



Australia East Timor Association Inc.

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ANNUAL REPORT

For year 1 January to 31 December 2025

**Prepared for the 2026 Annual General Meeting
On-line by Zoom, 6pm Wednesday 25 February 2026**

INTRODUCTION TO AETA

The Australia-East Timor Association (AETA) was established on 7 December 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 86 individual members and two organisational members registered on 31st December 2025 (c.f. 57 members registered on 31st Dec 2024, and 81 on 31st Dec 2023).

AETA ACTIVITIES

A. Annual General Meeting (AGM) and Governance

1. Annual General Meeting

The AETA AGM was conducted on 26 February 2025 with 21 members participating online. The previous executive and committee members were reelected.

2. Committee Members and Meetings

Our hardworking committee has made this a very successful year and the AETA Committee membership has been quite stable.

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 2025 AETA Committee comprised as follows:

Role	Name
Chairperson	Glenda Lasslett
Vice Chairperson	Jean McLean
Secretary	Ann Wigglesworth
Treasurer	Roger King
General Committee Members	Ashley Siedlecki Claire Woods David Lih John Wallace Jose Pires Tony Marjoram Peter Job (from July) Emanuel Braz (in Timor-Leste in 2025)
ETSA Representative	Augusto Sarmiento (until July 2025) Denise Fernandes (from August 2025)

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

3. AETA Strategic Plan

AETA operates according to the *AETA Strategic Plan, July 2022-June 2026* (updated Feb 2023). The AETA Committee held a planning session in February 2024 to consider key activities for the year including the Independence Dinner and the Honoring the Struggle event. A planning session will be held to develop a new plan for the period July 2026 to June 2030 following a survey of members' ideas about our new strategic direction early in 2026.

B. AETA Events

1. AGM 2025

The AGM was held on 26 February on-line, with 21 members attending. The minutes are attached.

2. Closure of AETA office

A consequence of Helen Hill's death was that in February 2025 the Hill family sold Helen's house and AETA had to move out of the office. Given that the Committee members are scattered around Melbourne using personal computers and most meetings are held on-line, the office was little used other than for storage, so the decision was made to close the office.

The AETA Library, which includes a copy of each book that passed through the AETA office since the bookshop started, is intended for the National Library of Timor-Leste when this is established (it has been in planning for many years). Meanwhile, Andrew Mahar, the Timorese Honorary Consul agreed to take the boxes of books which are now stored at their office at the Timorese Consulate at Victoria University, until such time we can pass them on to their destination in Timor-Leste.

The book stock accumulated through AETA's 40 years work as a book shop and distributor had been much reduced. For what remained, AETA sought Timorese organisations which were interested in taking some of the stock and donated seven boxes of books to education institutions in Dili, while others were donated to Timor related organisations in Melbourne and Canberra. A small selection of books is still being held in the house of one of the Committee members to meet occasional book purchases that are received by AETA.

3. Student Welcome and Book Launch

In 2025 the Welcome to 12 new Timorese students studying in Melbourne was held at the Melbourne East Timor Activities Centre (METAC) in Richmond on 7 March. The students were introduced by East Timor Students Association (ETSA) President Augusto Sarmiento.

At the same event AETA hosted the Melbourne launch of a book 'Dancers on the Sea' by Gabriel Samson who reflected on her experiences on Atauro Island over 10 years from the Indonesian occupation to the early years of independence. The event was very well attended with about 70 people present, and musical entertainment provided by the students and others at the end of the evening.

4. AETA Restoration of Independence Day Dinner

The AETA dinner was held on Thursday 22 May at William Angliss Restaurant, marking the 50-year anniversary of the Timorese Community in Australia, the founding of AETA, as well as 25 years of collaboration between many Australian Friendship Groups and Timor-Leste. The dinner was MCed by Jose Pires and focused on solidarity: four women, including Kirsty Sword Gusmao, Teresa Fraga, Febe Gomes and Ann Wigglesworth, gave brief reflections of the achievements of solidarity, challenges and future directions. Chico and Xavi dos Santos gave a lovely musical performance.

The dinner was a sell-out with 77 attendees, including 17 friendship groups represented. Positive feedback was received, with people enjoying the time for general interaction and networking. There was a request that dinners not always be held on Thursdays for those who cannot attend a Thursday event.

5. Honouring the Struggle

On 28 November AETA marked the 50th Anniversaries of independence, the invasion and AETA's international solidarity. Held at the Victoria Trades Hall, the event featured presentations by John Waddingham and Richard Tanter, both active in the early days of AETA, reminiscing about the early days and evolution of the campaign for independence. About 80 people attended and drinks and Timorese food was served. Memorabilia and photos were on display.

The event was well attended, with about 70 attendees, but less than the 94 acceptances received due to illness and bad weather. There were a number of supporters who have not been seen at other AETA events in recent years. A big thanks to Claire Woods and Roger King who did a brilliant job putting this event together.

C. Solidarity and Advocacy

1. Timorese Students in Melbourne

AETA continues to focus on networking opportunities, including facilitating partnerships with other organisations, to broaden the opportunities and networks for the students. The ETSA President is invited to join the AETA committee. AETA provides a Welcome to Timorese Students (see above) and discounted/supported tickets to AETA events. In addition, we link ETSA to other organisations where relevant.

2. The Timor-Leste Friendship Network Conference in Dili

Four Committee members attended the Friendship Conference in Dili on 10-11 July. The AETA Committee participants included Jean McLean and Ann Wigglesworth (representing Friends of Suai/Covalima, Ashley Siedlecki (Friends of Vermasse) and Glenda Lasslett (Friends of Baucau). The conference was also an opportunity to catch up with Life Skills Education, the local NGO that Helen started and the VU Alumni group that has worked with AETA on Election Monitoring visits.

3. 50th Anniversary of the Timorese Community in Australia

The Timorese Association of Victoria (TAV) held an event in August on the 50th Anniversary of Timorese refugees arriving in Australia, first in Darwin by ship and then many travelling to Melbourne. The theme was: 'Honouring the Past, Shaping the Future' highlighting the community's journey, resilience, and cultural pride.

A large gathering of Timorese and Australian supporters filled the Collinwood Town Hall. Events and enjoyed cultural performances (traditional dances), live music, photo exhibitions, Timorese food, and speeches by officials from Timor-Leste, including HE the Vice-Prime Minister of Timor-Leste, Kabualdi Lay, Timorese Ambassador to Australia, Ines Almeida, and the Australian Ambassador to Timor-Leste, Caitlin Wilson, as well as Pat Walsh and other dignitaries from the Timorese government. Congratulations to TAV for a wonderful celebration.

4. 50th Anniversary of the Deaths of the Balibo Five

The anniversary of the deaths of the Balibo 5 was marked by a fundraising event for the Balibo House Trust, held at Victoria University on 20 October as part of the annual Jean McLean Oration. President

Jose Ramos Horta made an excellent presentation as the keynote speaker for the Oration, mentioning with respect and humour many Australian activists who had been so important in the solidarity movement in the past. The wide attendance at the Oration indicated how so many people and organisations are supporting Timor-Leste in a variety of ways.

5. Timorese Seasonal Workers in Australia

AETA is committed to sharing information on workers' rights, facilitating access to support services to help workers in need, and advocating for better working conditions, where mistreatment of workers is identified or known. AETA often shares information about information sessions for seasonal workers and also often receives requests for contacts for translators to assist with assistance programs for seasonal workers. AETA continues to post related news and analysis of seasonal worker issues and news on Facebook.

6. Reflection on the Life of Pat Walsh

In December 2024 AETA committee and members were deeply saddened by the death of a great friend of AETA, Pat Walsh OAM OTL. Pat's contribution was enormous - as an activist, researcher, writer, editor, poet, mentor and commentator on the struggle for Timor's independence and then for peace and justice in Timor-Leste and beyond. Pat is remembered warmly and deeply by so many people and organisations that he worked with over the years. Pat was a great supporter and friend of AETA, always generous with reflections and acute analysis on the issues for Timor-Leste, and for Indonesia, West Irian and Myanmar.

Many memories and tributes to Pat were sent from around the world, including from both the President and the Prime Minister of Timor-Leste, the Embassy of Timor-Leste in Canberra, Human Rights organisations in Australia and Timor-Leste and so many friends and colleagues of Pat. The AETA Facebook page is full of tributes and reflections honouring a truly remarkable human being. We send our deepest condolences to Annie Keogh and family. Vale Pat Walsh.



D. Communications

Our e-Newsletters and Facebook page continues to be a useful 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 Friendship groups and other solidarity organisations and general news of what is happening in Timor-Leste.

Thirteen email newsletters were sent to 90 members and 340 other supporters. The primary purpose is to keep in touch with our network and to promote AETA events. We also use the emails to cover important parallel events. A summary of topics follows.

AETA Events

- The AETA AGM
- AETA Restoration of Independence Dinner
- AETA Honouring the Struggle event - Remembering 1975

Other Events and Topics

- METAC dinners including the annual Student Welcome
- ATLFN Friendship conferences in Dili
- TLSA conference in Dili
- Alola Timor Leste Study Tour
- Perma Youth International Convergence at Fatuquero, Ermera
- East Timor Development Agency fundraising campaign to support Timor-Leste's Young Chef Olympiad candidate
- Australia Western Sahara Association dinner
- Councils Connecting Communities: Australia - Timor-Leste. Celebrating of 25 years of friendship
- Ryder-Cheshire Australia search for a new secretary
- Update on Gil Scrine's film, *Swindle*
- Centre for Stories profile of Jose da Costa for Refugee Week
- Cardinal, Dom Vigilio do Carmo da Silva's visit to the Timorese community in Melbourne
- Boite Schools Chorus *Mai Fali Eh!* concert at Melbourne Town Hall attended by President Jose Ramos Horta, Ambassador Ines Almeida
- Hamoris Lian Timor Australian Tour
- TAV: Honouring the Past, Shaping the Future - a 50-year journey
- Pat Walsh reflecting on Truth Telling
- Paulie Stewart - All the Rage
- Friends of Suai/Covalima dinner
- Friends of Alieu Trivia night
- Jean McLean Oration presented by President Jose Ramos Horta for the Balibo House Trust and Victoria University
- Monash Friends of Vemasse 2026 calendar
- Timor Leste Australia Youth Dialogue - December Dialogue
- Friends of Bacau and Friends of Alieu Young Leader Awards
- Inside Indonesia edition
- Festive season gift opportunities:
 - Jose Ramos Horta Climate Action and Resilience Fund
 - Fundasaun Alola

- Klibur Domin
- Mary McKillop Today
- Endeavour United / MTC New Year's Eve Party
- Timorese community Santa Cruz Commemoration

The emails also carried news of the deaths of John Martinkus, Eric McLean, Rae Kingsbury and Pat Walsh, with our sincere condolences to their families and friends.

2. Facebook

On 31st December 2025 AETA's Facebook page had 3942 followers, on 31st Dec 2024 AETA's Facebook page had 3,800 followers, up from 3,300 in 2023. Approximately 44% of AETA's Facebook audience is based in Timor-Leste, 45% in Australia, 4% in Indonesia, and 7% elsewhere.

568 posts were created or shared, (c.f. 616 in 2024, 394 in 2023). Facebook engagement in 2025 included 5,059 reactions (likes), 283 comments and 274 shares (cf in 2024) 5,655 reactions, 1,032 comments and 716 shares. By far the most posts related to the passing of Pat Walsh. Many tributes were posted along with videos of Pat's funeral.

3. AETA Website

In 2025 there was an average of 4,138 unique visitors per month (cf 1,610 in 2024) and a total of 195,572 visits (cf 51,479 in 2024).

4. YouTube

AETA has a collection of video recordings of its events on YouTube. For access to these videos see: <http://www.youtube.com/@australia-easttimorassocia7121> www.youtube.com/@australia-easttimorassocia7121

5. LinkedIn

In 2024 we set up an AETA page on LinkedIn, mainly reposting posts of relevance to Timor-Leste. We are looking at alternatives to Facebook and may pursue this in 2026.



AETA Treasurer's Report

for the 2025 calendar year

This report takes into account the METAC Student Welcome, AETA's annual Independence Day Dinner, Timor Association of Victoria's 50 year anniversary, AETA's November event, *Remembering 1975*, memberships and donations. In September AETA received a bequest of \$40,000 from the estate of the late Helen Hill, founding member and guiding light of AETA, for which we are most grateful. Planning is underway to make best use of this money.

AETA remains in a strong financial position, posting a surplus of \$2,293 for the year excluding the \$40,000 bequest. This compares with a surplus of \$2,598 the previous year. Adding the \$40,000 bequest takes the annual surplus to \$42,293. AETA held net assets of \$79,902 on 31st December 2025.

77 supporters attended the annual Independence Day Dinner held on 22nd May compared with 124 last year, numbers boosted by Helen Hill's memorial service being held that morning. This year's dinner yielded a surplus of \$1,153 (cf \$1,724 in 2024), which included donations \$266 (cf. \$514).

90 supporters attended *Remembering 1975* at Solidarity Hall at the Victorian Trades Hall Council on 28th November. This was an "entry by donation" event. Donations raised \$2,575 which more than covered costs.

AETA sponsored the food costs of \$700 for the METAC Student Welcome on 7th March and \$1,000 to the Timor Association in Victoria's 50th anniversary celebration at Collingwood Town Hall on 30th August.

The AETA committee is extremely grateful for the ongoing support of members, donors, ticket buyers, attendees, volunteers and friends as well as the guest speakers, musicians, cooks and venue staff who make our events possible.



Roger King – AETA Treasurer

AETA Financial Report 2025	2025	2024
Calendar Year		
Income	\$	\$
Independence Day Dinner	4,834	7,370
November Event - Ticket Sales	0	1,110
November Event - Donations (Entry by Donation in 2025)	2,575	220
Book Sales & Merchandise	462	990
Food and Drinks	0	0
Members Dues	2,240	1,415
Other Donations	1,471	1,574
Postage	0	0
Bank Interest	255	610
Less ATO withholding tax on interest earned. TFN issue.	-90	
Total Income	11,747	13,289
Expenses	\$	\$
Food - Events-METAC/ETSA	700	700
Food and Drink - Independence Day Dinner	3,696	5,760
Food and Drink - November Event	1,524	494
Food and Drinks - Other	89	
Performance Fees	250	400
Bookshop Purchases (Write off)	222	425
Venue Rent	0	0
Equipment	0	0
Promotion	0	0
Stationery & Photocopying	131	0
Phone	0	0
Australia Post	321	261
Insurance	0	0
Consumer Affairs	49	48
Office Rent, Body Corporate, Water	0	0
Bank, Trybooking, Square fees	268	299
Website	1,203	1,305
Donations – TAV 50th Celebration (2024: Helen Hill Fund)	1,000	1,000
Total Expenses	9,454	10,691
Operating Result Excluding Bequest	2,293	2,598
Bequest (Helen Hill)	40,000	0
Operating Result Including Bequest	42,293	2,598
Balance Sheet	Dec 31, 2025	Dec 31, 2024
Current Assets	\$	\$
Balance in		
CBA 1002 9407 (Main Ac)	54,357	11,776
CBA 312350195664 (Term Deposit)	25,775	25,610
Cash in hand	0	0
Total Cash Assets	80,133	37,387
Inventory		
Stock Value of Books and DVDs	0	220
Total Inventory	0	220
Total Assets	80,133	37,607
Liabilities		
Creditors	231	
TOTAL Liabilities	231	0
Net Assets	79,902	37,607
Net Asset Previous Year	37,607	35,009
Operating Result, including Bequest.	42,293	2,598
Net Assets Current Year	79,902	37,607

AETA PROJECT REPORTS

AETA Independence Day Dinner

22 May 2025

Angliss Restaurant

Income

Full Price	63 @ \$68	\$4,284
Low Income	10 @ \$55	\$550
Comp	4 @ \$0	\$0
Subtotal	77	\$4,834
Book sales at dinner		\$129
Donations	11	\$266
Total Income		\$5,229

Expenses

Angliss Restaurant	3 course dinner @ \$48 PP x_77	\$3,696
Performer's Allowance		\$250
Trybooking Processing Fees		\$130
Square Processing Fees for book sales		\$1
Total Expenses		\$4,077
Surplus		\$1,153

AETA Remembering 1975

28th Nov 2025

Trades Hall-Solidarity Hall

Income

Ticket Sales (Entry by donation)		\$0
Donations: Trybooking		\$2,175
Donations: Cash at door		\$400
Poster sales		\$190
Total Income		\$2,765

Expenses

Trades Hall - Solidarity Hall - Free use		\$0
Food costs		\$1,235
Drink costs		\$209
Gifts to Presenters		\$80
Stationery		\$16
Trybooking Processing Fees		\$54
Total Expenses		\$1,595
Surplus		\$1,170