

**The Secretary of State for the Council of Ministers and
Official Spokesperson for the Government of Timor-Leste
Ágio Pereira**

**February 28, 2012
Dili, Timor-Leste**



Prime Minister returns from successful Australian visit.

Last Thursday the Prime Minister, His Excellency Kay Rala Xanana Gusmão, returned from a successful seven-day visit to Australia. The Official Guest of Government visit was to strengthen bilateral relations and regional cooperation with Timor-Leste's near neighbor. In an extremely busy program the Prime Minister met in Canberra with his Australian counterpart, the Honorable Julia Gillard MP and traveled to Sydney and Melbourne for meetings with the Premier and the Governor of New South Wales and the Acting Premier and the Governor of Victoria.

The trip offered the opportunity for the Prime Minister to have a brief meeting in Darwin with Woodside CEO Mr. Peter Coleman. This was their first meeting and was described by the Prime Minister as positive and constructive.

In Sydney, on the 70th Anniversary of the beginning of the Battle of the Timor Sea, the Prime Minister took part in two services of commemoration. Both paid homage to the bravery and courage of the Timorese people in World War II and recognized the tragic loss of life suffered during the years 1942-1945. In the first event the Prime Minister presented a wreath on behalf of the nation and a group of Timorese students presented bouquets honoring the 60,000 Timorese that are estimated to have lost their lives in that time. In the second service at the ANZAC Memorial Australian commandoes and Timorese "criados" were honored in a special ceremony. After a moving speech by Prime Minister Gusmão an exhibition was opened at the ANZAC Memorial that will help educate members of the Australian public about the history of Timor-Leste in those times.

The Prime Minister spoke to the Australian Timor-Leste Business Council in Sydney and the Victorian Chamber of Commerce and Industry in Melbourne, introducing the Strategic Development Plan, promoting Timor-Leste as a place for investment and encouraging support for the nation's small, but growing private sector. Other meetings allowed updates on the progress of the Dili Drainage and Sanitation Master Plan supported by Melbourne Water and Yarra Valley Water and also on the Timorese pro bono Commercial Law Program supported by the largest law firm in the world, DLA Piper. In Melbourne a meeting was attended with the Balibo Trust who presented their heritage inspired architectural design for the development of the Balibo Fort. The family members of the Balibo Five, including Shirley Shackleton, widow of Greg Shackleton, were warmly received by the Prime Minister.

During the visit several interviews were conducted by Australian media and disseminated nationally and internationally through television, radio and print.

Finally to create greater awareness of Timor-Leste the Prime Minister launched a book of collected speeches, *Strategies for the Future*, in both Sydney and Melbourne. **ENDS**

Ágio Pereira+670 723 0011

E-mail:

agio.pereira@cdm.gov.tl

OR

govtlmedia@gmail.com

Website:

www.timor-leste.gov.tl

**M
E
D
I
A
R
E
L
E
A
S
E**