



**Australia Timor-Leste  
Advancement Society**



# Annual Report 2022-23



## Introduction

The Australian Timor-Leste Advancement Society (ATLAS) was established to assist the East Timorese people as they lift themselves out of poverty, through supporting education, training, and job creation activities.

ATLAS was founded to carry on the work of John Patrick “Paddy” Kenneally, a World War Two Digger who during World War Two was helped by the people of Timor-Leste and who in return fought tirelessly for the independence of its people.

After independence Paddy supported several programs to assist the people of Timor-Leste in gratitude for the assistance the people gave during the War.

## Our Goal at ATLAS

The goal of ATLAS is to aid people in poverty by supporting the works of educational institutions, supporting the development of trade and professional skills, assisting individuals in setting up small businesses, maintenance and building of new educational facilities and supporting teachers and educators.

*On this year’s cover we feature a picture of Maria dos Santos and Gerald Kenneally (ATLAS) with Students and teachers at St Paul’s School, Turiscai*



**Australia Timor-Leste  
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## About the Australia Timor-Leste Advancement Society

The Australian Timor-Leste Advancement Society is a registered charity incorporated for the purpose of providing development assistance to communities in developing countries, in particular to communities in Timor-Leste that are disadvantaged or in poverty.

The Society's purposes specifically include:

- Establishing, monitoring, and evaluating development projects within East Timor that are focused on educating local communities
- Providing work skills and other assistance to enable recipients to set up a small self-sustaining business of their own
- Assisting in the building and maintenance of educational facilities
- Targeting assistance to specific disadvantaged groups to assist in transition into education or paid employment with the objective of those recipients becoming self-sustaining
- Training and development of skills including personal care, nutrition, drug and alcohol education, pregnancy support and similar skills
- Providing vocational training support in areas such as hospitality, tourism, carpentry, health, mechanics and other trade skills
- Entering into partnerships with local organisations that share ATLAS' principal purpose of providing development assistance to communities in developing countries that are disadvantaged or in poverty.



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## Message from our Chairman

### Dear Friends of ATLAS

This year, 2023, after three and a half years, I returned to Timor for two weeks. I was accompanied by ATLAS Secretary, Greg Mills. This was Greg's first trip to Timor.

Greg joined myself and Maria Dos Santos (ATLAS Representative in Timor) visiting our project partners and seeing firsthand the projects that you, our valued donors, sponsor. The work that the project partners are doing in Timor is outstanding.

Timor-Leste is a developing nation, with many challenges, certainly more than our own country was faced with. The population is around 1.3 million people and 65% are under the age of twenty.

Education is the key to the development of the country's youth who deserve the opportunity to have a sound education, giving them a set of skills to be able to work in their own country and overseas. On my March visit our project partners clearly identified teacher education, teacher support and students' educational needs as being of paramount importance.

During my trip to Timor-Leste this year, I travelled to St Paul's School, Turiscai, which is run by the Sisters of St Paul de Chartres. ATLAS through the support of Monsignor Brian Rayner and the Asia Pacific Foundation funded a generator, a computer and educational support for the school for twelve months. On behalf of ATLAS and the school we thank Monsignor Brian and the Asia Pacific Foundation.

Our annual Timor Time luncheon has been put on hold until renovations at Dooleys Lidcombe Catholic Club are completed. We hope to be able to host our Timor Time luncheon in late 2024 at Dooleys Lidcombe Catholic Club. This event usually attracts up to two hundred and twenty people. Sadly, Dooleys Regents Park Club cannot accommodate those numbers. ATLAS appreciates and acknowledges the support it receives from Dooleys. In February this year we held our first ever Trivia Event at Dooleys Regents Park Club. The event was well received and proved an entertaining afternoon.

I would like to acknowledge the Board of Directors of Dooleys Lidcombe Catholic Club. Your support for our work in Timor-Leste, as well as all your other community projects is to be commended. I have many memories of going with my mum and dad together with many other families, to the picnics organised by Dooleys, especially at Christmas. The Club truly represents community.

The Lions Club of Lugarno, represented by Greg English the son of James (Jim) English who served in Timor, generously arranged wheelchairs and other equipment for the Clinic run by the Carmelite Sisters at Motael. Thank you, Lion Greg English. Like your late father you also kept the promise, "Your friends do not forget you".

I would like to thank our Sponsors -Thomas Murphy & Co, Harbourview Apartments, Ulladulla, NSW, The Cove, Kettering, Tasmania, Comserv (NO3025) Pty Limited, 5<sup>th</sup> Avenue Florist, Peter Raksts Memorials, Dooleys Lidcombe Catholic Club, Invisible Ink (Website Design), Kenneally's Funerals and Eco Discovery Land & Water Tours, Timor-Leste – for their invaluable support.



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I want to express my deep gratitude to each and every one of you, our donors, for your ongoing support for our Projects in Timor-Leste.

In January this year, Father Graham McIntyre tendered his resignation as an ATLAS Director. Thank you, Father Graham, for your support which goes way back to when the Kindergarten at Maubara was being built. Whilst no longer a member of the Board, he continues to be a part of ATLAS.

Welcome to new director Noreen Nicoara who is responsible for the administration of the day to day running of ATLAS.

Our thanks to Maria Dos Santos, who joined us as our ATLAS Representative in Timor in May 2022, for the work she is doing with our project partners.

As I sign off on this Annual Chairman's Report, I wish to thank Sister Josephine Mitchell (ATLAS Patron), Sister Susan Connelly, Father Graham McIntyre, Noreen Nicoara, Paul McGrath, Janet Borg, Chris Scharf, Stephen Dillon, Greg Mills and Rayella Haines for all that you do and the dedication you give to ATLAS. I am blessed to be surrounded by such passionate people.

THANK YOU

**GERALD KENNEALLY**  
**CHAIRMAN**



**Australia Timor-Leste**  
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## Secretary's Report

What a year we have had at ATLAS! During our self-funded visit to East Timor, Gerald Kenneally and I learnt a lot about how the donations you make have made a big difference to so many people with the projects we deliver. Even small projects can have a big impact. Like the person learning English can now get a job in tourism; or the skills learnt in a sewing project can be applied to a startup business; or the children who are receiving a high school education and aspire to become doctors, nurses and dentists. It's all thanks to your generosity.

One thing we did learn during our discussions with our new ATLAS East Timor Representative, Maria, is that the COVID pandemic certainly impacted our ability to deliver services in Timor-Leste, so it was agreed to look at a new approach to how we can better deliver more of our projects. After discussions with a similar charity in Dili, the Committee has agreed to set up a Foundation in East Timor that in the future will administer and run our projects. This means that we will have an ATLAS presence always in East Timor to establish new projects, make sure that projects are delivering and to manage the distribution of our support with a detailed eye to make sure money gets spent correctly. The Foundation will be managed by Timorese people, with governance and approval of projects reviewed by the Australian Committee.

As COVID provided a pause in some of our activities, we have taken the opportunity to look at improving our systems and communications. Our new Financial System is up and running and we have completed our yearly reports with this new tool. We have also upgraded our Website to make it easier for our donors to learn more about our projects and what we have been working on and we hope to soon have the ability to offer merchandise and recurring contributions. Thanks to Invisible Ink who donated a lot of their time in producing the new site. I would recommend a visit – just type “ATLAS East Timor” into your search engine to find our site.

There is a lot of work provided by our volunteers to make sure that just about all of your contributions go to the projects that you wish to support. I would like to thank and recognise the work of all our Committee members but particularly our Chairman, Gerald Kenneally, Paul McGrath our Treasurer and our Administration Manger, Noreen Nicoara. Noreen has generously agreed to even contribute more of her time by agreeing to become a Director of ATLAS in addition to all the other work she does. Thank you, Noreen.

We are always looking for new volunteers. So, if you wish to help, regardless of your talents, we can find a role where you can help. Feel free to contact us at [info@atlaseasttimor.com.au](mailto:info@atlaseasttimor.com.au) if you want to help make a difference to the lives of the Timorese people.

Finally, I want to thank all of our donors for their continuing support. I doubt you can appreciate what a big change even a small donation can make to people's lives in East Timor. Also thank you to our Sponsors who contribute in cash and kind to the Society.

**GREG MILLS**  
**SECRETARY**



**Australia Timor-Leste**  
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## ATLAS Representative in Timor-Leste

Our newly appointed ATLAS Representative in East Timor, Maria Dos Santos works with our partners to support existing projects and develop new projects that require funding. Maria's work has proven an essential ingredient in ensuring good project governance and the best distribution of support to recipients.

Below is a summary of activities and progress from January to June 2023 provided by Maria.

St. Paul's school, Turiscaï and Maubara Kindergarten

- Scheduled a meeting with the Sisters regarding the situation they encountered in their community prior to their writing up a Project Proposal to present to ATLAS.
- Meet with the Sisters and discuss the Project Proposals they prepared with an amended budget.
- Although this report covers activity in the 2022-2023 year, the core activity detailed took place throughout 2022. The last two weeks of July was a time for becoming familiar with the Project, scope, requirements and ATLAS guidance/requirements.
- Good progress to establish a strong foundation for the Project where the priority is to implement a good system and create a broad context for change and provide good reports to ATLAS.
- **Phase 1**  
Projects for St. Paul's school in Turiscaï and Maubara Kindergarten cancelled in the 2022-2023 period due to changes
  - St Paul's School - for the funding of five lay teachers, school fees for twenty students and two filing cabinets
  - Maubara Kindergarten – for the funding of one yard cleaner, thirty-five school uniforms, one laptop computer and school fees for ten students.
- **Phase 2**  
The delay to the start of Stage 1. This has required re-alignment of the Project plan to reflect the delayed start. Identification of resource and required skill sets was reviewed against the entire proposal from 2022-2023 the initial assessment of the activities and budget spend to be in addition allocation.
- **Phase 3**  
Due to the large amount of funding requested, the Project Proposals have been postponed to 2024.





## Fundraising Report

Our main fundraising/information event, our Timor Time luncheon, was unable to proceed due to major renovation work being undertaken at Dooleys Lidcombe Catholic Club resulting in the non-availability of a suitably sized function area.

In February 2023 we held our first ever Trivia event at Dooleys Regents Park Sports Club. Our quizmaster was Murray Mackay, Managing Director of Trivia Central. Everyone who attended had a most enjoyable afternoon. Dooleys staff were, as always, friendly, efficient and ensured everything ran smoothly. The event proved to be a bit of a learning curve which turned out to be both entertaining and financially successful.

An ATLAS funding application presented to Dooleys Lidcombe Catholic Club was approved and provides for a substantial monthly donation. ATLAS is extremely grateful to Dooleys for their continued commitment to our work for the people of Timor-Leste.

Other very generous donors make regular donations (monthly, quarterly, six monthly, annually) either to ATLAS in general or directed to specific projects. You can also easily make a donation through our new updated website <https://www.atlaseasttimor.com.au/donations/6872/>

The Parish Priest of St Marys, Father Brendan Murphy, gave permission for three fundraising stalls to be held at Our Lady of the Rosary Parish, St Marys – Father’s Day 2022, Christmas 2022, and Mother’s Day 2023. All three stalls were very successful financially.

ATLAS has Public Liability Insurance and Certificates of Currency are available for persons who have been authorised to fundraise on behalf of ATLAS.



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## Our Programs of Assistance

ATLAS conducts several ongoing programs of assistance to different groups in East Timor who we have identified in need of funding. Many of these projects come to us through our local contacts or by being approached for assistance. We conduct a rigorous approach to our projects to ensure that the groups applying for assistance will apply the funds we provide correctly. In some cases, where the projects are under spent, the money will be returned to fund other projects. This approach is done in a respectful and business-like manner so that we can achieve the best outcomes for our donors and the recipients of this assistance. A Committee member sponsors these projects and have provided reports that are published below.

### ATLAS' Program of Education for Senior Students

ATLAS is keenly aware of the lack of educational opportunities in general in Timor-Leste particularly for girls and women, with only around 35% having the chance to proceed to Secondary Education.

Since January 2017, ATLAS, with the support of generous donors, has provided financial support to senior girls from St Therese's Orphanage, Maubara, to continue their Secondary Education. These girls, most of whom have lived at the Orphanage since they were small children, have all come from impoverished backgrounds having been left without parents or family to care for them. Since 2017, thirty-three young women have been given the opportunity for secondary education, including nine students in 2021, six in 2022 and six in 2023.

ATLAS is working to provide a more structured approach to this program and to ensure its continuation. In July 2021 a system of Scholarships was introduced for those girls from the Maubara Orphanage who are capable of continuing their studies at a secondary level and wish to proceed.

This requires a potential candidate to complete and submit an application form to the ATLAS Committee for approval. If approved, the Scholarship covers complete financial support (education, accommodation, food, clothing, medical, transport, etc.) for three years. The applicant is required to provide a reference from a credible person. The Scholarship is granted on condition that the student provides term reports and a final year report (Year 12 or equivalent). Reports on each student's behaviour and application to study is to be supplied by the Carmelite Sister in charge of studies.

Initially, those who received ATLAS funding needed to reside at Fatuhada in dormitory accommodation in the grounds of the Carmelite Convent. These girls were under the direction of the Carmelite Sisters for the three year period of the Scholarship. However, since January 2023, students undertaking Academic studies must now attend the newly opened Government senior secondary school at Maubara. They therefore continue to reside in accommodation provided at St Theresa's Orphanage, Maubara.

Students undertaking studies at Technical/Vocational Education Schools (STVE) which prepare students for earlier entry into the labour market with technical and work readiness skills in business such as administration, tourism, and hospitality are still required to reside at Fatuhada in order to attend relevant educational facilities in Dili.

At the beginning of 2023, three students applied for and were granted Scholarships for three years. These three students are all pursuing Academic studies which aim to prepare them to continue their studies at a tertiary level. They will therefore reside in accommodation provided at St Therese's Orphanage, Maubara.



ATLAS is aware of the importance of education in preparing these students for life and ATLAS is pleased to support the Carmelite Sisters in their commitment to the education of these senior students and for the contribution they can make to building their families, their community and their nation.



Fatuhada – Accommodation for Students



Fatuhada – Dining and Study Area

### St Therese's Orphanage, Maubara

During this financial year, ATLAS continued its support for the care and education of the children at Maubara Orphanage. ATLAS is concerned that 42% of the population of Timor-Leste still lives below the poverty line and that children without parents or family to care for them would have little hope of survival in the rural districts. The Orphanage provides a home for the children from these areas which is safe, where they are part of a community of children of different ages, and they are cared for with love and respect. The Carmelite Sisters who conduct the Orphanage know the importance of education for the development of the children and are committed to providing them with every opportunity for schooling. They are aware of the high rate of illiteracy in the country and that approximately 40% of young people in rural districts are unable to read. A high percentage do not attend school and in many schools the quality of education is low. The children from Maubara Orphanage attend schools appropriate to their age and their level of schooling i.e. Kindergarten (Grades 1-3) Senior Primary (Grades 4-6); Pre-Secondary (Grades 7-9). These schools are all in the local area.

Previously those who proceeded to secondary school (Grades 10-12) were required to move to Dili where they enrolled in either General Secondary Schools (GSE) which prepare students to continue their studies in Higher Education, or Technical/Vocational Schools (STVE) which prepare students to take their place in the business world.

Since January 2023 those students who wished to proceed to secondary school for Academic studies were able to remain living at the Orphanage and attend secondary school at a newly opened Government senior secondary school in Maubara.

Those students wishing to undertake studies at a Technical/Vocational College would still be required to undertake their studies in Dili.



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ATLAS is proud to be associated with the Carmelite Sisters and their care and education of children at Maubara Orphanage. They provide the children with the opportunity of schooling which prepares them for life and to the development of their families, their society and their nation.



*Children at Maubara Orphanage*



*Dormitory at Maubara Orphanage*

### **Maubara Kindergarten**

The Kindergarten at Maubara was built in 2002 and was ready for occupation by students and teachers at the beginning of the 2003 school year.

The Carmelite Sisters who run the kindergarten have recently applied to ATLAS for financial support to assist them in the running of the school to give the students every opportunity as they begin their journey into the world of learning.

We will be in a position to report on ATLAS' support for the kindergarten in our 2023-2024 Annual Report.

Improving the quality of education depends on the quality of the teachers. The Government of Timor-Leste is encouraging Principals to upgrade their qualifications.

Currently, the Principal of the Maubara Kindergarten is in the process of completing her studies as a Bachelor of Education.



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*Maubara Kindergarten*



*Maubara Kindergarten Classroom*

## **Dominican School (Eskola Dominicana) Hera**

This school was established by the Dominican Sisters in Hera which is a poor rural area. The families of the students often do not have the funds to pay the full school fees. ATLAS' support, through the generosity of its donors, has allowed the school to expand and provide much needed educational opportunities for this poor community. The number of students has increased significantly as the school continues to attract students and parents because their vision and mission is clear – as well as providing quality education to the students, they also aim to work on character building and instil strong values into this generation of Timorese. The Sisters are currently increasing the grades taught at the School to include Junior High – Grades 7, 8 and 9. In 2022 they introduced Grade 7 and in 2023 Grade 8.

During their visit to Timor, Gerald Kenneally, Greg Mills and Maria Dos Santos (ATLAS) visited the Dominican School at Hera on March 22 and spoke with Sister Elsie. They reported that it was amazing to hear about the progress of the school. Sister Elsie and the other Sister have done an excellent job. Three hundred children attend classes in the morning and three hundred and twenty-five in the afternoon. A new building is taking shape where they hope to set up a Science Laboratory.







Dominican School, Hera



Dominican School Library, Hera



Interior of School Library, Dominican School, Hera



School Canteen, Dominican School, Hera

### **Dominican Sisters – Bidau Orphanage**

The Sisters vision and mission is to help the children in their studies and their personal development so that these children can develop their capacities, talents and personalities and become good citizens and well-rounded persons. Thirty-five children are accommodated at the Orphanage.

In December 2022 the Sisters reported that funding provided by ATLAS through the generosity of its donors had greatly assisted in the capacity building of the children. They reported that the children's knowledge in all subjects had improved including their knowledge of English, Portuguese and Mathematics. The children have also been given leadership training as well as learning other subjects such as sewing, embroidery, cross stitch, baking, art, etc. The Sisters reported that the support given by ATLAS helped greatly in the development of the children both academically and vocationally.





On March 21 2023 Gerald Kenneally, Greg Mills and Maria Dos Santos (ATLAS) visited the Orphanage at Bidau and met with Sister Mary. They were able to see the repairs funded in 2021 by ATLAS to the kitchen and associated areas after the floods. The Sisters expressed their gratitude to ATLAS and its donors for their generosity in funding this essential work. There are some repairs needed to the roof of a shelter which is used for meetings and forms the entrance to the Chapel. They have no permanent maintenance person.



Bidau Orphanage – English Class



Bidau Orphanage – Elementary Maths Class



Bidau Orphanage – Baking



Bidau Orphanage – Cross Stitch and Embroidery





## Timor Learning Centre (Sentru Formasaun ba Juventude no Comunidade)

The Timor Learning Centre was developed by Libby Bleakley and her colleague Teresa Beck during their three year deployment to Timor-Leste with the Australian Federal Police. During this time they established strong and lasting friendships with the communities, local Police and Government officials. In consultation with the communities, they developed their own personal crime prevention initiative, a Learning Centre for Youth and the Community. They leased land and built the Centre which consists of a “Plus Fitness” gym, English language school, women’s sewing centre, office, vegetable gardens, Timorese Manager’s house, and their private residence.

On Tuesday March 21, 2023, Gerald Kenneally, Greg Mills and Maria Dos Santos (ATLAS) visited the Timor Learning Centre and met with the Co-Ordinator, Dede, and English teacher Guido. ATLAS funds Guido’s wages. Students attend English classes twice per week for 2 x 2 hour sessions. Classes run from Monday to Friday and class times are 8-10 am, 2-4 pm, and 4-6 pm. The majority of students are aged between five and eighteen years but there are some older students. The adults attend the 4-6 pm classes. The English classes cater for one hundred and twenty students. If, for whatever reason, a student drops out, then another student is chosen from the waiting list to keep the classes at capacity. The English Curriculum used is the Australian Accredited “Jolly Phonics” Basic English program.

From January 2023 a new focus for the Centre is on Environmental issues and Planetary Health. The title of this newly focused Curriculum is “Planetary Health – Earth Care, People Care and Fair Share”. Libby visited Timor in January 2023 to train Dede and Guido on the delivery of this Curriculum.

Gerald, Greg and Maria also inspected the Gym and the sewing centre. All memberships to the Timor Learning Centre are free. The young people are encouraged to be responsible for their areas as well as to tend to the garden daily which gives them ownership and enables them to take pride in their Centre.



Timor Learning Centre – Guido in the Garden



Timor Learning Centre – Women’s Sewing Centre





Timor Learning Centre - Gerald Kenneally and Guido at the Gym

### St Paul's School, Turiscai

Turiscai is a sub-District of Same. It is more than 300 km from Dili, through rugged, narrow, winding stony, mountainous terrain – often impassable during heavy rains. It encompasses poverty in all its forms. Malnutrition and illiteracy are widespread. Unlike other areas of Timor-Leste, Turiscai is subject to quite cold weather and unsettled conditions all year. There are approximately 15,000 inhabitants (approximately 2,000 families) in eleven villages scattered throughout the mountains. St Paul's School is run by the Sisters of St Paul de Chartres.

As related in our 2021-2022 Annual Report ATLAS had received support from a very generous donor to fund a Project Proposal covering the local purchase and installation of a much needed generator as well as Educational Support for the school to end June 2023. The generator has been installed and provides much appreciated back-up when the electricity fails. The Educational Support funding has proved invaluable in ensuring the children receive a comprehensive education.





At the beginning of 2023 the school added Grades IV and V. The classes now comprise Kindergarten I and II, Grades I, II, III, IV and V. The total number of students is 166.

The Sisters continue to run a feeding program for the children. All students receive a nutritious midday meal.



Generator (installed) – St Paul's School, Turiscai



Grades III, IV and V Classroom





## Treasurer's Report

ATLAS continues to have a sound financial basis for its ongoing activities but unfortunately, we are still seeing a decline in donations to the Society post pandemic. There are many demands on people's generosity to support many good causes and we believe the strained economic times have contributed to this decline. We also are always looking for new ways to attract new donors who can support our cause in assisting the people of East Timor. This year total donations were down 13 percent. However, our fundraising activities have recommenced and although we could not conduct our Timor Time event, the Trivia day did help add to our income.

With a decline in income a cautious approach has been taken to engaging in too many new projects, but we are also finding that many projects are not requiring the funds they once did. With a new Foundation to be established in East Timor next financial year, we hope to see ATLAS finding and funding more projects with the objective to always be using the funds our donors provide.

With the issues of not enough demand from projects and a decrease in income we still achieved a small surplus that has helped our retained funds keep up with inflation. We expect big things will come about next year with the new Foundation and a significant amount of the retained funds will be going towards supporting its establishment. Our Financial report for the year is below.

Many people make the work of ATLAS possible. But it is the donations and fund raising that our supporters provide that is delivering results for the people of East Timor. Like all organisations, ATLAS has costs that are required to run the charity. These include insurance, postage and IT costs. Nearly 92% of all expenditure was directed to the people who need your support. This was only because we have volunteers willing to donate their time to making the Society work. Thank you to everyone, donors and volunteers that allow us to make a difference. I would like to also thank Bruce Wood who freely provides our auditing services to ensure we follow good financial practises.

**PAUL MCGRATH**  
**TREASURER**



**Australia Timor-Leste**  
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## Financial Statement 2022-23

Account	2023	2022
<b>Trading Income</b>		
Currency Gain (Loss)	0	(4,242)
Donations Received	79,221	90,133
Interest Unrestricted	635	5
Miscellaneous Income	0	74
Other Sundry Income	0	27
Sale of Goods	0	1,120
Sale of Tickets	3,250	0
<b>Total Trading Income</b>	<b>83,106</b>	<b>87,116</b>
<b>Gross Profit</b>	<b>83,106</b>	<b>87,116</b>
<b>Operating Expenses</b>		
Accounting Fees	59	0
Advertising & Promotion	1,000	1,000
Bank Charges	448	302
Bank Revaluations	1,935	0
Client Services	49,006	74,844
Client Services Consumables	1,252	0
Computer Expenses	515	0
Fund Raising Expenses	1,493	0
Insurance	324	310
Postage Freight & Couriers	1,222	550
Printing & Stationery	42	264
Sundry Expenses	90	218
Telephone Fax & Internet	130	130
<b>Total Operating Expenses</b>	<b>57,516</b>	<b>77,617</b>
<b>Net Profit</b>	<b>25,590</b>	<b>9,498</b>



## Our Governance

As part of its responsibilities under the regulations and to ensure that the maximum benefit of your contributions can be realised, ATLAS have adopted a governance process to ensure full and open accountability to our donors, members and government bodies.

## Accountability to Members

ATLAS will take steps to ensure that we are accountable to members and that our communications are open and transparent. ATLAS will conduct regular meetings in line with its constitution to ensure members are fully advised on the Society's activities and intentions. The constitution outlines the calling of meetings, conduct of the meetings and the voting rights of members.

## Compliance with Australian Laws

ATLAS and its governing Board will not engage in conduct, or omit to engage in conduct, that may be dealt with as an indictable offence under an Australian law. The intention is always to deal at the highest ethical standards to ensure that our aid programs deliver the maximum benefit to recipients.

We believe we have a primary obligation to protect public trust and confidence and the assets of the Society and ensure we continue to operate in a manner that is sustainable and consistent with our purposes.

## Suitability of Responsible Officers and Members

ATLAS will take steps to ensure that all its responsible officers and members of the governing board are not disqualified from managing corporations. We will also continue to monitor whether each responsible entity remains eligible to manage corporations and take appropriate action if this is no longer the case.



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## Patron of the Society – Josephine Mitchell

As mentioned in our 2021-2022 Annual Report Sister Josephine Mitchell accepted the invitation to become one of ATLAS' first two Patrons. A profile of Sister Josephine follows.

Sister Josephine Mitchell RSJ has been a teacher and a leader of considerable skill in her many years as a Sister of St Joseph, the Congregation founded by St Mary MacKillop.

Josephine has degrees in Arts, Literature and Education and did overseas post-graduate study in Theology and Spirituality. Her teaching experience covers primary, secondary and tertiary levels. Josephine held major leadership roles within the Congregation of the Sisters of St Joseph for twelve years and was a lecturer in Teacher Education at the Catholic College of Education (now the Australian Catholic University). She has had a long involvement in matters of justice including two years on the Justice Desk of the Australian Conference of Leaders of Religious Institutes.

When Indonesia invaded Portuguese Timor in 1975, Josephine was deeply upset and has retained her anguish for the people to the present day. In various leadership capacities in the Sisters of St Joseph she had occasion to follow the fortunes of the Timorese and met Monsignor da Costa Lopes, the Apostolic Administrator of East Timor when he visited Australia in 1983, hearing from him at first hand the plight of the Timorese people.

In 1993 Bishop Belo of the Diocese of Dili approached the Sisters of St Joseph and asked for their help, specifically in the areas of literacy and health education. Teaching children to read and write in the main local language Tetun, was central to the enterprise. Tetun is the lingua franca of Timor-Leste and the first-named official language of the new nation. The Sisters entrusted the work to Sister Josephine Mitchell and established the Mary MacKillop Institute of East Timorese Studies (now Mary MacKillop Today) on August 8, 1994.

At that time, there were huge challenges to education in Timor-Leste. The administrations of Portugal (450 years) and Indonesia (24 years) did not place any priority on the need of the Timorese people for education resulting in unacceptably high illiteracy rates today. With half of the population under the age of 18 the people faced immense educational hurdles.

When Mary MacKillop Institute in Timor-Leste was restructured in 2012, Josephine completed her work as Director.

She then became an integral member of the Australia Timor-Leste Advancement Society (ATLAS) and directed her energies to supporting ATLAS' endeavours in Timor-Leste, with special focus on the education of girls and young women, particularly those from deprived backgrounds. She continues working with this program.



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## **ATLAS Board of Directors**

The ALTAS Board consists of several people with a wide variety of skills and experience chosen because of their commitment to the values of the organisation.

Gerald Kenneally – Chairman

Greg Mills (BSc, M. Mgt) Secretary

Paul McGrath – Treasurer

Rev. Graham McIntyre – Director (retiring)

In addition, we are supported by a Management Committee including:

Noreen Nicoara – Administration Manager

Sister Josephine Mitchell

Sister Susan Connelly

Janet Borg

Rayella Haines

Stephen Dillon

Chris Scharf



**Australia Timor-Leste  
Advancement Society**





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