

INVESTMENT AND TRADE COMMISSIONER FOR ASEAN

**118. Ms L. METTAM to the Premier:**

I refer to the Premier's comments about the vital importance of Indonesia to strengthening the WA economy, especially regarding critical minerals.

- (1) Can the Premier confirm that it has now been over three years since our state has had a full-time and in-country Trade and Investment Commissioner based in Jakarta?
- (2) Will the Premier advise why the position of WA ASEAN trade commissioner remains vacant after six months?

**Mr R.H. COOK replied:**

- (1)–(2) The reason that we have not had a full-time trade commissioner in Jakarta for some time is a little thing that happened around 2020, which was called COVID. Obviously, it was necessary to recall the trade commissioner. Upon reinstating the trade commissioner roles, we installed the ASEAN trade commissioner into Singapore, because it was a safer jurisdiction with the public health issues that were impacting on Jakarta at the time. I do not know; that just strikes me as sensible, really.

Obviously, the reason we have investment and trade officers in the ASEAN region is that the ASEAN region remains an important market for all our industries and, in particular, Indonesia. It has a population of around 260 million people, and it is literally closer to us than Sydney. It represents a huge opportunity for us, which is one of the reasons that I have engaged deeply with the Indonesian trade interests and the reason that I took the largest delegation, trade mission, to Indonesia last year, ever in the state's history.

We went to the ASEAN business summit. There were 180 delegates from Australia at that conference, 80 of whom were from WA. We are taking very seriously our relationship with Indonesia. That is why we continue to make sure that we engage on every level, including the memorandum of understanding that we have with the Indonesian Chamber of Commerce and Industry, which explicitly talks about opportunities to develop our critical minerals industries together. That will continue to be an important part of our work.

Currently, our acting ASEAN trade commissioner is in Jakarta; Bryce Green is a fluent Indonesian speaker. He is a former resident of Jakarta with deep relationships in that community at government and industry levels. He is doing a great job on behalf of the people of Western Australia, making sure that as part of our investment and trade network right around the world, we continue to make sure that we put WA on the front line of all these business and investment opportunities right across the globe. Indonesia is part of that. That is why we have our people on the ground there today; they are not only in Jakarta but also Singapore and right across the entire region. Just last year, I opened a new office in Ho Chi Minh City. We are continuing to expand our network, continuing to put Western Australia first, and making sure that we are continuing to grow our invest and trade opportunities.