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PM Correspondence - Advancing IA-CEPA through a Strategic Australia-Indonesia VET & Skills Partnership

Dear Prime Minister Hon. Mr Albanese,

I write with great respect to convey a strategic proposal to strengthen and enhance the Australia-Indonesia IA-CEPA framework through a scaled investment in Vocational Education and Training (VET), skills partnerships, and workforce-development pipelines—including the establishment of a Training Loan / Skills Investment Facility to support this initiative.

Australia and Indonesia are entering a decisive phase of bilateral cooperation. IA-CEPA has already created one of the most open and forward-looking economic partnerships in our region. The next step is to translate this framework into a long-term, skills-driven human capital alliance that secures Australia's workforce needs while supporting Indonesia's national human-capital transformation.

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**Indonesia's National Priority: Human Capital Transformation**

Under the leadership of President Prabowo Subianto, Indonesia has mandated a comprehensive reform of its education and vocational training system. This includes:

- Integrated VET pathways from secondary school to college level
- Competency-based curricula aligned with global industry standards
- Strengthening English, LLN, STEM, and digital capabilities
- Workplace-based learning to ensure graduates are skills-ready and job-ready
- Structured pathways to employment in global industries

This reform agenda aligns directly with Australia's strategic requirement for reliable, ethical, and well-prepared skilled-worker pipelines.

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**Australia's Strategic Objective: Securing Long-Term Skills Supply**

Australia faces one of the most acute and persistent labour shortages in the OECD. Over the next decade, it is estimated that nearly one million skilled workers will be required across construction, engineering, mining, energy, healthcare, ICT, agriculture, logistics, and advanced manufacturing.

Your leadership has consistently emphasised the importance of deeper cooperation with Indonesia. In this context, IA-CEPA provides a unique mechanism to complement Australia's domestic VET system by building offshore, Australia-aligned training capacity—reducing long-term pressure on local labour markets while supporting productivity, infrastructure delivery, and economic growth.

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### Geoeconomic Context: The Urgency to Act

President Xi Jinping has publicly committed China to accelerating investment in Indonesia's human capital, particularly through vocational education and technical training. This underscores a broader geopolitical reality: Indonesia's human capital has become a strategic asset contested by major powers.

Australia's response should be decisive, values-based, and partnership-driven—leveraging IA-CEPA to ensure Australia remains Indonesia's most trusted and impactful skills partner.

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### The IA-CEPA Opportunity: A Skills Superhighway Between Nations

An enhanced IA-CEPA Skills Partnership can deliver:

- WACE + Australian VET programs delivered in Indonesian schools
- TAFE and RTO qualifications (Cert II–IV, Diploma, Advanced Diploma) delivered in Indonesia
- Joint Centres of Excellence in engineering, health, ICT, logistics, mining, construction, and energy
- Industry-led apprenticeships and traineeships across both countries
- Global-standard English and micro-credentials
- Ethical, structured skilled-migration pathways aligned with Australia's labour demand

To support scale and sustainability, we respectfully propose consideration of a Training Loan / Skills Investment Facility—enabling shared public–private investment in skills infrastructure, delivery, and workforce mobility under IA-CEPA.

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### Strategic Value for Australia

A strengthened Australia–Indonesia VET and skills partnership would:

- Secure a long-term, high-quality workforce supply for Australian industries
- Support the objectives of the National Skills Agreement and TAFE leadership
- Enhance Australia's economic resilience and regional influence
- Contribute to regional stability through inclusive human-capital development

As you have stated, Prime Minister, “Indonesia is an important partner for Australia,” and “closer cooperation with Indonesia is essential for a stable and prosperous future.” This initiative gives practical effect to that vision.

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### ATVETI's Readiness to Support

ATVETI works closely with:

- More than 1,000 Indonesian colleges and universities
- Over 75,000 secondary schools, including approximately 30,000 vocational high schools
- Key Indonesian ministries and provincial and local governments nationwide

We stand ready to support the Australian Government, states and territories, industry, and education providers in designing and implementing this partnership in a manner that delivers measurable outcomes for Australia's workforce and economy.

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### Conclusion

A strengthened IA-CEPA Skills Partnership is not only an education initiative—it is a strategic economic and workforce investment. It offers Australia the opportunity to help build the Indo-Pacific's largest skills-ready workforce while securing the labour foundation required for national development over the coming decades.

I would be honoured to provide further briefings or participate in discussions at your convenience.

Thank you for your leadership and continued commitment to Australia–Indonesia cooperation.

Yours sincerely,

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