

MEDIA RELEASE



JOINT MEDIA RELEASE

MINISTER FOR FOREIGN AFFAIRS, AUSTRALIA

The Hon Julie Bishop MP

MINISTER IN THE OFFICE OF THE PRIME MINISTER FOR DELIMITATION OF BORDERS AND AGENT OF THE CONCILIATION PROCESS, DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC OF TIMOR-LESTE

H.E. Agio Pereira

CHIEF NEGOTIATOR FOR THE COUNCIL FOR THE FINAL DELIMITATION OF MARITIME BOUNDARIES, DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC OF TIMOR-LESTE

H.E. Kay Rala Xanana Gusmão

6 March 2018

AUSTRALIA AND TIMOR-LESTE SIGN HISTORIC MARITIME BOUNDARY TREATY

Today, in the presence of the UN Secretary-General, Australia and Timor-Leste signed an historic treaty establishing permanent maritime boundaries. This marks the beginning of a new era in the relationship between the two neighbours.

As well as maritime boundaries, the treaty establishes a framework to jointly develop the Greater Sunrise gas fields for the benefit of both countries. It also reflects a partnership between two countries which are bound by geography and deep ties of history and friendship.

The treaty was brokered by the Conciliation Commission established under the UN Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS) – the first of its kind.

Both countries demonstrated good will and preparedness to compromise. Although the results of the conciliation process are non-binding, both countries negotiated in good faith in order to achieve a treaty that Timor-Leste, Australia and the Commission believe is fair, balanced and consistent with international law.

Australian Foreign Minister Julie Bishop said: "The outcome is a milestone for the parties and for UNCLOS and international law. It reinforces our respect for, and the importance of, the international rules-based order in resolving disputes."

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Timor-Leste's Minister Agio Pereira said "This treaty marks an historic landmark for Timor-Leste, and for the friendship between Timor-Leste and Australia. Thanks to the strong commitment of the leadership of both countries to this conciliation process, we have arrived at an agreement on maritime boundaries that is equitable, and consistent with international law."

Timor-Leste's Chief Negotiator Kay Rala Xanana Gusmao said: "History is made today as Timor-Leste signs a treaty on permanent maritime boundaries that establishes, for the first time, a fair border between our two countries, based on international law. We thank the Commission for their patience, wisdom and trust, and the Australian representatives for their constructive engagement and spirit of cooperation. This moment also provides hope for the peaceful resolution of disputes around the world."

Australia and Timor-Leste both expressed their gratitude to the five eminent Commissioners of the United Nations Conciliation Commission, led by Chair H.E. Ambassador Peter Taksøe-Jensen, for their great dedication and professionalism in helping to forge an agreement.