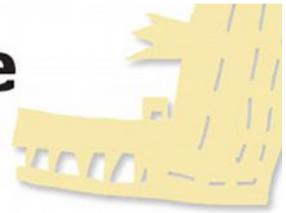




Australia Timor-Leste Advancement Society



Newsletter – May 2015

Here is the second newsletter of ATLAS, the Australia Timor-Leste Advancement Society.

It was wonderful to know that ex-Prime Minister Xanana Gusmão attended Anzac Day ceremonies in Australia, and you can read about that in the newsletter.

We're going to be having an information event on Sunday 27th September which we think will interest you greatly. You can read about this and about St Therese's Orphanage in this edition.

Very best wishes to you from all at ATLAS.

Visit from friends on Anzac Day

The strong links between Australian and Timorese people received an extra boost at the centenary of ANZAC in April 2015. Each capital city was fortunate to welcome a number of Timorese veterans in the very well-attended marches held on Anzac Day itself. The veterans came to Australia with His Excellency Kay Rala "Xanana" Gusmão, the Minister for Investment and Strategic Planning.



Xanana Gusmão and Lere Anan Timor laying a wreath at the War Memorial

Mr Gusmão was arrested in 1992 and spent 7 years in an Indonesian jail, until the referendum of 1999 saw his return as an honoured hero. He served as the President of Timor-Leste when independence was restored in 2002, and recently relinquished his next role as Prime Minister, in favour of bringing new blood into the Parliament.

Recognition of the role of the veterans in the recent history of East Timor was fitting at the Anzac celebrations. These courageous men and women kept the flame of hope alive in

East Timor during the Indonesian occupation 1975 – 1999, spending years in the mountains as a guerrilla force. They were supported by villagers throughout the country, often at the cost of the villagers' lives. The tales of the endurance and patriotism of the Timorese people are testimony to the love of their people and their culture, and their presence in Australia at this special time was an honour for the people of both nations.

Accompanying Mr Gusmão was Major General Lere Anan Timor, the commander of the F-FDTL, the Timorese military, who himself had a distinguished history as a guerrilla leader during the occupation. [Read as an online post...](#)

Protecting vulnerable children

Despite the tremendous efforts to develop the country since it gained its independence in 1999, East Timor remains one of the poorest countries in Asia. 41% of the population live below the poverty line of US\$0.88 cents per capita per day. Children are among the most vulnerable members in Timorese society: 58% suffer chronic malnutrition; 38% suffer from anemia, malaria, diarrhoea and other diseases and 20% have no access to primary education. Orphaned children are among the most destitute – often left without a home or relatives who can care for them.



A secure start in life

Thankfully, there are orphanages in Timor-Leste, like St Therese's at Maubara, which are there to provide loving care for these little ones. Saint Therese's was first located in Likisa. The building was totally destroyed in the violence following the independence vote, 1999. The children were then housed in overcrowded conditions in a small dwelling in the neighbouring area of Maubara.

New premises were built in 2002 thanks to funding provided by GOAL, Irish Overseas Development Fund. St Therese's now provides a loving home for 46 children, ranging in age from 6 to 16. They come from 12 of the 13 Timorese districts and arrive through the concern of priests and sisters.

Education is a priority for the children and the Sisters ensure that they have every opportunity to attend school. Children of pre-school age attend the kindergarten attached to the orphanage. Older children travel to primary or junior secondary schools in the area while senior students attend high schools in Dili.

Funds are needed to help the Sisters provide what is necessary for the children's livelihood i.e. nutrition, clothing, shelter, education, healthcare and transport. The Sisters assure us that they rely on ATLAS's financial support to provide the basic essentials for the children. The average cost of caring for a child is US\$50 per month. The Sisters and the children thank you for your generous support. [Read as an online post...](#)

Timor Time

Come to an entertaining and informative lunch time event on Sunday 27th September at Dooley's Catholic Club, Lidcombe, 12 noon for 12:30.

A great meal will be available at the bargain price of \$48.00. Get a table of 8 together and enjoy the company of friends.



You could be sitting here for Sunday lunch

One of the highlights will be the presence of the Ambassador, His Excellency Abel Guterres. There will be emphasis on ATLAS's WWII connection via Gerald, Paddy Kenneally's son. There will be Timor displays, a raffle, dancing and singing by Timorese Youth Club, and speakers will include Mr Gerald Kenneally and Sisters Susan Connelly and Josephine Mitchell.

The work of ATLAS will be the focus, with an emphasis on the importance of Timor to Australia and how we need to keep abreast of the developments which affect us all.

Contact Rayella on 8807 8894 for tickets. Don't miss this great opportunity to learn more about the debt Australia owes to the Timorese people!

Every Australian needs to be aware of our near neighbour Timor-Leste.

“Your friends will not forget you”that's what we said.

[Read as an online post...](#)

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