



Australian Embassy  
Timor-Leste

# COVID-19



8 May 2020

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



I hope you're finding our regular COVID-19 newsletter useful. As we continue to face the unprecedented challenges brought about by COVID-19, Australia is working hand-in-hand with Timor-Leste to prepare, prevent and respond.

There is a lot of great cooperation. You will probably have seen many of these achievements on our Facebook already, but here is a summary.



### In the past fortnight Australia has:

- 01** Kept in close contact with Timor-Leste at the highest levels. Prime Ministers Morrison and Taur Matan Ruak had a warm discussion by phone, as did Foreign Ministers Payne and Babo Soares. By maintaining close contact between leaders we can ensure that Australia's assistance is aligned and responsive to Timor-Leste's priorities. DFAT is also in regular discussion with Timor-Leste's Ambassador in Canberra, Inês Almeida.
- 02** Delivered more medical equipment – this time 20 patient vital sign monitors for use at the National Hospital and Vera Cruz isolation facility. Thanks to the Royal Australasian College of Surgeons for providing the equipment, with funds from the Australian government.
- 03** Helped Timor-Leste to manufacture personal protective equipment using innovative 3D printing. With Australia's support, Catalpa International is 3D printing face shields right here in Timor-Leste.
- 04** Ensured COVID-19 information is accessible to Timor-Leste's deaf community by funding sign language interpretation for the nightly news and all Integrated Crisis Management Centre media briefings.
- 05** Worked with the Integrated Crisis Management Centre and Ministry of Health to progress plans to establish additional isolation facilities. This builds on our earlier collaboration to get the Vera Cruz facility up and running. Thanks to partners WHO, Maluku Timor, St John of God and our Partnership for Human Development for providing the technical advice required to ensure these facilities are safe for patients and health care workers, while protecting the broader community.



- 06 Supported the Border Patrol Unit to effectively enforce the state of emergency border and quarantine measures through the Australian Federal Police's provision of camping and other equipment required for patrols.
- 07 Maintained the close ties between our defence organisations as they support COVID-19 operations. F-FDTL Chief Major General Lere Anan Timur and his Australian counterpart General Angus Campbell, and the Commander of 1st Division Major General Jake Ellwood, discussed the Australian Defence Cooperation's strong support for the F-FDTL in phone calls last week.
- 08 Prioritised the safety and wellbeing of Timorese workers in Australia. In addition to the new visa options and other support being provided in Australia, we have worked to ensure the Secretariat of State for Vocational Training and Employment's Labour Sending Unit is able to continue its work supporting Timorese workers in Australia who are in turn making a vital contribution to their families and communities.

Like many of you, the Australian Embassy is proud to join the national movement to honour frontline workers for their selfless contribution. We are also taking time to acknowledge the challenges that COVID-19 presents for mental health. The Embassy is developing a Mental Health Charter and will be participating in the global Push-Up Challenge to raise awareness (look out for photos coming soon!).



#### PARTNER PROFILE



Health NGO Maluk Timor has been quick to respond to COVID-19, providing training for over 1,600 health workers at every hospital and health centre in the country. Maluk Timor CEO, Dr Jeremy Beckett said that he has been impressed by the way Australia and Timor-Leste have been working together at this challenging time – ‘there’s a real sense of being in this together’. For more details of the remarkable work Maluk Timor is doing, check out our Facebook page (Australia in Timor-Leste).

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