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AIC launches rapid research exploring COVID-19's impact on Indonesia

The Australia-Indonesia Centre (AIC) is launching 12 new research projects that will explore the impact of COVID-19 on Indonesia's economy and society.

Indonesia has been one of the countries hardest hit by the coronavirus in Southeast Asia. As the crisis continues to spread, it is disrupting the country's [economy, connectivity and health systems](#).

In the health sector, the pandemic has caused major issues for hospitals' procurement and supply chain processes, including for personal protective equipment (PPE). As a result, healthcare professionals have faced high levels of uncertainty around their safety at work.

The marginalisation faced by those with a disability has been exacerbated, especially for women. Amid weakened health and wellbeing infrastructure they remain the most vulnerable to violence, poor health and economic exclusion.

The tourism sector, among the biggest drivers of Indonesia's economy contributing 6 per cent of GDP and providing livelihoods for tens of millions of people, has been devastated. Women, youth and low-income groups are the most affected.

"COVID-19 is redefining our view of vulnerability, from every aspect of the economy and society, including jobs, health, supply chains and education", says Dr Eugene Sebastian, Executive Director of the Australia-Indonesia Centre.

"Rapid research projects are our front-foot response to better understanding the pandemic and its impact."

Sixty Australian and Indonesian researchers from the AIC's consortium of 11 universities will collaborate on these 12 projects, which are divided into three areas: People and Health, People and Connectivity, and People and Economic Recovery. Topics include:

- Assessing occupational health and safety risks for front line health workers
- Improving COVID-19 data integration across health systems.
- Increasing the effectiveness of government communication strategies to influence behavioural change in communities, and
- Reimagining healthcare supply chains using smart digital technology and big data.

Contact details and more information on next page

“Within a short turnaround time,” says Dr Sebastian, “the researchers will produce timely analysis drawing from the best available evidence to help inform the policy community.”

“Because of COVID-19, researchers are not allowed to travel and will have to come up with new ways to access data and conduct research. The 12 projects we have selected all demonstrate innovative approaches to doing research remotely and working in virtual teams,” said Dr Sebastian.

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About the AIC

The AIC was established by the Australian and Indonesian Governments in 2013. It brings together 11 universities – seven Indonesian and four Australian – to advance people-to-people links in science, technology, education, innovation and culture. The AIC designs and facilitates bilateral research programs, taking research outcomes to policy and practice. It forms interdisciplinary teams that work collaboratively with stakeholders – policy, business and community – to find solutions to regional, national and global challenges.



Beyond research, the AIC’s outreach activities contribute to broader people-to-people links. It runs digital dialogues that seek to shed new insights. It supports the deepening of cultural exchange through a binational short film festival, explores respective national attitudes and perceptions towards each other, and brings together future leaders of both nations workshops, dialogues and other programs.

Visit the [AIC website](#) for more information.

The Small Rapid Research projects are part of the AIC’s [Partnership for Australia-Indonesia Research](#), funded by the Australian Government.

More information on next page

About PAIR

PAIR is the flagship program for the AIC's new research model, supported by the Australian Government, the Indonesian Government, the South Sulawesi Provincial Government and the AIC's eleven university partners.

Focused on South Sulawesi, PAIR explores the western coastal region of the province where a new 145-kilometre railway line is being built, connecting two major cities and three regencies: Makassar, Maros, Pangkajene, Barru and Parepare. It will explore four key areas: seaweed as a major commodity; transport, logistics and supply chain; young people health and wellbeing; and young people skills and development.



Visit the [PAIR website](#) for more information.

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