

BLUE MOUNTAINS EAST TIMOR SISTERS PROJECT (BMETS), Sydney, Australia

Projects and Organizational Focus

The Blue Mountains East Timor Sisters have several projects. Our main work over in East Timor is building friendship, leadership and connection with women in East Timor. We do a lot of fundraising in Australia for projects in East Timor, and have sent about \$30,000 over in the past two years. We also do a lot of awareness-raising of the situation and issues for East Timor women in the Blue Mountains community and beyond.

Through the Asia-Pacific Supportive Collective Timor-Leste (APSC-TL) we have:

- Supported a speaking tour of several East Timorese women in Australia
- Assisted two women to attend Emerging Pacific Leaders Dialogue 2006
- Provided wages for two key women leaders to do grass roots community work
- Funded 19 on-going scholarships for young women to finish school or go to university
- Funded writing of a Book of Veterans Stories of women's involvement in the clandestine movement
- Created a market for Mana Marta's Tais Co-operative in Australia
- Funded completion of a women's centre in Liquica
- Assisted a women's co-operative in Hato Bulico with sewing materials and support
- Through the Alola Foundation we have supported the Maternity Packs Project with over \$10,000. We have also donated \$4,000 for PRADET's safe room and transport.

Collaborations

We work with the Melbourne-based East Timor Women's Association (ETWA), the Ballarat group and have made links with informal groups in Sydney and Townsville. We exchange information and newsletters and talk to each other about issues and complexities. ETWA, Ballarat and BMETS have attempted to collaborate on a weaving project with women in two co-operatives based in Dili. We work with and promote the Mary McKillop Institute of East Timor Studies and particularly the Tetum books project. We also have made connections with a lot of individual women working on projects, both here and in East Timor.

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Written by the Blue Mountains East Timor Sisters Project, 2006