



Submission No 39

Inquiry into Australia's Relationship with Timor-Leste

Organisation: Charles Darwin University

Joint Standing Committee on Foreign Affairs, Defence and Trade
Foreign Affairs Sub-Committee

Charles Darwin University response to DFAT Inquiry into Australia's Relationship with Timor-Leste

Terms of Reference

The Joint Standing Committee on Foreign Affairs, Defence and Trade shall enquire into and report on Australia's relationship with Timor-Leste, with special emphasis on:

- Bilateral relations at the parliamentary and government levels
- Aid, including support with governance issues
- Economic issues, including trade and investment
- Cultural, educational and scientific relations and exchanges
- People to people links
- Defence cooperation and those aspects of regional security that affect Timor-Leste.

Charles Darwin University Submission

CULTURAL, EDUCATIONAL AND SCIENTIFIC RELATIONS AND EXCHANGES

BACKGROUND

This submission highlights the wide range and deep engagement of Charles Darwin University in Timor-Leste. It is intended in an abbreviated form to provide evidence of the importance of capacity building partnerships, engaged research and collaboration in education and training. The experience of the University is that consistency and commitment have built sustainable relationships that contribute to Timor-Leste's development agenda, but also, and importantly, enriches the experience of students and staff at CDU. The University now enjoys recognition in the sector and in Timor-Leste as having a lead role. This was clearly evidenced by the Universities Australia Round Table that was held at CDU Thursday 17 May 2012.

This Roundtable generated a framework for a wide-ranging and ambitious collaborative research and training agenda. The Roundtable brought together representatives from ten Australian universities at the CDU campus in Darwin. Convened by Universities Australia and Chaired by the Honourable Steve Bracks AC, senior officials from Timor-Leste including the Minister of Education Dr H.E. Joao Cancio Freitas, Labour and Education Attaché Mr Ismenio Martins da Silva and Rector of the Universidade Nacional Timor Lorosa'e (UNTL) Professor Aurelio Guterres outlined key strategic imperatives and development goals. AusAid Director East Timor Health and Education Ms Sarah Lendon summarised AusAid investment priorities. A preliminary audit of Australian university engagement with Timor-Leste informed the discussion and provided examples of bi-lateral co-operation across a wide range of disciplines.

Three areas of focus to ensure strategic university engagement and to minimise duplication emerged:

1. Improved Communication, including the mapping of Australian universities' current projects, the identification of gaps and alignment with Timor-Leste's Strategic Development Plan
2. Improved Co-ordination, including the identification of lead universities who share histories of productive and collaborative engagement with Timor-Leste and, through these institutions, improved co-ordination with AusAid
3. Better Program Outcomes, including dual degrees, increased scholarships, collaborative research and research training, accreditation support and initiatives to develop the vocational education sector.

At the conclusion of the formal meeting participants attended presentations from CDU staff and their Timorese students, adding both a human dimension to the discussion of strategic objectives, and a sense of urgency surrounding many of the areas of research focus, from environmental degradation to agricultural reform through to law and order and governance. Themes of trust, respect and partnership were reinforced.

It was agreed that a Universities Australia interest group would be formed to develop models for enhanced collaboration with Timor-Leste and that a follow-up meeting should be planned for Dili in 2013.

Since the Roundtable, CDU has continued to active build relationships at the highest level in Timor-Leste. The following documents key initiatives.

STUDENT ENROLMENTS

CDU has more than 40 students from Timor-Leste currently enrolled in academic studies – VET, Higher Education and Research.

DISTINGUISHED ALUMNI

- Dr Nelson ES Martins (formerly the TL Minister of Health) and PhD graduate from the Menzies School of Health Research (MSHR). Adjunct Professorship with The University of Sydney
- Ms Madalena Hanjan Soares (formerly the TL Vice-Minister of Health) – Masters graduate
- Mr Liborio Pereira, President, Civil Service Commission – Masters graduate
- Major Marcelino Ximanes, Aide-de-Camp for President Taur Matan Ruak - graduate of CDU's Certificate III in General Education for Adults

CAPACITY BUILDING ROLE

CDU has a long standing and serious commitment to manpower development in our nearest neighbour in partnership with local government agencies. An outline of current activity is provided below.

Ministry of Education

CDU and the MOE have awarded joint scholarships (6) for research in fields that are of relevance to Timor-Leste:

- Climate change
- Sustainable community based eco - tourism
- Economic development and free trade
- Operation of private military companies (PMSCs) and private security companies (PSCs) in Timor-Leste with recommendations for their statutory regulation and control
- Weed control

Ministry of Finance

- Delivery of Accounting studies at VET, bachelor and masters level - 15 students under a MOF scholarship program funded by the National Human Capital Development Fund
- Delivery of IT studies at VET, bachelor and masters level – up to 26 students (to commence mid-2103) under the MOF scholarship program funded as above
- Development and delivery of customised training in financial management funded by MOF. This is a joint venture with UNTL and CDU's School of Business - curriculum development in progress to be followed by stage 3, delivery of training
- Provision of English language training for Ministry staff

Ministry of Agriculture and Fisheries

- PHD training for a senior Ministry officer, on CDU full scholarship. Research focuses on the development of organic high end quality cashew crop for export in collaboration with local farmers to establish a sustainable valuable crop for export

- Longstanding research on water catchment processes and management. A PhD thesis by a CDU student has just been submitted and several publications prepared in consultation with Ministry personnel are nearing completion.
- Six joint marine research projects and reports, under the auspices of the Arafura and Timor Seas Expert Forum (ATSEF). The projects were the result of collaborative research carried out in Timor-Leste between the Ministry of Agriculture and Fisheries, the Government of Timor-Leste, Charles Darwin University, the Australian Institute of Marine Science, the Australian National University and the Northern Territory Government: <http://www.cdu.edu.au/research/atsef/>

Ministry of Health

- PHD training for a senior MoH officer, on a scholarship funded by CDU/Menzies School of Health Research (MSHR). Research focuses on the availability of essential medicines in health facilities
- PhD training for a senior MoH officer on a scholarship funded by MoH. Research focuses on the TL Health Policy Framework
- MOU between the MoH and MSHR to inform health practice and policy through fostering an environment of evidence-based research in Timor-Leste
- Capacity training of MoH nutritionists through MSHR

Ministry of Petroleum and Mineral Resources

- Delivery of Associate Degree in Process Engineering to a staff member of Autoridade Nacional do Petroleum (ANP) through a joint NT Government and CDU Timor-Leste Independence Scholarship, on the 10th anniversary of independence.

Ministry of Foreign Affairs

- Provision of professional diplomacy training – a collaborative project between CDU and the Australian National University (ANU)

National University of Timor-Leste (UNTL)

- CDU/UNTL MoU for broad based collaboration, capacity development, staff exchange
- Provision of CDU funded visiting research fellowships for 4 UNTL staff to support research capacity development
- Provision of CDU academic staff as adjuncts for research supervision and collaboration on research projects
- Appointment of a CDU Honorary Adjunct Professor as a Visiting Professor to UNTL to support regional marine training cooperation

Falintil-Forca Defesa de Timor-Leste (F-FDTL)

- Training of forty-two members of the F-FDTL - CDU's Certificate III in General Education for Adults, funded by Australian Defence Academy

RESEARCH INTERESTS AND DEVELOPMENT PROJECTS

Funded by agencies including AusAID, USAid, Global Environment Facility, World Bank, Asian Development Bank and UNESCO

Research interests

- Catchment Processes and Management
- Coastal and Marine Ecotourism and Alternative Livelihoods
- Coastal and Marine Environmental Policy Development and Management
- National Park and Marine Park Planning
- Ecosystem Based Fisheries Management
- Climate Change Impacts and Adaption Planning
- Marine Biodiversity
- Agriculture Development
- The Health of Women and Children including maternal and infant mortality
- Understanding and applying the new Penal Code and Domestic Violence Law
- Local Government Reform

Development projects

- Steps to the Future: A cooperative workshop for education and training in East Timor. A two day workshop funded by the Australian National Commission for UNESCO and Charles Darwin University
- Democracy and Governance Assessment for Timor-Leste

Arafura and Timor Seas Expert Forum (ATSEF) and the Arafura and Timor Seas Ecosystem Action (ATSEA) Program

CDU supports ATSEF/ATSEA through representation on regional and national ATSEF steering committees, consultancy work and research.

The Arafura and Timor Seas Expert Forum (ATSEF) program is a collaborative arrangement between government and non-government organisations from Indonesia, Timor-Leste, Papua New Guinea and Australia that aims to address common research priorities and to improve management of natural resources of the Arafura and Timor Seas.

The Arafura Timor Seas Ecosystem Action (ATSEA) is an International Waters project funded by the Global Environment Facility (GEF). ATSEA has been the primary agenda piece and work program for ATSEF.

Consultancy – As part of the ATSEA project, development of a Trans-boundary environmental diagnostic analysis funded by the GEF was completed by CDU and partners in 2011 and has formed the basis for the further development of a Regional Strategic Action Plan (SAP) and individual National Action Plans (NAP) currently being finalised and prepared for Ministerial approval late 2013.

Research - Completion of six joint marine collaborative research projects and reports. See above. Several publications, involving Timorese participants/researcher are nearing completion.

Other – CDU was the co-organiser (with ATSEA Program) of the Arafura Timor Seas Marine Science Symposium, Freemantle, Western Australia (July 2011).

FUTURE OPPORTUNITIES

CDU sees very clear future opportunities in developing manpower in the Northern Territory through the provision of education and training relevant to the needs of Timor-Leste as identified by the Timorese. The University as a dual sector institution is well positioned in terms of its proximity and accessibility to Timor-Leste and relative size of Darwin as a capital city to Dili to provide a suitable learning and living environment that Timorese easily adjust to.

Specifically the University identifies the following opportunities:

- English language training
- Vocational education and training across a range of skills needs
- Vocational education and training in newly developing and strategic industries in Timor-Leste e.g. oil and gas, tourism, hospitality
- Higher education and research training for professional staff
- Research training and mentoring
- In-service professional training
- Symposiums