

**OFFICIAL MINISTERIAL OVERSEAS TRAVEL**

**Outcomes Report**

The provision of the information below is consistent with the *Guidelines for Official Ministerial Overseas Travel*. This report must be sent to the Premier within 40 working days of return, and published on the relevant department website within 60 working days of the Minister’s return. The published version of the report does not need to include the ’next steps / follow up’ section or the signature block*.*

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| **Name of Department / Agency** | Department of Environment, Land, Water and Planning |
| **Departmental / Agency Contact**  | Marlene Mifsud, Director Ministerial Services |
| **Telephone Number** | (03) 9637 8157 |
| **TRAVEL DETAILS** |
| **Minister’s Name** | Josh Bull MP (representing The Hon Richard Wynne MP) |
| **Portfolio/s** | Multicultural Affairs |
| **Did the Minister’s spouse accompany the Minister in an official capacity?** **If Yes – please outline the role of the spouse in achieving the outcomes of the visit** | **YES** (official capacity) [ ]  **YES** (private capacity) [ ]   | **NO** [x]  |
| **Accompanying Ministerial staff** | **Shannon Farley** |
| **Countries visited** | Timor-Leste |
| **Date of travel** | 28 August to 2 September 2019 |
| **Number of official travel days (include day of departure and day of return)** | 6 |
| **Funding source (list Department/s or Agency)** | Department of Environment, Land, Water and Planning |
| **EXPENSES***Include combined expenses for Minister, accompanying staff and spouse (if accompanying in an official capacity)* | **$8,414.92** |
| **Air fares (including taxes and fees)**  | $5,257.60 |
| **Accommodation (including taxes and fees)**  | $2,332.86 |
| **Other expenses (including surface travel and travel allowances)** | $824.46 |
| **Travel cost for Minister and ministerial staff *(and spouse or de facto partner if applicable)***  | $8,414.92 |
| **Are the above costs final and complete?** | YES [x]  NO [ ]  |

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| **Purpose of travel**The Victorian Government was invited by the Government of Timor-Leste to attend the commemorations of the 20th anniversary of the Popular Consultation on Independence. Mr. Josh Bull MP, Parliamentary Secretary for Multicultural Affairs, represented the Government, on behalf of The Hon Richard Wynne MP in his capacity as Minister Responsible for the Relationship with Timor-Leste.Outside of official events, the visit enabled meetings with elected officials, high level civil servants and civil society organisations engaged in Timor‑Leste, and to visit Balibó, noting the strong connection between the Victorian Government and the Balibó House Trust.The travel demonstrated the Victorian Government’s ongoing commitment to the special relationship with the Government of Timor-Leste, and supported discussions to progress partnership activities within the long-standing Memorandum of Understanding between governments. |

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| **Benefits of travel to the State of Victoria**30 August 2019 marked 20 years since Timor-Leste’s Popular Consultation on Independence. The Government of Timor-Leste invited the Victorian Government to join other international supporters for a program of official events to commemorate the occasion.Participation in these events demonstrated the Victorian Government’s ongoing commitment to its special relationship with the Government of Timor-Leste. Further, the events were an opportunity to represent the support of the Victorian people, noting the State’s strong Timorese diaspora community, and the ongoing interest of community members and groups in supporting Timor-Leste’s continued independence journey.*Official events*Official events included:* Formal dinner hosted by the President of Timor-Leste, H.E. Francisco Lu-Olo Guterres, welcoming dignitaries visiting Timor-Leste for the anniversary
* Formal lunch hosted by the Prime Minister of Timor-Leste, H.E. Taur Matan Ruak, as part of official anniversary celebrations
* Ratification of the Maritime Border Treaty – exchange of diplomatic notes between the Prime Ministers of Australia and Timor-Leste to ratify the maritime boundary
* Official 20th Anniversary celebration at Tasi Tolu.

These events ensured Victoria’s presence amongst a wide array of international supporters of Timorese independence, an important symbol of the enduring depth of connection between our governments and people.Alongside these events, I participated in a program of activities delivered by Australia’s Embassy in Timor-Leste for the various Australian parliamentary representatives at national and sub-national levels.This included:* A defence briefing at Sparrow Force House, highlighting Australia’s ongoing support for Timor-Leste’s security forces
* A meeting with Timor-Leste’s Parliamentary Committee on Foreign Affairs, Security and Defence, as part of broader long-term relationship building between parliamentarians in both countries
* A visit to the Timorese Coffee Association, an initiative supported by the Australian Government-funded Market Development Fund, to discuss the importance of coffee to Timor-Leste’s economy, as well as the challenges and opportunities faced
* A visit to the Resistance Museum, exhibiting Timor-Leste’s experience during the Indonesian occupation, and the activities of the resistance force and international solidarity partners.

*Targeted meetings*Outside of official events, a range of targeted meetings were scheduled to reinforce strategic relationships and to discuss ongoing opportunities for partnership activity under the Memorandum of Understanding between the Governments of Victoria and Timor-Leste (signed in 2008, and renewed in 2017). While the agreement frames a commitment to supporting Timor‑Leste’s public sector capability and institutions in a spirit of friendship and mutual respect, the Government of Victoria also acknowledges opportunities to learn from Timorese approaches.Key meetings included engagement with the Vice Minister of State Administration, and the Office of the Ombudsman.The Vice Minister (and currently Acting Minister) of State Administration, H.E. Abilio Caetano, has responsibility for Timor-Leste’s decentralisation agenda. The meeting enabled continued discussion on the specific protocol of cooperation between the Ministry of State Administration and Local Government Victoria, including municipal partnerships between 15 Victorian councils and 11 Timorese counterparts. Discussion included an update on Timor‑Leste’s decentralisation process, including legislative requirements. Reflecting on the Vice Minister’s positive experiences with Victorian training and work placement programs, we discussed a potential visit to Victoria in 2020 to further share expertise and experience.The Office of the Ombudsman was represented by the Deputy Ombudsman for Good Governance, H.E. Miguel de Carvalho, and Deputy Ombudsman for Human Rights, H.E. Benicia Eriana Magno. This introductory meeting explored opportunities to continue the strong relationship with Sr Carvalho in his new role while extending it to Sra Magno, noting the importance of good governance and human rights across the full range of public sector activity. We discussed similarities and differences between Victoria’s and Timor-Leste’s approaches to oversight of governance and human rights matters, and respective challenges faced.*Broader visits*Travel also enabled visits to projects and organisations supported by Victorian Government connections.This included a visit to Catalpa International, a non-profit organisation integrating technology and behavioural insights with locally-driven solutions across a broad range of portfolios and sectors in Timor-Leste and elsewhere. VicRoads is providing technical expertise into an Integrated Road Management system developed by Catalpa International, through a broader project implemented by the International Labour Organisation with funding from the Australian Commonwealth Government. VicRoads’ involvement highlights the state’s expertise in measuring and monitoring road standards and project delivery, which will provide a vital input into critical infrastructure that underpins economic development.A visit to Balibó also enabled a deeper understanding of the importance of the area to Timorese-Australian relations, and inspection of Victoria Government-funded initiatives. On 16 October 1975, five Australian-based journalists were killed by invading Indonesian forces while trying to draw international attention to the plight of the East Timorese. This legacy has been acknowledged through the work of the Balibó House Trust, established by the Victorian Government in 2002 to refurbish the building inhabited by the journalists for use as a community centre. Recent Victorian Government support for the Trust include grants for a conference facility and water system, and current grants to support small scale water purification systems in key community locations and to help activate mountain biking as a tourism offering.*Overarching benefits*Through these activities a range of benefits were achieved, including:* Confirming the ongoing bipartisan support for the Victorian Government’s relationship with the Government of Timor-Leste, through participation in significant anniversary events
* Representing the Victorian people at these anniversary events, noting the State’s strong Timorese diaspora community, and the ongoing interest of community members and groups in supporting Timor-Leste’s continued independence journey
* Expanding and consolidating relationships with senior Government representatives, opening new opportunities for partnership activities under the Memorandum of Understanding between the Governments of Victoria and Timor-Leste
* Examining existing activities being delivered through the partnership between the Governments of Victoria and Timor-Leste, and discussing opportunities for continued activity.
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| **Next Steps / Follow Up**A range of follow-up activities are being progressed, including:* Developing a range of partnership options between the Governments of Victoria and Timor-Leste, in particular related to decentralisation of government services and public sector governance.
* Preparations for proposed reciprocal visits by elected Timorese officials.
* Re-establishment and activation of the Parliamentary Friends of Timor-Leste.
* Exploring ongoing partnership opportunities with a range of existing government and non-government partners by expanding or otherwise complementing recent activities.
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