

## **Media release.**

### **DACC–BPPI Memorandum Of Understanding Signed: Shared Heritage Across Indonesia, The Netherlands And Australia**

#### **Introduction**

The Dutch Australian Cultural Centre (DACC) and BPPI (Badan Pelestarian Pusaka Indonesia – Indonesian Heritage Trust) have signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) establishing a framework for cooperation focused on shared heritage between Indonesia, the Netherlands, and Australia.

The MoU reflects a shared understanding that the histories of the three countries are deeply interconnected through maritime and mercantile activity, war, migration, exile, education, and long-standing people-to-people relationships. It provides a structured basis for collaboration in research, documentation, heritage preservation, and public engagement.

#### **Shared Heritage Between Three Countries**

The heritage connections between Indonesia, the Netherlands, and Australia extend back several centuries and are not limited to the twentieth century alone. From the seventeenth century onwards, Batavia (now Jakarta) functioned as the principal Dutch administrative, maritime, and mercantile centre in the region. Many of the earliest European voyages that charted the Australian coastline were organised, supplied, or dispatched from Batavia, embedding Australia within wider Dutch–Indonesian trading and navigation networks.

These early maritime and mercantile connections laid the foundations for later historical intersections. During the Second World War, Australia became a crucial crossroads for Dutch and Indonesian histories. Dutch military forces operated from Australian territory, and the Netherlands East Indies Government-in-Exile functioned in Australia, including at Camp Columbia in Brisbane. Indonesians were present in Australia during this period as soldiers, workers, students, and political actors.

Camp Columbia, as a major Allied staging camp and the location from which the Netherlands East Indies administration operated in exile, represents a unique convergence of Australian, Dutch, and Indonesian wartime histories. These interactions were followed by post-war migration, diplomatic change, and evolving cultural relationships that continue to shape communities in all three countries.

#### **Purpose And Scope Of The MoU**

The MoU establishes a non-binding framework for cooperation grounded in mutual respect, historical accuracy, and inclusive, people-centred heritage approaches. It does not create legal or financial obligations but provides a platform for collaboration where interests align and resources permit.

Areas of cooperation include joint or complementary research, documentation of shared heritage sites, exchange of archival knowledge and methodologies, public engagement activities such as exhibitions and talks, collaborative publications, and the use of digital platforms to make heritage accessible to broader audiences.

An initial focus under the MoU is cooperation on mapping and documenting wartime graves linked to Indonesian, Dutch, and Australian histories, researching the personal stories associated with those

buried, and supporting commemorative initiatives in Australia relating to Indonesian wartime heritage.

### **BPPI And Its Leadership Context**

BPPI is Indonesia's leading civil society organisation dedicated to the preservation of tangible and intangible cultural heritage. Its work spans research, advocacy, capacity building, and community engagement, and it plays an important role in shaping public understanding of Indonesia's historical landscapes and collective memory.

The supervisory board of BPPI is chaired by Hashim Djojohadikusumo, a prominent Indonesian businessman with extensive experience in international business, finance, and investment. His role within BPPI is supervisory and strategic, contributing institutional oversight and an international outlook to an organisation focused on heritage and civic engagement.

Hashim Djojohadikusumo is the younger brother of Indonesia's current president, Prabowo Subianto. This family relationship is noted here solely as background context and does not imply any institutional or personal involvement by the President in BPPI or in the cooperation established through this MoU.

### **Dutch Connections Within The Family Context**

From a heritage perspective, and without implying political relevance, it is worth noting that the family histories of many Indonesian leaders reflect broader Dutch–Indonesian connections during the late colonial and early post-colonial periods.

In this context, Hashim and Prabowo's father, Sumitro Djojohadikusumo, one of Indonesia's most influential economists and policymakers after independence, studied in the Netherlands, including in Rotterdam. His education reflects a wider tradition of Indonesian intellectual engagement with Dutch academic institutions.

On the maternal side, Hashim and Prabowo's grandparents lived and died in the Netherlands, with documented residence in The Hague. This places part of the family's history within Dutch social and cultural life in the mid-twentieth century.

These references are included to illustrate broader historical patterns rather than to single out individuals, and they are presented solely within a heritage and historical context.

### **Relevance For DACC**

For DACC, the signing of the MoU with BPPI reinforces its mission to preserve and promote Dutch–Australian heritage within a broader regional framework that fully acknowledges Indonesia's central role. It aligns with DACC's focus on migration history, wartime heritage, maritime and mercantile connections, and the enduring legacies of Dutch–Indonesian–Australian interaction.

The MoU strengthens DACC's capacity to work collaboratively on shared heritage projects that are historically grounded, internationally connected, and attentive to differing perspectives across the three countries.

### **MoU Explainer: What This Agreement Does And Does Not Do**

The MoU provides a framework for cooperation rather than a binding contract. It expresses shared intent to collaborate where interests align and resources allow.

The MoU does:

- Recognise shared Dutch–Indonesian–Australian heritage
- Support joint heritage research and documentation
- Encourage people-to-people and community-based heritage initiatives
- Facilitate dialogue, knowledge exchange, and public engagement

The MoU does not:

- Create legal or financial obligations
- Commit either organisation to specific funded projects
- Imply political alignment or endorsement
- Replace the independence or governance of either organisation

The Mou was signed in January 2026.