



## SPOKESPERSON SIXTH CONSTITUTIONAL GOVERNMENT



## MEDIA RELEASE

Dili, 10 February, 2016

### **Government welcomes policy of the ALP to establish maritime boundaries**

The Government welcomes the statement made today by the Hon Tanya Plibersek MP, Australia's Deputy Leader of the Opposition and Shadow Minister for Foreign Affairs.

Addressing the National Press Club in Canberra Ms. Plibersek said "A Shorten Labor government will redouble our efforts to conclude good faith negotiations with Timor-Leste to settle the maritime boundaries between our two countries. If we are not successful in negotiating a settlement with our neighbor we are prepared to submit ourselves to international adjudication or arbitration."

She went on to say "It is in the national interest of both Australia and Timor-Leste that we do so, but just as importantly it is in the interest of the system itself that has delivered so much for Australia, that we are freely willing to participate in it."

Today's announcement follows on from the commitment of the Australian Labor Party, endorsed at National Conference, to "enter into structured engagement with Timor-Leste to negotiate the settlement of maritime boundaries" if elected to Government. The Deputy Leader of the Opposition explained that today's statement went a step further as it confirmed the ALPs willingness to enter into arbitration or adjudication if negotiations were unsuccessful.

The Government of Timor-Leste appreciates the bipartisan affirmation in Australia of the value of our bilateral relationship and strongly endorses recent statements from both the Government and Opposition upholding the important role of international law in solving state-to-state disputes.

Timor-Leste has recently commenced maritime border negotiations with Indonesia and last week H.E. Kay Rala Xanana Gusmão was appointed by Timor-Leste's Council of Ministers as Chief Negotiator for the negotiation of maritime borders.

Spokesperson for the Sixth Constitutional Government, Minister of State Agio Pereira, noted "the position of the Australian Labor Party further articulated by Ms. Plibersek today, demonstrates that moving forward from the current impasse is possible if there is a willingness to do so. Australia, as a country that promotes the rule of international law, led by a Prime Minister who expresses confidence in the role of international dispute mechanisms, is well positioned to step forward and engage with Timor-Leste to negotiate delimitation of our maritime boundaries." **ENDS**



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