Commodified Islam in Indonesia

Speaker
Assoc Prof Greg Fealy

Date and Time
Tuesday, 20 May 2014
1.00 pm – 2.30 pm

Venue
Bankstown Campus
Building 23, Room G.40

RSVP
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Abstract
Islam’s influence on contemporary Indonesian culture has grown considerably in recent decades and is evident in a variety of trends. First, there is the rise in pietistic behaviour, such as the performance of ritual obligations and wearing of overtly Islamic attire. Second, there is the burgeoning ‘Islamic economy’, which encompasses sharia banking and insurance, the Muslim fashion and publishing industries, and new forms of educational institutions. Other areas include the ‘Islamic’ tourism and hospitality sectors, online religious services, multi-level marketing, and Islamic management and spiritual renewal courses for executives.

According to some estimates, this Islamic economy has expanded by more than 40% per annum during the past ten years. The presentation surveys this Islamic sector, analyses the factors driving its growth and considers the impact that changing patterns of religious behaviour has on Islamic identity and outlook.

Of particular interest is the way in which Islam is commodified and ‘consumed’ by well-to-do urban Muslims. The impact of such commodification on the nature and content of Indonesia’s Islamisation, and the theoretical approaches to understanding such processes will also be discussed.

Biography
Greg Fealy is associate professor of Indonesian politics and head of the Department of Political and Social Change, in the College of Asia and the Pacific, The Australian National University. He gained his PhD from Monash University in 1998 with a study of the history of Nahdlatul Ulama, published in Indonesian under the title Ijtihad Politik Ulama: Sejarah NU, 1952-1967.


He is the director of the AusAID-funded Partnership in the Islamic Education Scholarships (PIES) program. He was the C.V. Starr Visiting Professor in Indonesian politics at the Johns Hopkins University School of Advanced International Studies, Washington DC in 2003 and has been a consultant to AusAID, USAID, The Asia Foundation and BP. From 1997 to 1999 he was an Indonesia analyst at the Australian Government’s Office of National Assessments.