



Australian Embassy
Timor-Leste

COVID-19



22 May 2020

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



Welcome to Edition 4 of our COVID-19 newsletter. There have been some significant achievements this past fortnight. A number of COVID-19 patients were discharged – all of whom had fully recovered – bringing the number of known active cases in Timor-Leste to zero.

We pay tribute to the Timor-Leste government, Ministry of Health, the Integrated Crisis Management Centre, the frontline workers who have worked so tirelessly to keep the community safe, and Timor-Leste's partners including the World Health Organization. Special acknowledgement must also go to the people of Timor-Leste who have heeded public health advice and taken steps to reduce the spread of infection, often at significant personal cost.

Of course, there is still a long way to go. As we have seen from international experience, this virus is not easily defeated. We have to stay focused on prevention and preparation. Australia will continue to work closely with Timor-Leste. Here is a summary of key recent activities.

In the past fortnight Australia has:

- 01 Delivered a further shipment of personal protective equipment (PPE) and medical equipment including oxygen regulators and basic response kits. This vital equipment will support patient care, while also ensuring the safety of frontline staff.
- 02 Helped Timor-Leste to further expand its COVID-19 testing. Congratulations to the hard-working staff of the National Health Laboratory and their partners at the Menzies School of Health Research with the laboratory now able to process up to 100 tests a day. Collaboration with the Royal Darwin Hospital will continue.
- 03 Provided cloth face masks to essential workers. The Australian Federal Police supplied the PNTL medical clinic with face masks for police officers patrolling the border. And the Embassy provided the Journalists' Association (AJTL) with supplies.
- 04 Maintained support to the Integrated Crisis Management Centre on contingency planning, situation monitoring and reporting. Australia's Defence Cooperation Program advisors work in the centre every day assisting with the COVID-19 response.
- 05 Presented new police notebooks to the PNTL which include information on gender-based violence support services, to assist police to refer women and children to the services they need. By recognising the gendered impacts of COVID-19 and the emergency response, the Timor-Leste Police Development Program is helping to keep vulnerable members of the community safe.



06 Marked the completion of the first 30 handwashing stations in 10 municipalities through Australia's PARTISIPA program, in partnership with the Ministry of Public Works. Another 40 will be installed in coming weeks to ensure that people can wash their hands in public spaces.

07 Kept up the close liaison at senior levels to ensure our assistance is aligned and responsive to Timor-Leste's priorities. Last week, Defence Ministers Linda Reynolds and Brigadier General (rtd) Filomeno da Paixão de Jesus had a warm discussion by phone. DFAT is also in regular discussion with Timor-Leste's Ambassador in Canberra, Inês Almeida.

On Wednesday we celebrated the anniversary of Timor-Leste's Restoration of Independence. Although we could not mark the occasion in the usual way, we pay tribute to Timor-Leste's development and join the Timorese people in the commemoration.



On 17 May the Embassy acknowledged the International Day Against Homophobia, Biphobia, Intersexism & Transphobia. We celebrate pride in diversity and strive to promote acceptance and respect regardless of sexual orientation or gender identity.

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