



Australian Embassy
Timor-Leste

COVID-19



14 May 2021

A message from Australia's Ambassador to Timor-Leste, Peter Roberts



Welcome to our third Embassy newsletter for this year.

Unfortunately COVID-19 cases are still increasing rapidly throughout Timor-Leste. Since our last newsletter a fortnight ago about 1,500 cases have been recorded, more than a third of the total number of cases recorded in Timor-Leste since the start of the pandemic.

Australia is continuing to support Timor-Leste – both on the COVID-19 response and the flood recovery. These are difficult times but together we are accomplishing a great deal.



In the past fortnight Australia has:

- 01 Delivered a first shipment of 20,000 Australian-made AstraZeneca vaccines to Timor-Leste, enabling Phase 2 of the national vaccination campaign to get underway. Regular shipments will follow, in line with Australia's commitment to ensure safe and effective vaccines for the 80% of the population not covered by COVAX.
- 02 Handed over a large quantity of PPE and medical items including COVID testing kits to support the Ministry of Health, Medical and Pharmaceutical Supply Agency (SAMES) and the National Health Laboratory as they respond to the COVID-19 outbreak.
- 03 Continued providing expert technical advice on the public health and acute care response to COVID-19 and the floods through the specially-trained Australian Medical Assistance Team (AUSMAT).
- 04 Maintained support for those still living in evacuation centres following the floods. Australian Humanitarian Partnership NGOs have been working with Civil Protection and the Ministry of Social Solidarity and Inclusion to ensure essential needs including food, security and medical, are being met. In addition, we have provided solar-powered lamps, tents and housing repair kits to families affected by the floods.



05 Worked with Bee Timor-Leste (Timor-Leste Water) to ensure that clean drinking water is available where it's needed. Since the flood, more than 7 million litres of water have been transported to evacuation centres and community tanks, significantly reducing the risk of water-borne illnesses in affected communities.

06 Kept up senior level engagement to ensure our partnership is responsive and aligned. Prime Ministers Scott Morrison and Taur Matan Ruak had a warm discussion by phone last week. In Canberra, the Department of Foreign Affairs is also in regular contact with Timor-Leste's Ambassador to Australia, Inês Almeida.

I was proud to receive my first AstraZeneca dose this week at the launch hosted by the Ministry of Health. Separately, the Embassy's voluntary staff vaccination campaign was extremely popular, with staff keen to protect themselves, each other and their community.

To stay up to date with developments follow our Facebook page 'Australia in Timor-Leste'. You can find past editions of this newsletter on our website.



Photo credit: Paizinho Tilman / Gabinete Primeiro Ministro



07 Funded the construction of four new border posts to support the PNTL to prevent the illegal movement of people and goods and enforce border controls. The Australian Federal Police, through the Timor-Leste Police Development Program, also commenced construction of a fifth post on Atauro Island to support the maritime police.

08 Supported F-FDTL engineers to refurbish a COVID-19 isolation facility in Baucau through the Defence Cooperation Program. Australia's Partnership for Human Development program helped to fit out the site by purchasing 60 beds, mattresses and linen. F-FDTL Chief, Lieutenant-General Lere Anan Timur and Australia's Commander of 1st Division Major General Jake Ellwood discussed our strong defence cooperation in a call last week.