



Australia-East Timor Association

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Life Members: **Helen Hill** OTL; **Jill Jolliffe** OTL; **Jean McLean** OTL; AM; **John Sinnott** OTL

ANNUAL REPORT

For year 1 January to 31 December 2023

Prepared for the 2024 Annual General Meeting

On-line by Zoom 21 February 2024

INTRODUCTION TO AETA

The Australia-East Timor Association (AETA) was established in 1975, following occupation of East Timor by Indonesia, as an information, solidarity and networking organisation to support the struggle for independence of East Timor. Meetings and rallies were organised and a bookshop established for the distribution and sale of information material on East Timor.

East Timor achieved independence in 2002 after 24 years of occupation following a UN-supervised referendum in 1999. Independence for Timor Leste - the main goal of AETA - was achieved. Questions for AETA then arose – what then should be the focus and goals of AETA?

After consultation with AETA members and a strategic planning process, AETA continues as an information, networking and support organisation in solidarity with the people of Timor-Leste, the East Timorese and wider community in Australia.

AETA is an incorporated association, with the following objectives and mission:

- (a) AETA works in solidarity with the people of Timor-Leste and East Timorese community in Australia
 - (b) The Association provides advocacy and information about Timor-Leste to members and public.
 - (c) The Association supports specific projects in Timor-Leste and Australia.
- (From AETA Constitution – approved 14 August 2014)

The AETA Strategic Plan focuses on the development of information sharing and networking, a bookshop, seminars, support of knowledge networks and special interest groups, archives, history and commemoration, the Annual Dinner, creation of a website to facilitate information sharing, and membership regeneration. While AETA works mainly in Victoria, there is increasing interest in supporting related activities in other states.

AETA had 81 members registered on 31st Dec 2023 (c.f. 60 on 31st Dec 2022). AETA has made increased efforts to get lapsed members to bring their membership up to date.

AETA ACTIVITIES

A. Annual General Meeting (AGM) and Governance

1. **The previous AETA AGM** was conducted on 22 February 2023 with 21 people participating online, including 16 current members. Minutes of this meeting are attached as Appendix Two.

2. Committee Members and Meetings

At the 2022 AGM, the AETA Committee recruited two more members from the Timorese community and these committee members have continued on the committee over the last year. Timorese membership now makes up almost half the Committee, strengthening AETA's links and collaboration with Timorese community organisations in Melbourne.

AETA committee meetings have continued to be on-line, meeting regularly in the first week of every second month throughout the year, with additional meetings as required. Activities are organized through meetings of the Events sub-committee, the composition of which changes for each event. The AETA Committee comprises as follows:

Role	Name
Chairperson	Glenda Lasslett
Vice Chairperson	Jean McLean
Secretary	Ann Wigglesworth
Treasurer	Roger King
General Committee Members	Bernardo Duarte Carla Chung Claire Woods David Lih Emanuel Braz John Wallace Tony Marjoram
ETSA Representative	Lidio Guilhermino Sarmiento Ximenes
Founding Member, life member	Helen Hill

Ann Wigglesworth, Secretary AETA is registered with Consumer Affairs Victoria and is responsible for submitting AETA's annual report.

3. AETA Strategic Planning for Future Events

On 24 August, the AETA Committee came together to hold a planning session for AETA Events. Each committee member put forward their ideas for events. In addition to regular activities, it was agreed to pursue the following activities:

- Showing of the film 'Butterfly Song' with speakers David Bridie and George Telek about West Papua.
- A festival exhibition in collaboration with Timorese organisations in Melbourne, led by Bernardo Duarte in 2024
- An international seminar or conference to mark the 50th anniversary of the Proclamation of Independence in 2025.

It was agreed that the end of year Honouring the Struggle event was important to continue, now that the dinner is being held in May. It was stressed that talks and memorial activities can be matched with Timorese music and cultural activities as well as offer spaces for socialising. The 2023 Honouring the Struggle event in November reflected this approach (detailed below).

4. AETA Chapters

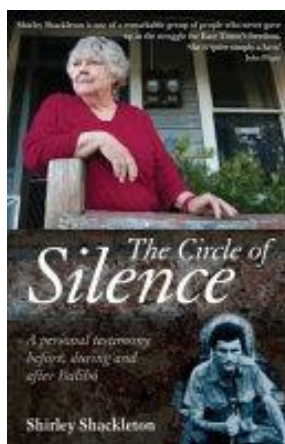
In October 2023, AETA members Helen Hill and Emanuel Braz started an AETA Chapter in Dili, initially for the purpose of providing comprehensive information to Australian residents in Dili about the Australian referendum on the indigenous Voice. The interest in Timor-Leste was significant. As a result, guidelines have been drafted for AETA Chapters which are currently being assessed by a legal advisor for consistency with AETA's Constitution.

AETA Committee members have also had dialogue with Timor activists in Sydney (Feb 2023), Adelaide (March) and Brisbane (August) about their interest in having a formal organisational link with AETA in Melbourne. The development of guidelines for an AETA Chapter will be useful for these discussions also.

B. Advocacy and Networking Events

1. Reflections on the lives of Timor activists

This year AETA committee members were saddened by the deaths of three women activists, all of whom had campaigned for justice and self-determination for East Timor since 1975.



Jill Jolliffe died on 2 December 2022. A celebration of Jill Jolliffe's life was held on 31st March hosted by METAC and Greig Cunningham. A journalist and author, Jill Jolliffe's place in Timor's history will live on in her writings and in the rich archives she left behind on the years of struggle for independence, now in the National Library of Australia and the Living Memory Project in Dili.

Shirley Shackleton died on 15 January 2023. Her funeral was held in Melbourne on 23 January with family and friends present. A memorial for Shirley was held at the launch of the film 'Circles of Silence', named after her 2010 book about her campaign for the truth about the death of the Balibo five. It was held on 3 May at the Classic cinema.

Helena Grunfeld died in July 2023. She was an active supporter of independence and justice for East Timor. Helena was a foundation member of the AETA Village Technology Group, where she had some great discussions with the group. In recent years Helena continued through her support for sustainable development locally through Friends of Aileu.

2. Student Welcome

This year the Welcome to new Timorese students in Melbourne was held at METAC on 3 March. AETA made a financial contribution to the cost of food and the wonderful performance by the Timor Oans cultural group. About 50 people attended.

3. Parliamentary Election Observing on 21 May 2023

AETA joined up with the Victoria University Alumni Association in Dili and Victoria University, which has in previous years run its own Election Observer missions in Timor-Leste, to form the AVEOM (Australia East Timor Association/Victoria University/Victoria University Alumni) Electoral Observation Mission to observe the May 2023 parliamentary elections.

Our Mission was led by Dr Jean McLean and Dr Ann Wigglesworth with Glenda Lasslett providing advance logistical support in Dili in the lead up to the election. The team included Dr Helen Hill, Professor Michael Leach, Dr Peter Brent,

Hon. Rob Hulls, Hon. Martin Foley, former Judge Ian Gray and others with long connections to Timor-Leste and previous experience with election observation in Timor-Leste, from Sydney, Darwin, UK and Hong Kong. These international team members were joined by twelve members of VU Alumni Association and twelve international Dili residents, who also provided some language and logistical support.

Prior to the election, Prof Michael Leach delivered a public lecture on 17 May entitled: Timor-Leste's Parliamentary Elections 2023: the System, Generational Change, Political Landscape and Implications, held in Dili. We were pleased that election experts Michael Maley and Allan Wall briefed AVEOM participants on the electoral process and the role of international election observers.

AVEOM was the largest Observer Mission at these elections. Our 44 team members observed polling stations and counting centres in Ainaro, Ataúro, Baucau, Bobonaro, Dili, Ermera and Liquica.

Our comprehensive report of the election announced them Free and Fair, with a summary of nine key findings and five recommendations. (see <https://www.aeta.net.au/aveom-timor-lest-2023-parliamentary-election/>)

AETA was honoured to receive a personal letter of thanks from President José Ramos Horta for the valuable contribution made by the AVEOM team.

A Report Back of the AVEOM mission was held on 30 May at St Kilda Town Hall, hosted by Friends of Suai/Covalima which had two members on the team. Speakers were Michael Leach, presenting the report, Hon Martin Foley MP on his first experience of observing Timorese elections, and FOSC member Nancy Price, an election observer veteran of five election observer missions.

While in Dili, AETA members were privileged to attend the Order of Timor-Leste award ceremony on 19 May at which John Waddingham, Cecily Gilbert (both of CHART), Bernard Collaery, Steve Bracks and Ego Lemos received the OTL medal.

4. AETA Restoration of Independence Day Dinner

The AETA dinner was held on 19 May at William Angliss Restaurant and was a great success. Occurring parallel to the Timorese elections and observer mission in which four AETA committee members were participating, these two events were very successful despite stretching the resources of the AETA Committee.



The theme of the dinner was on the Parliamentary Elections, and presentations by Michael Leach and Ego Lemos by video link to Dili stimulated a good discussion. Due to various other Timor-Leste focused events happening at the time, including the AVEOM project and an event at Trades Hall much more appealing to Timorese students, there were fewer participants than previously, with 59 attending.

5. Santa Cruz Massacre: Thirty Years On

This year's Honouring the Struggle event focused on the Santa Cruz Massacre. Held at Trades Hall on 16 November, the event opened with Timorese music provided by Xavi and Chico Santos. Chico also spoke movingly about his memories about living in Santa Cruz bairro and witnesses the events of the 12th November 1991.

The Timor-Leste Studies Association publication 'Santa Cruz Massacre: Thirty Years On' was presented by Michael Leach (co-editor). As well, the new book Economic Diversity in Contemporary Timor-Leste was also presented by co-editor Lisa Palmer. Ann Wigglesworth also presented a talk on the legacy of the Santa Cruz Massacre to key members of Timorese civil society.

Pat Walsh acknowledged the role of John Sinnott as the driving force behind AETA for many years, and of the recent passing of Bill Dagg, organiser with ROTARY of Donations in Kind (DIK), sourcing, sorting, repairing and shipping

hundreds of tonnes of useful goods to Timor-Leste. He also spoke of his alarm at the prospect of former General Prabowo Subianto, one of East Timor's most prominent tormentors, becoming the next president of Indonesia.

AETA provided a bar and finger food from the Asylum Seekers Resource Centre. It was a fitting tribute to those who lost their lives at the Santa Cruz Massacre, as well as an enjoyable and social evening with lots of catching up of old friends from around Melbourne.



6. Conversation with Helen Hill and Xmas Gathering

On 14 December AETA held a discussion on 'How can Australians best support education and life-long learning in rural Timor-Leste' with Helen Hill providing her insights from many years working with the Education Ministry in Dili, and her concerns about the separation of theory from practice in formal education.

The meeting was attended by about 18 people, including members of Friends groups from Aileu, Ainaro, Baucau, Suai/Covalima and Vermasse. The involvement of participants in supporting rural students with scholarships for further education, and for promotion of agriculture amongst youth and school gardens was a particular focus.

This was followed by the AETA Xmas Drinks at the same venue, the Commercial Club Hotel near the AETA office in Nicholson Street which a number of other AETA members attended.

7. Other advocacy events

AETA met with Home Affairs Community Liaison Officer, Mat McKenzie from the Department of Home Affairs in July, regarding how his department could work with the Timorese diaspora and others to support Timorese migrants.

AETA met with Luis Esteves, Program Manager for Timor-Leste for the Victorian Government, based in the Department of Families, Fairness and Housing, in August and liaised with Federal and State government officers regarding issues affecting seasonal workers and partnership with Timor-Leste.

AETA dealt with numerous enquiries from AETA members and the general public seeking help with Timor-Leste related matters.

Our Facebook page continues to be a great source of information and networking in both Australia and Timor-Leste, covering issues of development and justice in Timor-Leste, the situation of Timorese seasonal workers in Australia, the work of Friends groups and other solidarity organisations and general news of what is happening in Timor-Leste. More information is provided below.

C. Communications

AETA has made good use of our AETA Facebook page, sharing information about events and activities with networks across Melbourne and beyond. This Facebook page is read by a wide range of AETA members, members of the Timorese community in Australia, Australian solidarity groups and Timorese in Timor-Leste. We are also receiving more direct messages asking for information and/or assistance.

1. eNewsletters

Email campaigns were sent to 520 members and supporters promoting amongst other events:

- the AGM
- Student Welcome at METAC
- Restoration of Independence Dinner
- Honouring the Struggle

Each campaign involved an email newsletter followed by two reminders. The campaigns were also posted on Facebook. These emails also carried other notices and stories of interest.

Roger King manages the email newsletters. Following repeated issues uploading images to Mailchimp, the AETA account has now been switched to Mailerlite. This has been successful to date.

2. Facebook

On 31st Dec 2023 AETA's Facebook page had 3,300 followers, up from 3,200 in 2022. Approximately 40% of AETA's Facebook audience is based in Timor-Leste, 42% in Australia, 4% in Indonesia, 3% in UK, 1.6% in Portugal and 1.3% in USA.

Total reach was 19,200 (c.f. 23,900 in 2022). Content interactions were 4,700 (c.f. 5,700 in 2021).

The most engaged posts were:

- Jan 23 - Kirsty Sword Study Tour notice
- Jan 15 - Good bye Shirley Shackelton
- Oct 3 - Sr Carolina Maria Correia visit
- May 26 - Congratulations OTL recipients
- March 22 - Notice of Requiem Mass for Xisto Dos Santos

We thank all those who helped make the page interesting and informative, especially Dr Helen Hill and Glenda Lasslett.

3. AETA Website

The website - www.AETA.net.au - plays an increasingly important role in AETA communication, with an average of 2,100 unique visitors per month (up from 1,000 in 2022) and a total of 57,600 visits (up from 29,666 in 2022). The website is maintained by Jules Ober, Emanuel Braz and Roger King.

4. YouTube

AETA is assembling a collection of video recordings of its events on YouTube. You can access these videos of AETA events and messages at

<http://www.youtube.com/@australia-easttimorassocia7121>

APPENDIX ONE: FINANCE

AETA Treasurer's Report

for the 12 months ending 31st December 2023

Financial Position

The annual result was a deficit of \$1,115 (cf surplus of \$4,123 in 2022).
Net Assets as of 31st Dec 2023 are \$35,009 (cf \$36,123 the previous year).
The organisation remains in a strong financial position.

Donations and Support

Donations were made to Clearing House for Archival Records on Timor (\$2,000) and Permatil (\$250). AETA covered food costs for the T-L student welcome at METAC in February (\$770).

Volunteers

AETA is deeply indebted to those who volunteer their time and skills as speakers, presenters and organisers.

Supporters, members and donors

We are very grateful to those who attended AETA events, who joined or renewed their membership, and those who made donations to support the organisation.

Office

We are also very grateful to Helen Hill who has provided space for the AETA office in her home rent free.

Roger King

Treasurer

29 Jan 2024

AETA Financial Report 2023	Jan-Dec 2023	Jan-Dec 2022
Income	\$	\$
AVEOM Election Monitoring Fees	881	
Independence Day Dinner	3,040	5,180
Book Sales	1,077	959
Poster Sales	0	5,304
Food and Drinks	130	559
Members Dues	2,020	1,505
Donations	1,585	1,340
Total Income	8,733	14,847
Expenses	\$	\$
Events-Exhibition-7 Dec 2022	0	1,366
Bookshop Purchases	260	20
Food and Drinks	5,082	1,981
Performance Fees	180	450
Poster Frames	157	1,752
Venue Rent	416	
Promotion	0	79
Stationery & Photocopying	88	693
Australia Post	219	174
Consumer Affairs	61	60
Office Rent, Body Corporate, Water	0	0
Bank, Trybooking fees	208	196
Website	926	712
Donations – CHART	2,250	1,000
Total Expenses	9,847	10,724
Operating Result	-1,115	4,123
Balance Sheet	31st Dec 2023	31st Dec 2022
Current Assets	\$	\$
Balance in		
CBA 1002 9407 (Main Ac)	9,789	15,974
CBA 1009 6709 (Sales Ac)	0	18,906
CBA 312350195664 (Term Deposit)	25,000	
Trybooking	0	336
Payment owed (DELWP Invoice approved 20/12/22)	0	1,750
Cash in hand (from Poster Exhibition)	0	138
Total Cash Assets	34,789	37,105
Inventory		
Stock Value of Books and DVDs from PY	220	220
Total Inventory	220	220
Liabilities		
Reimbursements owed to R. King	0	722
Reimbursements owed to C. Woods	0	479
TOTAL Liabilities	0	1,201
Net Assets	35,009	36,123
Net Asset Previous Year	36,123	32,000
Operating Result	-1,115	4,123
Net Assets Current Year	35,009	36,123

PROJECT REPORTS

AETA DINNER Angliss Restaurant

19th May 2023

Income		
Full Price	42@ \$60	\$2,520
Low Income	13@ \$40	\$420
TL Student	12@ \$0	\$0
Comp	0@ \$0	\$0
Subtotal	67	\$2,940
Donations	9	\$190
Total Income		\$3,130
Expenses		
Angliss Restaurant	3 course dinner @ \$45 PPx62	\$2,790
Booking Fees		\$79
Total Expenses		\$2,869
Result		\$261

AVEOM FINANCIAL REPORT May - June 2023

Income		AUD
Melbourne based observers		\$600.00
Dili based		\$221.05
Fees received in Melbourne		\$60.00
Subtotal		\$881.05
Expenses		
T-shirts (Nony Printing)		\$635.74
Venues: Fundacao Oriente		\$302.73
Venues: Hosana Church		\$113.52
Peso Printing: Docs for STAE		\$15.14
Peso Printing: Observation Checklists		\$37.46
Peso Printing: Observation locations		\$9.08
Timor Diak (photos for STAE)		\$11.35
Duta Xerox flash disk		\$15.14
Total Expenses		\$1,140.16
Result		-\$259.12

SANTA CRUZ EVENT Trades Hall

16 Nov 2023

Income	
Donations	\$515.00
Books Sales – Santa Cruz – 13 copies	\$390.00
Other Books	\$160.00
Bar Income	\$355.50
Less Fees	-\$23.94
Less GST	-\$42.57
Net Income	\$1,353.99
Expenses	
Food	\$903.00
Drinks & Ice	\$239.00
Performer	\$180.00
Book Stock – Santa Cruz – 13 copies	\$260.00
Total Expenses	\$1,582.00
Result	-\$228.01

APPENDIX TWO: 2023 AGM MINUTES

AUSTRALIA-EAST TIMOR ASSOCIATION INC.

ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING 2023

On Zoom at 6pm Wednesday 22 February 2023

Minutes of Meeting

Present: Glenda Lasslett (Chair), Roger King, Jean McLean, Claire Woods, Carla Chung, Peter Moylan, David Hall, Chris Adams, Ashley Wild, Trina Supit, Helen Hill, Bernardo Duarte, Emanuel Braz, Tony Marjoram, John Wallace, Andrew Mahar, Heather Spurling, David Fallick, Maire Sheenan, Vanessa Hearman, Ann Wigglesworth. (21 people, 16 current members)

Apologies: David Lih, Janet Hunt, Nancy Price, Tonny Castro

Glenda Lasslett, Chair, made the Acknowledgment of Country and welcomed all to the meeting. Glenda thanked all the members for supporting AETA and noted a successful year: membership numbers increasing, a very active Facebook page and excellent attendance at AETA events. Of special note was our increasing engagement with the Timorese community and Timorese students.

1. Confirmation of Minutes of previous AGM

The minutes of the previous AGM were presented and unanimously accepted without change.

Moved: Ann Wigglesworth

Seconded: Glenda Lasslett

Accepted unanimously.

2. Presentation of AETA Annual Report

The 2023 AETA Annual Report was tabled. Secretary Ann Wigglesworth highlighted key points:

A. AETA Meetings and Governance

- AETA's membership has grown to 65.
- In July 2022 a Strategic Plan was developed, informed by a survey of the membership. The new four years plan is from 2022-2026.

B. Advocacy and Networking Events

- The date of the Independence Dinner has changed from the Proclamation of Independence on 28 November to the Restoration of Independence, with the dinner held on 20 May in 2022 for the first time.
- AETA continues to advocate on relevant issues.

C. Communications

- AETA's newsletter has expanded to 460 members and supporters.
- AETA's Facebook page now has risen to 3,200 followers.

D. Bookshop and Archive Project

- The Bookshop stock has been reduced and no new books purchased.
- The Archive project has been completed.
- AETA expresses our deep thanks to John Waddingham, Cecily Gilbert and Jennifer Murphy, the VU Special Collection Librarian for helping AETA complete this project.

Motion: That the AETA Annual Report be accepted:

Moved: Claire Woods
Seconded: Jean McLean
Accepted unanimously.

3. Presentation of AETA Financial Report

The 2022 AETA Treasurer's Report and Financial Report were tabled. Treasurer Roger King highlighted key points.

President Glenda Lasslett referred to the Internal Audit of the accounts by the Audit Committee (Glenda Lasslett, Ann Wigglesworth, Tony Marjoram).

Motion: That the AETA Audit Committees statement that "the Treasurer's Report and Financial report have been examined by the Audit Committee and in its opinion are a true indication of the financial position of AETA as of 31 Dec 2022 and the results of its operations for the year then ended." be accepted.

Moved: Claire Woods
Seconded: Jean McLean
Accepted unanimously.

4. Election of AETA Committee

- No new nominations for the Committee were received.
- The existing committee would be nominated for re-election as a group.
- The existing committee members were asked to introduce themselves.
- It was noted that John Wallace had recently been co-opted onto the Committee and would be continuing in this position.
- At ETSA's recent Annual Meeting, Elidio Ximenes was elected as President, and will be the new ETSA representative on AETA committee.
- Thanks were expressed to Tonny Castro, outgoing ETSA President for his role on the committee.

Motion: That Jean McLean, Ann Wigglesworth, Roger King, Emanuel Braz, Carla Chung, Bernardo Duarte, David Lih, Claire Woods, Tony Marjoram, John Wallace be nominated to continue on the Committee.

Moved: Glenda
Seconded: Helen.
Accepted unanimously.

Motion: Ann moved that Glenda be nominated as President of AETA.
Seconded: Helen.
Accepted unanimously.

5. Any other business

5.1 Interest in AETA beyond Victoria

- There was a discussion, led by Helen Hill, about the possible formation of State-based sub-Committees of AETA.
- Jean asked Helen to document her ideas to share with the Committee.
- Ann and Glenda are in touch with NSW and SA on this issue.

5.2 Timorese workers in Australia update

Carla informed the meeting of her liaison with the unions with regard to the Seasonal Workers Program, now under PALMS (Pacific Australia Labour Mobility Scheme) in relation to concerns about worker support and safety. Carla will be meeting the Labour Hire Commissioner shortly to follow up on these issues.

Glenda thanked all members of the committee for their contribution to a very positive year for AETA. The meeting ended at 7pm.

Minutes by Ann Wigglesworth, AETA Secretary