



Canberra Friends of Dili Inc
ABN: 42755 698645

Submission to: Joint Standing Committee on Treaties

On: Consequences of termination of the Treaty between Australia and the Democratic Republic of Timor Leste on Certain Maritime Arrangements in the Timor Sea

On behalf of: Canberra Friends of Dili

Canberra Friends of Dili (CFD) is an organisation of members of the Canberra community, who have an association with and affinity for East Timor and who are working through CFD to promote friendship on a personal and organisational basis between people in Canberra and people in Dili in East Timor. CFD is also the community organisation which underpins the friendship relations between the cities of Canberra and Dili initiated in 2006 and renewed in 2013. Further, CFD is a member of the Australia East Timor Friendship Network.

CFD members welcome the recent announcements of the Governments of Australia and Timor Leste that they are committed to good faith negotiations of the maritime boundary between the two countries.

Many of our members believe that Australia owes a 'debt of honour' to the people of Timor Leste for their unflinching support of Australian troops in the face of great danger during World War II; and for Australia's failure to take action following Indonesia's invasion of Timor Leste in 1975.

Australia's failure to negotiate a permanent boundary with Timor Leste through the resource rich Timor Sea, has effectively deprived our near neighbour of billions of dollars of resource revenue which would have a significant positive impact on the development of the fledgling Timorese economy. We point out that Australia is a vast, wealthy, resource-rich and secure nation, and has blatantly failed to act with fairness in its dealings with one of our closest and poorest neighbours - a brand new, developing nation desperately in need of a secure income to shore up its fledgling economy. Many of our members believe that Australia has tarnished its international reputation by its conduct towards Timor Leste and its actions in withholding a resolution of the maritime border.

CFD points out that the Australian Government needs to acknowledge the extent of friendship at the personal, organisational and community level between Australians and East Timorese. CFD believes that as Australians become more



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aware of their Government's shabby treatment of Timor Leste on this matter, the Australian people will overwhelmingly support the establishment of a permanent maritime boundary, based on median line principles to ensure that the people of Timor Leste can get the benefit of **all** of their natural resources. In addition, the erosion of Australia's reputation in this region can only work to the detriment of our national strategic interest, particularly given other external influences currently at work there.

CFD points out that the people of Timor Leste are not seeking charity from Australia. They are understandably seeking what is fair and just: the establishment of a clear, permanent maritime boundary along the median line between our two countries. We appeal to the Australian Government to negotiate fairly and transparently to establish that border as a matter of urgency.

For further information on the activities of Canberra Friends of Dili visit our website at <http://www.cfd.org.au>

Dr Stephen Utick
Convener
Canberra Friends of Dili
Dated 9 March 2017
