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## Newsletter – April 2015

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### Our Inspiration

John (Paddy) Kenneally was a young private with the 2/2 Independent Company of the Australian Army which was stranded in Timor by the Japanese invasion of 1942.

After his return to Australia he did everything in his power to make known the story of the Australians on Timor. He often said:

*"We went to Timor and brought nothing but misery on those poor people. That is all they ever got out of helping us – misery."*



*"In 1942 we were just a handful of men, short of everything and fighting an all-conquering enemy. We only survived because of the Timorese people's help. We were living off them. We arrived in Timor with plenty of ammunition but only one month's rations ..."*

The success of this Australian operation was mainly due to the selfless support of the Timorese people. They helped the Australians by feeding them, housing them, nursing them when most were struck down with malaria, and by acting as lookouts, warning them of the whereabouts of the Japanese. When the Australian forces were withdrawn, these loyal Timorese were left to the mercy of the Japanese who regarded them as hostile. Between 40,000 and 60,000 Timorese were killed as a result of bombing or in reprisal, all civilians under a neutral Portugal.

Paddy returned many times to Timor over the years. He sought out Timorese who had assisted the Australians and did all he could to assist them, saying: "The Government has never really acknowledged our debt to the Timorese from the War. All the Timorese ever got from helping us was misery."

Paddy's efforts to repay 'the debt of honour' intensified after the Indonesian invasion of East Timor in 1975. He was relentless in his determination to support the people in their struggle for self-determination.

Paddy's son Gerald is continuing his father's work of assisting the people of Timor-Leste to achieve their desires. They want good education for their children and secure jobs so that they can live happy and productive lives.

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## Water on tap, but not yet up the hill

There is an educational institution in Dili called *Instituto de Ciências Religiosas* (ICR), and it is a formation centre for lay people and teachers for Catholic religious education which has been working successfully in Timor-Leste for 25 years.



It has 500 students, half of whom are from rural areas and board at the Institute, going home only in the holidays. Some of its past students are currently working in various sectors such as in the schools, as teachers of Catholic religious education, and in the parishes, as catechists, while others are involved in private sectors. The Government is keen to use the services of these well-trained men and women, and many of the students have no difficulty in getting jobs in the State schools.

One of the biggest challenges has been the lack of water supply for the needs of the campus and the dormitories. There was a pipe line previously in use, but it is no longer functioning. The problem hugely affected the activities of the campus, so much so that they had to buy the very expensive water that was delivered by tanker nearly every week. To overcome this issue, the Institute decided to drill for a ground water supply to be piped to the campus dormitories and provide much needed water for the ablutions area.

ATLAS was able to assist with this important project, and local contractors have drilled deep and found spring water as a result of finance supplied by ATLAS. The project is an ongoing one, with further pumps to be installed to ensure that the water becomes available to the whole site. Being built against a mountain, the terrain is very steep, adding further challenges to the task of getting potable water to the student

All in all, a great success, but a work in progress.

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## We Wood Work

The woodwork project was established by Gerald Kenneally to honour the memory of his father “Paddy” Kenneally, an Australian soldier on Timor in 1942.

There is demand in Timor-Leste for school furniture such as blackboards, cupboards, tables, desks, as well as teaching resources, including skills development games and jigsaw puzzles. This demand is growing and there is every indication that a successful business could provide such teaching aids without the Timorese having to access them in other countries.



Crosses currently being made by the woodwork project in Timor-Leste are being used in the Funeral Industry in Australia, and certain types of crosses are also proving popular among Australian buyers. Sales in Timor-Leste, particularly for use in Churches, are also promising. The first employee, Vitál António de Jesus, has commenced work and has sent his first report.

The longer term plan for the project is the development of the Funeral industry in Timor-Leste. This will include the manufacture of good quality coffins and the introduction of appropriate facilities and management skills. This will be done in consultation with the Timorese people, with respect for customs and culture.

Education and training will underpin the whole enterprise which will address both management and skills needs. ATLAS is preparing to raise \$20,000 to cover wages, materials, rent of premises and ongoing overheads as the enterprise develops. The hope is that a flourishing, self-supporting industry will develop for the good of the nation of Timor-Leste.

Your assistance in this would be a wonderful way for you to be part of the great Australian acknowledgement of the debt we owe the Timorese people. They don't want a handout – but a hand up, and through establishing industries, Australian can help to pay the debt.

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**[www.AtlasEastTimor.com.au](http://www.AtlasEastTimor.com.au)**

C/O St. Joseph's Parish  
231 Newbridge Road, Chipping Norton NSW 2170  
Phone: +61 2 9602 1083  
Fax: +61 2 9601 2046