

Grupu Dezenvolvimentu Tasi Iibun Baucau  
Baucau Beaches Development Group  
Baucau Timor-Leste

**Australian Parliament's  
JOINT SELECT COMMITTEE ON NORTHERN AUSTRALIA**

**Inquiry into  
The Development of Northern Australia**

**Indigenous Development Partnerships  
for Northern Australia &  
the Democratic Republic of Timor-Leste**

**Submission from Baucau Beaches Development Group**

[ceo@timoraustralia.asia](mailto:ceo@timoraustralia.asia)



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This Submission is made for the Committee's following policy and white paper interest:

- examine the potential for development of the region's mineral, energy, agricultural, tourism, defence and other industries;
- provide recommendations to:
  - enhance trade and other investment links with the Asia-Pacific;
  - establish a conducive regulatory, taxation and economic environment;
  - address impediments to growth; and
  - set conditions for private investment and innovation;
- identify the critical economic and social infrastructure needed to support the long term growth of the region, and ways to support planning and investment in that infrastructure.

## **Baucau Beaches Development Group Background**

Baucau Beaches Development Group (Group) is the following group of social companies being established to generate sustainable opportunities for coastal communities in the North Eastern rural region of the Democratic Republic of Timor-Leste. This is a rural community-based demand driven private sector development partnership initiative for the 2011-30 Strategic Development Plan and the 5<sup>th</sup> Constitutional Government of Timor-Leste.

### **Baucau Beaches**

Developing Baucau Beaches as an indigenous marine eco-tourism destination development company. Building the Baucau Beaches 'Coral Triangle's Hotspot' destination brand locally to globally as a social enterprise development partnership of the Timor-Leste Ministry of Tourism. This is a practical demonstration development of 'high value – low volume' community-based indigenous marine eco-tourism. Business activities include reforesting the coast for premium dive tourism where community economic, cultural and environmental heritage sustainability development opportunity is optimized.

### **Timor Photography**

Timor Photography is a community-based enterprise that is developing the image & film destination brand of Baucau Beaches and Timor-Leste Tourism. Trainee photographers are developing long-term industry skills to generate professional photographic, film, media, marketing and heritage employment opportunities.

### **Wataboo Resort**

A community-based eco-tourism dive resort proposed for development in 2014. Baucau Beaches has developed successful tour, food and beverage services that will now expand to meet high visitor demands for up market accommodation. Wata Boo Resort will allow other Baucau Beaches and national coastal communities to apply the same community based tourism development business model as a national tourism demonstration business.

### **Inbound Timor**

In 2014, Inbound Timor will become the international holiday and tourism wholesale business of Baucau Beaches and assist the Ministry of Tourism in packaging inbound visitor services.

### **MADE IN TIMOR**

MADE IN TIMOR will develop value added and sustainable niche local products that complement the international significance of Baucau Beaches marine, watershed, biodiversity and indigenous heritage. For example, by adding value to coconut plantation forestation with coastal communities for tourism, the development of premium coconut products from water, to cream, to extra virgin oil, will increase the value of coconut plantations, including those families who may not directly benefit from tourism products.

### **Timor Seafood**

Timor Seafood will assist Baucau fisher communities to move away from the present unsustainable fishing and foraging livelihoods, to commercial fishing sustainably targeting pelagic and trap fishing to compete with illegal foreign fishing and imported seafood. Aquaculture will also be developed to meet demands as Timor-Leste's fish stocks become unsustainable for commercial fishing.

Millions in economic leakages are experienced in Timor-Leste to illegal fishing and importation of seafood. There are high demands for emerging domestic seafood needs from school feeding to increasing national food security with seafood protein across Timor-Leste.

Timor Seafood will play an important role for women to participate in the industry with the processing of fish presently predominantly caught by men. Larger vessels crewed by several families and technology also offers greater opportunities for women to become commercial fishers.

### **Timor Maritime College**

Timor Maritime College was established in 2009 and continues to provide international maritime and oil and gas workforce development skills, experience and interest benefiting many communities across the country. All training is undertaken for real employment, livelihood, community, workforce and industry development outcomes.

### **Timor Crew**

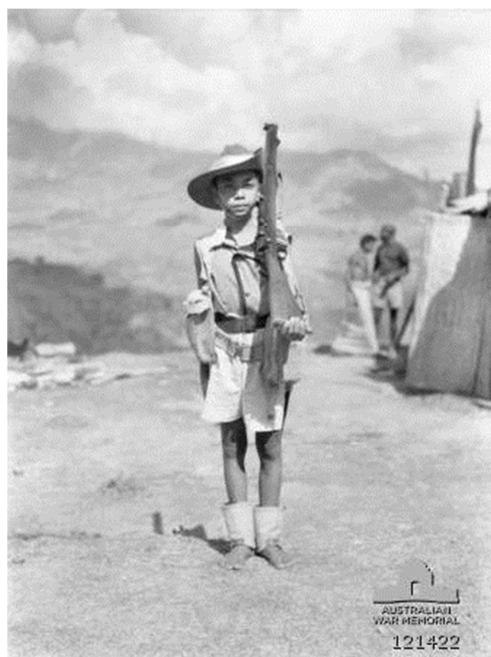
A crew development and resource project management service supporting Timor Maritime College, Timor Crew will establish in 2014 to optimize Timor-Leste local content opportunities for Timorese to work in the international seafaring, offshore oil, gas and flight attendant industries.

## Timor-Leste's Connections that Shape Northern Australia

The people of Timor-Leste, West Timor and Pantar Alor Indonesia have traded and settled in Northern Australia well before Australia was colonized. Sadly today, many of these fishing families who follow ancestral fishing trade routes within Australian annexed maritime borders, are often imprisoned in Australia, have their vessels destroyed and or die at sea using traditional vessels enforced by the Australian Government for access to these traditional fishing grounds. A direct impact on this loss of Indigenous heritage is that these poor indigenous fisher people have become vulnerable to exploitation from people smugglers, particularly teenage boys who are contracted as crew for refugee vessels, who we again see imprisoned in Australian adult prisons or who die at sea in unseaworthy vessels.

A second significant migration of Timorese people came to the East Kimberley as Koepangers' in the north Australian pearl-shell industry between the 1870s to the 1960s'. Many Koepangers ended up in forced and indentured labour working across the Kimberley and Top End.

In 1941 during World War II, 400 Australian soldiers from the 2/2nd Independent Company (2/2 Commando Squadron), an element of Sparrow Force, was dispatched to what was then known as Portuguese Timor, now Timor-Leste. They conducted successful guerrilla warfare against the invading Japanese Imperial Force preventing them from advancing on to Australia for a year. In September 1942, the 2/2nd Independent Company was reinforced by 2/4 Independent Company bringing the total number of Australian soldiers to 700. Australian 2/2nd soldiers were outnumbered by more than 9 000 Japanese troops. These Australian soldiers owe their success and ability to survive primarily to the Timorese who went to their aid with food, water, pack ponies, concealing and protect them from the enemy as well as assisting guerrilla operations. Approximately all but 40 of these soldiers survived to return to Australia.



Timorese Creado boy Akiu who served the 2/2<sup>nd</sup> Independent Company, 12.11.1945

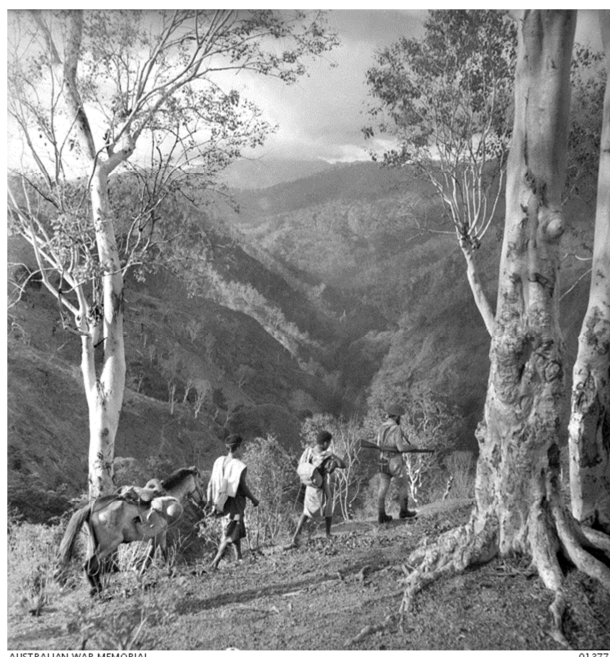


Photo by Damien Parer: Timor, 9 December 1942. Australian soldiers with local Timorese leading a pack pony.



ADF troops deployed to Timor-Leste attended the funeral of one of the last East Timorese veterans alongside hundreds of mourners in Dili. The procession honoured Senior Rufino Alves Correia, who served alongside Australian forces during World War II. Members of Joint Task Force 631 carried the casket through a guard of honour, before family, friends and colleagues. It was Mr Correia's special request to be draped with the Australian flag upon his passing, typifying an everlasting bond to his neighbouring comrades. Photo by ADF, Dili, 23 April 2010

*“Our guerrilla forces in Timor have been doing bold and courageous work.” “Though the spotlight has been more on New Guinea because of the larger forces engaged, the people of Australia should not overlook the importance of Timor as a base for operations against the north-west of Australia.”* Prime Minister John Curtin highlighted the importance of Timor operations when he looked back at the long year that was 1942.

Many Timorese communities who were believed to have supported these Australian operations were tortured, raped, murdered and went into famine with crops, livestock and houses destroyed by occupying Japanese forces. It is estimated that between 40 000 to 60 000 Timorese died as a direct result of Australia drawing in the Japanese to Portuguese Timor and the assistance given to Australian commandos, far exceeding the losses of any other nation that supported Australians in war.

Timorese refugees who settled in Northern Australia after 1975 Indonesian occupation and the 1999 Referendum Crisis, have also played a great role in the positive development of communities such as Darwin.

## Reconnecting Timor-Leste with Northern Australia

This living heritage with Northern Australia and Timor-Leste is now being rediscovered in the Kimberley. In 2008 the former Western Australian Minister for Infrastructure and Planning, now Federal Member for Perth, and Deputy Chair of this Committee, the Hon Alannah MacTiernan MHR and the present Timor-Leste Ambassador to Australia, H.E. Abel Guterres, connected the needs of high Timorese youth unemployment with labour shortages closing service businesses in the Kimberley.

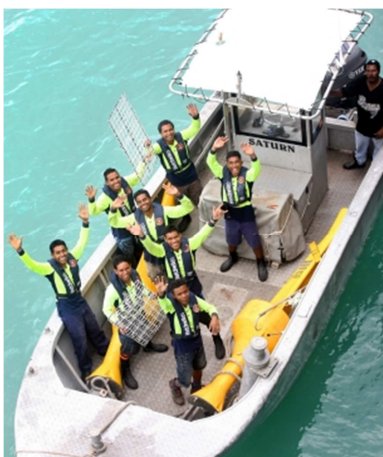
Some indigenous leaders in the Kimberley have expressed support to allow Timorese workers in the Kimberley where there is some hope people with a much closer culture, support positive opportunities for their indigenous youth. This includes an interest for Indigenous youth training and working in Timor-Leste where there is limited to no welfare systems and a more relevant cultural environment to develop.



*“I have had a long time dream of having my countrymen from both Timor and the Kimberley coming together and learning together in a cross cultural way.” “I believe they share a lot in common.” “Now I appreciate to know there is someone else across the sea that feels the same way.” - Neville Poelina*

Photo of Neville Poelina, a Nyikina Kimberley Indigenous leader, Uptuyu Aboriginal Adventures tourism entrepreneur, Tourism Western Australia Commissioner and founder of the World Indigenous Tourism Alliance. Neville, partner Jo Camileri and family have travelled to Timor-Leste, volunteered as mentors and connect Timorese workers in the Kimberley with Indigenous communities.

Under the initiative of the Hon Alannah MacTiernan MHR and Ambassador Abel Guterres, Timor Maritime College was established in 2009 to pilot 18 Timorese Maritime Cadetships working and training in the Australian pearling industry under the former Occupational Trainee visa (now the Training and Research Visa (Subclass 402) - Occupational Trainee stream). For the community of Broome and Eastern Kimberley, this became a positive project with evidence that local Indigenous Australian workers who were working and training with the Timorese Cadets, began to experience less racial discrimination at work, alcohol and drug use, better wellbeing in both the workplace and at home, greater work ethics, productivity and interest to develop a sustaining career.



These Timorese Cadets did encounter difficulties with the pearling Occupational Trainee Sponsor for not delivering on training, safety and working conditions, which the Australian Fair Work Commission and Ombudsman are facilitating resolutions for.

From 2012 to 2013, the Group assisted Kimberley Accommodation to place 9 Timorese Hotel Management Interns, again under the former Occupational Trainee visa in Broome, Halls Creek and Kununurra.

In February 2014, 4 Timorese Seasonal Workers under the Accommodation Trial of the Seasonal Worker Program are expected to start with the first Indigenous Australian sponsor, Lombadina Aboriginal Corporation situated on Cape Leveque North of Broome for 6 months. There will be a second group of 4 Timorese Seasonal Worker Applications for a further 6 months starting August 2014.

Lombadina is a sister community with Baucau Beaches where indigenous development cooperation will be developed.

All these services have been produced with voluntary staff, host communities, sponsors and in-kind funding from Kevin Austin, Neville Poelina and Jo Camileri without any interest or assistance from the Australian Embassy in Timor-Leste. Baucau Beaches Development Group is looking forward to working with H.E. Peter Doyle, the new Australian Ambassador to Timor-Leste who started in March 2014. A significant greater number of occupational trainees, Seasonal Workers and skilled workers could be facilitated in and from both countries with resourcing assistance from the Australian Government to the Baucau Beaches Development Group, Australian Indigenous, industry and community partners.

### **Workforce skills and industry gaps**

Baucau Beaches Development Group is as a development partnership for the Democratic Republic of Timor-Leste to generate youth maritime employment and industries. After successfully partnering with North Western Australian industry, governments and their communities from the Top End to Broome, the Timor Sea and Timor-Leste, Baucau Beaches Development Group is now strategically focused on partnerships for mutual bilateral workforce and industry development for the following industries:

- Maritime resources
- Marine tourism
- Bluewater seafaring
- Flight attendants
- Seafood (aquaculture, fishing, seafood production)
- Tropical forestry & agroforestry

All projects are developed on private sector development supply and demand guided by the 2011-30 Strategic Development Plan of the Democratic Republic of Timor-Leste.



In the 2013 Parliamentary Joint Committee on Foreign Affairs, Defence and Trade (Committee) - Australia's relationship with Timor-Leste, wide support was submitted and heard for increased access to Australia for Timorese vocational students, occupational trainees and skilled migration that supported Australian labour shortages and significant development for both countries workforces, industries, economies and relationships. It surprised the Committee that Timor-Leste had proven to be a model source country for labour cooperation, yet only a small number of Timorese are granted visas, particularly skilled visas. The former Australian Commonwealth Department of Education, Employment and Workplace Relations, now the Department of Employment, informed the Committee that in 2013, only five 457 visas were held by Timorese.

The Democratic Republic of Timor-Leste sees the development of the private sector as its major national priority, that in the presence of a youth population in poverty, limited skills and employment opportunities, is a real challenge as industry building commences.

The following is an extract of a Public Hearing with H.E. Abel Guterres, Timor-Leste's Ambassador to Australia at the Australian Federal House of Representatives Parliamentary Joint Committee on Foreign Affairs, Defence and Trade, Foreign Affairs Sub-Committee, Inquiry into Australia's relationship with Timor-Leste on the 21<sup>st</sup> of May 2013

Extract STARTS CHAIR: Dr Stone mentioned diving before and the potential for tourism. We have a seasonal worker program and I know that you are very keen to see that extended. I am just wondering how we could make that easier.

Ambassador Guterres: The seasonal worker program is very important for Timor-Leste. Why do I say this? The benefits are, of course, mutual: you have a labour shortage and we are supplying you with labour. So your industries have a guaranteed labour force to expand their business and the services they need to provide. For Timor-Leste it is about developing their skills in the industrial system of working. Our system is not an industrial system of working; if you start work at seven o'clock you come home at 10 o'clock! People do not have experience of the industrial system of living like you have in Australia. When people come here they are exposed to work ethics and health and safety issues in the workplace.

But the seasonal worker program also exposes them to what democracy is all about. Australians enjoy democracy. You can criticise your leaders and you do not find yourself in prison. That exposure is important for our people. We are a young democracy and we are building the pillars of democracy. This exposure is very important for that. All in all, it is very important. It will support and help Timor-Leste to truly stand on its own feet but it will also help with the whole democratic process. When people are exposed they understand. Over the centuries, how do people learn? Because they travel, they learn from each other and bring new knowledge into the country. This is exactly what happened. You were talking about the Chinese having all the herbal medicines. Why do they do that? Because they went all over the world getting all the plants that people were using. This is how they have it. This is part of the learning process that is no different now than centuries ago. For us it is important that this takes place.

There is an issue which I have talked about with some of the industries, especially farmers in the horticultural industry. The rules are very tight. Bureaucracy is too cumbersome, they are reluctant to take on people and upfront costs are too high. That is what they told me. I have expressed this view to DEEWR and hopefully we can deal with that to make it easier for Australian farmers to take on these seasonal workers, especially in the horticultural industry. New Zealand has been very successful. It is important that Australia can also be successful. That benefits Timor-Leste and also the Pacific countries.

There are also concerns about people who overstay and run away into the community. I can tell you, and I can also guarantee, that with our people that will not happen. I will give you an example. When they leave the country, when they leave Dili and get on the flight, they have a number of families coming to say goodbye to them. Do you know what that means? That means each face that is looking at them needs he or her help. That means that every cent he or she is earning is shared with all the others. In a sense, the benefit is not only for the worker himself or his immediate family but there is also the extended family. When these people come they are on a mission and they must fulfil the mission. Running away is not an option, and they do not even think of it anyway because they have a responsibility to their family and country. And of course they do not want to bring shame on their country and their family, so they will not run away. That concern can be put away completely.

Dr STONE: In my electorate, we have a huge shortage of abattoir workers and workers in piggeries, which are very high-tech, very modern facilities. They cannot get enough people to do the tasks. Perhaps we need to further explore how an occupational workplace trainee might fit into that setting in addition to horticulture. All oil and gas fields, coalfields and goldfields run out of their minerals or resource eventually, and there will be no exception with Greater Sunrise, sadly. What sort of planning are you doing for life after Sunrise, in terms of employment prospects and new industries? You mentioned agriculture and tourism. Are they the areas in which you are doing preplanning for employment development post the period when you are dependent on the oil and gas fields?

Ambassador Guterres: Our strategic development plan 2030 is precisely for that purpose. Oil and gas, or any natural resource, are not forever. It will go. We need to develop other sectors of the economy. Timor-Leste will have three main industries to underpin its economy: oil, gas and other natural resources; tourism; and agriculture. It is a small country, a small space. We really need to develop tourism and agriculture as alternatives to oil and gas. Tourism, whether you are in Australia, Pacific countries or other countries, is a major employment generator for the people. It employs thousands of people.

The tourism industry is the one we really need to develop, and of course the oil and gas money that has come in is for that purpose. It is to develop other sectors of the economy so that when oil and gas, all the natural resources, are gone, we have these alternative industries that will sustain the country and economy in the long run. Of course, the major challenge we have is the capacity, the knowledge. This is the major challenge that we need to invest in: our human capital. But of course the tourism industry can only develop if you have the major infrastructure issues addressed. Airport and port facilities, clean water, sewerage systems, roads, bridges—all these are enabling factors for a tourism industry to take place.

To develop agriculture, yes, we have to build dams, because the country is like a horse's back. When it rains, all the water that comes in goes immediately into the sea. So we need to build dams to really harvest the water, which can be used for irrigation systems and clean water consumption. These are the things that we need to develop.

Of course, developing this costs, and we need to have the money. This is where the revenue from oil and gas resources is so important to us. This is where the management of it is also very important to us. This is where prudent management is very important. I suppose we are lucky in the sense that we have learned from many other countries that have failed—resource rich but absolutely poor because the money has gone to a small elite and the rest of the population really lives on rubbish bins. That is not on for us.

We are on the right track, and we will continue to further strengthen that in terms of managing, whichever government or political party comes in to manage the affairs of the state on behalf of the people through elections. The systems are the key element. Once you have good systems in place, everybody else can just follow. This is where the government is working hard to put in place good systems where the country's resources, income and revenues are well managed. That can benefit all members of society rather than a small elite group. So we are on the right track, and I am proud and pleased to share this with you.

Senator MOORE: Since your submission talked about the ongoing discussions about the Timor Sea Treaty, we have had the challenges going on. In your opening statement you did not mention the maturity of the relationship between our two countries or how you see that being progressed to maintain the strong relationship you identify whilst there is such a serious challenge going on. Could I get some comments from you on that?

Ambassador Guterres: For a start, we are geographically linked and in that we have no choice. In terms of dealing with our relationship, our relationship is big and broad, and this disagreement is one piece in that broader relationship. Because it is to do with legal issues, do we allow this one disagreement to overtake the relationship or do we quarantine this disagreement for our legal people to deal with and keep our relationship rolling? This issue is critical for Timor-Leste. It is almost a national security issue for Timor-Leste, for its survival. You are talking about the resources of the country. If you were to compare Australia and Timor-Leste, there is a huge difference. One country is a resource rich country that is well developed and Timor-Leste is a toddler that is learning to walk and stand its own feet. Australia is a good neighbour and it needs to take Timor-Leste as a sovereign entity on an equal basis. I think that is very important. The present leadership wants to deal with this issue now rather than leave it for next month, because things could be different.

Our relationship is very important because of its geographic nature, but there are emotional ties between the two countries that we are loyal to. Governments come and go but, as a people, we are friends forever. This was tested in the Second World War. It was established then. So are we, the present generation, wanting to follow in those footsteps or do we want to go the other way? I think, overwhelmingly, that is the way to go—to build the friendship. Differences exist for reasons and therefore

they must be dealt with as mature friends and neighbours. We can deal with these differences, through whichever means is possible, to come to a solution.

Australia and New Zealand are cousins. They have differences. New Zealand apples were stopped from being exported to Australia, but the relationship did not collapse, because of the maturity and the sense of friendship. You have one difference; you deal with it, you work through it. You negotiate and you go through the process until you come to a satisfactory outcome. For Australians it is small and minute but for Timor-Leste it is big. For a country in its early stages of building institutions, as a sovereign state you must have your boundary issues dealt with, but our legal people will be dealing with that. The important thing is that we do not allow that piece of difference to overtake the entire relationship. If that happens, then I think we might as well not have a relationship at all.

MADDEN, Ms Shannon, Branch Head, Department of Education, Employment and Workplace Relations

RODDAM, Mr Mark, Group Manager, Department of Education, Employment and Workplace Relations

CHAIR: Welcome. Before we proceed to questions, do you wish to make a short opening statement to the committee?

Mr Roddam: I am pleased to provide the committee with information about Timor-Leste's involvement in the Pacific Seasonal Worker Pilot Scheme and the Seasonal Worker Program. The Seasonal Worker Program is the centrepiece of the Department of Education, Employment and Workplace Relations involvement with Timor-Leste. The three-year Pacific Seasonal Worker Pilot Scheme, which concluded on 30 June 2012, tested whether a seasonal labour mobility program could contribute to the economic development of participating Pacific island countries through seasonal employment experience, remittances and training. The Seasonal Worker Program commenced on 1 July 2012 and builds on the Pacific Seasonal Worker Pilot Scheme in contributing to the economic development of participating countries. The program is ongoing for the horticulture sector and involves eight participating Pacific island countries and Timor-Leste. A small-scale three-year trial is also being undertaken in the accommodation, aquaculture, cane and cotton sectors in selected regions.

Timor-Leste was invited to participate in the pilot scheme during its final year, from September 2011, in a small-scale trial of labour mobility arrangements with accommodation providers in Broome, Western Australia. Twelve workers were recruited from Timor-Leste by three approved employers under the trial. The employers were pleased with the workers and at the time indicated their intention to recruit from Timor-Leste again during the 2013 season. Two of the three employers have had the workers return in 2013. In terms of the Seasonal Worker Program, Timor-Leste has been participating in that program since its inception on 1 July 2012. As at 30 April 2013, 28 seasonal workers have come to Australia from Timor-Leste collectively under the pilot and the Seasonal Worker Program. Of these, 26 have been employed in the accommodation sector and two in the horticulture sector.

Timor-Leste and DEEWR have worked together to develop labour-sending arrangements for Timor-Leste to send workers to Australia under the Seasonal Worker Program. As well a labour-sending unit in Timor-Leste, Timor-Leste has a labour attaché based at the embassy here in Canberra who is very focused on the program. Both the labour-sending unit in Timor-Leste and the Timor-Leste labour attaché in Canberra are efficient and responsive and have strong working relationships with Australian government officials. DEEWR has worked closely with Timor-Leste to develop relationships with Australian employers in the horticulture and accommodation sectors. For example, DEEWR has facilitated a marketing visit by the Timor-Leste Labour attaché to Australian employers in both the horticulture and accommodation sectors to promote Timor-Leste workers. Timor-Leste workers have now been recruited into both of these sectors, and the participation in the Seasonal Worker Program is increasing. Timor-Leste is proving to be a competitive participating country and has impressed Australian approved employers by supplying hardworking seasonal workers. We expect Timor-Leste's participation in the Seasonal Worker Program to continue to grow. My colleague Ms Madden and I are very happy to answer your questions about Timor-Leste's participation in the Seasonal Worker Program.

Dr STONE: We have had some suggestions that there could be a special regional access quota for Timor-Leste workers into Australia, in particular looking at the tertiary entrance qualifications needed. For example, a lot of 457 visas might be waived if people had skills in, say, something like an abattoir or the pig industry, because the numbers are very low given there is 70 per cent unemployment in Timor-Leste and there are a huge number of young people graduating from school with no jobs. Have you had any direct request from the Timor-Leste government or have you looked at something beyond just the Pacific islander Seasonal Work Program, which has only six-month work opportunities? At the moment it tends to be very high cost for the employer in Australia. When it was trialled in my part of the world it has been abandoned by the growers in the Swan Hill area because of the cost per worker being far higher than a local worker engaged.

Mr Roddam: We have had representations about expanding the number of industries under the programs both domestically and from international countries, and the industries you mentioned are among those. That is really a decision for government about whether they want to expand the program. What I would say is that obviously to expand into those industries would take it beyond a seasonal program. The horticulture industry as well as the industries that we are trialling have those defined seasons and an important part of that is the idea that workers come to Australia, work for that period and then go back and remit that money and make a contribution to their families and their communities. That is really the good news part of the program where we have seen people make a real difference to their lives with money they have earned working in Australia. We certainly have those representations but it would take possibly a separate program or it would take this program down a different track. I am aware of other opportunities, though, through the system that Timor Leste have taken up, such as occupational trainee visas in Broome with pearling, and I am sure there are others as well. But we have had those representations.

Dr STONE: Is there a quota on the number of occupational traineeships?

Mr Roddam: That is administered by the Department of Immigration. I am not aware, sorry.

Dr STONE: There are a lot of Indonesian horticultural workers who come to southern Australia on these traineeships.

Mr Roddam: There may be. I am unsure of that.

Dr STONE: Given that if the object is remittance support, you would be able to remit even more if you had a more than six-month opportunity, and our international backpacker visas allow up to two years in Australia if you work in a regional area. They still require you to move on every six months, which is an issue we need to deal with in a policy sense in Australia too. It is early days, as you say, but we are really not doing much for the people of East Timor at this stage with the numbers coming in.

Mr Roddam: Numbers are growing and particularly the experience in Broome with the Timor Leste workers was a very positive one not only in terms of work ethic and how pleased the employers were with those workers but also the links they were able to establish with the local indigenous communities and the links they established with the Catholic Church as well. They were really an excellent part of the local community and the standard of how we like this program to work. Timor Leste is the only country that has the labour attaché arrangement working on the program out of the nine participating countries that we have in the program. I think it is a real benefit to have someone based in Australia who is marketing on behalf of the workers. There are challenges in the program that we continue to work through. We have got a good relationship with the Timor Leste embassy here and we continue to work through those issues.

Dr STONE: When you say some working in accommodation, you mean hospitality, hotels and that sort of thing.

Mr Roddam: That is right.

Dr STONE: What proportion of women were there to men amongst the East Timor candidates?

Ms Madden: In the pilot scheme we had a 50-50 break-up in Timor Leste. I do not have the breakdown for the accommodation sector but under the program most workers from Timor Leste are in the accommodation sector and it is currently about 44 per cent female and 56 per cent male.

Dr STONE: Do you know how they are actually recruited back in Timor Leste? Is it a competitive field or are people chosen on the basis of some other criteria?

Mr Roddam: There is a work ready pool that the government maintains. For example, the first accommodation business that recruited workers was presented with a pool of perhaps around 30 workers and they then selected the best 12 they wanted from there. The idea with all participating countries is that we try to have the program extended to those that are unlikely to have work opportunities otherwise or would not have work opportunities otherwise. Often those outside the city areas and that sort of thing are what we encourage. We do not have enormous oversight of where they come from but that is what we encourage. Extract ENDS

The following is an extract of the Committee's Visit to Timor-Leste meeting with H.E. Dr José Ramos-Horta President of the Democratic Republic of Timor-Leste on the 8<sup>th</sup> November 2011:

2.116 Asked what he would prefer to see Australia contributing to at this time, the President emphasised that the approximately \$100 million in development assistance that Australia provides per year is very welcome and noted, as an example, the Seeds of Life program. He felt that an increase in access for vocational training for Timorese people in Australia, greater access to the Seasonal Worker Program and additional assistance for infrastructure would be welcomed.<sup>32</sup> He also expressed the view that less should be spent on consultants associated with the aid program.

2.117 The President explained that access to Australia's Seasonal Worker Program has three major benefits for the Timorese people: a source of income, which can be shared with family members in Timor; the fostering of a strong work ethic; and educational and training benefits.

2.125 While noting that Australia's development assistance is provided in accordance with a Planning Agreement with Timor-Leste and is based on priorities identified by the Timorese themselves in their Strategic Development Plan, it became apparent to the delegation that assistance would be welcome in the following areas:

- increased access to vocational training in Australia and to the Seasonal Worker Program

Relations between the national governments of Timor-Leste and Australia are at the lowest point it could possibly be at. Here is a practical and effective people to people, country to country and industry to industry proven product that could assist relationships significantly if the following Recommendations are responded to in the same spirit Timor-Leste has had for Australia and its people.

## **Recommendations**

1. The Australia Government should enter into negotiations in good faith with Timor-Leste to establish permanent maritime boundaries in accordance with international law. Australia should establish permanent maritime boundaries along the median line half way between the coastlines of Australia and Timor-Leste. To enable this Australia should terminate the CMATS treaty.
2. The Australian Government resubmit to the maritime boundary jurisdiction of the International Court of Justice and the International Tribunal for the Law of the Sea. The Australian Government commit to referring the matter to independent arbitration should the matter be unable to be resolved bilaterally.
3. The Australian Government expand vocational education, training and employment by funding Baucau Beaches Development Group of Timor-Leste to increase its sustainable indigenous workforce and industry development products in partnerships with bi-lateral governments, regional communities and industry.
4. The Australian Government expand access for Timorese and Indigenous Australian development partners to study, train and work in Australia, Timor Sea, Timor-Leste Exclusive Area, Timor-Leste and internationally to enable end-to-end workforce and industry development in Timor-Leste and Northern Australia by:
  - a) Funding joint Timorese and Australian Indigenous vocational training for entry into the following Australian labour shortages, regional industries and local Indigenous content needs in both Australia and Timor-Leste:
    - Maritime offshore oil & gas
    - Tourism
    - Bluewater seafaring
    - Flight attendants
    - Seafood (aquaculture, fishing, seafood production)
    - Tropical forestry & agroforestry
    - Livestock & meat production



- b) Funding joint Timorese and Australian Indigenous industry sponsorship facilitators and mentors for workplace, host community and home community mentoring.
  - c) The Australia Seasonal Worker Program and Trial sectors become a longer-term program to include non-seasonal labour shortage industries such livestock and meat processing.
  - d) The Australian Seasonal Worker Program improve resource assistance that enables more Northern Australian Approved Employer applications to be completed and reduce delays in application processing that has taken over 1 year and resulted in both the loss of seasonal sponsorship opportunities and industry confidence in 2013 and 2014.
  - e) The Australian Government include Timor-Leste in an agreement for the Temporary Work (International Relations) (subclass 403) visa – Government Agreement stream.
  - f) The Australian Government enable Timor-Leste and Northern Australian governments, industries and regional communities to cooperate on workforce and industry development activities through, vocational scholarships and the following Australian migration program mechanisms:
    - Seasonal Worker Program
    - Training and Research Visa (Subclass 402) - Occupational Trainee stream
    - Temporary Work (International Relations) (subclass 403) visa – Government Agreement stream
    - Temporary Work (Skilled) (Subclass 457) visa – Labour Agreement stream
    - Labour Agreements
    - NT & WA Nominated Sponsorship & Migration Plans
    - Regional Migration Agreements
    - Enterprise Migration Agreements
5. The Australian Government assist the Democratic Republic of Timor-Leste in acceding to international seafaring industry requirements through the International Maritime Organisation Convention on Standards of Training, Certification and Watchkeeping (STCW 95) and the ILO Maritime Labour Convention to establish a Timorese domestic and international seafaring industry.
6. The Australian Centre for International Agricultural Research (ACIAR) assist the Democratic Republic of Timor-Leste and partner Indigenous communities in Northern Australia with aquaculture, commercial fishing, seafood production and coastal agro-forestry industry development.

7. The Australian Prime Minister, Opposition Leader and Governor General of Australia, address the Democratic Republic of Timor-Leste's National Parliament in a public address to recognise the heroic Timorese services to Australian military operations in Portuguese Timor during WWII and apologise for the thousands of Timorese who lost their lives, those tortured, for loss of property, livelihoods and the famine experienced following Japanese revenge for Australian commando operations.