



Submission No 7,

Inquiry into Australia's Relationship with Timor-Leste

Name: Northern Territory Government

Joint Standing Committee on Foreign Affairs, Defence and Trade
Foreign Affairs Sub-Committee



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Mr Nick Champion MP
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Parliament of Australia
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Dear Mr Champion

Nick

The Northern Territory is a leader in terms of Australia's overall relationship with Timor-Leste. Significantly, my first international visit as Chief Minister of the Northern Territory was to Timor-Leste on 7 and 8 May 2013, demonstrating the importance of the relationship to the Northern Territory and the opportunities for growth between two friends.

While in Timor-Leste, I met with the Acting Prime Minister, President and other Ministers and a number of key actions and outcomes have evolved from those meetings that will drive the relationship at the political, educational, sporting and other levels.

The Northern Territory Government's submission to the Inquiry into Australia's relationship with Timor-Leste is enclosed for your information. The submission outlines a number of current engagements and future possibilities.

I look forward to the outcomes of the inquiry and to the Northern Territory being at the forefront of Australia's relationship with Timor-Leste over the coming years.

Yours sincerely


ADAM GILES

20 JUN 2013

Parliament of Australia

**Joint Standing Committee on Foreign Affairs,
Defence and Trade**

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**Inquiry into Australia's Relationship with
Timor-Leste**

Northern Territory Government Submission

Introduction

As one of Australia's closest international neighbours, Australia has a close ongoing relationship with Timor-Leste, with the Northern Territory at the forefront of that relationship.

Given the closeness of the two jurisdictions, the Northern Territory has a unique international friendship with Timor-Leste. This strong relationship extends across a range of areas including political, cultural, economic, educational and sporting. Timor-Leste is a key strategic partner for the Northern Territory in the Asian region.

The relationship between the Northern Territory and Timor-Leste dates back well prior to independence of the sovereign country and has developed significantly since independence. Dili is the closest international capital city to Darwin and is approximately 2500 kilometres closer to Darwin than Darwin is to Canberra.

The short distance across the Timor Sea between Timor-Leste and the Northern Territory has allowed for the development of strong cultural and people-to-people links over the years. Darwin has a large Timorese population who play a significant role in the local community.

The Northern Territory's relationship with Timor-Leste is also a building block for the growing tri-lateral relationship between Timor-Leste, the Northern Territory and eastern Indonesia; a relationship that the Northern Territory is keen to foster for the benefit of the immediate region over the coming years.

As a key leader in Australia's engagement with Timor-Leste, the Northern Territory will look to further strengthen this position to advance political, economic, cultural and other links for the benefit of Timor-Leste, the Northern Territory and the wider region.

Areas of Engagement

Government and Political Relationships

As with cultural and people-to-people links, political and government relations between Timor-Leste and the Northern Territory are robust with particular ongoing interaction between government officials.

Significantly, the first international visit by Chief Minister of the Northern Territory, the Hon Adam Giles MLA, who took office in March 2013, was to Timor-Leste in early May 2013. This visit was to reconfirm relations between Timor-Leste and the Northern Territory at the highest levels of both governments and recognise the unique relationship between the two.

A key medium of contact at the Ministerial level between Timor-Leste and the Northern Territory is the Timor-Leste/Northern Territory Ministerial Forum. This forum is usually co-hosted by the Chief Minister and Timor-Leste Deputy Prime Minister.

The third and most recent meeting of the forum was held in Darwin on 6 April 2011. The next forum meeting, having been delayed due to elections, is scheduled to take place in Dili in either late 2013 or early 2014.

The Northern Territory has provided assistance, advice and training to various areas of the Timor-Leste Government. This assistance is further explained under the relevant subheadings throughout this document.

Trade

Darwin is Australia's trade gateway to Timor-Leste, with Australia's only regular direct air and shipping links with Timor-Leste.

Northern Territory merchandise exports to Timor-Leste stood at \$34 million for 2011-12, and although small compared to Northern Territory trade with other international markets, represented approximately 50 percent of total merchandise exports between Timor-Leste and Australia.

Service trade figures for the Northern Territory are not recorded, but would not be insignificant in respect of direct air and sea links and provision of business services, such as accounting, from Darwin.

The Toll Global Resources link to Dili is one of the few direct shipping services from Darwin to Asia. The direct air link to Dili is one of only four direct air links between Darwin and Asian destinations; the others being to Denpasar, Singapore and Manila.

A number of Territorians have business interests in Timor-Leste, with the Jape Group reported as the largest single investor through their Timor Plaza development.

The Chamber of Commerce Northern Territory led a delegation of local businesses from Darwin to Dili in March 2013 with a view of promoting trading links between Timor-Leste and the Northern Territory. The outcomes of the visit were positive with linkages being strengthened between the business communities of both jurisdictions.

Development of the petroleum rich Timor Sea provides significant opportunities for the oil and gas industries of both Timor-Leste and the Northern Territory in terms potential gas developments and the service and supply of current and future projects.

Education and Training

Education and training is a key area of engagement between Timor-Leste and the Northern Territory. Although links are robust at the primary and secondary levels, and mainly driven by the family linkages, it is the tertiary level where the main linkages in education between Timor-Leste and the Northern Territory exist. The Northern Territory is keen to expand links with Timor-Leste at the primary and secondary levels.

The Northern Territory's Charles Darwin University (CDU) is a leader in Australia's engagement with Timor-Leste in the educational sphere and has a range of activities with Timor-Leste in the fields of governance, law, education and training, health, marine environmental science and agriculture. It also has close links to the National University of Timor-Leste.

CDU has submitted a separate submission to this Inquiry regarding its activities in Timor-Leste. CDU continues to work with private firms and government agencies in Timor-Leste to further its connections.

In December 2011, the Northern Territory Government fulfilled its commitment to the Timor-Leste Government with the completion of the ten placements in Northern Territory Public Sector agencies under the Northern Territory's Timor-Leste Civil Service Capacity Building Internship Scheme. The Northern Territory met all costs which were significant.

Following Chief Minister Giles' visit to Dili in May 2013, the Northern Territory Government is investigating future training arrangements for Timorese civil servants in practical areas such as tourism, mining and horticulture. The Northern Territory Government would look to partner with the Australian Government in fulfilling any commitments.

The Northern Territory has committed to working closer with Timor-Leste in the field of crocodile management. As an Australian leader in this field, the Northern Territory is investigating the best way it can assist Timor-Leste to develop its crocodile management and conservation program through the sharing of operational and technical knowledge and experience.

Sporting Engagement

The Northern Territory Government promotes sporting linkages with Timor-Leste and considers sporting links central to developing cultural and people-to-people links.

Since independence, Timor-Leste was a strong supporter of the Arafura Games, a biennial regional sporting event held in Darwin.

For the past two years, a team from the National Critical Care and Trauma Response Centre based at Royal Darwin Hospital was deployed to Timor-Leste to provide medical assistance for the Tour de Timor international bike race. Surplus boxes of medical supplies were gifted to five health clinics in Timor-Leste during the deployment.

The 2013 Darwin-Dili Yacht Rally will start from Darwin on Saturday 13 July 2013 with official finish celebrations taking place on Friday 19 July 2013. Northern Territory Ministers have had a close association with the re-establishment of this event in 2010 after an interruption of 35 years. The Northern Territory Government has again provided financial support for the Darwin-Dili Yacht Rally in 2013.

Sporting links have been used to develop trilateral links between Timor-Leste, the Northern Territory and the Indonesian province of Nusa Tenggara Timur. The Timor Sea Cup, an under 18 boy's soccer tournament, was first held in 2008 with the fourth round held in Kupang in October 2012 and brings together the youth of the region in friendship. The Northern Territory is looking to continue this growing regional event and will work with the governments and football federations of Timor-Leste and Nusa Tenggara Timur.

Arts

The Northern Territory Department of Arts and Museums (DAM) has had for a number of years and continues to have linkages and collaborations with Timor-Leste. DAM has an established relationship with the National Museum of Timor-Leste and has previously provided museum training to staff, as well as advised on collection management and storage of collections.

The staging of the Husi Bei Ala Timor Sira Nia Liman – From the Hands of Our Ancestors in November 2008 brought collection objects from the national collection of Timor-Leste to Australia and displayed them along with DAM collection and loaned objects. DAM will continue its collaboration with the National Museum of Timor-Leste to broaden cultural exchange and foster an understanding of the cultural heritage across both regions.

In addition, the Northern Territory arts and cultural organisations, funded through the Northern Territory arts grants program and other industry organisations, have also established engagement with Timor-Leste. Funding has included support towards artist residencies and skills exchange, cross cultural arts project development and events, artistic collaborations and development and presentation of new work.

Timor-Leste and the Northern Territory are supporters of each others local art scenes with various Timor-Leste acts ongoing supporters of the Darwin Festival and Darwin artistic and musical groups regularly visiting Dili. In May 2013, the Darwin Chorale, supported by the Northern Territory Government visited Dili as part of the Rotary District Conference.

Health

In addition to the Northern Territory's support of the Tour de Timor, the Northern Territory Department of Health has previously, through the Centre for Disease Control undertaken work with Timor-Leste in mosquito eradication programs. There are possibilities through AusAid funding where health staff have been funded for health related activities to be undertaken in Timor-Leste.

The Northern Territory, in partnership with the Australian Government, has an important role to play in the development of health care in Timor-Leste.

Tri-lateral Engagement

The Northern Territory's relationship with Timor-Leste is an important part of the broader trilateral relationship between Timor-Leste, Australia and Eastern Indonesia. The Northern Territory will play an increased role in this relationship, particularly the relationship between Timor-Leste, the Northern Territory and the provinces of eastern Indonesia where the Northern Territory already has strong bilateral relations.

The tri-lateral relationship is a strategic one for the Northern Territory and will help build ties into Timor-Leste and into Eastern Indonesia. The Northern Territory has already participated in growing the regional relationship between Timor-Leste, Nusa Tenggara Timur and the Northern Territory through sporting initiatives such as the Timor Sea Cup and educational initiatives through CDU.

The Northern Territory, in cooperation and consultation with Timor-Leste and Indonesia, will develop guidelines for the tri-lateral relationship.

Future Directions for the Northern Territory's Engagement

The Northern Territory is at the forefront of Australia's engagement with Timor-Leste and will look to continually build upon these relations.

Chief Minister Giles' visit to Timor-Leste in May 2013 has highlighted the importance of the Timor-Leste relationship to the Northern Territory and set the framework for ongoing cooperation. The Northern Territory will look to expand partnerships with Timor-Leste across a number of fields relating to short term initiatives through to ongoing projects, including:

- capacity building in the Timor-Leste Civil Service
- crocodile management
- education partnerships (in partnership with Charles Darwin University)
- Timor-Leste/Northern Territory Ministerial Forum
- sporting initiatives, including the continuation of the trilateral Timor Sea Cup
- encouraging trade and investment opportunities
- improved access to the Northern Territory labour market through the Seasonal Worker Program.

The Northern Territory will look to work with the Australian Government and other partners in its ongoing partnership with Timor-Leste.