

## **ACU Human Flourishing Centre to tackle regional challenges**

Australian Catholic University (ACU) has launched a new research centre bringing together leading academics from Australia and Indonesia to address the region’s most pressing challenges.

ACU and leading Indonesian university Universitas Gadjah Mada today announced the establishment of the Indonesia-Australia Human Flourishing Centre, which will support collaborative research, student exchanges and joint doctoral programs in service of a flourishing humanity.

The centre will focus on research areas critical to both countries, from public health and education to interfaith relations and social cohesion. It will help deliver solutions that make a tangible difference to people’s lives.

The Centre was launched with events in Jakarta and Yogyakarta that brought together university leaders, researchers and senior diplomatic officials and leaders from government and industry.

ACU Vice-Chancellor and President Professor Zlatko Skrbis said the initiative marked an important step in strengthening research partnerships between Australia and Indonesia.

“Indonesia is home to the most dynamic research and innovation ecosystems in Southeast Asia,” Professor Skrbis said.

“By bringing our researchers together, we can develop solutions to shared challenges and nurture the next generation of global scholars, translating ACU’s mission into real-world impact for communities across Australia, Indonesia and the wider Asia-Pacific.”

“Our approach is purposefully mission-driven, interdisciplinary and impact-oriented, ensuring that world-class research is harnessed to improve lives and strengthen societies.”

The partnership will support:

- joint research projects
- co-supervised PhD programs
- researcher mobility
- student exchange opportunities
- industry collaboration.

UGM Rector Professor Ova Emilia said the centre would deepen academic collaboration.

“This partnership will enable our researchers and students to work together on projects that have real impact for communities in Indonesia and across the region.”

The centre reflects growing collaboration between Australia and Indonesia in higher education and research.

Indonesia is the world’s third largest democracy and has the largest Muslim population in the world. The Southeast Asian nation is also a key partner for Australia in the Asia-Pacific.

The Centre will honour the legacy of the late Pope Francis, who undertook an apostolic journey to Indonesia, where he called for interfaith dialogue and renewed efforts to improve human flourishing.

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ACU Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Research and Enterprise) Professor Abid Khan said the Centre would bring unique perspectives from the Global South to international conversations about human flourishing.

“Human flourishing is about helping people live healthy, happy and meaningful lives,” Professor Khan said.

“The impact of research in this space is huge – from healthcare that treats the whole person to education programs that focus on student wellbeing and interfaith initiatives that strengthen social cohesion.

“Many of the issues facing our region require cross-border research collaboration. This centre provides a platform for that work.”

The Indonesia-Australia Human Flourishing Centre builds on research at several prestigious international institutions. ACU has previously collaborated with Harvard University’s Human Flourishing Program and Baylor University’s Institute for Global Human Flourishing.

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