



Submission No 68

Inquiry into Australia's Relationship with Timor-Leste

Name: Mr Andrew Metcalfe

Organisation: Department of Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry

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



Australian Government
Department of Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry

Andrew Metcalfe AO
SECRETARY

Ref: EXEC2013-00934

12 April 2013

Mr Jerome Brown
Secretary
Joint Standing Committee on Foreign Affairs, Defence and Trade
PO Box 6100 Parliament House
CANBERRA ACT 2600

Dear Mr Brown

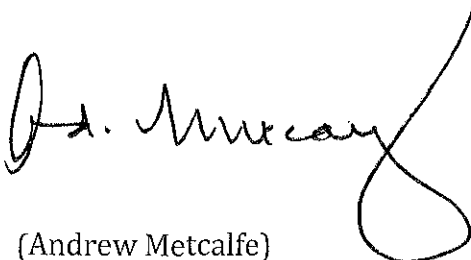
Thank you of your correspondence of 6 February 2013 inviting the Department of Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry (DAFF) to provide information to the Joint Standing Committee on Foreign Affairs, Defence and Trade Committee inquiry into Australia's relationship with Timor-Leste.

Please find enclosed a submission which describes DAFF's role, responsibilities and challenges in relation to biosecurity and fisheries management in Timor-Leste.

Australia, through DAFF and the Australian Fisheries Management Authority (AFMA), engages with Timor-Leste on fisheries management and governance in a small number of bilateral and multi-lateral forums. We also enjoy a close relationship on biosecurity cooperation.

Thank you for your letter.

Yours sincerely



(Andrew Metcalfe)



Australian Government

Department of Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry

DAFF SUBMISSION TO THE JOINT STANDING COMMITTEE ON FOREIGN AFFAIRS, DEFENCE AND TRADE (JSCFADT) INQUIRY INTO AUSTRALIA'S RELATIONSHIP WITH TIMOR-LESTE

The Department of Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry welcomes the opportunity to make a submission to the JSCFADT Inquiry into Australia's relationship with Timor-Leste. DAFF's engagement with Timor-Leste is principally in fisheries management and governance. We also enjoy a close relationship on biosecurity cooperation.

Fisheries cooperation – management and governance

Human and institutional capacity building is needed to help Timor-Leste manage its fisheries. Specifically, Timor-Leste needs help with undertaking stock assessments, revising and implementing fisheries legislation, licensing fishing vessels and improving and coordinating monitoring, control and surveillance to combat illegal fishing.

Australia, through the Department of Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry (DAFF) and its portfolio agency, the Australian Fisheries Management Authority (AFMA), engages with Timor-Leste on fisheries management and governance in a small number of bilateral and multilateral forums.

Since 2009, AFMA has worked closely with the Timor-Leste Ministry of Agriculture and Fisheries in developing capacity to combat IUU fishing. The program stems from a meeting of Ministers in April 2009 that agreed to develop a trilateral (with Indonesia) plan of action to help Timor-Leste develop its capability to combat illegal fishing in its waters, including the interdiction of illegal fishers.

AFMA's work in the program is funded through AusAID with some in-kind funding from AFMA. To date the program has involved:

- a) exposure to operational procedures and practices, including at sea enforcement
- b) practical experience in investigative techniques
- c) an understanding of maritime law enforcement generally
- d) improved capacity to contribute to the development of fisheries legislation for Timor-Leste.

More specifically, AFMA runs a fisheries officer exchange program whereby Timor-Leste fisheries officers come to Australia and spend time with AFMA officers while they undertake investigations and prepare briefs of evidence. It is also an opportunity for the officers to learn about Australia's fisheries legislation.

AFMA also works with Timor-Leste fisheries officers in country; a key part being developing the *Timor-Leste National Plan of Action to Detect and Deter IUU Fishing*. Further work on IUU fishing controls is expected to flow from the application of this document.

The officer exchange program has resulted in improved cooperation and understanding between the fisheries agencies. Mentoring is a key part of the officer-level training. An indication of Timor-Leste's appreciation is a presentation it made recently to the RPOA on its experiences working with Australia.

The Regional Plan of Action (RPOA) to Promote Responsible Fishing Practices including Combating Illegal, Unreported and Unregulated (IUU) Fishing in the South East Asia Region.

The RPOA is a joint Australia and Indonesia-led initiative that was set up in 2007 when the fisheries ministers of eleven South East Asian countries, including Australia and Timor-Leste agreed to cooperate in this forum. Australia's engagement in the RPOA is led by DAFF.

The primary focus of the RPOA is combating illegal, unreported and unregulated (IUU) fishing.

Through the RPOA, DAFF has commissioned three major RPOA studies that have drawn input from all RPOA countries, including Timor-Leste. Together they are the agreed working documents forming the basis of the region's fisheries management capacity building efforts.

The studies are:

- ***A Framework for Model Fisheries Legislation in South East Asia*** – this provides an in-depth analysis of the gaps, strengths and weaknesses of the fisheries legislation of each RPOA country and a detailed framework to guide each country's legislative reforms.
- ***Net Returns: A Human Capacity Development Framework for Marine Capture Fisheries Management in Southeast Asia*** – provides a detailed prioritised list of requirements and actions and a plan for their implementation, both for each RPOA country or for the whole RPOA group.
- ***RPOA Monitoring, Control and Surveillance (MCS) Curriculum and Training Program*** – a practical handbook for the training of fisheries compliance officers in their normal operational functions.

The RPOA has set up Sub-Regional Monitoring, Control and Surveillance (MCS) Working Groups to encourage coordinated fisheries enforcement responses to IUU fishing. Timor-Leste actively participates with Australia, Indonesia and Papua New Guinea in the ***Arafura and Timor Seas Sub-regional MCS Group***. The primary objective of the group is targeting IUU fishing activity through coordinated sea and air patrols and skills transfers between the fisheries officers of each country.

AFMA provides the secretariat for the group and coordinates Australian engagement, including coordinating surveillance operations targeted to areas of mutual interest.

Other key forums where Australia engages with Timor-Leste on fisheries and marine issues are:

- a) ***Arafura and Timor Seas Experts Forum (ATSEF)*** – a scientific and technical forum comprising Australia, Indonesia and Timor-Leste. ATSEF was established in 2002 during the United Nations World Summit on Sustainable Development in Bali with the aims of promoting the sustainable use and development of the Arafura and Timor Seas and the prevention and elimination of illegal fishing.
- b) ***Coral Triangle Initiative (CTI)*** – led through the Department of Sustainability, Environment, Water, Population and Communities, the CTI has six members: Timor-Leste, Indonesia, the Philippines, Papua New Guinea, Malaysia and the Solomon Islands. Australia's engagement is focussed at this stage on facilitation, advisory services, with particular focus on coral reef and associated ecosystem management.

Opportunities for further cooperation

Timor-Leste has only an embryonic fisheries management capability. Concerted capacity building and training has the potential to yield major benefits quickly. Two opportunities to build further Timor-Leste fisheries management capability are:

- a) **Cooperative surveillance and enforcement** – the creation of bilateral legal and administrative arrangements so that Australia can work with Timor-Leste in undertaking cooperative surveillance and enforcement activities in its waters. Timor-Leste's waters are poorly patrolled and IUU fishing activity by foreign vessels is substantial. In addition to

depleting Timor-Leste's fish stocks there must also be impacts on stocks shared with Australia.

- b) **Accelerate capacity building for fisheries and enforcement officers** – taking a broad spectrum approach to building human and institutional capability in the Timor-Leste Ministry of Agriculture and Fisheries through a focused and accelerated implementation of the findings and recommendations contained in the RPOA study *Net Returns: A Human Capacity Development Framework for Marine Capture Fisheries Management in Southeast Asia*.

Biosecurity Cooperation

Since shortly after Timor-Leste's independence, the Australian Government has had an ongoing relationship with Timor-Leste on animal health and biosecurity issues. This relationship continues between DAFF's Regional Animal Biosecurity program and Timor-Leste's Ministry of Agriculture and Fisheries (MAF). DAFF's interests in Timor-Leste are to get early warning of changes in the risk to Australia from exotic animal diseases, and to build Timor-Leste's capacity to prevent, detect and respond to significant animal diseases. This provides mutual benefits of reducing animal disease risks in Timor-Leste, the region and therefore to Australia.

DAFF and MAF conduct collaborative animal health surveillance in mutually agreed key biosecurity risk areas and capacity building activities. These activities provide an opportunity to confirm disease status within the region, disseminate public awareness information and build the capacity of local staff. DAFF also builds technical capacity of MAF staff through funding technical training opportunities in Timor-Leste or Australia. This is done with both DAFF and AusAID funding. For example: DAFF funds annual joint surveillance activities, most recently in November 2012 in the Dili, Ermera and Liquica districts; a current AusAID funded project exists to assist Timor-Leste with veterinary laboratory skills; and DAFF and MAF are jointly developing a concept proposal for AusAID's Government Partnership For Development program to help build MAF's animal health and quarantine capacity.