



PRIME MINISTER
CANBERRA

15 JUL 2006

Mr Roger Trundle
Managing Director
Thiess Pty Ltd
179 Grey Street
SOUTH BANK QLD 4101

Dear Mr Trundle

Thank you for your letter of 4 May 2006 regarding Australia's bilateral relationship with Indonesia.

I appreciate your taking the time to share the views of the Board of Thiess Pty Ltd and the Advisory Board of Thiess Contractors Indonesia. Your company's long and successful involvement in the Indonesian market is a notable feature of the increasingly mature commercial relations between our two countries.

The Australian Government is naturally taking very seriously the issues raised by the recent unauthorised arrivals from the Indonesian province of Papua. In recent years, Australia and Indonesia have developed strong cooperative links across a broad range of issues and I am determined that no single issue should be allowed to jeopardise the continued strength of this relationship.

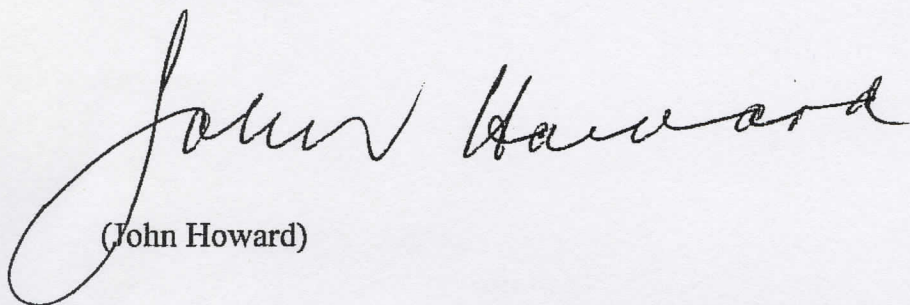
As you are no doubt aware, I travelled to Batam Island in Indonesia between 25-27 June, where I met with President Yudhoyono to discuss the bilateral relationship. During my meeting with the President I reiterated Australia's firm support for Indonesia's territorial integrity, including its sovereignty over Papua. I also reiterated the government's broad support for the implementation of the Special Autonomy plan for Papua, including economic development and respect for human rights. The visit was also an opportunity for me to reaffirm Australia's commitment to continuing to strengthen the bilateral relationship, and to reaffirm the importance of enhancing our cooperation to tackle challenges we both face, including terrorism, illegal fishing and people smuggling.

I note your suggestion with respect to placing restrictions on the conditions of protection visa applicants. If Australian laws are broken, the government will respond, however given the very great value Australia places on freedom of expression and individual liberty, we do not have any plans to place restrictions on visa holders from lawfully expressing their personal beliefs. During my

meeting with President Yudhoyono I stressed the government's opposition to Australia becoming a staging point for Papuan separatist movements.

Your letter also indicates Thiess' preparedness to contribute to a broader process of dialogue between Australia and Indonesia. I welcome your commitment to the bilateral relationship and commend your willingness to contribute constructively to dialogue with Indonesia. I have copied this letter to the Minister for Foreign Affairs, and I am confident that his department will ensure that your participation is sought in any forums in which your expertise may be of value.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "John Howard". The signature is written in dark ink and is positioned above the printed name.

(John Howard)