



Australian Embassy
Timor-Leste

COVID-19



20 August 2021

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



Concerningly, since our last newsletter a month ago the Delta variant of COVID-19 has been detected in Timor-Leste and we are now seeing a second wave of infections.

Faced with increasing case numbers it has been heartening to see the speed with which the Ministry of Health, supported by Australia and other partners, has continued the vaccination rollout. Nationally, almost 50% of the eligible population (aged 18+) has now received a first dose. And in Dili, which was the early focus for the campaign, more than 50% of adults are fully vaccinated with two doses. Congratulations to everyone involved in this tremendous achievement.

In the past month Australia has:

- 01 Welcomed the arrival of the largest delivery of COVID-19 vaccines to Timor-Leste. 300,000 doses arrived from Australia last week in response to Prime Minister Taur Matan Ruak's request for a vaccination surge. Australia has now shared more than 577,000 vaccines with Timor-Leste with further deliveries planned in line with our commitment to ensure sufficient supply to fully vaccinate everyone not covered by COVAX.
- 02 Joined with Defence Minister Filomeno Paixão de Jesus, Health Minister Dr Odete Maria Freitas Belo and F-FDTL Chief Lieutenant-General Lere Anan Timur to open a new COVID-19 isolation facility in the border area of Maliana. Australia's Defence Cooperation Program worked with the F-FDTL and the Ministry of Health to refurbish the facility which will enable the care of patients while also protecting the community.
- 03 Strengthened security measures at the border by completing two further police border posts through the Timor-Leste Police Development Program. These self-sustainable posts at Amin Matan and Fatululik, together with further supplies of tents, stretchers and sleeping bags, enhance the PNTL's Border Patrol Unit's (UPF) ability to enforce the government's border control measures and keep the community safe.



Australian Embassy staff member Amélia accompanied her mother Marciana to get vaccinated. Remember, being fully vaccinated with two doses is required for maximum protection against COVID-19, and in particular for optimal effectiveness against the Delta variant. With the 300,000 vaccines that arrived from Australia last week, now is your chance to get vaccinated! Vaccination centres are operating all over Timor-Leste.

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.

04 Together with Japan, funded UNICEF to build permanent water and sanitation facilities at a number of border posts, quarantine and isolation facilities. This is an important COVID-19 infection prevention and control measure for people crossing the border into Timor-Leste.

05 Continued to support economic recovery and resilience through the rollout of our AUD20 million COVID-19 Economic Response Package. Announced in June, this package is supporting small-scale community infrastructure projects throughout the country as well as providing social assistance payments for vulnerable households. The design process for the *Bolsa da Mae Jerasoun Foun* payments is well underway with the Ministry of Social Solidarity and Inclusion for cash payments to help women and children overcome poverty.

06 Progressed important infrastructure upgrades for Port Hera as part of our maritime security partnership in preparation for the arrival of two Guardian-class Patrol Boats from Australia in 2023. We also commenced preparations for our annual defence exercise Hari'i Hamutuk - Australian Defence Force members have arrived in Timor-Leste and undergone quarantine so that they are ready to conduct this year's activities with the F-FDTL in Tilomar, Metinaro, Port Hera and Baucau in accordance with strict COVID-19 procedures.

