

## Library Study Tour of Timor Leste

Libraries for Timor-Leste (LFTL) was established in 2004, formally incorporated in May 2011. Recognising the significant contribution libraries make to social, cultural, educational, and economic development it aims to:

1. Support the development and sustainability of libraries in Timor-Leste.
2. Raise funds to assist library building infrastructure projects, collection development, lifelong learning, reading, and digital literacy programs
3. Provide scholarship and other appropriate opportunities for current and prospective Timorese library staff to access library skills, training, and development.
4. Increase community awareness and action to support Timor-Leste library needs.

The Group's inaugural Annual General Meeting was held on 29 August 2012 at the newly redeveloped and gorgeous ground floor level of University of Melbourne's Baillieu Library.

Immediately following the AGM an information

evening was held sharing the experiences and findings of those who participated in a study tour of public, academic, and special libraries in Timor-Leste. Over 12 days in September 2011, a group of 11 participants travelled through Dili and many districts visiting libraries and meeting with staff, volunteers, and community. The purpose of the tour was to understand progress to date and to inform future fundraising and awareness raising activities. Libraries visited include the Universidade Nacional Timor Lorosae (UNTL), Dili and Hera, the Dili Institute of Technology (DIT), the Commission for Truth and Reconciliation (CAVR), Dili, and the Baucau Teachers College, among many others.

The study tour group was impressed by several libraries including standout and exemplar Biblioteka Ermera in Gleno – a beautiful, purpose-built two-storey community library which opened in 2011 and provides collections, storytimes, outreach programs, visits to new mothers, Tetun publishing, and storytelling on the radio. They have since opened a second branch in Hatolia.

Baucau Teacher's College Library is operating out of a new building and features an excellent collection of text books and teaching materials to support the curriculum of the college. One of the few libraries visited which actually has an automated library management, it is well used by the students and regularly provides placements and work experience for staff from other libraries.

It was a great privilege to meet with Kirsty Sword Gusmao at the Xanana Gusmao Reading Room. As the Reading Room's Founding Director she had much information to share about the library including its plans for a major building redevelopment and re-establishment of the Reading Room Board.

The libraries all provide much needed services and, while much progress has been made in the past decade including the opportunity for staff to access some library skills training, there is little by way of coordination of the library sectors and certainly very little, if any, government funding. Collection development is challenging as is providing information technology infrastructure and services.

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LFTL is currently working on a strategic plan. Following the tour it is contributing funding to Biblioteka Ermera in Gleno. Haburas Moris Library is also receiving a contribution to help re-establish the Mobile Library Service to more remote parts of Atauro Island. Other libraries will also receive assistance from future fundraising. The next major fundraiser will be the group's fifth Trivia Night featuring the magnificent Brian Nankervis (of RockWiz) to be held Saturday 23 March 2013 at the Geelong West Town Hall. It would be great to see you there.

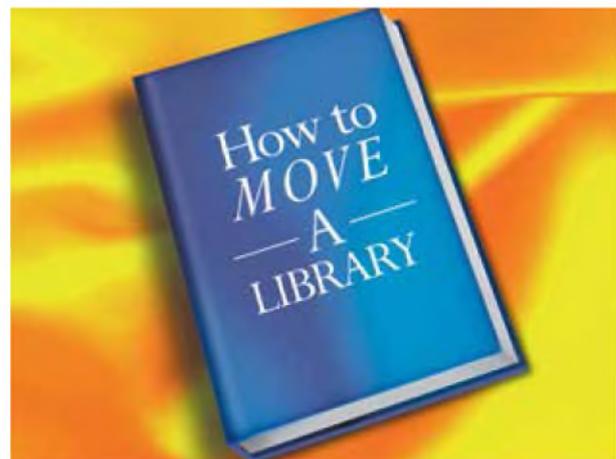
Emerald Leung, LFTL Committee Member, has put together a wonderful Prezi presentation with information and images from the Library Study Tour of Timor-Leste and it can be accessed via: [librariesfortimorleste.org.au/reports.htm](http://librariesfortimorleste.org.au/reports.htm) and clicking on the first heading titled Study Tour 2011 – on line presentation.

If you would like to explore opportunities to contribute, please contact Patti Manolis via [patti.manolis@geelonglibraries.vic.gov.au](mailto:patti.manolis@geelonglibraries.vic.gov.au).

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### Current office bearers

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