



TIMOR-LESTE STRATEGY

2018-2020

*Supporting sustainable
development for
Timor-Leste's future*

*Engagement and Government
Relations Portfolio*



**VICTORIA
UNIVERSITY**

VICE-CHANCELLOR'S INTRODUCTION



Victoria University (VU) has been engaged with Timor-Leste continuously for over 30 years. In 1998, VU's Centre for Asia-Pacific Studies began to co-host seminars with the Australia - East Timor Association (AETA) on development issues in Timor-Leste like health, sustainable development, education and agriculture. In December 1998, Jose Ramos-Horta, representative of the CNRT (National Council of Timorese Resistance) suggested that VU co-host an international seminar on *Strategic Development Planning* for Timor-Leste. In 2009, VU recognised the contribution of Jose Ramos-Horta by admitting him to 'the degree of Doctor of the University *honoris causa*, in recognition of his outstanding commitment to the defence of human rights and for his contribution to establishing the independence of Timor-Leste.'

Since 2003, VU has welcomed 173 Timorese alumni (October, 2017) either living here in Australia or now back in Timor-Leste, with females representing about 40% of this cohort, and males 60%. The average age of VU Timorese alumni is 41 years, with the youngest, 24 and eldest, 64. Courses enrolled range across **Victoria University Polytechnic, College of Arts & Education, College of Business, College of Engineering & Science** and the **College of Health & Biomedicine**. We are proud that many of these students have risen to positions of prominence within Timor-Leste in the Government, bureaucracy, and the education and health sectors.

Timor-Leste is referenced in Victoria University's Strategic Plan (2016-2020), and I am deeply committed to continuing VU's collaborative work in Timor-Leste. My commitment is affirmed by the appointment a number of years ago of the **Hon. Jean McLean** (ex-Victorian Parliamentarian, awarded the Order of Timor-Leste by the Timor-Leste Government in 2015 in recognition of her long history of promoting the interests of the country) as my Special Adviser on Timor-Leste.

Additionally, VU has hosted the Honorary Consulate of the Democratic Republic of Timor-Leste at our Flinders Lane Campus for many years (with the kind support of the Victorian Government), and has close links with the Timor-Leste National Government and its various departments including the University of Timor-Loro Sa'e (UNTL), with which we have worked closely over the past decade in particular.

VU is committed to working for the sustainable future of Timor-Leste; or in the country's Tetum Prasa language, 'Loron RUA ne'e haka'as-an ba servisu ba futuru ne' ebe sustentavel ba Timor-Leste'.

I am pleased to commend this Strategy as a blueprint for VU's continued involvement in Timor-Leste.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Peter Dawkins". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Professor Peter Dawkins AO
Vice-Chancellor & President
Victoria University

VISION

A Timor-Leste where its people have created a prosperous and strong nation.

MISSION

VU will support sustainable development for Timor-Leste's future through collaboration and education.

ACRONYMS

For the purposes of this document the following acronyms apply:

AETA	Australia East-Timor Association
CNRT	National Council of Timorese Resistance
CPLP	Community of Portuguese Language Countries
DIT	Dili Institute of Technology
LGA	Local Government Authority (Local Councils)
SDGs	Sustainable Development Goals
TLSA	Timor-Leste Studies Association
UN	United Nations
UNTL	Universidade Nacional Timor Lorosa'e
VET	Vocational, Education & Training
VU	Victoria University

BACKGROUND CONTEXT

The Democratic Republic of Timor-Leste (Timor-Leste) was the first new sovereign state recognised by the United Nations (UN) in the 21st century, on 20 May, 2002. The country was a Portuguese colony for more than 200 years, from 1702 until it declared independence in 1975. A period of Indonesian occupation ensued, which ended in August 1999, after UN-mediated negotiations and a referendum. Timor-Leste is less than 800km from Darwin, making it significant geopolitically and socio-culturally for Australia, and an obvious target for involvement in the nation's development.

Timor-Leste is 16 times smaller than the state of Victoria (14,870 sq. kms) with a population one-fifth its size (1.26 million people). The most populous city in Timor-Leste is the capital, Dili, with over 230,000 people; other large centres are Ermera (127,000) and Baucau (124,000), with nearly 88% of Timorese people living in areas classified as urban.

At the beginning of 2018, Timor-Leste's population was distributed with 33.8% under 15 years of age, 62.5% between 15 and 64 years of age and 3.6% aged 65+ years.

Timor-Leste is the Asian country with the highest rate of Catholicism (96.9%), while Protestant and Evangelic worshippers represent 2.2% and Muslims 0.3% of the population.

Statistics on page 5 sourced 2018 countrymeters.info/en/timor-leste

TIMOR-LESTE STATISTICS



14,870

sq. km (Timor-Leste in size)

520

times smaller than Australia

1,264,617

population: Timor-Leste

234,331

population: the capital, Dili

1,704,105

projected population:
Timor-Leste (2030)



133

births per day



24

deaths per day



1.6%

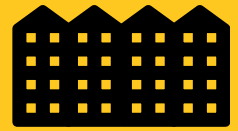
average annual
growth
(1950-2017)

85

people per
sq. km density
(2017)

115

people per
sq. km density
(expected 2030)



87.7

% of the population
living in an urban
environment



49

% of population
female

70

years of female
life expectancy



18.4%

current
unemployment rate
in Timor-Leste



156

internationally-
ranked country by
population



51

% of population
male

68

years of male
life expectancy



37

% of population living
below the international
poverty line of
\$1.25USD per day

VICTORIA UNIVERSITY
STATISTICS

41.8

Average age of
VU alumni

82.5

% of alumni studied
a VET qualification

173

Timorese Alumni
from Victoria
University

40

% of VU alumni
in Timor-Leste are
female

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Victoria University (VU) has a long history of working with the people of Timor-Leste, dating back to well before the nation's sovereignty was recognised by the United Nations in 2002. VU commits to continuing the legacy of this work through the initiatives outlined in this Strategy.

Through reference to the Timor-Leste National Government's *Timor-Leste Strategic Development Plan 2011-2030*, Victoria University has identified five overarching ambitions, below.

In order to pursue these goals, the University has identified five key pillars to underpin its future activities in association with Timor-Leste. The five strategic pillars, identified after examining existing modes of engagement and confirmed by a broad stakeholder consultation process, are these:

1. Education, Skills and Service Development

VU and its Polytechnic will explore opportunities to establish industries, skills and services that promote development and prosperity in Timor-Leste.

2. Student Exchange and Experience

VU will foster opportunities for its students in selected discipline areas to include Timor-Leste studies as part of their course, complemented by an opportunity for a planned in-country study experience.

3. Academic Engagement

VU will promote academic scholarship about Timor-Leste which will aim to uplift its communities and support its prosperity, in collaboration with other universities and institutions in Australia, Timor-Leste and elsewhere.

4. Community Impact and Service

VU will link with the Victorian Timorese community and within Timor-Leste to build capability and network connectedness for the betterment of the Timorese people and nation.

5. Government Connection and Networks

VU will work collaboratively with Governments and relevant ministries/departments (including the national government of Timor-Leste, the Victorian State Government, the Commonwealth of Australia, and relevant LGAs with Timor-Leste partnerships and communities), as well as with other Australian and Timor-Leste Universities/Institutions, to foster opportunities for community enrichment in Timor-Leste.

STRATEGIC PILLARS AND INITIATIVES

VU's long-standing history with the Timor-Leste nation is strong and continuing. As an Australian university held in high regard and respect in the country, VU aims to continue working collaboratively with the Timor-Leste national government, its institutions and its people to develop and uplift their communities. VU will provide professional, academic and skills development for its academics, students, staff and the Timorese people for a sustainable and successful future. It is proposed that this will occur via five pillars of focus, to ensure measurable and effective outcomes.

The five strategic pillars, based upon existing modes of engagement, are:

1. EDUCATION, SKILLS AND SERVICE DEVELOPMENT

2. STUDENT EXCHANGE AND EXPERIENCE

3. ACADEMIC ENGAGEMENT

4. COMMUNITY IMPACT AND SERVICE

5. GOVERNMENT CONNECTION AND NETWORKS

STRATEGIC PILLARS AND INITIATIVES

OBJECTIVE 1: EDUCATION, SKILLS AND SERVICE DEVELOPMENT

VU and its Polytechnic will explore opportunities to establish industries, skills and services that promote development and prosperity in Timor-Leste.

- Initiative 1.1: Provide opportunities for Timorese nationals to be educated at VU through various avenues including direct admission, or via scholarships including those offered by the VU Foundation (e.g. Timor-Leste Scholarship Fund), and the Victorian and Commonwealth Governments.
- Initiative 1.2: Investigate working in a coordination role between federal and state governments, institutions and philanthropists in the development of new industries, and jobs creation, in Timor-Leste.
- Initiative 1.3: Continue to partner with the Victorian State Government to provide opportunities for members of the VET sector in Timor-Leste to undertake annual training in Victoria (subject to State Government Funding).

SUCCESS STORIES

“My friends recommended VU for its unique learning experience. I like that my classes are so multicultural – I have classmates from 15 countries, sharing real examples of what’s happening in their communities around the world.”

Angelo Monizjong
Master of International
Community Development



“Thanks to my VU scholarship I have my MBA and the great job I have now. I believe that I can be my own boss, and share my strength and skills with other women, other Timorese, for the benefit of my people.”

Cristina Freitas
Master of Business
Administration



OBJECTIVE 2: STUDENT EXCHANGE AND EXPERIENCE

VU will foster opportunities for its students in selected discipline areas to include Timor-Leste studies as part of their course, complemented by an opportunity for a planned in-country study experience.

- **Initiative 2.1:** Introduce Timor-Leste related strands as an optional topic inserted into existing units in relevant College courses, rather than maintaining a specialised Timor-Leste related units.
- **Initiative 2.2:** Develop a more efficient and unified joint-planning approach to VU student study tours to Timor-Leste for VU Colleges (and potentially other stakeholder groups outside VU).
- **Initiative 2.3:** Form a Timor-Leste led student association/alumni group as a way of being able to socialise and communicate between past, present and future students who have or will study at VU (and possibly other Victorian institutions).



SUCCESS STORY

“Getting to travel to Timor-Leste for three weeks to teach English was definitely a highlight of my time at VU and something I will never forget. My workplace experiences allowed me to put into practice what I was learning in my degree and allowed me to make contacts with professionals in the industry.”

Benjamin Foster
Teacher, Richmond West
Primary School
Bachelor of Education (P-12)

STRATEGIC PILLARS AND INITIATIVES

OBJECTIVE 3: ACADEMIC ENGAGEMENT

VU will promote academic scholarship about Timor-Leste which will aim to uplift its communities and support its prosperity, in collaboration with other universities and institutions in Australia, Timor-Leste and elsewhere.

- **Initiative 3.1:** Consider the development of a “Journal of Timor-Leste Studies”, potentially combining academic articles, more practical case studies, and articles on various issues in Timor-Leste.
- **Initiative 3.2:** Liaise with UNTL as the joint sponsor to consider the ongoing value of, and potential alternative models for offering, the biennial VU-UNTL Timor-Leste Conference.
- **Initiative 3.3:** Continue to use the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), planned to be in place until 2030, to inform its engagement activities with the Timor-Leste Government and Timorese people.
- **Initiative 3.4:** Consider the development of a Timor-Leste Collaborative Research Group based at VU encompassing TLSA researchers, and those from VU and other universities with an interest in Timor-Leste.

SUCCESS STORY

“As an academic with a research background in peace-building and community development, I highly value genuine collaboration and reciprocity. I am honoured to be invited to build on VU’s existing strong ties with Timor-Leste. VU has hundreds of Timorese students and alumni. We work together and collaborate on various initiatives such as organising the Sustainable Development Goal conference in Dili and community development study tours to Timor-Leste. The richness, depth, scope and nature of partnerships have been beyond any other academic engagement I have seen.”

Dr Siew-Fang Law
Senior Lecturer – College of Arts & Education
Victoria University



OBJECTIVE 4: COMMUNITY IMPACT AND SERVICE

VU will link with the Victorian Timorese community and within Timor-Leste to build capability and network connectedness for the betterment of the Timorese people and nation.

- **Initiative 4.1:** Establish a succession-planning process to encourage next-generation VU staff to support the work of VU in Timor-Leste.
- **Initiative 4.2:** Develop and enhance new and existing connections VU has with key stakeholders/interest groups surrounding Timor-Leste as a communication and collaboration mechanism, such as:
 - Australian East Timorese Association (AETA)
 - Victorian local friendship groups (especially in west-of-Melbourne LGA locations)
 - East Timorese Students Association (ETSA).
- **Initiative 4.3:** Develop processes and procedures around the selection, funding and administration of the VU Foundation Timor-Leste Scholarships to ensure transparency and well-communicated processes to all those involved (especially in Melbourne and Timor-Leste).

OBJECTIVE 5: GOVERNMENT CONNECTION AND NETWORKS

VU will work collaboratively with Governments and relevant ministries/departments (including the national government of Timor-Leste, the Victorian State Government, the Commonwealth of Australia, and relevant LGAs with Timor-Leste partnerships and communities), as well as with other Australian and Timor-Leste Universities/Institutions, to foster opportunities for community enrichment in Timor-Leste.

- **Initiative 5.1:** Develop, and enhance, existing and new connections VU has with key stakeholders/interest groups surrounding Timor-Leste as a communication and collaboration mechanism. Those include:

Universities and institutions

Universidade Nacional Timor Lorosa'e
Charles Darwin University
Australian Catholic University
Dili Institute of Technology
Monash University
Monash University Sustainable Development Institute
Swinburne University of Technology
Federation University Australia
RMIT University

Philanthropists/individuals

Steven Bracks AC
Former Premier of Victoria (44th)
(1999 – 2007)

Australian philanthropists
(various industries and interests)

Governments and applicable ministries/departments

Democratic Republic of Timor-Leste
Australian Government
State Government of Victoria



SUCCESS STORY

“I am passionate about supporting rural women through my NGO ‘Strong Women Working Together’. I want to apply my academic skills in community development to engage the community in consultation, project planning, implementation, monitoring and evaluation processes using a participatory approach.”

Gizela de Carvalho

Master of International Community Development

Women’s activist, Timor-Leste
(Strong Women Working Together)

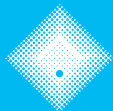
VU Foundation Timor-Leste
Scholarship recipient

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**VICTORIA
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MELBOURNE AUSTRALIA

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