



Australia Timor-Leste Advancement Society



Timor-Leste... *The Independence Vote!*

Memories and Celebrations

The 25th anniversary of the Vote for Timorese independence recalled the courage of the Timorese on 30th August 1999 when they overwhelmingly voted for freedom, thus ending the 24-year occupation by Indonesia.

The process of the ballot included the presence of many international observers who testified to the dignified and resolute determination of the people to gain their freedom.

One Australian observer later spoke of being deeply moved when travelling to a polling place in the early hours of the morning and seeing hundreds of people dressed in their Sunday-best clothes, emerging from a misty valley, all with their voting papers held tightly in their hands.



Timorese dancers in St Marys Cathedral November 1995

The peaceful conduct of the vote mirrored the general attitude of the people from the time of the invasion in 1975.

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An ATLAS Fund-raiser



Australia Timor-Leste Advancement Society invites you to a fun afternoon of Trivia

Join us to catch up and enjoy the trivia
Prizes and raffles

Dooleys Regents Park

Sunday 27th October 2024

12:30pm arrival for a 1pm start

Bistro opens at 12 noon

Tickets \$20 ★ **10 people per table**
Limited numbers

★ **RSVP 6th October 2024**

9833 8152

info@atlaseasttimor.com.au



A Message from Greg Mills of the ATLAS Board

Hello, I'm Greg Mills, a Board Member and the secretary of ATLAS. I work in a Team with Paul McGrath, Noreen Nicoara and Stephen Dillon, and we are responsible for the day to day management of ATLAS.

Like any organisation there is a lot of work in the background to ensure that ATLAS stays "on the ball".

We are volunteers, supporting our other volunteer committee members who are responsible for running the projects that deliver outcomes for our Timorese friends.

Some of the things the directing Team does include:

- ensuring compliance with government regulations and reporting to the Australian Charities and Not-for-profits Commission (ACNC);
- attending to day to day activities like donation receipts, finance reporting, funds transfers;
- organising events like Timor Time and Timor Trivia and assisting our fund-raising efforts, which includes ATLAS merchandise: T-shirts, mugs, key rings and so on.
- marketing and communication services that are provided by Stephen and Vanessa Dillon's business "Invisible Ink".

We work closely with our ATLAS committee members who ensure that the projects you support through your generous donations directly assist the Timorese people. The needs in Timor-Leste are great and so this is a great challenge.

Two years ago, we engaged a local Timorese person, Maria dos Santos, to help us in making sure our projects are run successfully, and that our clients are correctly using the funds that you, our supporters, donate. It also gives us a local presence that enables us to collaborate more closely with the people we serve.

Gerald Kenneally and I visited Timor last year on a self-funded trip to get a closer look at how the ATLAS projects are going and we saw much being achieved.

Some issues we identified were:

- we weren't always identifying projects where we could help because not many people knew about ATLAS in Timor;
- we need to build better relationships with government, other charities working in the field, clients, and recipients;
- we need to better manage how we distribute our funds to the projects rather than the lump sum transfers that we have made in the past.

We met with a number of local people who work in the aid sector and we were advised the best way to address these issues would be to have a formal presence.

That meant we needed to establish a not-for-profit foundation or charity, not unlike ATLAS here in Australia. But we wanted it to be run by local Timorese people. Therefore we had to find Timorese people who were willing to donate the time and effort to supporting ATLAS in Timor

In Australia setting up a charity is a relatively easy process – in Timor it isn't.

So, we had to engage a local solicitor to help, and it has been a journey of twelve months of paperwork, government registrations, dealing with banks and navigating all the rules required to set it up. We hope in the next month or two we will have the final sign off. Then the

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will be in business – so to speak.

But none of this could happen if it wasn't for the supporters and donors of ATLAS - and that includes all of you.

We wanted you to know something of the inner workings of ATLAS.

We are all working together with you to carry out our joint commitment – helping the people of Timor-Leste to lift themselves out of poverty.

I wish to convey to each of you my heartfelt thanks and that of all the members of ATLAS.

Greg Mills

ATLAS and Saint Isabel Aged Care Community Centre - Aileu

Your friends do not forget you



Poverty remains dire in Timor-Leste

ATLAS considers this a very worthwhile project – assisting the aged and disabled while at the same providing education and job creation.

The Saint Isabel Aged Care Community Centre in Aileu is run by Lourdes de Araujo.

I visited Aileu in March 2023 and met with Lourdes to discuss the project and the work performed by the Centre.

The Community Centre supports elderly and disabled people in the villages of Liurai, Raimansu, Rirema, Hohulo, Quirlelo, Laklo, Datrema, Liquitura, Erlolo, Lahae, Fatubossa, Lausi, Selo Kraik and Saburia.

Lourdes identified three young students who assist her at the Centre and she would like to train them with a view to providing them with the skills necessary to undertake basic assistance to aged and disabled people. This includes the preparation and provision of nutritious foods.

Thanks to you - Gerald Kenneally

Don't forget the ATLAS Trivia Event

(see p.1 for details)

As always, we thank you for the support you have given and continue to give to ATLAS, keeping the promise "Your friends do not forget you".

Here are some people you would help...



Beauty and Grace *(continued from p.1)*

Their sense of identity was assisted by strong leadership, their shared Catholic faith and the strategic measures they took to claim their customs and languages. Their remarkable history testifies to the human capacity to resist revenge and violence.

The current President José Ramos-Horta noted that despite the devastating effects of the Indonesian occupation, not a single Indonesian civilian was murdered by a Timorese during the occupation. In a world where retaliation is rampant, the Timorese example is remarkable.

“The Timorese people have shown that telling the truth is a necessary prelude to trust and to peace,” said Bishop Long. “They maintained the truth of who they were as a people and refused to capitulate. But they did so supported by their Christian beliefs, personal integrity and with an acute understanding of the dangers of revenge,” he said. Monsignor Tony Doherty, then Dean of Sydney’s St Marys Cathedral, commented “the Timorese response to violence has been beauty and grace”.

Whilst widespread poverty still affects the people, the memory of the vote for independence continues to give a rightful sense of national pride.

ATLAS Fruit Cakes - only \$30!

Christmas is not far away, so order your ATLAS fruit cakes now. We are taking orders!

All profit from sales will go to our Projects in Timor-Leste. These delicious cakes (including gluten free) are ideal Christmas Gifts for family, friends or community groups.

If you run a business, they are superb for your clients! Place an order and you support the work of ATLAS and honour the words "Your Friends Do Not Forget You".

Please email info@atlaseasttimor.com.au
Or call 02 9833 8152



Pope Francis in Timor-Leste

Hundreds of thousands of Timorese people gathered in the blazing sun at Tasi Tolu, near Dili, to attend Mass with Pope Francis on 10 September.

The Pope spoke of East Timor's recovery from the violence of the independence struggle, hailing its new era of peace and freedom.

Prime Minister Xanana Gusmao, a hero of the liberation struggle, had swept the streets with locals to help clean up the city before the Pope's arrival.

President José Ramos-Horta thanked him for visiting East Timor bringing a "message of peace, reconciliation, human fraternity, and hope, which is necessary in an increasingly troubled world". The President reported that the government was fighting against poverty, hunger and food insecurity, child malnutrition, violence, and various forms of exclusion and social marginalisation.

Thanks to The Tablet



A sea of people for Pope Francis's Mass Thanks to NCR Online

Donation Form

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www.atlaseasttimor.com.au

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