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Nursing agenda drives Indonesia-Australia collaboration

JAKARTA/MELBOURNE, 15 January 2024 – New prospects are opening for Indonesia’s nurses, with the launch of a new activity to expand bilateral cooperation in nursing between Indonesia and Australia. With the support of Katalis, a government-backed economic cooperation program, the Australia Indonesia Centre (AIC) will consider how Indonesia and Australia can work together to build skills in Indonesia’s nursing workforce and take advantage of emerging cross-border opportunities.

Australia’s demand for qualified nurses is far greater than its domestic supply, and the gap is likely to continue to grow, while in Indonesia, there are more nurses than jobs. In addition, Indonesia’s ambitions to become a global hub for medical tourism rely on access to specialist nursing skills, which are still very limited in Indonesia but well established in Australia. The new activity will explore these issues and identify options for both countries to build nursing skills and increase mobility as guided by the Indonesia-Australia Comprehensive Economic Partnership Agreement (IA-CEPA).

Paul Bartlett, Director, Katalis said, *“The opportunities for Australian and Indonesian nurses, and healthcare sectors, are significant, if the right foundations are in place to support stronger mobility and cooperation. We’re excited to work with the Australia Indonesia Centre to better align health professional standards and access to health services in both countries, with the full support of the Indonesian and Australian governments.”*

Over the next six months, Katalis and AIC will assess market gaps and needs, and equivalence of nursing qualifications in each country, as well as progress discussions between professional bodies in both countries. Their work will provide the necessary information and analysis to support closer alignment in nursing education between Australia and Indonesia, and inform mutual recognition of nursing standards and practice.

Dr Eugene Sebastian, Executive Director, the Australia-Indonesia Centre, said, *“Activities like this take action on our commitment to bring Australia and Indonesia closer together to share in the mutual benefits of cooperation. By leveraging our network of health and nursing experts and industry connections across both countries we will identify ways to address workforce gaps and create opportunities for individuals which can lead to better health systems for all.”*

The new activity follows previous work by Katalis to expand links between Australia and Indonesia in nursing, with the completion of a comparative assessment of nursing standards in Indonesia and Australia in March 2023. It also builds on Katalis’s success in other sectors, with Katalis playing an instrumental role in supporting Australia and Indonesia to establish a Mutual Recognition Agreement (MRA) for professional engineers in June 2023, which has created new opportunities for Indonesia’s engineers.

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About Katalis

Indonesia-Australia Comprehensive Economic Partnership Agreement (IA-CEPA) Economic Cooperation Program Katalis (Katalis) is a unique, five-year (2020-25) government-backed business development program unlocking the vast potential of economic partnership between Australia and Indonesia. Katalis was established under the IA-CEPA and complements other Australian development programs with a commercially oriented, bilateral approach that prioritises gender equality and social inclusion.

About the Australia-Indonesia Centre

The Australia-Indonesia Centre (AIC) is a bilateral collaborative research initiative established by both governments, leading universities and industry. Its mission is to advance people-to-people links in science, technology, education, innovation and culture.

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