would enable us to be more agile, innovative and to accelerate.

Large-scale collaboration for social benefit: Professor Hadiz gave an example of collaboration between the University of Melbourne and the Faculties of Medicine at Universitas Indonesia, Universitas Gadjah Mada and Universitas Airlangga, with the support of the Indonesian Government. This research project aims to bolster the resilience of Indonesia's health systems and commenced in January 2020. Professor Hadiz also highlighted the need to undertake social sciences and humanities research to ascertain lessons about government policy and social responses to COVID-19.

Cooperating as equal partners: During the pandemic, Professor Hadiz described the ways mobility restrictions have prevented researchers from undertaking research activities as they did before. This means that now is a good time to engage on equal terms with Indonesian researchers, rather than just having in-country research assistants. This could also involve schemes to enable virtual visiting programs and support joint writing projects.

**Panel 2: Indonesia-Australia
Economic Relations:
Rebuilding Post-Pandemic
Economies**

Professor Michael Wesley



Professor Michael Wesley is Deputy Vice-Chancellor, International at the University of Melbourne. Professor Wesley has extensive experience in international strategy and relations and has worked in higher education, government, and the private sector. He has published on Australian foreign policy, international relations and strategic affairs in Asia, and the politics of state-building interventions.

Professor Wesley offered an analysis of the context of Australia-Indonesia economic relations. In his presentation, Professor Wesley discussed how:

- Australia has recently become increasingly diplomatically isolated from the Southeast Asian region due to a “polarising logic of US-China competition.”
- The need for Australia to formulate a compelling grand narrative for engagement with the Asia Pacific region.
- The Australia-Indonesia bilateral economic relationship is important, and by diversifying the basis of this relationship it will have it will have greater potential.

A shift in Australian foreign policy

New paradigm of Australia drifting from Asia: Professor Wesley argued that the direction of Australian foreign policy in this region has in the last 5 years been concerning. For observers of the Asia-Pacific region for the last thirty years, this is a worrying and unprecedented time. He stated that, “Australia’s interests and alignments are drifting away from Indonesia, ASEAN and the broader Asian region to a greater extent than any time since the end of the Vietnam War.”

Past shared interests: Professor Wesley emphasised that, broadly, ASEAN countries and Australia shared the same interests for the period between mid-1990s and 2016 and avoided “the polarising logic of deepening China-US rivalry and competition.” He explained that by polarising logic he means how the United States and China have attempted to influence countries in our region to side with their objectives, goals, and ideal frameworks for how the region would work.

Bipartisan approach of balancing relationships: Professor Wesley explained that, starting with Prime Minister John Howard, elected in 1996, Australian leaders from both sides of politics adopted the guiding phrase, “Australia does not have to choose between its security relationship and friendship with the United States and its incredibly important economic and other relationships with China”. Australia, Indonesia and other ASEAN countries who adopted such an approach believed that despite increasing US-China competition, they could remain poised between the rival states.

Australia shifted in 2016 and no longer avoids the polarising logic. Professor Wesley suggested that the Australian government shifted from trying to avoid this polarising logic of US-China competition and progressively began contributing to it by siding with the United States and its characterisation of China as having a disruptive role in the region.

Australia's approach (2016-)

Australia promotes concern about Chinese influence in the region. Professor Wesley described Australia's deepening alarm at China's actions, particularly concerning activities such as foreign influence operations and militarisation of South China Sea. He stressed that under the Morrison government, Australia has attempted to ensure that other countries in the region realise that China is a disruptive force in the region and that Chinese hegemony would be dangerous for smaller nations. He stated, "Australia has, in my view, very actively joined the US-led campaign that China is dangerous and that they need to be careful about entering agreements with China", including the Belt and Road Initiative and the involvement of Chinese telecommunications companies in infrastructure development.

Australia has become part of the logic that Indonesia is keen to avoid. Professor Wesley stated that as a result Australia has become more diplomatically isolated over time from its neighbours in Southeast Asia.

Australia has consolidated alternative regional groupings. The Morrison government has also been spending a great deal of diplomatic capital and effort consolidating regional groupings, primarily the Quadrilateral Security Dialogue (QSD, also known as the Quad) with the United States, Japan and India, which separates Australia from Indonesia and ASEAN. Professor Wesley emphasised that Indonesia and other ASEAN countries have been concerned that the Quad has the potential to displace ASEAN in developing frameworks of governance for the Asia-Pacific region.

Diversifying relationships

Need for a grand narrative of engagement: Professor Wesley contended that Australia now lacks a grand narrative about why it should engage deeply, meaningfully and extensively with the Asia region. He stated that, "Australia no longer has a unified vision of the Asian region. Its views of Asia are heavily refracted through its growing confrontation with China and its deep fears about China." This contrasts with the grand narrative held for more than 30 years, in which Australia saw an abiding security logic in deeply engaging with Indonesia and other countries in Southeast Asia and the Asia Pacific.

Deglobalisation and economic nationalism threaten engagement: Professor Wesley emphasised that economic globalisation as a logic of Australia's engagement is no longer considered of primary importance for Australian regional foreign policy. He explained that this logic is threatened by a number of developments, including the concern that Australia and other countries are becoming too dependent on the outside world for crucial supplies. Professor Wesley suggested that the rise of economic nationalism and fears of being coerced by becoming too dependent on a small number of powerful nations are also important factors constraining a logic of economic globalisation.

Indonesia is important for diversifying economic relationships. Professor Wesley stated that there is no question that the Australian government sees Indonesia in this new paradigm of polarisation, as a like-minded country. Australia is looking for ways across a number of sectors to become less economically dependent on China and to do that by increasing its economic engagement with countries such as Indonesia. This is a very positive element pushing forward following the signing of

the IA-CEPA and other elements of the bilateral relationship. Professor Wesley noted that there is increasing attention in Canberra to initiatives to develop the bilateral economic relationship.

Influence of COVID-19: Professor Wesley concluded by stressing how future economic engagement will need to account for the very real impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic, particularly on Indonesia.

Dr Yose Rizal Damuri



Dr Yose Rizal Damuri is Head of the Department of Economics at the Center for Strategic and International Studies. His research centres on international trade, regional integration, economic development and the digital economy.

In his presentation, Dr Yose discussed:

- The effects that COVID-19 has had on economies in the Southeast Asian region.
- The short-, medium-, and long-term issues that Australia and Indonesia face in their respective economic recoveries.
- Ways in which Australia and Indonesia can collaborate to assist each other's recovery process.

Current challenges

Pandemic is still far from over: Dr Yose emphasised that countries in the Southeast Asian region recorded new peaks in infections not long before the conference in July 2021. Indonesia's fatality rate was well above the world average, whilst other countries in the region like Thailand, Cambodia and Malaysia have shown increases in fatality rates. Although the situation in Australia is far better than in Southeast Asia, the ramifications of the region's experience with the pandemic would affect Australia's recovery.

Vaccination key for economic recovery: Dr Yose stated that vaccination was the key to improving the current situation. However, there are still many difficulties in the production and distribution of vaccines in Indonesia. Despite this, the effectiveness of various vaccines that have been developed by different parts of the international community can be a cause for optimism.

An uncertain recovery pathway: Dr Yose argued that, considering these circumstances, the economic recovery path out of the pandemic still seems to be uncertain. While some economies, such as the United States and those in Europe, have begun to "kick-out" their recovery programs, other countries, such as those in Southeast Asia, still have to grapple with public health issues. This will affect the prospects of recovery in other countries, like Australia.

Economic recovery

The implications of delayed recovery to fiscal and monetary aspects might be overwhelming: There is a possibility that recovery will be uneven between developing and developed countries: many emerging economies are still dealing with the pandemic while developed economies have already begun the recovery process. Additionally, the accumulation of debt risks remains high. The combination of delayed and uneven economic recovery and debt risk accumulation will lead to an uncertain path to recovery

Delayed recovery increases pressure: Although so far the crisis has been isolated to the real sector and has not had a significant impact on the financial sector, Dr Yose argued that delayed recovery and debt accumulation will have significantly pressure the sector.

Dealing with connectivity issues: Prior to the pandemic, trade contributed 60% of Southeast Asia's GDP. This has been significantly disrupted by the pandemic, with the biggest disruptions happening in global and regional supply chains. Though some countries, e.g. Indonesia and Malaysia, have been able to revive connections, while others, e.g. Vietnam, were not affected at all, the situation remains fragile due to trade and political tensions between countries in the region. Dr Yose stressed that this is an issue that must be dealt with, as "recovery will not be complete without trade revitalisation."

Mobility limitations affect migrant workers: Another related issue is the mobility of people. Dr Yose explained that COVID-19 hit the tourism industry in Asia "abruptly and deeply" whilst also affecting the movement of international migrant workers disproportionately. Though it might take years for mobility to recover, he argued that action needed to be taken to accelerate recovery.

Short-, medium-, and long-term issues

Vaccine production a key short-term goal: Among the short-term issues, Dr Yose argued that vaccine production and distribution was important, though he also believed that transparency and data-sharing surrounding vaccines was a rarely discussed issue. He argued that this was vital, as with the emergence of new COVID-19 variants, a lack of data on the efficacy of vaccines will hamper vaccination rollouts.

Formulating pandemic exit strategies: Dr Yose argued that supporting exit strategies from heavy reliance on fiscal support was an important medium-term issue, saying that it was a vital part of ensuring a more balanced financial recovery and minimising debt risk. Financial safety nets also need to be strengthened, including those within the wider region.

Global economic governance must be reformulated: For longer-term issues, Dr Yose stated that it was important to prepare a global economic governance that was more adaptive and resilient for post-COVID-19 economic arrangements. These can include digital transformation, as well as reconfiguration of Global Value Chains (GVC). Dr Yose stressed that for these actions to be implemented effectively, stronger international cooperation is needed. In his words, "Only if we end the pandemic everywhere can we end the pandemic anywhere."

Collaborating for recovery

Learning and collaborating with each other: Australia and Indonesia have very important roles to play in these issues. Australia has been able to deal with health-related issues more successfully, and can share strategies from which Indonesia can learn. Collaboration in vaccine production is also key, whilst promoting greater cooperation in dealing with future health problems.

Australia can assist Indonesia in structural reform: In the economic sphere, it is important for both countries to keep their economies open, at least in terms of trade and investment. Structural economic reform is also an important area of partnership, and Indonesia can learn much from Australia in effectively implementing its recent structural reform agenda.

Structural reforms must succeed for a fast Indonesian recovery: Dr Yose stressed that over the next several years, the recovery path will depend on how successful Indonesia is in implementing structural reforms, such as the Omnibus Law on Job Creation. If the implementation pushes the boundaries of Indonesia's economic and financial structures, we may experience a stronger and faster recovery. But,

if it fails to deliver on its promised agenda, we will see a difficult recovery pathway over the next five to ten years.

Leveraging on cooperation beyond the bilateral relationship: Together, Australia and Indonesia can also cooperate to achieve policy successes at regional and multilateral levels. Both economies should promote open and inclusive regional economic integration at the top of their agendas, whilst also improving and strengthening regional financial safety nets.

Australia-Indonesia cooperation can alleviate regional tensions: Connectivity should also be improved in the digital sphere. Dr Yose cited Professor Wesley's presentation, where he spoke about Southeast Asian economies' involvement in China's Belt and Road Initiative (BRI). Dr Yose responded to this, saying that it was not that regional economies were eager to involve themselves in the BRI, but instead that there was a lack of alternatives to the connectivity improvements that joining the Initiative provided. He stressed that the pandemic has only heightened the importance of digital connectivity for economic activity. "If Australia and Indonesia can contribute more to physical and digital connectivity in the region, it would both help regional development and possibly alleviate geopolitical tensions."

Reframing the post-pandemic economic order: At the multilateral level, as G20 members, both countries have significant leverage to deal with the aftermath of the pandemic. This should be capitalised on by formulating the new multilateral rules and disciplines needed for the post-pandemic economic order, such as those regulating digital economic activities. Australia and Indonesia should also take an active role in promoting global action towards a 'green economy,' and to ensure that economic recovery is carried out in a sustainable manner.

Cooperation is key in managing the pandemic: To conclude his presentation, Dr Yose highlighted that greater cooperation is key in managing the pandemic. Some factors will hinder this effort, such as the persistent lack of trust between the two countries and insufficient institutional mechanisms that can support recovery. However, he stressed that "Indonesia and Australia should still join hand-in-hand, not only to support each other, but also to encourage greater international cooperation."

Professor Ross Garnaut



Professor Ross Garnaut is a Professorial Research Fellow in Economics at the University of Melbourne. Professor Garnaut has authored and edited 49 books and numerous influential articles on international economics, public finance, and economic development. He is also a founding Director of both the Lowy Institute of International Policy and of Asialink. Professor Garnaut has been consulted on trade policy and relations with Asia and the Pacific by Australian prime ministers and senior ministers since 1975.

In his presentation, Professor Garnaut:

- Addressed the regional context and continuing need for Australia's deep integration with Asia for Australia's prosperity and security.
- Described the economic impacts of the pandemic.
- Outlined patterns of income stagnation in pre-pandemic Australia.
- Presented three constraints to rebuilding Australia's post-pandemic economy and opportunities for Australia-Indonesia cooperation in a zero-emissions world economy.

Australia's neighbourhood

Deep integration in the neighbourhood. Professor Garnaut engaged with Professor Michael Wesley's presentation on the difficulties of Australia's current approach to international relations. Professor Garnaut stated that engaging with Asia is "a fundamental reality of Australia. The departure from it is risky for Australia for prosperity and security." He added that the tendency in Australia to see international relations primarily through a lens of US-China relations obscures an important reality of our situation.

Deep integration with Asia is essential for Australia's security and prosperity. Professor Garnaut stressed that the most important element of this engagement is a close relationship with Indonesia. Indonesia is the most important element of Southeast Asia and for what Indonesia is itself. With some forces pushing against this integration from Australia and the region, close relations with Indonesia is the most important way to avoid isolation. While maintaining this relationship has challenges including different cultures and histories, approaching it constructively is crucial.

Pandemic impacts and economic policy responses

Chinese lockdowns affected trade in the first quarter of 2020. Professor Garnaut explained that China shut down completely to lock down the virus in the first quarter of last year. This had a significant negative impact on trade in this region, especially for countries which are very strongly reliant on income from exports of commodities like Australia and Indonesia.

General collapse in economic activity in the second quarter of 2020. This made the second half of last year the largest downturn in a six month period that the world has ever known. Professor Garnaut stressed how this downturn was bigger than the first six months of the Great Depression and the Global Financial Crisis in 2008 and early 2009. There was a collapse of world trade. He stated that amid

this situation, one may have thought that we were in for a very heavy downturn, but this did not happen globally.

Fiscal and monetary expansion: In the second quarter of 2020, developed countries and China rapidly embarked on the biggest Keynesian fiscal and monetary expansion that the world has ever seen.

Learned lessons from the Global Financial Crisis. Professor Garnaut explained that, overall, economic policy responses to the Global Financial Crisis helped to limit the collapse in economic activity. For instance, by increasing government expenditure, financed by debt, monetary expansions in central banks. He stated that countries have learned that we did not respond early enough or respond for long enough to the Global Financial Crisis. Consequently, there has been much larger monetary expansion this time.

Pandemic economic challenges require close cooperation. Professor Garnaut emphasised that the G20 forum was very important in the aftermath of the Global Financial Crisis. He stated that Australia and Indonesia working together made an important contribution to the G20's success. Cooperation between Australia and Indonesia also set the tone for Asia-Pacific cooperation when it was most productive after the Asian Financial Crisis of 1998.

Strong rebound in economic activity as a result of monetary expansion. Professor Garnaut stated that the early positive response to stimulus was strongest in the countries that had done best in the pandemic, most importantly the countries in the Western Pacific Region – China, Japan, Korea, Taiwan, Thailand, Vietnam, Australia and New Zealand were amongst the lowest rates of COVID-19. This region had very big economic growth in the second half of 2020.

Australia's economic situation

Second half of 2020 growth poses questions for the economy of the future. In his recent book, *Reset: Restoring Australia After the Pandemic Recession* (BlackInc, 2021), Professor Garnaut has suggested that it is not good enough for Australia to aim to return to the economic situation it had prior to the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic.

He explained that, prior to the pandemic, Australia had undergone 29 years of unbroken economic growth, the longest period that any developed country had ever had. He divided this period into three decade blocks:

1. The *first decade* was strong growth in productivity based on economic reforms.
2. The *second decade* was fuelled by the China resources boom.
3. The *third decade* is what Professor Garnaut refers to as the "Dog Days".

Slow growth and shifts in immigration patterns: Professor Garnaut emphasised that since 2013, Australian productivity growth and output per person grew more slowly than in any other developed country. The whole economy kept growing and Australia did not experience a recession mainly because of historically unusually high immigration rates. There was a change in the character of immigration, away from an emphasis on skilled and educated immigrants coming in as permanent arrivals towards temporary migration with a high unskilled cohort.

Income stagnation: Professor Garnaut suggested that if it continued it could have threatened the stability of our economic and political system, just like a much longer period of stagnation in the

United States became a threat to American democracy. He reflected that while it would not be beneficial to return to a pre-pandemic economy, it would also be challenging.

Three headwinds

1. ***The world is taking seriously the need to move to zero net emissions by 2050.*** All developed countries except Australia have now formally committed to this goal.
2. ***Significance of the China-Australia relationship:*** China is a more important trading partner to Australia than to any other economy. He stated that, “China is as big an export country to Australia than the next nine countries put together. It is a fantasy to think that Australia can easily or quickly diversify from China.”
3. ***Pandemic has hit service exports.*** The Australian government has discriminated against certain institutions in its distribution of assistance in response to the pandemic which has left our universities very weak.

Australia-Indonesia cooperation in a zero emissions world economy: Professor Garnaut stressed that we can overcome the headwind of pandemic affected service exports by making use of another set of advantages Australia has in the zero emissions world economy. That requires an embrace of decarbonisation that is being adopted in every other developed country. He stated that, “getting onto this bandwidth is one way in which Australia and Indonesia can help each other. We are both big exporters of fossil fuels and both have big alternatives in the zero emissions world economy. By working together, we can do a lot of things that we would find more difficult on our own.”

Ms Ni Made Ayu Marthini



Ms Ni Made Ayu Marthini, M.Sc. is the Director for Bilateral Trade Negotiations in the Ministry of Trade of the Republic of Indonesia. She has worked for the ministry since 2006.

In her presentation, Ms Made spoke about:

- Indonesia's efforts to adopt a more open international trade policy, with the Indonesia-Australia Comprehensive Economic Partnership Agreement (IA-CEPA) being a key part of that.
- The role that IA-CEPA can play in improving Indonesia-Australia economic relations.
- How both countries can cooperate to rebuild their post-pandemic economies through IA-CEPA.

Trade a key policy of the Jokowi administration

Indonesia looking outwards: The administration of President Joko Widodo has seen Indonesia adopt a more open and outward-looking international trade policy. The country aims to be more competitive through facilitating trade and investment and pushing through structural reforms, shown most clearly through the passage of the Omnibus Law on Job Creation in 2020.

Reviving trade negotiations: This policy has also seen the government renew pushes to finalise trade negotiations that were previously paused. As a result, seven bilateral trade agreements have been concluded between 2015 to 2021, of which two have been implemented. Ms Made stressed that among these, IA-CEPA was among the most 'advanced and modern' agreements, stating that negotiations were marked by a sense of optimism and excitement, especially within the private sector.

Pivoting trade policy to respond to COVID-19: COVID-19 has changed the direction of Indonesia's trade policy, which has now focused on calling for global solidarity and cooperation to fight against the pandemic. Ms Made reiterated Dr Yose's comments that the pathway to economic recovery cannot be delayed for both Indonesia and Australia. She then commented on Indonesia's efforts, as a co-chair of COVAX, to ensure that the waiver for COVID-19 vaccine patents can be implemented, as this will make vaccines more easily available and affordable for developing countries.

Australia-Indonesia trade not reflective of close relationship: Returning to IA-CEPA, Ms Made commented that the level of total trade and investment between Australia and Indonesia did not reflect the good political relations and close geographical proximity of the two countries. Both countries are not among each other's top ten trading partners, whilst compared to other ASEAN states, Indonesia has the lowest amount of trade with Australia. Ms Made stressed that the Indonesian government strongly hoped that IA-CEPA can improve bilateral trade and that this will facilitate stronger people-to-people links and cooperation.

Opportunities and setbacks in IA-CEPA

Setbacks in implementing IA-CEPA: IA-CEPA came into force on 5 July 2020, in the midst of the COVID-19 pandemic and other elements of uncertainty in the multilateral trading system. Despite Indonesia's exports of goods to Australia increasing by 7.6%, imports decreased by 15.7%, below the level initially expected. Services trade paints an even bleaker picture, as Australian border closures have hindered growth in tourism and the implementation of the work-training visa that was part of the IA-CEPA agreement.

Facilitating opportunities: Though levels of investment between both countries have increased, it is still not at the level that was hoped prior to the pandemic. However, IA-CEPA has also facilitated improved economic cooperation that Indonesia has not seen with any other trading partner, as seen in the signing of the Subsidiary Arrangement (Katalis) on 25 June 2021. The government is also exploring ways in which IA-CEPA can help Indonesian SMEs, which were badly hit by the pandemic.

The window of opportunity: Ms Made argued that IA-CEPA is a "window of opportunity," but to take advantage of it Indonesia and Australia had to be "creative, bold, and frank" in their relationship. Ms Made went on to say that "Fundamentally, Indonesia and Australia complement each other, and IA-CEPA should accelerate this process."

Making an Australia-Indonesia powerhouse: Ms Made highlighted the "powerhouse concept" that was discussed in negotiations that could benefit both Indonesia and Australia. Some examples included how Australian wheat could fuel Indonesia's instant noodle manufacturing and increase its exports, as well as how Australian investment can improve Indonesia's tourism sector, with many private sector stakeholders already having projects in the works. Ms Made also spoke about how Australia's expertise in battery technology could help Indonesia develop an electric vehicle industry, especially considering Indonesia's cobalt mining capabilities.

Improving Indonesia's human resources through IA-CEPA: Ms Made stressed that Vocational Education and Training to improve Indonesia's human resources was a key part of IA-CEPA, which was pushed through by President Joko Widodo himself. Australia has a good education system that Indonesia can learn from, and she explained that there are already plans made within the agreement for this to happen. For example, there are arrangements for Indonesian students to complete six months work placement in Australia following their completion of education in Indonesia. Once this is implemented, it is hoped that this will improve the capabilities of participating students once they return to Indonesia.

Greater trust leads to opportunities and growth

Improving trust will bring the relationship forward: Reiterating what Professors Wesley and Garnaut have said, Ms Made argued that both sides needed to "develop trust and understanding." She hoped that IA-CEPA showed a commitment to improving trust between Indonesia and Australia. She cited the case of UTS approaching the Indonesian government and private sector about implementing a teaching, learning, and research program on marketing Indonesian products in Australia, saying that this was an excellent example of efforts in improving understanding that can be facilitated by IA-CEPA.

Look at challenges as opportunities: Ms Made concluded that as neighbours, Indonesia and Australia have to make use of their special relationship. Additionally, as the pandemic continues to linger, challenges associated with it must be seen as opportunities.

Trade and cooperation benefit all involved: Ms Made emphasised that trade cannot be seen as a zero-sum game, and that both countries stood to benefit from continued trade with each other. While Australia can benefit from a prosperous Indonesia, this can only be achieved through close collaboration between Indonesia and Australia. Lastly, she reiterated that building trust and understanding between the two countries is a key factor to achieving success, and should not be underestimated.

Mr Kevin Evans



Mr Kevin Evans is Indonesia Director at the Australia-Indonesia Centre. He has worked as a diplomat, stockbroker, academic and NGO activist during the past thirty years he has lived in Indonesia.

In his presentation, Mr Evans spoke about:

- Trade patterns between Australia and Indonesia prior to and after Indonesia's industrialisation.
- New opportunities for trade that have emerged despite the COVID-19 pandemic.
- How the relationship between the two countries can be reframed.

The historical roots of Australia-Indonesia trade

Long history of trade: Mr Evans began by describing how during the 1700s, people came from Indonesia to Northern Australia to trade with local Aboriginal communities and engaged in partnerships. This continued until the advent of the White Australia Policy in 1901, though trade was maintained in different forms. Australia established a trade office in Batavia in the 1930s, exporting wheat, fruit, and canned food while importing petroleum, rubber, tea, and coffee. This style of trade did not change until the 1980s, when Indonesia set itself up for industrialisation.

Indonesia diversifies: Indonesia wanted to decrease its dependence on oil for exports and government revenue, especially following the collapse in oil prices in the 1980s. This led to an expansion in the tax base to boost non-oil revenue, together with both a liberalisation of the investment regime to encourage foreign investment, and facilities provided for importers of raw materials who would develop these into processed exports.

Income growth for newly industrialised countries: This period saw newly industrialised economies in the region, such as Hong Kong and Singapore, going through a period of income growth. This led to them moving labour intensive manufacturing offshore, such as textile, clothing, and footwear, including to Southeast Asia and Indonesia in particular.

Changing trade patterns between Australia and Indonesia: As with industrialisation efforts in other Asian economies, Australia was well placed to provide inputs to Indonesia's with raw materials such as cotton and some metals. These materials helped power industrialisation in many of these countries.

Higher education: As Australia commercialised its higher education sector, its size began to grow, and in 1994 Australia overtook the USA as the preferred destination of education for young Indonesians. This has continued to be the case for the last 25 years.

The Asian Financial Crisis limited Indonesia's manufacturing growth: However, Indonesian industrialisation stalled in the wake of the Asian financial crisis. While the industrial sector still grew in absolute terms, it did so at a slower rate than the rest of the economy, thus relatively declining. Indonesia's growth came largely from higher exports of coal and palm oil. However, despite this growth, Mr Evans argued that the Indonesian economy has grown more "introverted" and less export-oriented, which can be seen as a withdrawal from global value chains.

The current state of Australia-Indonesia trade

Growing trade surpluses: In the bilateral trade relationship, Australia has had a merchandise trade deficit with Indonesia for long periods of time, but this has recently gone back into surplus. From the services side, Indonesia has had a growing surplus with Australia, mostly coming from tourism: prior to the COVID-19 pandemic, Indonesia was about to overtake New Zealand as the preferred destination for Australians travelling overseas.

Nickel-backed growth a cause for optimism during COVID-19: Mr Evans pointed out that two provinces enjoyed 4.9% growth during the 2020 COVID-19 recession: Central Sulawesi and North Maluku. The growth of the economies of both provinces came off the back of nickel, a top-level national resource. Indonesia has successfully leveraged on this, becoming one of the top global producers of stainless steel. The nickel boom has also allowed Indonesia to revive its dream of having its own nationally-owned automotive sector. Nickel, copper and cobalt can help Indonesia achieve this dream, but lithium is the missing ingredient.

New opportunities for Australia-Indonesia trade: Australia is a leading producer of lithium, and can provide education and training to develop the Indonesian automotive industry. Mr Evans stressed that it was important for Indonesia to see Australia not as a market destination, but as a source of raw materials that it can use to take on the world. Indonesia must take advantage of this if it wants to keep up with other developing Asian economies, such as Vietnam.

Taking advantage of IA-CEPA: Tariffs for Indonesian products coming into Australia are now zero, and there is a special relationship in place when it comes to bringing in electric vehicles from Indonesia. Thailand is currently the largest supplier of electric vehicles to Australia, so if Indonesia can build up its capacity, it will be a good competitor to Thailand in terms of exporting both regular and electric vehicles to Australia.

The powerhouse concept: Mr Evans went on to explain the powerhouse concept by citing the example of a flour mill in Makassar partly owned by a West Australian wheat farmer cooperative. The flour mill imports Australian wheat, which is then processed into flour and partially exported to other ASEAN countries. Another example Mr Evans cited was how Indonesia imported Australian cotton, which it processed into cloth and fashion, and then exported it abroad. "Think of it as a production line that starts in Australia then goes through Indonesia for value added, before going to the world."

Reframing the trade relationship more broadly

Look beyond commodities: Mr Evans stressed that Indonesia and Australia needed to look beyond commodities as a basis for the trade relationship, and instead look at a broader and more sophisticated relationship encompassing manufacturing and services.

Look to services: From an Australian perspective, it will probably develop a trade relationship similar to what it has with other industrialised economies in the region. There will likely be a stronger services element, with education and tourism. The latter can hopefully go both ways, with Indonesians comprising a greater part of tourists coming to Australia. Research will also be an important part of the relationship. Australia can look to share technology and expertise about electric batteries to Indonesia, allowing it to develop its relevant industries.

Viewing the relationship in a mature way: Mr Evans concluded by saying that Indonesia and Australia needed to “change the way we see each other.” Both Indonesia and Australia are big countries in their respective regions and members of the G20.

Australia and Indonesia as equal partners: Mr Evans stressed that Indonesia and Australia should view each other as “equals, as genuine partners,” going beyond the old donor-recipient relationship. Indonesia, he stressed, should not look down on Australia because of its comparatively lower population size, as many other previously developing Asian economies such as China and Japan were able to recognise the strategic importance of their partnership with Australia. On the Australian side, there should be recognition that Indonesia is a major neighbour, and that a major regional relationship cannot be made without Indonesian involvement.

Panel 3:

Policy and Institutional Design: Responding to the Health Crisis

Professor Dr Ova Emilia



Professor Dr. Ova Emilia is the first Indonesian Professor for Medical Education. She has been the Dean of the Faculty of Medicine at Universitas Gadjah Mada between October 2016-2021 and is also a practicing obstetrician-gynaecologist.

Professor Ova's presentation was framed as learnings in response to the worsening COVID-19 situation. In July 2021, Indonesia experienced more than one thousand daily deaths and reached a total of 2.95 million COVID-19 cases. At the time of the presentation, these infections had resulted in 2.32 million recoveries and 76,200 deaths.

Professor Ova outlined the guidelines provided by the World Health Organisation (WHO) on pandemic preparedness before saying that no country was prepared for this pandemic.¹

In her presentation, Professor Ova concentrated on four pillars on which to provide pandemic response recommendations:

- Coordination between national and provincial governments.
- Community engagement and controlling misinformation.
- Operational support and logistics: Universities and student involvement in public health responses, and,
- Maintaining essential health services and systems: Combating fear and stigma.

Coordination

Contextual challenges: Indonesia is a diverse country with wide variations in education, which has made it difficult to manage the response to the COVID-19 pandemic. Indonesia's vast geography has also constrained public access to information and healthcare. In the discussion, Professor Ova explained that it is extremely difficult to implement lockdown measures as most Indonesians work in informal sectors and essentially live hand-to-mouth. Without work, informal workers are completely dependent on government or community support. Professor Ova emphasised, "though we understand that lockdowns are the most effective way to eliminate the virus, it is difficult for Indonesia to implement this strictly."

Multi-level coordination is important: Professor Ova explained the importance of a flexible and fast-moving government agency, such as The National Disaster Management Agency (Badan Nasional Penanggulangan Bencana - BNPB), in Indonesia's pandemic response. However, she emphasised that the BNPB does not have direct access to Indonesia's existing 'command and control system' of decision makers. Further, as a relatively young democracy where decision making is quite decentralised, Indonesia has encountered many difficulties in implementing its response to the pandemic.

¹ World Health Organisation (2020) 'Operational planning guidance to support country preparedness and response'. World Health Organisation. Available at: <https://www.who.int/publications-detail-redirect/draft-operational-planning-guidance-for-un-country-teams>

Improving coordination: While provincial governments have control over important offices such as the provincial Health Office and Health Education Office, these entities are not under the authority of the BNPB. Over time, provincial governors have taken steps to bridge the two systems and improve overall coordination.

Community engagement and information

Community engagement with health protocols has improved. Professor Ova described how it was initially difficult to engage communities to practice health protocols because of low levels of health literacy. However, as individuals began to witness how the virus affected those around them, many became more active in COVID-19 management efforts. Despite these improvements, Professor Ova highlighted in discussion that more engagement is needed as, “health workers are now seeing too many [infected] patients because of poor compliance with the lockdown policy [PPKM].”

Control misinformation. Professor Ova emphasised that Indonesia must centrally organise information and make it easily accessible, as false information about COVID-19 is widely spread and consumed. She suggested that perhaps the Ministry of Communication and Information should increase their efforts to limit the spread of misinformation. Although this is a complex issue, Professor Ova underlined how public health should be the overriding priority.

Engage community leaders and maintain resilience. Professor Ova emphasised how informal cultural leaders are influential within many Indonesian communities and could be engaged to communicate information on good health practices. Additionally, she emphasised the important role local communities have played in the fight against COVID-19, which, she argued should be given the necessary appreciation and support. If needing to self-isolate, many households in Yogyakarta have increasingly relied on their local communities for support as financial aid from the provincial government has been insufficient to meet daily needs.

Involve students in public health and clinical responses. Professor Ova described how partnering with students can better communicate information to families and communities. Through such efforts, students can improve their soft skills and become leaders within their communities. Students also play an important role in monitoring individuals and families in self-isolation. Professor Ova highlighted the efforts of health students and residents that require greater recognition, and that the government has started providing incentives, in line with other nations.

Public health capabilities and priorities

Increase testing capacities and data integration: Professor Ova explained that it became clear early on in the pandemic that Indonesia’s infrastructure for testing, screening, and therapy was inadequate. In Yogyakarta, only four laboratories that meet BSL-2 (Bio Security Level 2) standards serve a population of 4.4 million people. Further investment into laboratories should take into account the population they service. Professor Ova also argued that data should be centralised and feedback on policies should be encouraged as this will improve coordination and encourage better decision making.

The role universities play in health innovations: Professor Ova described how new innovations have emerged in response to shortages. Examples of innovation from Universitas Gadjah Mada include the GeNose artificial intelligence used to detect the presence of COVID-19, UGM-made ventilators, and personal protective equipment (PPE) developed in conjunction with Yogyakarta-based small and

medium sized enterprises. Professor Ova suggested that the government can further encourage innovation by connecting universities to industry, historically a challenge for universities.

Designate hospitals for the treatment of COVID-19. Professor Ova also suggested that designating a particular hospital as a referral hospital can help alleviate the stigma associated with seeking treatment for COVID-19. She explained that “the stigma attached to COVID-19 not only affects the infected person, but also the health providers from which they seek treatment. This has caused major disruptions within the health system.” Designating a hospital as a COVID-19 hospital can provide more effective allocations of resources such as doctors and nurses, compared with when infected patients are dispersed across hospitals. In discussion, Professor Ova noted that COVID-19 field hospitals are currently being established.

Build vaccine development capacities. Self-sufficiency in the production of essential medical equipment and goods should be encouraged. Professor Ova highlighted efforts to initiate a national vaccination program, although these began belatedly due to the lack of 3 BSL-3 (Bio Security Level 3) standard laboratories capable of producing vaccines in Indonesia. Professor Ova suggested that alongside investment in these laboratories, Indonesia’s vast geography means that more investment is needed to maintain a cold supply chain for vaccines.

Prioritise high mobility areas for vaccination. Professor Ova explained how Yogyakarta is a province with very high population mobility as it is a tourist destination and a university city. Although prioritising certain regions can be politically complicated, mobility should be considered as it is a factor in the spread of COVID-19.

Maintain healthcare services. From her experience as a practitioner, Professor Ova stated that within the first six months of the pandemic, many avoidable deaths occurred because people were afraid to seek medical care. Indonesian practitioners and public health experts have worked hard to rebuild health services, which have now returned to something approaching normal. In her own practice, more people are now seeking antenatal care, assisted by recently introduced telemedicine services.

Professor Tony Blakely



Professor Tony Blakely is an epidemiologist and public health medicine specialist who has led much of the modelling that underpinned the Victorian Government's RoadMap out of Victoria's second wave of COVID-19 infections. Whilst principally an epidemiologist, he uses and combines methods from multiple disciplines: biostatistics, economics, econometrics, and computer and data science. Professor Blakely is Director of the Population Interventions Unit within the Centre for Epidemiology and Biostatistics at the Melbourne School of Population and Global Health at the University of Melbourne.

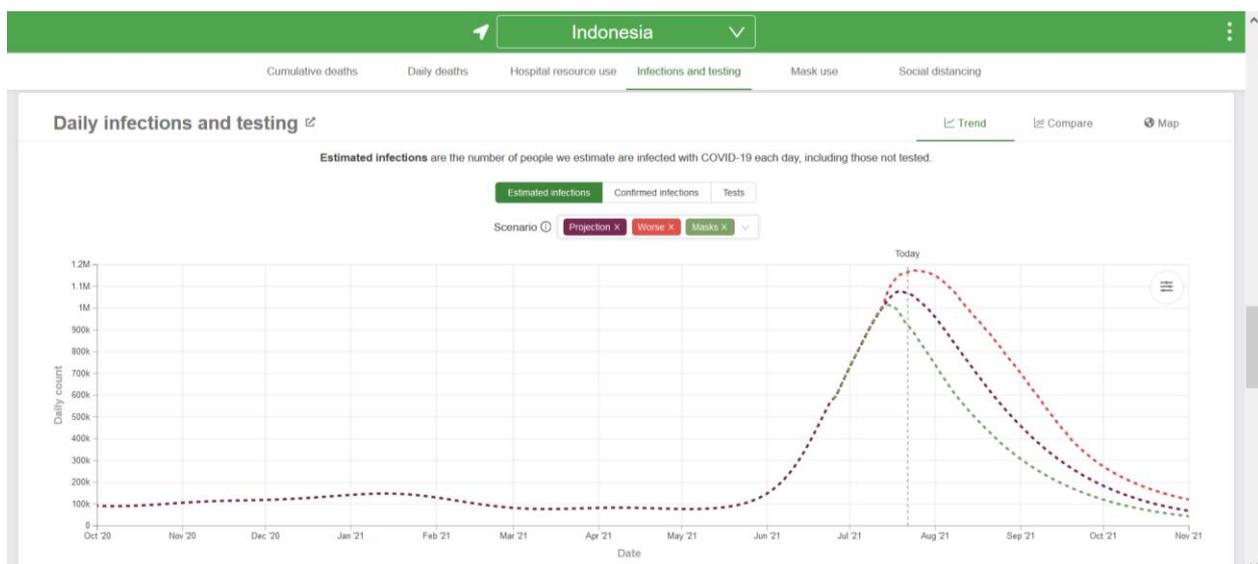
In his presentation, Professor Blakely:

- Reflected on the Institute for Health Metrics and Evaluation's (IHME) COVID-19 predictions for Indonesia.
- Shared his team's work on COVID-19 Pandemic Trade-offs tool. Though the circumstances of Indonesia and Australia are different, there are still some parts of the tool are useful for Indonesian pandemic responses, and
- Presented a comparative case study of modelling on Pakistan.

Comparing IHME forecasts with official Indonesian data

The IHME's forecast is around thirty times higher than the official Indonesian projections. To calculate this, the IHME starts with recorded deaths, converts this total to excess deaths, and then uses the infection fatality risk to arrive at a total number of infections. This forecast suggests that around 0.4% of the Indonesian population are becoming infected every day, a rate similar to the United Kingdom during its last peak earlier this year.

Figure 1
IHME forecast of daily infections in Indonesia



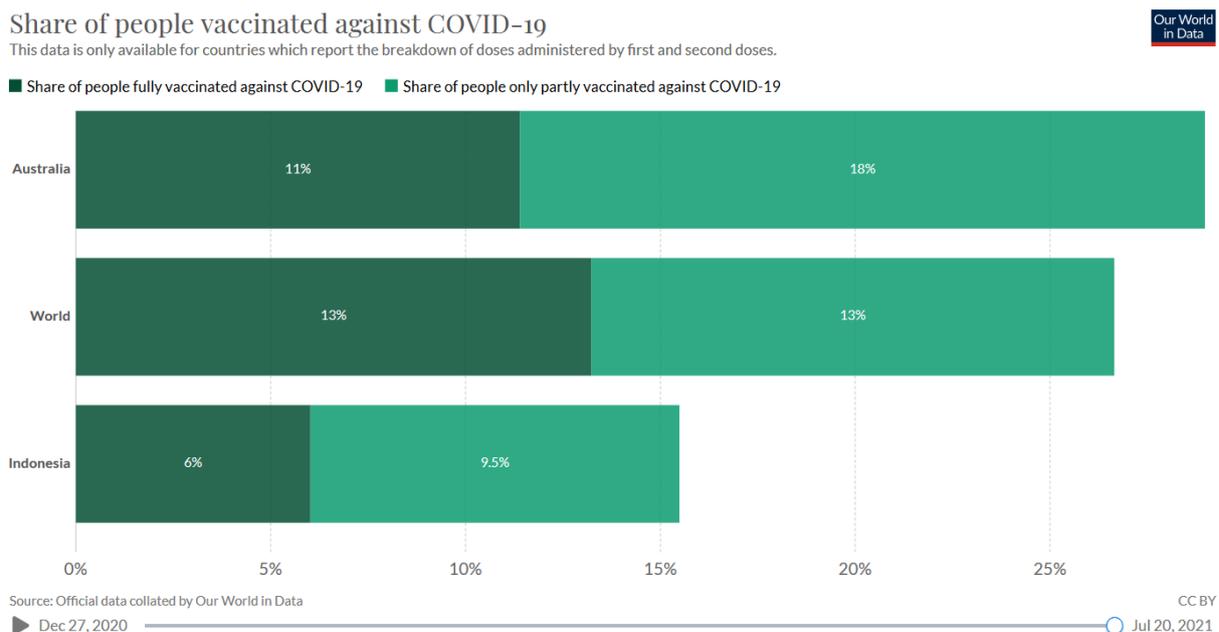
The IHME's Forecast shows twice as many deaths than Indonesian government data. Figure 2 shows daily deaths with the red line indicating the official record. The purple line, which takes into account excess deaths, shows that 200,000 Indonesians are estimated to have died from COVID-19 so far in the pandemic.

Figure 2
Estimate of daily deaths in Indonesia taking into account excess deaths



Slow vaccination rates: At the time of the conference in July 2021, vaccination rates in both Indonesia and Australia were lagging behind the world average. Though Indonesia is slightly behind Australia, it is not much worse off in terms of the share of the population vaccinated against COVID-19.

Figure 3
Share of people vaccinated against COVID-19, comparing Indonesia and Australia to the global average



Explaining the COVID-19 Pandemic Trade-offs Tool

Modelling informs policy making: Professor Blakely, with his team at the Melbourne School of Population and Global Health, has developed the COVID-19 Pandemic Trade-offs Tool.² The model has successfully been used by different governments for policy planning, including during the second wave of COVID-19 infections in the state of Victoria, Australia. Professor Blakely explained in discussion that Victoria's Chief Health Officer, Professor Brett Sutton, has publicly stated that the government uses modelling. Such modelling can thus be assumed to be having an effect on policy decisions and public discourse through presentations of the models in the media.

The COVID-19 Pandemic Trade-offs tool takes into account a two-year period:

- During the vaccine rollout – Year 1.
- Easing border restrictions once the vaccination rollout is complete – Year 2.

The COVID-19 Pandemic Trade-offs tools is derived from two different models.

1. **Models 'agents' with different characteristics and behaviours.** For instance, some agents might be vaccinated while others are not, some might be more mobile than others, and some might practice better mask-wearing behaviours. This is used to estimate how daily infection rates and time in lockdown varies with different policy scenarios.
2. **Linked to an integrated epidemiological and economic model.** The team converts the estimated infections from the agent-based model into health-adjusted life years (HALYs), deaths, and costs to both the health system and GDP.³

The COVID-19 Pandemic Trade-offs tool currently contains 240 scenarios, taking into account: 6- and 12-month policy options, levels of suppression (moderate elimination/tight suppression, loose suppression and 'barely' suppression), two levels of Delta infectivity, five levels of vaccine coverage (from 50-90%), if children are vaccinated, and four levels of people who are vaccinated but become infected and arrive in Victoria after borders open. Though it is still possible for people to transmit the virus after getting vaccinated, they are half as likely to do so as if they were not vaccinated.

Modelling patterns of transmission: The model is extensively calibrated to achieve 40% to 50% of infected persons infecting no one else. It is also calibrated by increasing infectivity and mobility to achieve 20% of infected persons causing 70% to 80% of next generation of infections.

Modelling in action: the case studies of Victoria and Sydney

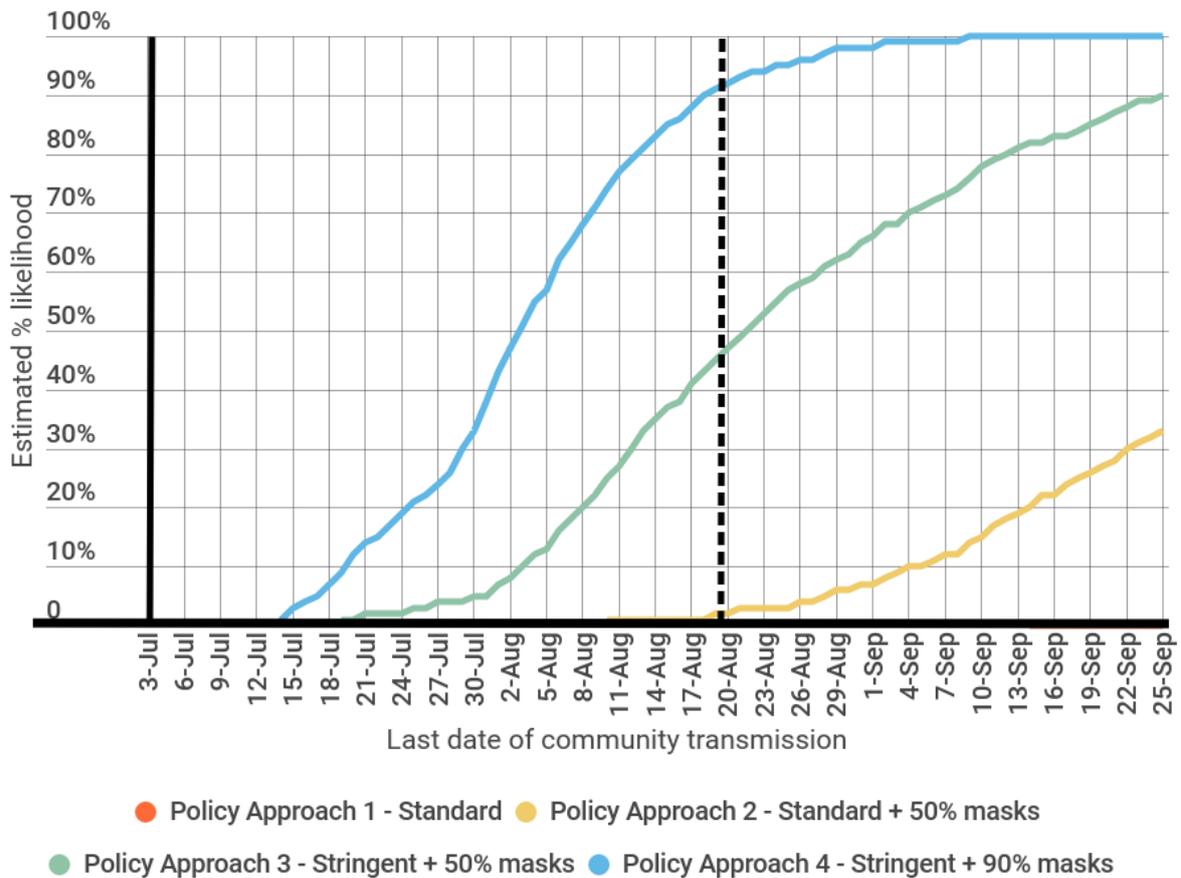
Hard lockdowns and mask wearing can produce zero community spread. Professor Blakely and his team have shown in modelling of Victoria's COVID-19 second wave that a tough lockdown coupled with strict mask policies over a six-week period had a high probability of eliminating the virus.

² See <https://populationinterventions.science.unimelb.edu.au/pandemic-trade-offs-july-2021/>

³ The second model uses a technique known as proportional multistate lifetable modelling and was developed in collaboration with the IHME. More can be read in a recent article published by Professor Blakely and his team, see Blakely, T. *et al.* (2020) 'Proportional multistate lifetable modelling of preventive interventions: concepts, code and worked examples', *International Journal of Epidemiology*, 49(5), pp. 1624–1636. Doi: [10.1093/ije/dyaa132](https://doi.org/10.1093/ije/dyaa132).

Figure 4

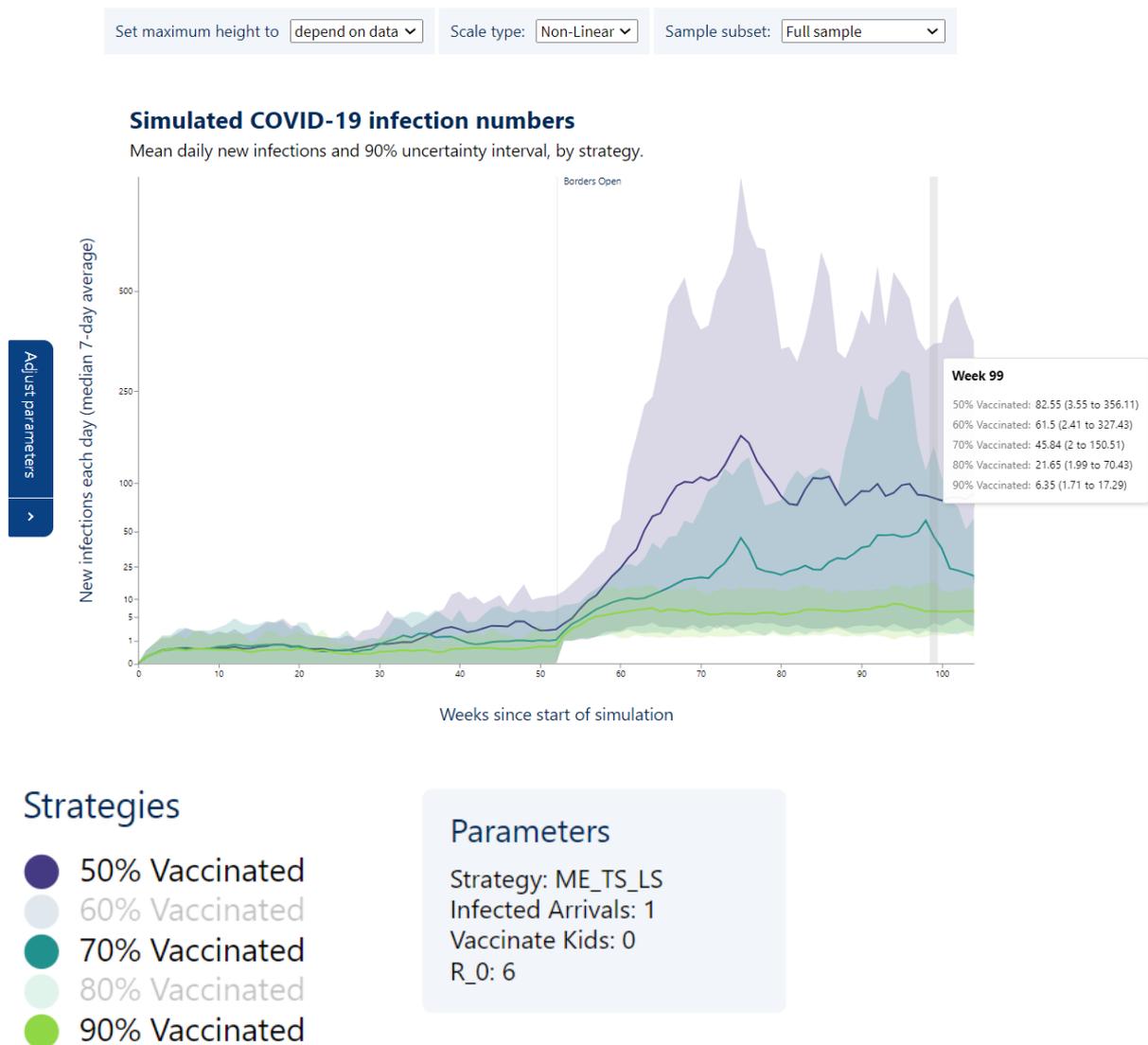
The probability of the 6-week lockdown in Victoria (commencing 9 July 2020) achieving elimination of community transmission of SARS- CoV- 2



Standard policy approach has very little certainty for eliminating the virus. These findings were a watershed event in Australia, as policymakers came to the realisation that living with zero infections in the community was possible. Elimination of the virus whenever it enters Australia from overseas is now written into Australia’s policy of managing COVID-19.

Looser measures increase time spent in lockdown. The situation in Sydney is an example of what can happen if the virus enters, with up to 100 infections at the time of the presentation. Modelling found that the weaker policy response initially adopted in Sydney would have taken between several weeks and several months to reduce new infections to five per day. The modelling concluded that a Victoria-style Stage 4 lockdown would on average take 5.8 weeks to reduce infections to five or less daily cases. Professor Blakely reflected in discussion that it “was this overwhelming evidence that tipped New South Wales into a hard lockdown, because they knew that their policy wouldn’t work.”

Figure 5
Modelling showing daily infections with different policy settings



Herd immunity is not possible through vaccination alone. Figure 5 shows a graphical output of the model. In the first year, prior to open borders infections are low on average. After the borders open infections are higher than the first year but become increasingly manageable with higher rates of vaccination. It is very likely that the virus will still circulate even after vaccination targets are achieved.

Moving policy settings during and after the vaccine rollout: In discussion, Professor Blakely stated that in Australia there needs to be the ability to move up and down different stages of lockdowns. For measures to succeed, high compliance mask wearing, physical distancing, stay at home orders, and economic support are needed. Once higher vaccination coverage is achieved in six months to one year, both Australia and New Zealand will be learning how to live with the virus.

Planning for open borders: When asked how modelling informs policymaking, Professor Blakely emphasised how in Australia in the next 18 months to two years, border restrictions need to be considered to limit the inflow of people to a level where contact tracers can work effectively and keep

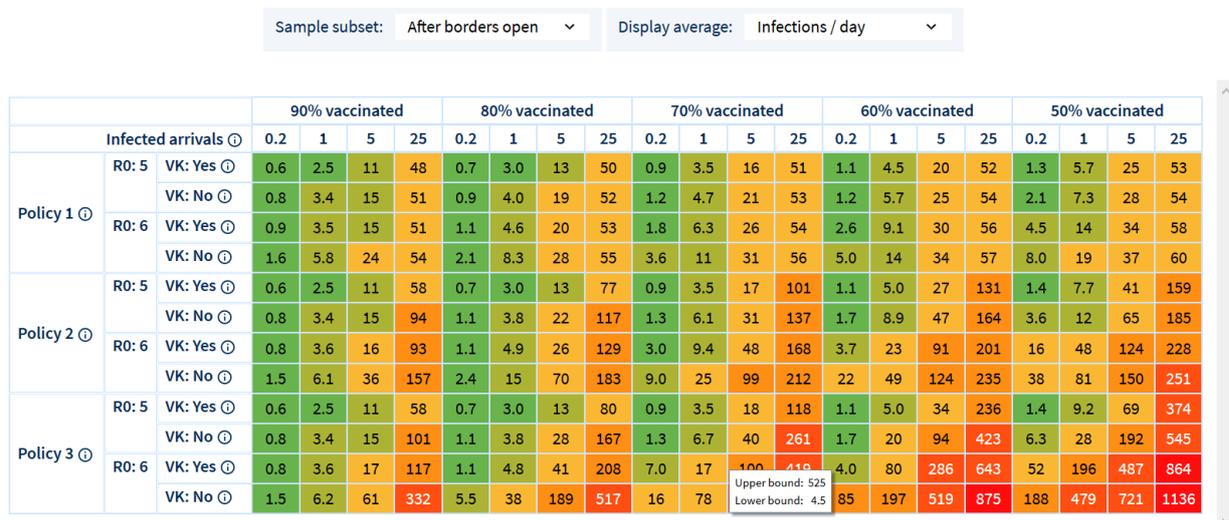
the infection rate low. There will still be incoming people who are not immune, either by infection or lack of vaccination. The exit strategy from this is either through a natural lowering of infection rates over time or encouraging more people to be vaccinated.

Applying the COVID-19 Pandemic Trade-offs tool to Indonesia

This is an example of a heatmap that shows the average of daily infections in the second year. For this model to be more applicable to Indonesia, several changes can be made:

- Vaccination could be treated as ‘vaccinated or immune from infection’.
- Modelling should look at Policy 3, which models ‘Barely Suppression.’ This means only going into lockdown where the numbers are very high.
- Focus on the bracket showing 25 infected arrivals per day, as this makes infection endemic, and multiply this by 40 to take into account Indonesia’s population size.

Figure 6
Heatmap showing average daily infections in Year 2 with open borders⁴



This model shows that 50% immunity could see 35,000 cases or 24,000 infections with 60% immunity. Recent research has shown that around 44% of Jakarta’s population has been infected, while across the whole country around 20% of the population might be infected. It can therefore be assumed that 25% of the population is immune, but this level of immunity has not yet been included in the model.

⁴ This takes into account different policy settings and scenarios, like R0 and the vaccination of children.

Figure 7
Annual deaths in Year 2 using the COVID-19 Pandemic Trade-offs Tool

Sample subset: After borders open Display average: Deaths / year

		90% vaccinated				80% vaccinated				70% vaccinated				60% vaccinated				50% vaccinated				
Infected arrivals		0.2	1	5	25	0.2	1	5	25	0.2	1	5	25	0.2	1	5	25	0.2	1	5	25	
Policy 1	R0: 5	VK: Yes	2.4	8.7	36	149	3.7	15	56	199	6.1	22	95	250	8.7	34	151	297	12	51	214	341
		VK: No	3.1	13	51	154	4.8	20	86	202	7.8	29	128	252	9.5	42	184	297	20	66	240	342
	R0: 6	VK: Yes	3.4	14	53	167	5.9	24	101	220	13	42	177	271	23	77	240	330	46	135	314	384
		VK: No	6.3	21	88	170	11	45	146	222	26	74	200	274	43	117	268	334	79	186	341	412
Policy 2	R0: 5	VK: Yes	2.3	8.7	35	192	3.8	15	57	364	6.2	21	102	634	8.5	38	206	1012	14	71	386	1436
		VK: No	3.2	12	53	339	5.8	18	104	577	7.6	40	203	861	14	68	381	1269	35	107	626	1700
	R0: 6	VK: Yes	3.4	14	58	351	6.1	26	137	694	21	64	338	1139	32	199	821	1672	171	508	1254	2169
		VK: No	6.2	23	135	594	13	78	380	958	64	173	690	1432	186	425	1076	1916	384	804	1496	2388
Policy 3	R0: 5	VK: Yes	2.2	8.7	35	195	3.8	15	58	376	6.1	21	103	757	8.6	38	275	1964	14	93	662	3664
		VK: No	3.2	12	53	367	5.8	18	134	846	7.7	40	253	1776	14	145	801	3528	58	239	1900	5323
	R0: 6	VK: Yes	3.4	14	59	451	5.9	26	222	1169	44	114	733	3069	36	685	2541	5748	512	2105	5155	8843
		VK: No	6.2	23	221	1310	31	202	1111	2897	119	582	2371	5057	693	1802	4457	7563	2000	4901	7358	11394

Deaths would decrease considerably at 60% immunity. Figure 7 is an example of a heatmap that shows annual deaths in Year 2. Using the same assumptions, the second to bottom row might be more applicable to Indonesia. In this case, Indonesia could see 360,000 annual deaths if 50% immunity is achieved, going down to 240,000 deaths if 60% immunity is achieved.

Deciding acceptable risk: The tool can also provide policymakers with an interactive tool to set acceptable parameters. For instance, how many maximum infections per day is acceptable, how many deaths per year, and how many hospitalisations per year. In Figure 8 below, the green cells fit within the criteria set and provide a guideline to the policy settings that should be adopted.

Figure 8
Heatmap showing daily cross-border traveller quotas in Year 2 with different risk settings

Max infections/day (100) Max deaths/year (251) Max hospitalisations/year (3045)
 Max % time in lockdown (10%) Display average: Deaths / year

		90% vaccinated				80% vaccinated				70% vaccinated				60% vaccinated				50% vaccinated				
Infected arrivals		0.2	1	5	25	0.2	1	5	25	0.2	1	5	25	0.2	1	5	25	0.2	1	5	25	
Policy 1	R0: 5	VK: Yes	2.4	8.7	36	149	3.7	15	56	199	6.1	22	95	250	8.7	34	151	297	12	51	214	341
		VK: No	3.1	13	51	154	4.8	20	86	202	7.8	29	128	252	9.5	42	184	297	20	66	240	342
	R0: 6	VK: Yes	3.4	14	53	167	5.9	24	101	220	13	42	177	271	23	77	240	330	46	135	314	384
		VK: No	6.3	21	88	170	11	45	146	222	26	74	200	274	43	117	268	334	79	186	341	412
Policy 2	R0: 5	VK: Yes	2.3	8.7	35	192	3.8	15	57	364	6.2	21	102	634	8.5	38	206	1012	14	71	386	1436
		VK: No	3.2	12	53	339	5.8	18	104	577	7.6	40	203	861	14	68	381	1269	35	107	626	1700
	R0: 6	VK: Yes	3.4	14	58	351	6.1	26	137	694	21	64	338	1139	32	199	821	1672	171	508	1254	2169
		VK: No	6.2	23	135	594	13	78	380	958	64	173	690	1432	186	425	1076	1916	384	804	1496	2388
Policy 3	R0: 5	VK: Yes	2.2	8.7	35	195	3.8	15	58	376	6.1	21	103	757	8.6	38	275	1964	14	93	662	3664
		VK: No	3.2	12	53	367	5.8	18	134	846	7.7	40	253	1776	14	145	801	3528	58	239	1900	5323
	R0: 6	VK: Yes	3.4	14	59	451	5.9	26	222	1169	44	114	733	3069	36	685	2541	5748	512	2105	5155	8843
		VK: No	6.2	23	221	1310	31	202	1111	2897	119	582	2371	5057	693	1802	4457	7563	2000	4901	7358	11394

Opening borders requires new policies and risk evaluation. Professor Blakely concluded that the modelling shows a “bumpy ride” for Australia as it goes through more lockdowns. Once borders open,

quarantine-free travel is only possible with a raft of new policy settings, such as setting limits on daily arrivals from countries with different infection levels. This model can be adapted to Indonesia, though modifications are needed.

Lessons Learned from Pakistan

Increasing vaccinations reduces net harm. In discussion on the value of modelling for policymaking, Professor Blakely reflected on his modelling experience with Pakistan (commissioned by the Asia Development Bank). He explained that in countries like Indonesia the virus will circulate at a level that cannot be restricted through border control and that the priority is working with a health system at capacity towards something like herd immunity. The key for Indonesia is to get as many people vaccinated as possible so that the net health harm is less than if infections ran freely.

Faster vaccine rollout reduces deaths and time in lockdown: In their modelling for the vaccination rollout of Pakistan, Professor Blakely's team compared different speeds in which the country could vaccinate 70% of its adult population. This modelling showed how each rollout scenario compares in terms of infections, deaths, and time in lockdown. Vaccination produces reductions in the number of deaths and time in lockdown, and by comparison does not massively reduce the number of infections.

Trade-offs between infections, deaths, and time in lockdown. Vaccination reduces both infections and deaths, but these parameters also trade off against each other: the greater amount of time in lockdown, the fewer infections and deaths occur.

Mr Abetnego Panca Putra Tarigan



Mr Abetnego Tarigan is the Deputy Chief of Staff of Human Development Affairs in the Executive Office to the President (KSP) of the Republic of Indonesia, a position he has served in since 2020. In this position he focuses on policies concerning universal education, public health, disaster governance and social protection.

In his presentation, Mr Abetnego addressed:

- Institutional and policy responses, particularly to provide social protection to vulnerable groups.
- Current challenges, especially the need to balance the economic impacts of the pandemic and the welfare of the Indonesian people.

Adjusting health targets and priorities

Pivoting to a pandemic response: Healthcare had been an area targeted for improvement by the government in the 2020-2024 National Medium-Term Development Plan. This plan aimed to expand healthcare programs to cover everyone, including vulnerable groups. However, the pandemic has meant that these priorities have had to be adjusted to focus on controlling COVID-19, protecting healthcare workers, providing social protection, and enabling economic recovery with an emphasis on building economic resilience to the impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic. The initial COVID-19 National Taskforce was accordingly transformed into the Committee for Handling COVID-19 and National Economic Recovery (through Presidential Regulation No. 82/2020), with an expanded focus including economic recovery and transformation.

Contextual challenges: Key challenges in policy implementation are Indonesia's vast geography, the large and increasing number of Indonesians living in poverty since the pandemic (27.54 million Indonesians, or 10.14% of the total population, in March 2021), high rates of unemployment, and high rates of informal work (54.37% of the workforce). These factors have been influential in decisions of the government of President Joko Widodo to concentrate on economic recovery.

The government covers treatment costs. Mr Abetnego explained that one of Indonesia's key policies is for the state to bear the costs associated with treatment of COVID-19 patients and to provide telemedicine services for individuals who are self-isolating. The central government has also provided COVID-19 medicine packages for citizens in Jakarta, Bogor, Depok, Tangerang, and Bekasi. Mr Abetnego outlined incentives and compensation for healthcare workers, with budget resources allocated by the Committee for Handling COVID-19 and National Economic Recovery (KCP PEN) until the end of 2021.

Increasing vaccination rates: Through international cooperation, the Indonesian government has secured approximately 480.7 million doses of COVID-19 vaccines (as of 15 July 2021). The government aims to increase vaccination targets from 1 million doses per day in July to 5 million doses per day in August 2021. Importantly, Mr Abetnego emphasised, COVID-19 vaccines are available to everyone at no cost.

Mobility restrictions: Since the early months of the pandemic, the Indonesian government has implemented international travel restrictions and large-scale social restrictions. Mr Abetnego emphasised how these policies regulate many aspects of everyday life, including working and learning from home and the opening hours of shopping centres and restaurants. Mr Abetnego stated that, “self-discipline is the key for mobility restrictions to be successful.”

Social protection for vulnerable groups

Assistance mechanisms: Mr Abetnego outlined how a budget allocation of Rupiah 187.8 trillion (17.7 billion AUD) for support has been distributed through a number of programs, such as the:

- Family Hope Program (Program Keluarga Harapan), a pre-existing conditional cash transfer program,
- Basic Provisions Card (Kartu Sembako), a food distribution program,
- Social Cash Transfer Program (Bantuan Sosial Tunai),
- Pre-Employment Card (Kartu Pra-Kerja),
- Village Fund Cash Assistance (Bantuan Langsung Tunai Dana Desa), and,
- Electricity subsidies.

Assistance has been extended and increased during mobility restrictions. The Social Cash Transfer Program provides 15.9 million people with 300,000 rupiah (30 AUD) per month and this program has been extended until October 2021. Beneficiaries of the Family Hope Program and the Social Cash Transfer Program receive an additional 10 kilograms of rice during the Imposition of Restrictions on Community Activities (Pemberlakuan Pembatasan Kegiatan Masyarakat - PPKM).

Data integration: Further improvements to the Unified Database for Social Protection (used as a basis for registering those who are poor and targeting social protection programs) is crucial to ensure that social protection programs and pandemic responses initiatives are reaching all who need support.

Impact of mobility restriction on vulnerable groups: The government acknowledges that mobility restrictions have significant impacts on economic activity and put pressure on poor and vulnerable groups, and micro, small, and medium enterprises. Mr Abetnego highlighted assistance through tax incentives, an interest rate subsidy scheme, and a fund for three million new small and medium sized enterprises. Mr Abetnego stated that, “the public have always been the priority for us, but economic recovery is needed so that the people’s welfare can be guaranteed.”

Economic wellbeing: Mr Abetnego cited the Ministry of Manpower in explaining that 29.4 million active workers have lost their jobs or had salary reductions because of the pandemic. In discussion, Mr Abetnego described a recent protest against mobility restrictions by taxi drivers (accessed through online and mobile apps) in Bandung, West Java. Disruptions to livelihoods inform why the government has emphasised an approach that balances economic priorities and health protocols. He added that one of the largest complaints about the implementation of the pandemic response has been the slow distribution of social assistance.

Support for the unemployed: The government has identified a gap in the Social Insurance Program: those who unemployed. Mr Abetnego explained that the recently passed Law on Job Creation (Law No. 11/2020) makes important changes to Indonesian labour law to improve productivity and competitiveness, while providing protections to employees. Article 82 of the new Law allows for the

creation of a Job Loss Security Program that will provide the unemployed with cash stipends for up to six months, as well as career guidance and skills training. Technical regulations are still being formulated and this program will likely be managed by the Social Insurance Agency (Badan Penyelenggara Jaminan Sosial).

Current priorities

Increasing testing capacities: Low testing rates and tracing problems relate to limited laboratory capacities, a lack of local government support for supplies, and prohibitively expensive COVID-19 tests. In discussion, Mr Abetnego emphasised a significant gap in testing capacities between Western Indonesia and Eastern Indonesia and between urban and rural areas has resulted in people waiting five days for results in some areas. By increasing the number of laboratories in testing networks and the capacities of Puskesmas (community health clinics), daily testing targets have increased from 4000 tests to 200,000 tests.

Cooperation is essential. For Mr Abetnego, there are several key takeaways from the Indonesian government's response: "First, cooperation is very important to handle the pandemic. For instance, academics play an important role to support data and innovation. Mutual trust is also important. The other takeaway is very practical – supply chain management is strategic to ensure everyone's health and safety."

Dr Ir Udrekh



Dr Ir. Udrekh, SE., MSc., is the Director of Disaster Management Systems for the Deputy of Systems and Strategies at the National Disaster Mitigation Agency (Badan Nasional Penanggulangan Bencana - BNPB) of the Republic of Indonesia.

In his presentation, Dr Udrekh explained:

- How the role of the BNPB in responding to the pandemic has expanded to include public health awareness, resource acquisition, and measures to respond to economic conditions.
- BNPB efforts to increase coordination between levels of government and other actors, such as the Indonesian army.
- Contextual challenges to the government's pandemic response and potential solutions.

Institutional responses

BNPB headed initial National COVID-19 Response Task Force. Dr Udrekh stated that from the early months of 2020 the Indonesian government began pandemic preparation and mitigation efforts, which included limiting the number of incoming flights from Wuhan, the epicentre of COVID-19 at that time. In March 2020, the government established the National COVID-19 Response Task Force comprised of different agencies and headed by the Chief of the BNPB.

Responding to economic impacts: In June 2020, the Indonesian government reflected that the BNPB restricted the response to COVID-19 solely to the health sector, which did not respond to the significant economic impact of the spread of the virus and measures to control it. Dr Udrekh explained that in addition to its COVID-19 response efforts, the government began a coordinated effort to respond to these economic impacts by forming the COVID-19 Response and National Economic Recovery Committee (KPC-PEN).

Multi-level cooperation: Through the COVID-19 Response and National Economic Recovery Committee, the BNPB has increased its coordinating efforts between ministries, government institutions as well as the army and police. The BNPB has also established a network of regional task forces spread across Indonesia's 34 provinces, down to the neighbourhood (RT/RW) level.

Limited resources

Dr Udrekh explained that adequate funding is an issue for BNPB's curative, promotive, and preventive COVID-19 management efforts.

Resource acquisition: Key elements of the BNPB's curative efforts include the distribution of various forms of personal protective equipment, as well as improving medical and testing capacities, such as through obtaining reagents.

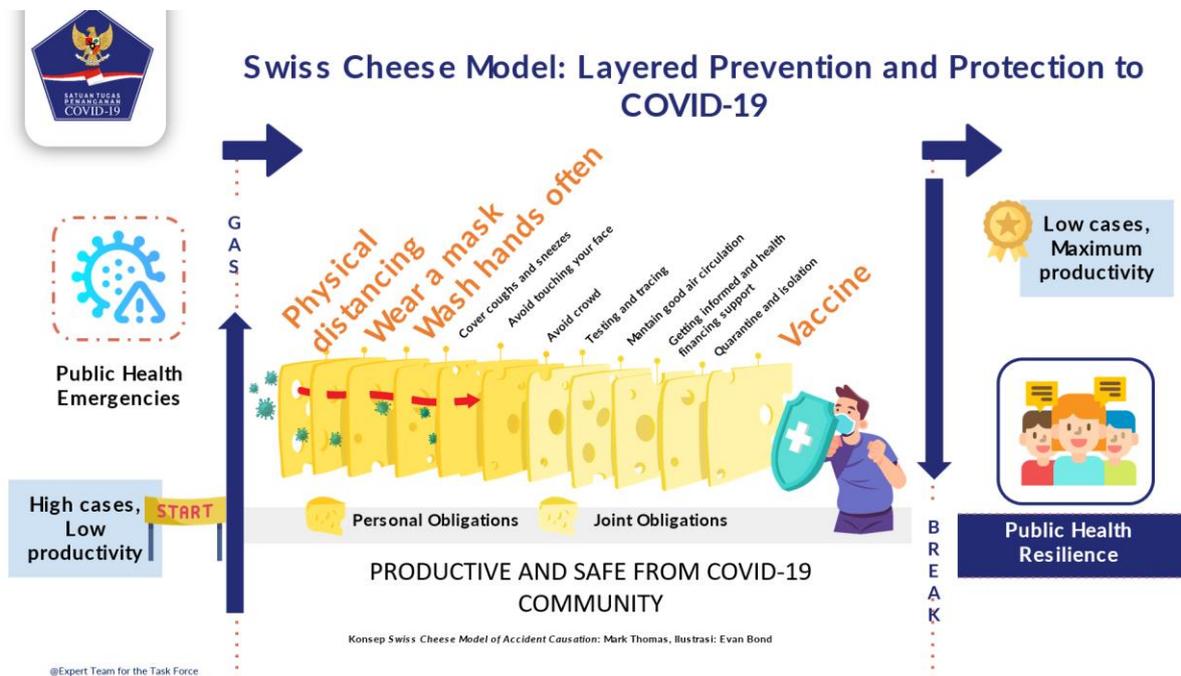
Public health awareness: The BNPB’s efforts also extend into promotion and prevention, including conducting surveillance by collecting data related to health status and socioeconomic conditions. The BNPB has also grown its efforts to improve public health, such as providing nutritional and psychological support to the community. Dr Udrekh explained that as curative efforts to manage the virus require large-scale investment, “lately the BNPB has been concentrating on promotive and preventive efforts as they are more cost-effective, efficient, and sustainable.”

BNPB’s adaptive response

Behaviour changes: Because of limited resources, Dr Udrekh described how the BNPB has used the ‘Swiss cheese model,’ illustrated below, where they divide COVID-19 prevention and protection efforts into personal and joint obligations. The first layers of protection are personal obligations, such as wearing face masks and avoiding crowds. Dr Udrekh emphasised that these practices are “values that we continue to try to instil in communities in an effort to change their behavioural patterns.” He explained that the last lines of defence are joint obligations, including testing and tracing and providing financial support and good health information. The final line of defence in this model are COVID-19 vaccines.

Figure 1

The BNPB’s model of COVID-19 prevention and protection efforts



Accelerating vaccine delivery: A key part of fulfilling joint obligations is ensuring that vulnerable people are vaccinated. Dr Udrekh highlighted that the Indonesian government has taken steps to accelerate the national COVID-19 vaccination program. In July, the government has sought to expand the vaccination rollout, in the hope of reducing the spread of the virus.

Strategies to improve coordination

Pivoting to a health crisis: Dr Udrekh explained the challenges of the BNPB's pandemic response, as it normally deals with natural disasters. Initially, coordination was one of the largest challenges. The BNPB was forced to act quickly and efficiently, however, Dr Udrekh reflected, "even with daily virtual discussion sessions, we often spent entire days trying to coordinate our policies with ministries like the Ministry of Health." Despite these limitations, the BNPB had to produce regulations quickly, which often resulted in unclear policies. Dr Udrekh elaborated that tackling such challenges underpin why the BNPB has tried to shift from a top-down to a bottom-up approach.

Improving data collection: Dr Udrekh emphasised that, "the key issue for us at this stage is data," as Indonesia's size and technological limitations make ensuring data consistency challenging. To address this issue, Dr Udrekh explained that the Indonesian government has tried to implement the 'One Data System' to ensure that information and data is accurate.

Improving multi-level cooperation to implement mobility restrictions: Dr Udrekh argued that for PPKM (Imposition of Restrictions on Community Activities (Pemberlakuan Pembatasan Kegiatan Masyarakat - PPKM) to succeed in reducing COVID-19 to manageable levels, good coordination is needed at all levels. "It is hoped that subdistrict and village task forces will facilitate faster communication of the situation on the ground to central government agencies, so that the effectiveness of PPKM can be more accurately assessed."

Cooperation with the Indonesian army: For Dr Udrekh, the pandemic response has produced better coordination between civil and military agencies, and that the effectiveness of using the Army in COVID-19 management efforts is being continually assessed. In discussion, Dr Udrekh added that the BNPB has involved the Army to directly promote behaviour change to the Indonesian people.

Dr Stephanie Williams



Dr Stephanie Williams was appointed as Australia's Ambassador for Regional Health Security in March 2020. As Ambassador, Dr Williams supports the advancement of Australia's interests in the Indo-Pacific by fostering linkages between Australia's public health and medical research experts and partners in the region. In addition, she guides the implementation of the \$300 million Health Security Initiative for the Indo-Pacific region. Dr Williams is a Public Health Physician and Epidemiologist and has been the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade's Principal Health Specialist since 2017.

Dr Williams provided insights into Australia and Indonesia's health relationship and contributions to global health cooperation, including:

- Support for multilateral efforts, such as the COVAX Advance Market Commitment.
- A practical bilateral health relationship involving collaborative research.
- Long term health preparedness, such as vaccine development capacity-building.

Similarities between Australian and Indonesian responses

Pillars of public health, social protection and economic recovery are common. Dr Williams outlined shared challenges for Australia and Indonesia in communicating with diverse communities, using data in decision making, and adapting responses. Both countries recognise that COVID responses are always in motion. Together, Dr Williams stated, "our engagement has been characterised by constant bilateral communication as well as shared commitment to mutual learning."

Contributions to multilateral initiatives: Dr Williams emphasised how this shared commitment has been reflected in Australian and Indonesian contributions to multilateral and plurilateral events, such as the ASEAN Health Experts Forum, where representatives from the region have, "shown up, shared lessons, and learned from each other." Dr Williams gave the example of the COVAX Advance Market Commitment (AMC), the financing instrument for vaccine supply for developing countries. Minister of Foreign Affairs for the Republic of Indonesia, Retno Marsudi, is the Co-Chair of the COVAX Advance Market Commitment (AMC) Engagement Group and Australia is a financial contributor to the COVAX AMC, to the amount of \$130 million.

The health partnership before and during the COVID-19 pandemic

Australia-Indonesia Health Security Partnership: Dr Williams explained that Australia and Indonesia's health partnership existed well before the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic, has been enhanced during the pandemic, and the partnership will continue with COVID-19. In 2020, the Australian and Indonesian governments announced the Australia-Indonesia Health Security Partnership which is designed to grow capacity in both human and animal infectious disease control between Australian and Indonesian institutions.

Bilateral collaboration: Dr Williams outlined examples of collaboration prior to the onset of the pandemic, including on community preparedness and responses with the Red Cross, research by

Universitas Gadjah Mada and the Kirby Institute at the University of New South Wales about antimicrobial resistance, and surveillance training with Charles Sturt University.

Support during the pandemic: Dr Williams stated that the Australia-Indonesia health relationship has been boosted by Australia's support for the procurement and distribution of commodities by WHO and UNICEF within the Indonesian system, guided by Indonesian requests. Australia has also provided economic support to Indonesia. For instance, in 2020, Australia extended a \$1.5 billion loan for Indonesia's COVID-19 response and recovery.

Vaccine cooperation has been a key focus of the Indo-Pacific Centre for Health Security in recent months. Australia's \$523 million Regional Vaccine Access and Health Security Initiative, announced in October 2020, included \$101.9 million to support access to COVID-19 vaccines in Indonesia. Dr Williams also highlighted the July 2021 announcement of Australia bilaterally sharing 2.5 million doses of the AstraZeneca vaccine to Indonesia.

Pandemic preparedness and policy implementation

Health systems, structure, and access: In discussion, Dr Williams explained that health systems security refers to strong public sector system health systems that have the necessary structures on a population health level to guide government responses to infectious diseases and where an individual can access healthcare. She stated that, "a secure health system, both in a pandemic and in between pandemics, is one in which when an individual turns up with an interest in prevention, treatment, or cure that there is someone to be seen and that they are not impoverished by the attempt to seek healthcare."

Vaccine development capacity-building: Dr Williams cited collaboration between the Commonwealth Scientific and Industrial Research Organisation (CSIRO) and the Eijkman Institute for Molecular Biology to build Indonesia's capacity in vaccine development. Dr Williams emphasised the importance of such initiatives given the inevitability of future health security threats.

Long-term policy preparation: Dr Williams suggested that pandemic preparedness varied between countries and there is no perfect response to this health crisis. She also argued that there have been progressive improvements to health security capacities in our region, which has contributed to pandemic preparedness. Dr Williams stressed a different way of perceiving the COVID-19 pandemic, as not just a significant event but also "an event on a continuum of events, as we have been on a continuum of incremental change in health systems."

Involving citizens and data in pandemic responses: Dr Williams stated that the 2020 Global Preparedness Monitoring Board's review of global COVID-19 responses found that the two most important ingredients for effective implementation have been the quality of political leadership and degree of engagement of the citizenship. Within this, the largest factor is the quality of the policy and the technical advice that informs decision making. Though heterogenous policy responses have been observed, Dr Williams argued that the effectiveness of health policies and responses cannot be separated from the general drivers of governance and policy implementation across all sectors.

Panel 4:
**Promoting Social Inclusion During
and After the COVID-19 Pandemic**

Ms Shawana Andrews



Shawana Andrews is a Palawa Trawlwoolway woman and is Associate Director of the Poche Centre for Indigenous Health and a Senior Research Fellow in the Department of Social Work at the University of Melbourne. She has led Faculty and University-wide Indigenous health teaching and learning initiatives with a focus on Indigenous doctoral advancement and health leadership. Ms Andrews is a social work and public health researcher in areas of Aboriginal mothering, family violence and Aboriginal women's gendered cultural practice and knowledge.

In her presentation, Ms Andrews provided insights on:

- The rapid Indigenous-led response to COVID-19 from early-2020.
- Structures of government engagement with Indigenous leaders and peak organisations.
- Features of effective community mobilisation.
- Ongoing challenges in collaboration with the Federal Government for the vaccine rollout.

A rapid response

The risks for Australian Indigenous people from COVID-19 are significant. Ms Andrews explained that Australian indigenous people face an already high burden of chronic disease, long standing inequity of service division and access to healthcare, and pervasive social and economic disadvantage in housing, education and employment. Twenty percent of Indigenous people also live in remote or very remote areas. The World Health Organisation has highlighted that the inequities experienced by Indigenous communities in Australia compared to other Australians are the largest in the world. Despite national commitment by all Australian governments to close the gap in life-expectancy between Indigenous and non-Indigenous Australians since 2007, annual reports to parliament have shown little progress.

Disproportionate effects of previous pandemics: The 2009 H1N1 Pandemic took a disproportionate toll on Australian Indigenous people. Ms Andrews explained that the death rate from H1N1 was six times higher for the Indigenous than the non-indigenous population. In 2009, Indigenous people made up 2.5% of the total population but accounted for 11% of cases in Australia, 16% of hospitalisations, and nearly 10% of admissions to intensive care units (ICU).

Rapid responses and national-level mobilisation: By the time that the federal government announced travel restrictions to Indigenous areas on 26 March 2020, local efforts to protect communities were well underway. Despite decades of government neglect of policy and funding, Australia's national peak Aboriginal Health Body, National Community Controlled Health Organisation (NAACHO) were quick to create a tailored infectious disease response to the novel coronavirus and mobilise its 143 primary Indigenous primary health services.

Local community responses exercised sovereignty. Early in 2020, some remote communities independently shut their borders. These communities exercised sovereignty that they had rarely evoked but never ceded.

High-level advocacy and leadership: NAACHO, led by Aboriginal woman Pat Turner, successfully advocated for an Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Adviser Group on COVID-19 for the Department of Health, established on 5 March 2020. In discussion on ensuring representation and participation, Ms Andrews emphasised the importance of high-level advocacy to be part of decision making from the beginning. Such advocacy can be contextualized within broader citizenship issues and the push for self-determination and community control, including ongoing processes across various states for Treaty and a national push for a voice to parliament.

Significant shifts in government engagement

The National Partnership Agreement on Closing the Gap: Ms Andrews explained that through this Partnership (formalised in July 2020), Indigenous representatives are for the first time included in a national approach to addressing health disparities. She stated that, “this agreement recognises that fundamental structural changes to the way governments—including public health authorities—work with Indigenous communities is critical to closing the gap.” The National Partnership Agreement set a precedent and provided leverage for NACCHO to lobby the Federal Government about the pandemic response.

Collaborative response and recovery planning: The Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Advisory Group on COVID-19 has provided advice on preparedness, response, and recovery planning since March 2020. Ms Andrews explained that this advisory group works on principles of shared decision making, power sharing, two-way communication, self-determination, leadership and empowerment. It is co-chaired by NACCHO with the Federal Department of Health, and includes the Aboriginal-controlled health sector, state and territory government representatives, and Indigenous communicable disease experts.

Indigenous leadership

Communication and mobilisation: Ms Andrews emphasised how community mobilisation has been “swift, pre-emptive and preceded any of the Australian government’s decisions.” NACCHO understood the disadvantages faced by Indigenous communities, such as literacy, and knew the nuances of Aboriginal communication. Communication strategies included social media, Indigenous TV and radio alongside engaging elders, sportspeople, musicians, artists, and community organisations. Ms Andrews explained that compliance with difficult measures, such as lockdowns in Victoria, demonstrated the capacity of community-led decision making, especially considering the considerable lack of trust in government amongst Indigenous communities.

Considering pandemic responses through an equity lens: The Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Advisory Group on COVID-19 worked toward a brief that ensured that all stages of the pandemic were considered through an equity lens and were proportional to the risk of disease in communities.

A world-leading response: Indigenous peoples have been significantly less affected by COVID-19 compared to other Australians. As of 22 July 2021, there had been zero deaths and ICU admissions, and just 148 cases of coronavirus reported for 800,000 Indigenous people across the country. This success is particularly noteworthy considering the devastating impact of this pandemic on other Indigenous communities worldwide.

Ms Ade Siti Barokah



Ms Ade Siti Barokah is Program Officer for the Democratic Resilience Program at the Asia Foundation, where she works with vulnerable women, youth, disabled people, religious minorities, and other marginalised groups. Her areas of expertise include public policy, poverty reduction, community empowerment and social inclusion. In 2020, she co-authored a book, *Kita Bukan Sekadar Angka* (We are Not Merely Numbers), which discusses the impacts of the pandemic on marginalised groups in Indonesia.

Ms Ade spoke about Peduli, one of the Asia Foundation's programs, which works to create inclusive communities and reduce poverty. While Peduli was started with the support of the Australian government before the COVID-19 pandemic, it has been implemented during the pandemic. Ms Ade discussed:

- Marginalised groups that Peduli supports.
- How COVID-19 has affected the marginalised and vulnerable groups.
- How to build inclusive societies during and after the pandemic.
- Multi-actor and stakeholder collaboration.

Peduli: Promoting social inclusion and reducing poverty

Nationwide program empowering the most marginalised communities through civil society organisations: Peduli (Indonesian: Care) promotes social inclusion and works to reduce poverty by empowering the most vulnerable and marginalised communities who are often not reached by government programs. Peduli awards grants to civil society organisations (CSOs) and works nationwide in 21 provinces, 75 districts and 238 out of Indonesia's 74,000 villages.

Peduli supports multiple marginalised communities:

- Indigenous and isolated communities, such as the Suku Anak Dalam in Jambi, Mentawai people in West Sumatra and the Boti people in East Nusa Tenggara. Ms Ade explained that These people are often stigmatised as being dirty, dumb, backward, or perverted (*sesat*).
- Waria (transgender women), who are often stigmatised as sinners, spreaders of HIV/AIDS and rejected by their families. They face discrimination and bullying in communities and schools, which leads to a lack of education and subsequently difficulties in securing employment looking for jobs.
- Victims of gross human rights violations, such as people who are considered as ex-members or close relations of members of the Indonesian Communist Party (PKI), victims of military operations in Aceh and victims of communal violence.
- Vulnerable children and youth, such as children of migrant workers, child victims of commercial sexual exploitation and children in correctional facilities.
- Persons with disabilities, who are often excluded from social and political activities.
- Religious minorities and followers of local beliefs who often also experience stigmatisation.

Multiple forms of marginalisation: Ms Ade explained that all the groups supported by Peduli experience exclusion from social, political, and economic activities, as well as harassment, stigmatisation, and violence. Stigma and exclusion are related to identity construction and maintained

by social norms, symbolic markers, the absence of inclusive public policy and geographic isolation. Ms Ade described how people who are excluded often face:

- Difficulty accessing services available to others.
- Difficulty obtaining legal identity documents.
- No recognition in government statistics.
- Lack of acceptance by the community and sometimes by their own families.
- High risk of abuse, attack and exploitation.
- Limited capacity to exercise rights.
- Limited bargaining power.
- No access to credit and limited access to economic opportunities.

Pre-existing challenges exacerbated by the COVID-19 pandemic

Insecure work and a lack of government documents increases vulnerability. The marginalised communities Peduli works with were among the hardest hit by COVID-19. Ms Ade stated that marginalised people are often at risk of losing work and income because they commonly work in informal sectors that are heavily affected by social and physical distancing policies. Many are also without labour protection and experience income insecurity. Many also do not have a National ID Card (KTP), making it difficult to access healthcare and support services.

Risks and stigmas of COVID-19: Ms Ade explained how marginalised people experience multiple stigmas if they contract COVID-19, citing the example of a transgender woman who contracted COVID-19 and then experienced difficulties accessing medical care. Members of marginalised groups are also at higher risk of contracting COVID-19 because of poor living conditions and underlying health conditions.

Building an inclusive society

Social inclusion is an obligation: Ms Ade emphasised that social inclusion is important because everyone has a right to be happy and protected from illnesses. Exclusion prevents individuals from benefitting fully from economic growth. Addressing the root causes of exclusion and discrimination will support sustainable, inclusive growth and poverty reduction. Because of this, she stated, “social inclusion is not simply ‘the right thing to do,’ but also the obligation of the state and all of us.”

Policies, access, and change in community attitudes: Ms Ade highlighted that social inclusion should be an integral part of development that is present in all policy decisions, not simply in response to the pandemic. Social inclusion is not a linear process, and as such it is important to identify the most appropriate entry point in each context. She also explained that increasing social inclusion involves improving policy, such as through the implementation of affirmative policies, improving social acceptance, and increasing access to basic services and social protection for marginalised groups.

Data, access, participation in decision-making: Improving policies, social acceptance and access is a gradual process involving many stakeholders from the village to the national level. This involves:

- Improving data collection through efforts like mapping marginalised citizens.
- Incorporating data, usually through district governments, to ensure that members of these communities can access key services like social protection, vaccination and COVID-19 testing.

- Establishing multi-stakeholder forums.
- Ensuring beneficiary groups are involved in development processes.

Small-scale groups can produce positive change. To improve social acceptance, Ms Ade outlined that Peduli has established and empowered ‘solidarity’ groups, as well as community-level volunteer groups. Peduli also has facilitated dialogue with the community, often through cultural, social service and sports activities, although the pandemic has limited these activities to online spaces or very small in-person groups.

Civil society organisations and governments are both crucial. CSOs have a strong competitive advantage in reaching the most marginalised citizens that are not reached by government agencies. At the same time, maintaining good working relationships with government can accelerate the mainstreaming and replication of social inclusion initiatives.

Participation and capacity-strengthening to exercise rights. The representation and active participation of marginalised people is central to ensuring that they have the capacity to exercise their rights and that services meet their self-identified needs.

Diversifying stakeholders and spaces for dialogue: Higher education institutions are important engines for providing evidence and research-based advocacy. Peduli has worked with Universitas Gadjah Mada and its students in promoting social inclusion through activities like “Peduli goes to Campus” in 2020.

Professor Cathy Humphreys



Professor Cathy Humphreys is Professor of Social Work at the University of Melbourne. She is also a Co-Director of the Safer Families Centre of Research Excellence. Professor Humphreys is a Co-Director of the Melbourne Alliance to End Violence Against Women and Their Children (MAEVe), with Professor Kelsey Hegarty. MAEVe draws together academics from across the University of Melbourne to support practice and policy developments in the areas of domestic and family violence, as well as vulnerable children in out of home care.

In her presentation, Professor Humphreys addressed issues and responses associated with victim-survivors of domestic and family violence who have been particularly disadvantaged during lockdowns to curb the spread of COVID-19. The United Nations General Secretary has referred to domestic and family violence as the shadow pandemic. Professor Humphreys provided insights on:

- Increases in domestic and family violence, both in first time reports and the severity of violence experienced.
- Pandemic responses which have had a positive effect on this vulnerable group, by providing financial support and increasing access to some services.
- The limited reach of crisis responses which were in many instances temporary.

The shadow pandemic

Women reported increases in domestic violence, both first time reports and increasing severity. In 2020, an Australian Institute of Criminology survey of 15,000 women found that there was a very significant number of women who reported experiencing domestic and family violence.⁵ Those who had already experienced domestic and family violence reported an increase in severity and many women reported—for the first time—different aspects of coercive control.

Coercive control: Professor Humphreys highlighted that this survey revealed significant increases in perpetrators strategically using the lockdown to further isolate women and children from family, friends, and service providers. There were also reported increases in technological abuse and financial abuse.

Positive policy impacts

Increase in social security payment: Professor Humphreys explained how the Federal Government responded to the pandemic by transforming the very basic social security payment, Newstart, into JobSeeker, and doubling the payment. She stated that this reflects government attitudes toward people who are on social security benefits, “when they realised that a larger portion of the population was going to have to live on these basic benefits, they doubled them.”

⁵ See Boxall, H., Morgan, A., & Brown, R. (2020). “The prevalence of domestic violence among women during the COVID-19 pandemic”. *Australasian Policing*, 12(3), 38–46. 6

Housing protected and provided: A non-evictions policy was introduced, meaning that renters could not be evicted from their properties during the first and second COVID-19 lockdowns in 2020. Similarly, power companies could not turn off power. Homeless people were also taken off the street and housed. Within this group of homeless people were a significant group of women and their children.

Bringing attention to victim-survivors' experiences: Professor Humphreys explained that domestic and family violence thrives in secrecy. To combat this, the media has paid considerable attention to survivors of domestic and family violence, including survivors with disabilities and mental health problems, and those from the LGBTI community.

Shifting services online and telephone: Professor Humphreys stated that funding for telehealth services has had a positive effect for victim-survivors of domestic and family violence. She emphasised that telehealth has considerable reach into rural communities. Chat functions on help lines—which previously had been waiting to be developed for a long time—were funded. Similarly, men's behaviour change groups went online for the first time. Men who had a desire to change had access to these groups and these groups experienced an increase in demand.

New forms of work and collaboration: Professor Humphreys noted that there has been an increase in collaboration between government and non-government organisations. Within the sector, organisational technology workers—who often work behind the scenes—suddenly became front line workers. Practitioners also began working from home. For some workers, this has suited them well and into the future many will want a hybrid of office and working from home arrangements.

Challenges and constraints

Funding did not match demand and crisis measures were temporary. Workers in the domestic and family violence sector have found that they have been working more intensively as increases in demand for services have not been funded. Professor Humphreys emphasised how crisis strategies have been rapidly wound back, even though the pandemic is not over. She explained that, "it was an interesting social experiment – things could be done differently in a crisis and that these had a positive effect."

The most vulnerable were left out of support. Professor Humphreys highlighted that those without citizenship rights have been further marginalised. They have been dependent on the philanthropic sector and volunteers to provide food and help. Casual workers have been left out of support packages. Women dominated industries have continued to be undervalued, such as the childcare sector which was one of the first to lose government support through JobKeeper payments.

Monitoring of children could not happen during lockdown. No 'eyes on the children' through schools, sports clubs or the service system. Professor Humphreys emphasised that child abuse can thrive when children are not observed or interacted with outside the home.

Lasting changes?

Greater exposure of domestic and family violence as an issue of social exclusion. COVID-19 has exposed inequalities and provided attention to a hugely vulnerable and marginalised population of women and children living with abuse. In discussion on how to create support networks and elevate marginalised voices, Professor Humphreys discussed current initiatives, such as a funded victim-

survivor group in Victoria to engage with government and the non-government sector. Professor Humphreys explained that support and funding is needed, “because there can be such isolation and misgivings about what has happened, the sense of empowerment that comes from making experience meaningful and contributing to practice and policy development is often a few steps along the way.” She also noted that thinking about how to listen to the experiences of children who have lived with domestic and family violence is also a current focus.

Value of economic stimulus: Professor Humphreys concluded that COVID-19 has shown the ability of a relatively rich, low population country to respond with economic stimulus and experience its value. Stimulus to the most in need creates a bounce back in the economy. The response to the COVID-19 pandemic showed that there were some benefits to the economy through stimulus and that this had a trickle down effect to the most vulnerable in the community.

Dr Amalinda Savirani and Dr Rachael Diprose



Dr Amalinda Savirani is a lead researcher at the Research Centre for Politics and Government (PolGov) in the Faculty of Social and Political Sciences at Universitas Gadjah Mada (UGM). Dr Rachael Diprose is a Senior Lecturer in the School of Social and Political Sciences (SSPS) in the Faculty of Arts at the University of Melbourne and is the Co-Convenor of the University's Indonesia Forum. Dr Savirani and Dr Diprose have led a recent large-scale research project with colleagues from UGM and the University of Melbourne on Gender, Collective Action and Governance in Rural Indonesia. Drawing on interview data from fourteen villages across nine provinces, this project has produced significant findings on the barriers women confront and the ways that women overcome them to improve their everyday lives, and exercise voice and influence on decisions which affect them. Dr Diprose's website, *Demi Setara* (or 'For Equality') shares their research findings in a variety of forms.

Dr Savirani and Dr Diprose's presentation shared findings of their research project and what has been found by revisiting sites during COVID-19. This research has interviewed 750 village men and women and conducted a survey of 600 people during the pandemic. Dr Savirani and Dr Diprose explained that:

- Village women through small-scale and networked women's collective action have created diverse development outcomes.
- Civil society organisations (CSOs) play an important role in supporting women to grow their skills, knowledge, and agency.
- Networks of support established prior to COVID-19 have been important for women's resilience.
- There has been some backsliding in women's participation in decision making during the pandemic.

Women's influence on development

Progress has been made but more work is needed to address inequalities. Dr Diprose explained that in rural areas in Indonesia, there are often deep patriarchal structures that exclude women from participating in and influencing decision-making processes in relation to development. Their research has found that in diverse contexts across Indonesia women can and do exercise influence on development.

Groups effect change through networks. In rural areas, women's collective action does not occur through large-scale street protests, but rather through small-scale work. Their research calls this process 'women's networked collective action': how village women join a broader network of women and then work with other actors to garner support, using strategies of leverage to put pressure on decision makers and create new spaces for women to exercise voice and influence. In discussion, Dr Savirani emphasised how informal women's groups can be institutionalised, "the question is how this can be scaled up and become more inclusive."

Women face multiple barriers to participation at the village level. Dr Savirani explained that social norms of gender exclusion in public life and decision making make it difficult for women to participate. Women who seek to influence village decision-making or vocally defend their rights often encounter stigma and resistance. Many women reported being threatened when they were perceived to have threatened village power structures.

Change involves moments of advancement and regression. Increasing gender inclusion and women's influence is not an upwardly linear process. As Dr Diprose explained, "it ebbs and flows with moments of quick advancement and regression which tend to happen at critical junctures." These critical junctures include elections, natural disasters, and other external shocks like the COVID-19 pandemic.

CSOs support women to grow capacities and skills for exercising voice. Dr Diprose highlighted that improvements to gender inclusion happen incrementally and CSOs have played a brokerage role in helping connect marginalised groups to decision-making spaces and other actors of influence and by supporting women to navigate the barriers to gender inclusion.

Support for women is critical to increasing participation. Dr Savirani stated that while the Ministry of Villages has tried to prioritise women in policies on village budgeting and district policymaking, changing the rules alone does not tackle social norms about women's participation. Dr Diprose stressed the importance of support from CSOs. She stated, "CSOs are critical in facilitating horizontal connections and ensuring as many people can be brought into organised structures, as well as helping women navigate and negotiate spaces with policymakers and other decision makers." Dr Diprose added that both these dimensions are particularly important in places with entrenched gender norms that exclude women.

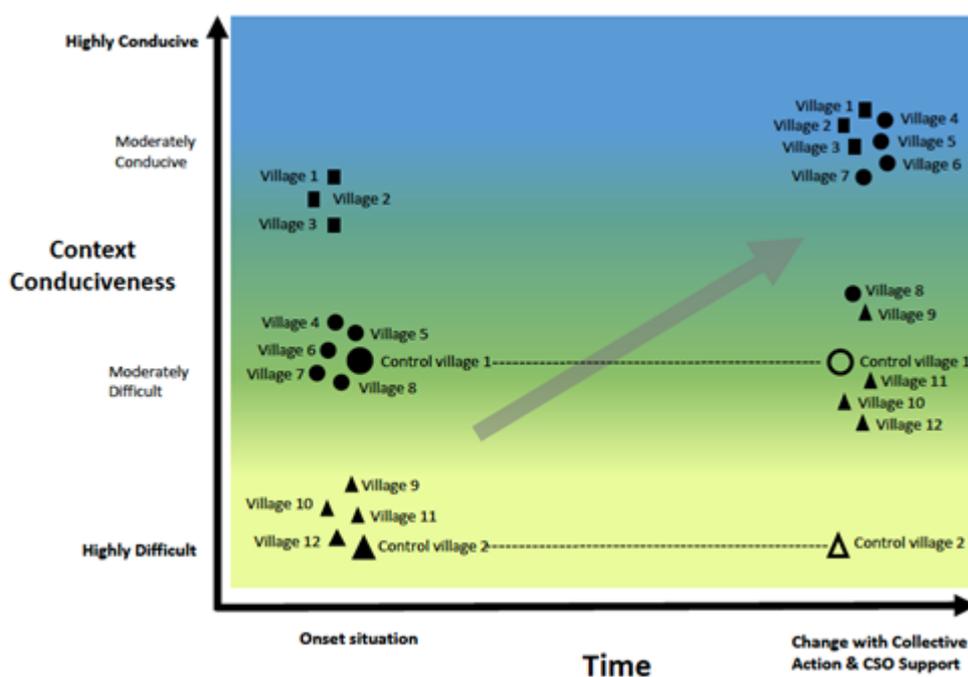
Wider improvements to gender inclusiveness

Common pathways for women to grow their influence: Dr Diprose described how across incredibly diverse contexts their research identified three pathways through which women grew their influence: women's agency and grassroots collective action, support from CSOs to these groups to grow their capacities and influence, and the advocacy work of CSOs in planned and adaptive ways to help women overcome barriers.

Women with support of civil society organisations have created change. In all research sites in which CSOs focused on gender inclusion worked, change was observed over time, but in places where CSOs were not active no change was observed (see Figure 1). The research found that women influenced village development in a variety of ways and that, over time, this action changed the context of villages and districts to have better policies and support for gender inclusion and women's empowerment. Core to this change was working through women's groups. These groups give women legitimacy for participating in formal decision making structures, making them better invited into public decision making and difficult to ignore.

Figure 1

Context change over time with women's action and support from civil society organisations



Diverse development outcomes: Across contexts, village women have produced innovative economic and social policies, projects, services, and infrastructure, new inclusive regulations and policy frameworks, inclusive practices and reach for different community groups.

Women and COVID-19 responses

Women switched livelihoods and were active in community responses prior to the Delta variant. Dr Savirani explained that in some cases switches in livelihood were motivated by mobility restrictions. For instance, in Yogyakarta when the main tourist street closed, homeworkers who produced handicrafts pivoted to making cloth face masks. Women have also established new businesses, including by accessing a government small business scheme.

Women active in mutual support health responses. Midwives and Puskesmas (community health centres) workers have taken the lead in the on-the-ground health response. From the outset of the pandemic, women have also provided mutual support to each other through savings and loans groups.

Women have played key roles at the neighbourhood level during the Delta variant wave. Households have been helping each other by preparing food stations to provide free meals to communities and providing food to ill and isolating relatives. Women have also been providing support for isolation centres. Dr Savirani emphasised how as the severity of the pandemic has grown responses have become more local in scale.

COVID-19 is a critical juncture

Pre-existing networks of support important for resilience. Work by CSOs has given vulnerable groups greater visibility. Dr Diprose explained that female headed households received thirty percent of the first tranche of village-dispersed cash transfers, which reflects work to increase legibility by facilitating access to citizenship documents.

Backsliding in women's involvement in village-level decision making. There are more men than women on village COVID-19 task forces. Dr Savirani noted that as these task forces are part of a top down policy, villages are involved in implementation rather than having the power to change their composition. Men are also more likely to attend decision making meetings, although more women with a background of collaborating with CSOs have attended compared with other women.

Increased domestic violence: There has been increased reports of domestic violence, associated with frustration from lost livelihoods, stay at home orders, extra costs associated with learning from home. The qualitative evidence in this study has been backed up by data from the National Commission on Violence against Women (Komnas Perempuan).

The type of disaster influences the degree of backsliding. While in other disasters, there have been advancements in gender inclusion, this has been less the case during the COVID-19 pandemic. In the most extreme cases, the whole system has collapsed and there has been little women's influence. Dr Diprose and Dr Savirani stressed that the risk of backsliding needs to be a focus of policy attention in the coming months. CSOs concerned with gender inclusion are well placed to continue to bolster women's resilience and support marginal groups during the pandemic.

Dr Manjula Marella



Dr Manjula Marella is a Senior Research Fellow, Nossal Institute for Global Health, Melbourne School of Population and Global Health at the University of Melbourne. Dr Marella is a disability inclusion researcher with core research expertise in qualitative, quantitative and psychometric (Rasch analysis) methods for developing and validating client-reported outcome measures. Dr Marella has led major research projects involving large population-based surveys for informing various disability inclusive programs throughout Asia and the Pacific, including Indonesia, in the fields of public health, inclusive education and evaluating disability inclusion in post-disaster response and recovery.

Dr Marella spoke about the research her team conducted on the impact of remote learning on families of students with disabilities in Victoria, particularly during the 2020 lockdowns. Dr Marella and her team focused on the coping and adaptive strategies adopted by families, their experiences, and to document any learning and teaching methods that were identified to be successful during the remote learning period. In her presentation, Dr Marella explained that:

- Children with disabilities and their families were strongly affected by the transition to remote learning last year.
- Communication between schools, parents and regulatory authorities must be clear when implementing such a policy.
- More flexible support should be provided for families to improve the learning outcomes of their children.
- Lessons and technology need to be adapted to the specific needs of children if they are to be effective.

Communication and tailored learning

Initial government and school communication issues: Dr Marella and her team identified government messaging about school closures and eligibility criteria for on-site learning as an important issue.

Defining vulnerability: Initial government guidelines stated that vulnerable children and children of essential workers could attend on-site learning. Schools initially understood vulnerability as abuse or neglect at home. Many of the participating families argued that the definition of vulnerability should also include students who are disadvantaged in their school learning.

Communication improved with experience: In subsequent lockdowns, some students with disabilities were allowed to return to school, and special schools were also opened apart from during the Stage 4 lockdown (August-October 2020). Dr Marella explained, however, that the definition of 'vulnerability' has continued to be debated, with schools arguing that if students with disabilities can be supported from home, they should stay at home.

Individualised learning brings better outcomes: Parents identified that most strategies applied during the initial Term 2 remote learning were one-size-fits-all, without making adjustments for individual students. When activities were tailored to the individual needs of students, learning outcomes

improved. For instance, Dr Marella cited a secondary student's mother who explained that her son could not engage directly in reading activities but was more engaged when an activity involved podcasting. His comprehension improved as a result of this project.

Digital technology adopted but inconsistently used in mainstream and specialist schools: Some schools sent out working materials to families without clear instructions about what was expected of parents and students, and the use of video conferencing tools varied between schools. In terms of technology, Dr Marella explained that it was often not ideal for students to engage with laptops. For many students it was difficult to transition from the laptop being a medium for having fun to a medium for learning.

Different student responses to digital and non-digital learning: Parents had to come up with strategies to engage students. Some students could engage with hardcopy reading materials while some secondary students found worksheets difficult as they were more accustomed to digital technology. Dr Marella explained that some students also found the use of technology more engaging, especially those who found it difficult to participate in face-to-face interactions at school—they were more comfortable communicating with their teachers via email.

Emotional and social impacts on students

Loss of routines: Dr Marella explained that the overall impact of the pandemic on students with disabilities has mostly been emotional, because of the uncertainty surrounding the situation and the loss of the daily and weekly routines they plan their lives around. This led to confusion, frustration, and anxiety for many students.

Impact on social skills and behaviour: Lockdowns and learning from home has contributed to regression in students' developmental, social, and behavioural skills. Most students have had limited opportunities to engage and communicate with their peers. Though some schools provided opportunities for classrooms to have online conversations, it depended on each child's ability to engage through video conferencing.

Longer-term effects: Some students have experienced long-term effects in the new academic year, especially for students transitioning from primary to secondary school or finishing secondary school. The inability to access previously accessible support systems has led to a regression in some skills for these children.

Maternal support: Dr Marella and her team observed that most of the time, it was mothers who contributed to remote learning, often to the extent that they had to give up their jobs and career opportunities to support their children.

Flexible use of NDIS funding required: Although there is the National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS) for formal disability support, additional therapies that most of these students have in terms of speech or occupational therapy were non-existent during lockdown. However, there was some flexibility in the NDIS funding as some families tried to use the disability support to support their children's learning activity.

Ongoing advocacy and collaboration

Research needed on the experiences of disadvantaged families. Dr Marella explained that one of the limitations of her team's research is that they could not capture the voices of families from lower socioeconomic backgrounds or culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds. She emphasised how even the well-resourced families who participated in the research struggled.

Advocacy remains important: Advocacy has been key to ensuring that the government specifically considered students with disabilities in their pandemic policies. In Victoria's lockdown in May 2021, for instance, options for students with disabilities were clearly discussed at the outset.

Data collection should consider impacts: Dr Marella emphasised that data collection on disabled people was already challenging prior to the pandemic. Whilst there is good quality data on disabled people in Australia, Dr Marella suggested that the nature of the data makes it difficult to disaggregate and assess the specific impacts the pandemic has had on disabled people.

Strong partnerships and engagement are key: Dr Marella argued that education responses to COVID-19 would be more effective if there were strong partnerships between regulatory bodies, schools and families of students with disabilities. She explained that the examples presented in the session by other speakers showed the importance of engaging with marginalised groups, in line with the disability advocacy slogan, "nothing about us, without us." Marginalised groups must be included in all stages of planning, from preparedness to response and recovery.

Ms Emily Heng and Ms Citra Gantiaji



Ms Emily Heng is the Director of Operations at the Australia-Indonesia Youth Association (AIYA) and a student in the Bachelor of Global Studies and Bachelor of Laws (Honours) programs at Monash University. Ms Citra Gantiaji is the President of the Jakarta chapter of AIYA and the Program Coordinator at the Australian Consortium for 'In-Country' Indonesian Studies (ACICIS), where she plans and coordinates high-quality short-term programs for Australian and other international students to study in Indonesia.



Emily and Citra spoke about social inclusion before and after COVID-19, specifically from the perspective of the Australia-Indonesia Youth Association (AIYA).

In their presentation they described how:

- Youth have rallied together to maintain a sense of connection, and
- Despite the circumstances of the pandemic, chapter (branch) members from both countries have not been dissuaded from coming up with new ideas to constantly energise Australians and Indonesians to connect with one another.

Connections despite restrictions

Connecting despite mobility restrictions: AIYA's vision is "to connect, inform, and inspire," and the organisation has focused on connecting Australians and Indonesians throughout the pandemic, despite the lack of travel and mobility programs. Ms Heng and Ms Gantiaji emphasised how AIYA has taken steps to ensure that their events are accessible to their international student membership, who have been heavily impacted by the pandemic.

Variety of events: One of the events that all chapters in Indonesia hosted was a scholarship information session, especially to promote the Australia Awards Scholarship. The scholarship strongly encourages women, people with disabilities, and people from geographic focus areas in Indonesia to apply.

The Jakarta chapter, that Ms Gantiaji heads, started "AIYA Connect," an initiative to reach, discuss and inspire youth across Australia and Indonesia about issues that are relevant and up-to-date in their communities. The first two sessions covered mental health and saw close collaboration with several mental health advocacy groups.

Focus on networking: The Jakarta chapter has collaborated with Indonesian Youth Opportunities in International Networking and AIYA National to discuss and give tips about online networking during the pandemic. To date, the Jakarta chapter has organised several competitions to encourage youth to participate in the Australia-Indonesia space. One was a writing competition themed "Heroes" that received more than 120 submissions.

Australian chapters have hosted in person events where possible: AIYA has also held sport events, recognising that it is a good way to include people from different backgrounds. Other hybrid and digital

events include a Careers Night, where AIYA New South Wales live streamed the event on Facebook, as well as the movie night “As Worlds Divide”, which explored the Mentawai people of West Sumatra, Indonesia. Ms Heng and Ms Gantiaji emphasised the importance of better mutual understanding, so that Australian and Indonesian youth can work productively and contribute to strengthening cooperation between the two countries.

Reflecting the digital turn in organisational structures: Realising that digital events are a key way for promoting social inclusion where people cannot meet each other physically, AIYA also started a Digital Operations portfolio. AIYA now has a Digital Events team and a Digital Education team.

Formal programs to promote social inclusion:

- **Pathways mentoring program:** Organised by AIYA in conjunction with CAUSINDY (the Conference of Australian and Indonesian Youth). The program is a valuable way for young members to access mentoring and support as well as career tips from people who are more established in fields related to the Australia-Indonesia relationship.
- **Women’s Empowerment Special Project:** A project where participants discuss women’s empowerment issues in both countries and create meaningful friendships.
- **Kumpul** (Indonesian: Come Together): As AIYA’s Indigenous Engagement Special Project, Kumpul brings together Australian-Indonesian youth to recognise and elevate Indigenous issues in both countries. AIYA has made sure that people who identify as Indigenous from both Australia and Indonesia participate in the running of Kumpul. It is hoped that the discussion of the bilateral Indigenous cultures will not only be confined to particular events like NAIDOC (National Aborigines and Islanders Day Observance Committee) Week, but will instead become a permanent part of AIYA’s platform within the Australia-Indonesia relationship.

Support for people-to-people links: AIYA also works very closely with government institutions such as DFAT and the Indonesian Embassy in Canberra, which provides funding for AIYA events and initiatives. Both governments have been supportive of building people-to-people links. Ms Heng and Ms Gantiaji explained that people-to-people links are important because they are the basis of including marginal people such as women, international students and indigenous students.

Changes and challenges

Connectivity and technology: COVID-19 resulted in the cancellation of in-person events and the transition to online events. This pivot exposed challenges for collaborative organisations, such as variable internet services. For example, the internet connection of the East Nusa Tenggara chapter is not as reliable as the Jakarta chapter.

Events were run by multiple team members. AIYA also provided training for committee members to develop their technical skills, ensuring that they were comfortable with their new working environment and confident in delivering online events.

Digital fatigue: Another challenge being faced is ‘screen fatigue.’ AIYA understands that most committee members are working and/or studying from home, requiring them to spend long hours in front of their electronic devices.

Regular events maintain engagement: Ms Heng and Ms Gantiaji explained that to maintain engagement with their audiences, they tried to have regular events that were hosted consistently, so

that members would have something to look forward to. When hosting events, they have taken steps to make sure that it is as engaging as possible by using breakout rooms, ice-breaking activities, and question-and-answer sessions.

Digital events as opportunities: Ms Heng and Ms Gantiaji emphasised that one of the opportunities of the pandemic was that it encouraged AIYA to adopt digital events, which in turn allowed them to reach a larger audience. In this sense AIYA has thrived—its membership reached 600 by July 2021, which represents a large increase over its membership of 470 in 2019.

Future plans

Keeping what works: Ms Heng and Ms Gantiaji outlined that AIYA plans to retain successful projects at the national and chapter level, such as their Women’s and “Kumpul” Special Project.

More variety of events: AIYA also plans to use diverse event formats, such as online, digital and hybrid forms to accommodate people who are based remotely or outside of existing chapters.

Diverse channels of communication: Lastly, AIYA will use more varied communication channels to reach its members.



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