

Submission to: Australian Parliament Joint Standing Committee on Treaties

On: the *Treaty between Australia and the Democratic Republic of Timor-Leste establishing their Maritime Boundaries in the Timor Sea (Timor Treaty) (New York, 6 March 2018)*. On behalf of: Canberra Friends of Dili (CFD).

Background:

Canberra Friends of Dili (CFD) is an organisation of members of the Canberra community, who have an association with, and affinity for, Timor-Leste and who are working through CFD to promote friendships at both personal and organisational levels between the people of Canberra and of Dili, the capital of Timor-Leste. CFD is also the community organisation which underpins the friendship relations between the cities of Canberra and Dili initiated in 2006 and renewed in 2013. Further, CFD is a member of the Australia East Timor Friendship Network. For information on the activities of Canberra Friends of Dili, visit our website at <http://www.cfd.org.au>.

CFD put a submission dated 9 March 2017 to the Committee's 2017 inquiry into the Consequences of termination of the Treaty between Australia and the Democratic Republic of Timor-Leste on Certain Maritime Arrangements in the Timor Sea. In that submission we made the following key points:

- Australia's failure to negotiate a permanent boundary with Timor-Leste through the Timor Sea, has effectively deprived our near neighbor of billions of dollars of resource revenue which would have a significant positive impact on the development of the fledgling Timorese economy.
- Many of our members believe that Australia has tarnished its international reputation by its conduct towards Timor-Leste and its past actions in withholding a resolution of the maritime border. The resulting erosion of Australia's reputation in this region can only work to the detriment of our own national strategic interest, particularly given other external influences currently at work there.

Our current position:

CFD members now warmly welcome the successful outcome of the negotiations between Australia and Timor-Leste resulting in a fixing of a medium line maritime boundary between them in the Timor Sea. CFD believes this to be a good outcome for Australia itself, which will position Australia to make a positive contribution to the economic development of Timor-Leste. It will also enhance Australia's standing in the region and go some way to healing the damage done to Australia's reputation by its previous conduct. The Treaty is also a fair and just outcome for Timor-Leste and its people in their quest for economic development and national recognition.

CFD urges that Parliament should acknowledge the extent of friendship at the personal, organisational and community level between the Australian and East Timorese people. CFD therefore strongly recommends that the Committee recommend to the Parliament that Australia ratifies the *Treaty between Australia and the Democratic Republic of Timor-Leste establishing their Maritime Boundaries in the Timor Sea* (Timor Treaty) (New York, 6 March 2018).

Dr Stephen Utick
Convener, Canberra Friends of Dili
19 April 2018

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