

Ms Gillian Cordy
President
Australian Federation of Modern Language Teachers Associations

By email: president@afmlta.asn.au

Dear Ms Cordy

Thank you for reaching out to express your concerns regarding the availability of Indonesian and German at the University of Tasmania. Your commitment to this matter is greatly appreciated.

At the University of Tasmania, we agree that the provision of foreign languages provides many opportunities for individuals, communities and Australia including strengthening the pipeline of language professionals and the broader pedagogical, cultural and economic value.

We share your belief that language programs are critical to Australia's future and have been advocating at both state and federal levels for investment in languages at all levels of the education system in Tasmania and across Australia.

The reason investment is needed is that, while we have sought to sustain our Indonesian program as long as we could because of its importance, cuts to university funding and especially the loss of international student review means we can no longer afford to cross-subsidise a language program with very low enrolments.

Despite our efforts to sustain our Indonesian program, like many across Australia it has faced long-term declining enrolments. In 2024, we had 24 students studying Indonesian across all year levels, which amounts to less than the equivalent of five full-time students (EFTSL). The funding we receive from those students is well below what we need to support an Indonesian program.

What makes it more challenging is that without significant intervention there is no prospect of this changing. Sadly, there is no pipeline of pre-tertiary students in Indonesian language in Tasmania. Furthermore, from a total cohort of approximately 12,000 Year 11 and 12 students in Tasmania, only 145 studied a language of any kind last year.

This is a challenge that no single institution can solve alone. It requires a

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coordinated response at both the state and national levels in Australia, and with our partners in Indonesia. We strongly advocate for the development of state and national language strategies that provide the right type and scale of investment to maintain and build impactful programs.

To give you a sense of what it would look like to run a viable program, we would need two Indonesian language academics at the University of Tasmania. These educators would both teach at the University and work with the wider education sector to increase opportunities for Indonesian language learning in primary and secondary schools in Tasmania. They would also play a vital role in mentoring and supporting Indonesian language teachers across the state.

I would welcome the opportunity to connect with you to understand how we might jointly advocate and find opportunities for an enduring approach to language provision in Australia. As a nation, we need both a state and national language education strategy and the right type and scale of investment to maintain and build impactful programs.

I am confident that this dialogue will contribute meaningfully to the development of our shared aspirations for language education.

Kind Regards,



Professor Rufus Black
Vice-Chancellor

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