



# **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:

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

## Contact

Engagement and Government Relations  
+61 3 9919 5511  
[engagement@vu.edu.au](mailto:engagement@vu.edu.au)

For more information, visit  
[vu.edu.au](http://vu.edu.au)

[vu.edu.au](http://vu.edu.au)  
CRICOS Provider NO. 00124K (Melbourne)  
CRICOS Provider NO. 02475d (Sydney)  
RTO Code: 3113



**VICTORIA  
UNIVERSITY**

MELBOURNE AUSTRALIA

Published by Victoria University, Melbourne, Australia.

© Victoria University (Engagement and Government Relations) 2018

The copyright in this document is owned by Victoria University (Engagement & Government Relations) or in the case of some materials, by third parties (third party materials). No part may be reproduced by any process except in accordance with the provisions of the Copyright Act 1968.

