



This great event to be held 6 October 2006

Background

It should come as no surprise after over 400 years of colonisation and 24 years of occupation that most libraries across East Timor are, without exception, housed in war ravaged or neglected buildings requiring serious building maintenance and without any equipment and facilities we regard as standard for contemporary library services.

The libraries are used heavily and are relied upon for access to learning materials and study space, despite their very poor condition. Funds are desperately needed as most libraries in East Timor have no access to income and therefore no way of accessing new books and other learning materials required.

A group of dedicated people from the Victorian Public Library Network and the State Library of Victoria have organised two successful Library Books for East Timor Trivia Nights at the Hawthorn Town Hall held 30th April 2004 and 29 April 2005. An incredible \$58,634 was raised at these two events to assist East Timor's fledgling library network.

Libraries to benefit from the fundraising efforts include the Xanana Gusmao Reading Room, Lolotoe Junior High School and Community Library, Manatuto Public Library, Baucau Public Library, Baucau Friendship and Learning Centre, Atauro Island Library, Same Schools Literacy Project and the National University Library in Dili. Xanana Gusmao Reading Room staff coordinate the acquisition of materials on behalf of the libraries and have so far purchased over 3,500 new books in English, Portuguese, Tetun and Indonesian.

To continue this great work in East Timor's libraries a third trivia night will be held on Friday 6 October 2006 at the Hawthorn Town Hall. **Brian Nankervis**, Melbourne based writer and comedian, will be the guest Master of Ceremonies Extraordinaire along with other guest trivia masters including Lonely Planet's **Tony Wheeler**, Reading Books and Music CEO **Mark Rubbo** and **Anne-Marie Schwirtlich** - State Librarian and CEO of the State Library of Victoria. All money raised will go directly to East Timor libraries. Attendance upwards of 400 people is expected. The organizers of the event are participating purely and completely on a voluntary basis. Partners involved to date are Viclink-Victorian Public Library Network, Australian Volunteers International, State Library of Victoria, Friends of Same, Maribyrnong City Council and City of Boroondara.

Why this event?

After experiencing centuries of Portuguese rule and subsequent Indonesian occupation, East Timor overwhelmingly voted for independence in 1999. Following the vote, militias backed by Indonesian military carried out systematic killing and destruction of infrastructure before



United Nations peace keeping forces arrived. *Infrastructure destroyed included public libraries.*

The previous library network was made up of Indonesian branch libraries. Special needs of the Indigenous population were not recognized or reflected in the collections and policy directions of the libraries. East Timor now has the opportunity to establish a public library system which suits local requirements. The funds raised through this event will greatly assist the East Timorese to continue this process.

Access to books and information is a critical element in civil societies and particularly in communities of such high need. East Timor will benefit greatly from assistance in providing access to educational materials and in addressing low literacy rates and skill levels. 46% of the population have never attended school resulting in a largely inexperienced workforce. Public library services are an essential conduit to reading skills, information services, social programs and skills based training and development.

Aims and objectives

- Provide funding for the development of library collections in relevant languages including Tetun, Portuguese, Bahasa and English for the development of East Timor public library services. It is envisaged that approximately \$25,000-\$30,000 will be raised from this event.
- Support the acquisition of literacy and information skills in East Timor.
- Increase community awareness of the issues faced by the world's newest and Asia's poorest nation and Australia's close neighbour.

How can you help?

Sponsorship is sought for the event. In order for the entire proceeds raised from ticket sales to go directly to East Timor we are looking for assistance in covering costs associated with the provision of food, prizes and event costs.

Catering. Can you help with provision of food? We are seeking caterers who are able to contribute food. Alternatively sponsorship by way of funds for the purchase of food is welcome.

Donations of prizes for trivia night attendees and for silent auction are sought. No prize is too small or too big!! As well as the opportunity to contribute to a major event which will be of direct benefit to the people of East Timor we will also acknowledge your contribution at the event, on the program and in media releases.

Attend the event. It will be a great night out and you will be directly contributing to rebuilding East Timor. Tickets are \$50 per person. Look out for further details coming soon.

Volunteer. You can make a great contribution by joining the organising working group and/or by helping on the day of the event and at the event itself. Tasks include venue set up, wine sales, preparation and serving of food and drinks and other event tasks.

Please pass on this information to anyone you feel may be able to assist.

For further information and discussion please contact:

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Thank you for your consideration.

