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## Newsletter – September 2015

An Information Day for ATLAS which included a most enjoyable dinner, was held on Sunday 27th September at Dooleys Catholic Club Lidcombe. The Board and Committee of ATLAS organised the event, and the 200 people who attended enjoyed with them an afternoon of “Timor Time”.

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

*Very best wishes to you from all at ATLAS.*

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### ATLAS – a group keeping the promise

**Mr Gerald Kenneally**, Chairman of ATLAS, welcomed some very special guests - the widows of four of the Australian commandos who served on Timor in 1942. They are Betty Devlin, wife of Michael Devlin, Jean English, wife of James English, Maria Hartley, wife of John Hartley, and Yvonne Langley Walsh, wife of Vincent Walsh, and Nora Kenneally, wife of John (Paddy) Kenneally. Gerald presented each widow with a corsage in remembrance of their husbands.



*Jean English, widow of James English, 2/2 Commandos*

He reminded the patrons present of the promise made to the people of Timor in 1942 from the Australian Government: “Your friends donot forget you”. Unfortunately that promise was not kept during the dark days of the Indonesian occupation when men like Gerald’s late father Paddy tried to remind the Government and the people of Australia of how much Australia owed to the Timorese people. Gerald recognised that although Timor-Leste has gained its independence it continues to have its struggles. However this tiny new nation is willing to grow and ATLAS can support the Timorese people.

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## Special Guests at Timor Time

The **Foin Sa'e Timor-Leste Culture Group** danced, bringing a wealth of tradition and culture to the event.



**Joan Westblade LCM** was welcomed to the dais and was presented with a certificate declaring that she is an honorary member of ATLAS. Her amazing work in Timor over many years in health education and community support has made her a well-known presence in Timor where she is affectionately known as “Madre Johanna”. Not only has she worked tirelessly to improve the standard of health but she stood with the people in their struggle for dignity and freedom.

**Josephine Mitchell RSJ** has been instrumental in connecting people, helping them to help others for many years. She has been a mentor and exemplar, always ready to listen and with her enormous intuition able to offer wise counsel and practical advice.

Children have been Josephine’s concern for many, many years and she addressed those present at “Timor Time” about ATLAS’s work for children through the Maubara orphanage.



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## Dr Kirsty Sword Gusmão OAM

**Dr Kirsty Sword** has held positions of high responsibility in her various roles in Timor-Leste and has been instrumental in the betterment of health care for mothers and children and in the championing of mother-tongue education. Dr Sword Gusmão spoke to the guests at “Timor Time” of the aspirations of families for a better life in Timor and of the advances that this small neighbor of Australia has made.

Some of the initiatives which Dr Sword Gusmão has undertaken include:

The **Xanana Gusmão Reading Room**, the first public library to operate in East Timor after the end of Indonesian Occupation.

The **ALOLA Foundation** which addresses the many needs of Timor-Leste women. It has contributed to the dramatic reduction in rates of infant mortality, immunisation rates and girls’ completion of secondary schooling, and is effective in the fields of education, advocacy, economic empowerment and maternal and child health.

As **Goodwill Ambassador for Education** Dr Sword Gusmão has focussed on the huge education needs throughout the territory, administering a Rural Schools Development Program building schools in the most remote and disadvantaged communities.

Her commitment to education and women’s rights are acknowledged internationally because of the significant contributions they have made to East Timor and its people.

Everyone at ATLAS's Information Day, “Timor Time”, appreciated Dr Sword's presence and informative speech.

The Board and Committee of ATLAS were thrilled with the outcome of the day.

**The Board:** Chairman Gerald Kenneally, Greg Mills, Paul McGrath and Father Graham McIntyre

**Committee:** Noreen Nicoara, Janet Borg, Stephen Dillon, Rayella Haines, Josephine Mitchell and Susan Connelly. Like so many groups in Australia, ATLAS members give their time, keen to keep that promise made in the name of Australia,

**“Your friends do not forget you”.**

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