



9 April 2020

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



COVID-19 poses an unprecedented challenge. We are here to keep working with Timor-Leste. Each week I want to touch base with you through this newsletter to update you on our work with Timor-Leste and share other developments. We will of course keep posting regularly on Facebook, but this will act as a summary.

Australia is supporting Timor-Leste to prepare for and prevent the spread of the pandemic, and manage health and economic impacts. This means we are redirecting our existing development programs to support the response in Timor-Leste. Our assistance is coordinated with the Timor-Leste Government and the World Health Organization.

### In the last week Australia has:

- 01 Helped Timor-Leste set up isolation facilities at Vera Cruz, and supported Timor-Leste's work in developing Standing Operating Procedures for quarantine, and isolation of patients with mild symptoms
- 02 With the Menzies School of Health Research, helped build the National Laboratory's ability to conduct COVID-19 testing locally, and we are supporting a further extension of the Laboratory and skills development at the national hospital to manage infection prevention and control, building on the good work of the WHO
- 03 Supported NGOs including Maluk Timor to deliver training to improve the skills of Timorese health workers in health clinics across the country to prevent and control infections like COVID-19
- 04 Helped Timor-Leste establish the Integrated Crisis Management Centre and provided Australia's Defence Cooperation Program advisors to support its operations
- 05 Supported the PNTL through the Australian Federal Police Timor-Leste Police Development Program including to establish temporary police stations at critical locations, and set up handwashing stations at police stations in every district of Timor-Leste
- 06 Supported the repatriation of nine Timorese doctors from Fiji so they can help with Timor-Leste's response



- 07 Provided personal protective equipment and medical supplies to protect Timorese healthcare workers
- 08 Implemented screening of any travellers leaving Australia for Timor-Leste – to help keep Timor-Leste safe
- 09 Provided certainty to Timorese Seasonal Workers in Australia – they can stay and work longer and have access to Australia’s world class health system
- 10 Supported public messages on health (you can watch my handwashing video on Facebook!). Australian Awards Alumni have been working to spread the message as well.

*Thanks to the Royal Darwin Hospital for conducting Timor-Leste’s COVID-19 testing for free, while the National Laboratory built its capacity*



We are so grateful for all our partners and will continue to work closely with all.

Follow our Facebook page ‘Australia in Timor-Leste’ to stay up to date with developments.

And during these difficult times let me wish a Happy Easter to all!

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