

Timor Sea Treaty
Submission No: 74
11/01/02

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BY:

82 Woolwich Road,
Woolwich, 2110
4 September, 2002

The Hon. Julie Bishop MP,
Chair, Joint Standing Committee on Treaties
Parliament House, Canberra, ACT

Re: **Ratification, Timor Gap Treaty, 2002**

I write about the pending ratification of the Timor Gap Treaty, in the hope that some changes might substantially increase the chances of economic self-reliance for East Timor, and stability in Australia's near north.

The present treaty is based on a definition of the maritime boundary between Australia and East Timor which is expressly stated to be of a provisional nature and without prejudice to the final determination. However, the Australian Government has withdrawn from dispute settlement procedures offered by the International Court of Justice and the International Tribunal on the Law of the Sea.

Since a commonly accepted resolution for disputes between close neighbours in such cases is to make the dividing line equidistant from both countries, irrespective of undersea geological formations, Australia's withdrawal from dispute settlement shows a lack of appreciation of the need of East Timor for the extra resources which it could claim, especially those of the "Greater Sunrise" gas field.

In the long run, it is surely in Australia's interest to pursue friendly re-negotiation of the boundary, with attention to East Timor's stability and capacity for economic self-reliance.

Yours sincerely,



Constance Ewald

JOINT STANDING COMMITTEE
ON TREATIES

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18 SEP 2002

BY: *G. B. Gould*