



Submission No 34

Inquiry into Australia's Relationship with Timor-Leste

Name: Sister Eileen (Rita) Hayes

From: Eileen Hayes
Sent: Wednesday, 27 March 2013 12:28 PM
To: Committee, JSCFADT (REPS)
Subject: Australia's Relations with Timor Leste

Submission Reference: **Cultural, educational exchanges**
Person to person links

To whom it may concern:

I am writing from Timor Leste and have only just had access to information regarding the above inquiry. My submission is brief because of the time restraint but I can gladly produce more detailed information on request.

I have been living and working in Timor Leste since 2000. Until 2005 I lived in the mountain village of Railaco Craic, District of Ermera where I was a member of the Community Development Team, Comunidade Edmund Rice. I assume their work will form part of this inquiry.

BUILDING AND RESOURCING SENIOR SECONDARY COLLEGE:

From 2007 I have been living and working in Railaco Vila, District of Ermera. My principle role has been in the Senior Secondary School, Nossa Senhora de Fatima where I teach and am the resource person and link person for resource and cultural exchanges with Colleges, schools and generous people in Australia and other nations.

Through the generosity of Australian people we have built an entire senior secondary school in Railaco. This consists of six classrooms, an administrative block, and toilet facilities. In addition \$US 50,000 water system has been installed that supplies water to the school, nearby church facilities and the neighbouring community. School power is supplied by a solar power system donated by the Leeds Catholic community, England and supplied and installed by Australian volunteers.

The school has been totally furnished and resourced by donations from colleges, schools and families in Australia.

EDUCATIONAL AND CULTURAL EXCHANGES:

During the past six years there have been numerous educational and cultural exchanges between students, teachers and volunteers from Australia and Timor Leste. The visitors and the Timor students have been involved in English, music and art classes and also sport and physical education. The Timorese have willingly offered hospitality and the sharing of their cultural riches. The amount of goodwill generated through these exchanges is incalculable.

SCHOLARSHIP SCHEME:

Through the generosity of donors, schools and individuals I conduct an extensive educational

scholarship scheme. There are currently over one hundred (100) tertiary student recipients of these scholarships and there are sixty (60) senior secondary student recipients. This scholarship scheme has been in operation since 2001 and has averaged a cost of \$US 40,000 per year, totally from donations.

VOLUNTEERS:

Volunteers from Australia have been involved with school maintenance, teaching classes and sharing resources.

Volunteers, doctors and nurses, have also been involved in working in the Mobile Health Clinic in Railaco. and groups of dentists and eye doctors have rendered service on various visits to the District.

Sister Eileen (Rita) Hayes sgs