



Queensland Supporting Timor Leste Libraries – QSTiLL

QSTiLL (Queensland Supporting Timor Leste Libraries) is a dynamic and collaborative group of volunteers from Queensland library staff leading the work of fund-raising and support for Timor Leste (East Timor) libraries. The QSTiLL group originated from members of the public library network's Community Services Interest Group, which represents public libraries throughout Queensland on issues concerning outreach within communities, and was formed to raise funds to assist the development of libraries affected by war or disaster.

Our key objectives are to:

- Raise funds for the provision of library resources;
- Assist with the training of library staff,
- Grow partnerships with the Timor Leste library community,
- Encourage interest and awareness in QSTiLL to Queensland library staff and the wider community.

The group was inspired by the work of Patti Manolis, Fiona Gleadow, the Victorian library network group Books for East Timor, and Nicole Wiseman, all of whom alerted QSTiLL to the destruction and rebuilding efforts facing libraries and library staff in Timor Leste after Independence in 1999.

Since 2005, QSTiLL has been active with regular fundraising endeavours. This began with State Library of Queensland's initiative of a film night event, followed by QSTiLL volunteers organising regular book sales at Chermide Library (Brisbane City Council) and Logan West Library (Logan City Council). Additional book sales have been held by Moreton Bay Regional Council at Albany Creek Library and by Thuringowa Library. Additional QSTiLL funds have come from the sale of Tais bookmarks, handmade by the women of East Timor, and donations from local fundraisers, such as morning teas, and selling chocolate crocodiles, by staff at the State Library and the public library network.

The bi-annual weekend book sales at Chermide Library are our bread and butter. The group has the collecting, carting, setting-up, spruiking, selling, sorting, and packing up of withdrawn library books down to a fine art. We

have been enormously encouraged by the generosity of the community, library colleagues, and supporters of Timor Leste.

These funds have allowed QSTiLL to support Timor Leste libraries with:

- Donations of funds for book resources to key libraries in East Timor, Xanana Gusmao Reading Room and others,
- Donation of \$1000 to ABITL, Timor Leste's National Library and Information Association, to assist with the publication of the first edition of the Directory of Libraries in East Timor (2009), now available in print and online in the dual languages of Tetun and English,
- Provision of a scholarship to assist in the education and long-term skilling and capacity building of Timor Leste library staff. The first recipient of this scholarship, Evy Mardiani Dewi, Librarian and Library Studies educator at the Dili Institute of Technology, has now completed the Library Science Program at Wijaya Kusuma University, Surabaya, Indonesia.

The QSTiLL website <http://qstill.qld.googlepages.com/home> is a key component to our awareness-raising locally, state-wide, nationally, and internationally. QSTiLL members also endeavour to raise community and public library awareness with information and displays at public events such as International Women's Day Breakfast and Queensland Public Libraries Association (QPLA) conferences, membership of the Brisbane East Timor Support Group Network, regular updates to the public library network's Community Services Interest Group, and hosting the Brisbane launch of the CD *Hau Abut: I am woman*, assisting the Bairo Pite Clinic in Timor Leste.

All of the volunteers in QSTiLL have brought and gained skills. From designing websites to packing boxes, from compiling email lists to designing posters, from counting and banking money to public speaking and promotion.

It is a rewarding experience to be a part of QSTiLL, and it is fair to say that whole of QSTiLL is greater from the efforts of all its individuals.

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