



SPOKESPERSON SIXTH CONSTITUTIONAL GOVERNMENT



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Government assists the “Timor Awakening” initiative involving veterans of Timor-Leste and Australia

The Government of Timor-Leste is pleased to be assisting “Timor Awakening”, a renewal and rehabilitation program for Australian veterans, founded on solidarity, camaraderie and holistic care. The Prime Minister’s Office will be facilitating meetings between visiting Australian veterans and Timorese resistance veterans during a series of 11-day adventures in Timor-Leste to be undertaken by former service personnel.

Prime Minister, H.E. Dr. Rui Maria de Araújo said “Timor-Leste is excited to be involved in the program and wholly supports the program for the obvious potential it has to positively effect the lives of veterans and their families.”

The first 11-day adventure is set to begin on the 18th of July and will traverse eight Municipalities with participants experiencing the opportunity to see communities impacted by war and now developing in peace. Timorese veterans will share stories as part of the adventure, building on already strong connections between the ex-services communities of both countries that reach back to the Second World War.

Although the program is open to Australian veterans of any era it is anticipated that many will come from the 30,000 troops that visited Timor-Leste between 1999 and 2010 during the INTERFET and ISF deployments. Organizer and former INTERFET soldier Major Michael Stone noted that “all the soldiers who I’ve met always loved the Timorese people; they wanted to see more and do more for them.”

The trip is a part of a 12-month engagement program for the Australian veterans that includes preparation, education, shared experiences and pastoral care.

The Prime Minister Araújo thanked the Returned Services League of Australia, Queensland, Veterans Care Association Incorporated and “all others involved in developing and working to implement Timor Awakening” and extended “best wishes to the veterans and their families who participate in this opportunity”, noting that they were warmly welcome in Timor-Leste. **ENDS**



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