

Media Release

The Hon Lisa Neville MP
Minister for Police
Minister for Water



Wednesday, 15 November, 2017

SUPPORTING EAST TIMOR: VICTORIA TO FUND NEW WATER TANK

The Andrews Labor Government is providing water security in Timor-Leste through funding for a water tank and purification plant at Balibó House.

Minister for Water Lisa Neville today announced almost \$91,000 in funding for the Balibó House Trust enabling the construction of a 196,000 litre water tank and purification plant.

The donation to build the tank falls under the Labor Government's *Water for Victoria* plan which recognises the state's role to assist developing countries with water security and sanitisation needs.

In 2002 the Victorian Government established the Balibó House Trust in honour of five Australian-based journalists known as the Balibó Five – Greg Shackleton, Gary Cunningham, Tony Stewart, Malcolm Rennie and Brian Peters – who were murdered by Indonesian troops while filming the invasion of East Timor in 1975.

The Labor Government has been working with the Timor-Leste Government to build Timorese Government capacity by exploring new opportunities to strengthen ties and support the country.

In March this year, the Labor Government provided \$60,000 to East Timor over three years to train nurses for a new dental clinic and \$100,000 for a new conference centre, providing a boost to visitor numbers and tourism, leading to new job opportunities for the local Timorese.

The Labor Government and Timor-Leste Government have partnered on a broad range of areas including, vocational education and training, commerce, land management and planning, information technologies and the establishment of municipal government.

The Balibo House Trust works with the Timorese community and supports local activities, including a kindergarten, dental clinic and community centre.

The new tank will collect water from the roof of the conference facility, which will be purified for drinking and used for laundry and showering. Demand for clean water is high due to population growth and reduced rainfall.

In 2016, the community of Balibo and surrounding areas suffered water shortages and were forced to truck in water weekly – an expensive task for the local community.

Access to safe and reliable sources of water is central to the health and wellbeing of the community and their economic future. Balibo trust is a not-for-profit community organisation – with all money going back into the Balibo community.

Quotes attributable to Minister for Water Lisa Neville

"This project ensures communities in East Timor have access to clean water – which supports local jobs, economic development and helps foster positive relations with Timor Leste."

"Victoria has a close bond with Timor Leste and we know we have an important role to play helping developing cities become more sustainable and resilient."

Quote attributable to Member for Richmond Richard Wynne

"Victoria has shared a bond with Timor Leste for many years. We take our obligations to help support our neighbours seriously, because we want to make a difference to the lives of Timorese people."

Media Contact: Jessica Evans 0437 779 243 | Jessica.evans@minstaff.vic.gov.au