



**Volume 31 December 2018**

Seasons greetings from all at Alola Australia. Alzira Reis, Fundasaun Alola CEO and Maria Bohan, Alola Australia chair reflect on the challenges and achievements of the past year and how this has shaped plans for a strong and sustainable future. We share some highlights from Alola Australia's tenth anniversary dinner, including a link to Glenda Laslett's powerful and moving speech. Thinking of going to Timor-Leste in 2019? You will after reading about some of the great trips on offer. From all of us here, have yourself a happy Alola Christmas: give an Alola gift certificate or five - there's something splendid for everyone - especially the women and children of Timor-Leste and; share the newsletter to all and sundry - because no-one should miss out. Thank you for your support, friendship and solidarity.

## Fundasaun Alola reflects on the year and plans for the year ahead

*by Alzira Reis, CEO Fundasaun Alola*



Above photo from photographer Jorge de Araujo

One of the most exciting events for the Alola Foundation in 2018 was the launch of an integrated approach in the villages of Manumera and Kaimauk in Turiskai Same. The objective of the integrated approach is to improve the nutrition status of women and children in the local area.

Also of great interest was the Alola workshop involving Alola stakeholders, held on 24-25 of October, to review the implementation of the 2018 Annual Action Plan; and design the Annual Action Plan for 2019 according to the Alola road map. As a result of the review it has been shown that the program has achieved 85 percent of its plan in the

period of January to October and it is expecting to achieve 100 percent by the end of the year. However, the Economic Empowerment program has only been able to achieve 55 percent of its plan, with the main reason being a lack of funding to implement the activities prioritized in 2018. One of the contributing factors in the program not being able to implement its entire plan is the wider political stalemate. Thirty percent of the Economic Empowerment program's annual budget comes from the Ministry of Social Solidarity.

We have learnt and grown from the 2018 experience. We will now reinforce our partnerships with potential development partners or donors and strengthen the fundraising strategies within the organization. In addition, Alola continues to introduce and fortify the implementation of our values and principles as a non-profit organization; which includes team work and voluntarism as a foundation to perform its mission.

The best and worst experiences in the development of Alola in 2018 are a lesson in steps for improvement. Change is a constant factor in the lives of individuals and the organization. Efforts to bring the good back into our focus means taking a more balanced perspective and considering the experience as motivation. Therefore, the Alola Foundation will have another Strategic Plan for 2020-2024 in 2019 and the spirit of **resource mobilization** will be an investment in the future and a priority next year.

## Alola Australia looks back over 2018

by Maria Bohan, Chair Alola Australia



Above photo from photographer Jorge de Araujo

Alola Australia has had a busy year and as it comes to a close I would like to acknowledge the key ingredient to our work - the wonderful, committed Alola friends and supporters. Thank you to you all.

2018 is the tenth Anniversary of Alola Australia – this achieves ten years of partnership with Fundasaun Alola in Timor-Leste. Over these ten years we have raised \$1.6 million to support the women and children in Timor-Leste. As this year ends we honour the founding Board members: Robbie Campo, Jill Forsyth, Christine Perkins, Rosalie Sword, Karen O'Sullivan, Melanie Atkins, and Geoff Donnelly. We thank these founding board members for their vision, leadership and hard work.

### and towards 2019

Alola Australia's Board is ready to hit the ground running in 2019. We began our review of 2018 in September and as this newsletter goes to press we will have finished our Business Plan for 2019. We will be in touch with you in early 2019 to seek your support for our activities and invite you to have little events to support Alola.

We are most excited that two senior staff from Fundasaun Alola will be in Melbourne in April 2019 and when we have the dates confirmed we will invite you to a special event so you can meet them and hear news from Timor-Leste.

We are always happy to receive your suggestions, comments and feedback. Please send us an email, give us a ring or speak to us when you meet us during 2019.

### Christmas – end of year greetings from Alola Australia

This newsletter will reach you just before the Christmas – New Year Season. On behalf of the Board I send you, your families and friends, much peace and hope for this special time of the year.

And I know you will all join with me in sending our warmest Christmas wishes to our friends at Fundasaun Alola: to Dr Kirsty Sword Gusmão, AO, the Chair of the Board; to the Board members; to Alzira Reis the CEO, the staff and the many volunteers in Timor-Leste. May all the women and children of Timor-Leste have a peaceful, safe Christmas time.

## Give a happy Alola Christmas



Wanting to give a sustainable, life and community changing gift for Christmas this year? Well Alola has just the thing. With five Christmas gift certificates, ranging from \$10 - \$75, there's something for everyone - especially the women and children of Timor-Leste. To shop or browse visit [www.alola.org.au](http://www.alola.org.au)

You can send an E-gift certificate, print at home or send a printed gift certificate, that we'll post to you.

## Alola Australia's very special tenth anniversary fundraising dinner

by Marita Jacobsson and Maria Bohan



Just over 100 friends gathered together on Friday October 19 at the Angliss Restaurant Melbourne for the annual Alola Australia fundraising dinner. This year's dinner was also a celebration of Alola Australia's ten years of partnership with Fundasaun Alola. A partnership that has raised \$1.6 million for women and children in Timor-Leste.

From the commencement of the night, there was a buzz in the room as old and new friends came together to be informed and inspired by our special guest speakers, enjoy a delicious dinner and raise vital funds for Fundasaun Alola.

Our special guest speakers inspired with their stories of Timor-Leste past, present and hopes for the future. Glenda Lasslett who has supported campaigns for independence and sustainable development in Timor-Leste from New

York to Melbourne since 1975 spoke about 'what a young nation's women and men can achieve against all the odds.' You can read Glenda's powerful and inspiring speech by clicking [here](#) to go to our website.



*Ambassador Abel Guterres and Glenda Lasslett*

Our second guest speaker Abel Guterres, Timor-Leste Ambassador to Australia, arrived in Australia as a refugee in August 1975. At the time he spoke no English and had no money. He thought he would soon be heading back home. However Indonesia's invasion of Timor-Leste in December 1975 prevented any possible return.

Abel became a tram driver, a bus driver and an activist. He worked on the diplomatic front with Dr Jose Ramos Horta and returned to Timor-Leste in 1999 to support the UN supervised Referendum on Independence. Abel attended Oxford University as a student in the Foreign Service Program, post graduate studies in international law, politics, diplomatic practices, trade and finance. He then worked as Chief of Staff for Prime Minister Dr Jose Ramos Horta.

As Timor-Leste's first Consul General to Australia, Abel played a leading role in laying the foundations for the many friendship groups especially in Victoria and New South Wales. His work over decades has made a significant contribution to building deep and lasting friendships between Timor-Leste and Australia. In 2010 he was appointed the Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of Timor-Leste to Australia, New Zealand and the Republic of Fiji.

Abel also spoke with a passion for what a young nation's women and men can achieve against all the odds. He has lived through many on the ground experiences of this and shared amazing awe inspiring stories. We were honored to have Abel join us for Alola Australia's tenth anniversary celebration.



*Ambassador Abel Guterres and Alola Australia board member Helen Tchong.*



Lactation Consultants Kate Birchall and Helen Adams with Fundasaun Alola Founder and Chair Kirsty Sword Gusmão

Maria Bohan read out a special message from Alzira Reis, Fundasaun Alola CEO:

*'...I thank you for your commitment and support of Alola and for attending tonight's dinner. Your generous support will strengthen our work of integrating Alola's programs so that they are more effective across our rural areas.*

*Your support last year allowed us to consult with key leaders at community level in our municipalities, to do local mapping and to launch our integrated approach of Our Village Loves Mothers and Babies (SHIO) in two villages.*

*I am honoured to thank Alola Australia, Ambassador Abel, Mana Glenda and all friends of Alola for your commitment and support to our organisation, yesterday, today and in the future.*

*Thank you for your belief in our work - our successes are because of your support.*

*We have great confidence that you will remain our friends and partners as we continue to move forward.*

***Our women are the mothers of our nation***

***From the strong women is born a great nation'***

Paul Caine from Caine Real Estate was our auctioneer extraordinaire. The auctions raised \$4,200 on the night. A big thank you to the people and businesses who donated live and silent auction items.

Many long-time friends of Timor-Leste were there on the night: activists and supporters; volunteers and mentors; people who have lived and worked in Timor-Leste; people who have visited many times; people who have worked with governments supporting Timor-Leste; and people who have participated in the Kirsty Sword Gusmão Study Tours. A number of the original Alola Australia board members were also present; Christine Perkins, Jill Forsyth and Robbie Campo.



Robbie Campo, Christine Perkins and Maria Bohan, past and present Alola Australia board members

Thank you to everyone who came along, those that were there in spirit and the many friends who gave a donation in lieu of being at the dinner. **Just over \$18,000 was raised to support Fundasaun Alola's work with women and children of Timor-Leste.**

Thank you to the Angliss Restaurant, staff and students, and especially Angelina Chung, Reservations Restaurant, Conference and Food Operations whose family hail from Viqueque in Timor-Leste.

The evening closed with a heart-warming rendition of the much loved and very moving traditional Timorese song *Mai Fali Eh* by all the guests.

## Want to visit Timor-Leste in 2019? There are so many possibilities

### Study Tour with Kirsty Sword Gusmão

It's time to register your interest in our 2019 Timor-Leste Study Tour. Next August we will be remembering the past by celebrating the 20th anniversary of the 1999 Popular Consultation, the culmination of the Timorese people's 24-year-old struggle for self-determination. But we will also be nurturing the future by focusing our attention and the funds we raise on the economic empowerment of women. Find out more in our flyer and share it with your family and friends. Register your interest by dropping Kirsty a line at: [kirsty@alolafoundation.org](mailto:kirsty@alolafoundation.org)



Interested in visiting our nearest neighbour, Timor-Leste?

*Participants in our 2019 Study Tour will have front row seats at the very special celebrations to commemorate the 20th anniversary of the 30 August referendum. On this date in 1999 the people of Timor-Leste exercised their hard won right to self-determination, voting to become an independent nation. We shall also be visiting the town of Balibo, near the Indonesian border, and have the opportunity to talk to key players involved in the struggle for Independence.*

*As well as remembering the past, we believe it is important to nurture the future. The focus of our 2019 Study Tour will be on exploring the role that women play in boosting the economy of their families and local communities. We will visit handicraft cooperatives, learn about the work that the Alola Foundation is doing to preserve and promote the traditional art of weaving and meet with national leaders to listen to their perspectives on Timor-Leste's economic development and challenges. Funds raised will support Alola's Economic Empowerment program.*

**Dates:** August 25 to 2 September, 2019



Find us on  
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"I am excited to offer participants in this Study Tour a unique and privileged glimpse into the life of a new nation. You will meet some of the country's leaders, experience its history and natural beauty, laugh a lot, and perhaps cry a little. Hopefully Study Tour 2019 will ignite a passion for this beautiful country and its people, and lead to your ongoing engagement beyond the tour's end."

*Dr Kirsty Sword Gusmão AO*

<https://www.facebook.com/TimorLeste.Study.Tours/>

## Explore Timor-Leste through a permaculture lens with CERES: 8 – 21 July 2019

Join CERES (centre for education and research in environmental strategies) next July to explore the unique country and landscape of Timor-Leste. Combining experiential learning with travel, this is an opportunity to join the movement of people making positive change for themselves and their communities through ecological based solutions

**For further details contact Ben or Sophie, by email [benedict@ceres.org.au](mailto:benedict@ceres.org.au), [global@ceres.org.au](mailto:global@ceres.org.au), or phone (03) 9389 0183** or visit the website <https://www.ceres.org.au/global/timor-leste/>



## Local tour companies also offer trips throughout the year. See:

**Timor Adventures:** 'choose from a range of Timor Adventures (adventure treks, day tours, cultural tours, Taste of Timor, motorcycle adventures, women's tour *visiting Alola and ETWA* and more) . . . or make your own.'  
[www.timoradventures.com.au](http://www.timoradventures.com.au)

**Eco Discovery:** '© **Timor Sparrow Tours** range from guided tours around the capital Dili, to scenic drives, bird watching, safari and trekking expeditions into the most remote locations, and our latest **Timor "Sparrow Force" Tours**, all designed to give you a full insight into the history and culture of this beautiful place under the sun and the lives of its people'. [www.ecodiscovery-easttimor.com](http://www.ecodiscovery-easttimor.com)

**Green Mountain Tours and Drivers:** <https://www.facebook.com/greenmountaintours/>

## Keep in touch



<https://www.facebook.com/AlolaAustralia>

Join our 1,595 friends and keep in touch through the **Alola Australia Facebook** page.

Visit the **Alola Australia website** for the latest on upcoming events and campaigns, Fundasaun Alola programs, annual reports, making donations, getting involved, newsletters you might have missed and much more.

[www.alola.org.au](http://www.alola.org.au)

## Contributors

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### **News from Fundasaun Alola:**

Alzira Reis CEO Fundasaun Alola.

### **This edition:**

*Reflections and Christmas messages:*

Alzira Reis CEO Fundasaun Alola

Maria Bohan Alola Australia

*Give a happy Alola Christmas:* Alola Australia newsletter production team

*Alola Australia's very special tenth anniversary fundraising dinner:* Marita Jacobsson and Maria Bohan

*Visit Timor-Leste in 2019:* Alola Australia newsletter production team

## Support Alola with a donation

Alola Australia (ABN: 20 132 084 050) is endorsed as a Deductible Gift Recipient. Donations of \$2 or more to Alola Australia are tax deductible in Australia.

### To make a one off or regular donation you can:

#### Make a direct deposit to Alola Australia.

Our bank details are:

Alola Australia, ANZ Bank Collins Place, Melbourne Victoria BSB: 013 030

**PLEASE NOTE NEW Account number: 304 782 427**

Swift code: ANZBAU3M

Reference: donation [your family name]

So that we can acknowledge your donation please send an email to [friends@alola.org.au](mailto:friends@alola.org.au) with your details and amount of deposit.

**Send a Cheque:** Cheques should be made out to Alola Australia Ltd and mailed to PO Box 382 Abbotsford 3067 VIC. Australia

**Donate Online via Paypal:** visit our website ([www.alola.org.au](http://www.alola.org.au)) and click the 'Donate Now' button.

#### Donate by Credit Card:

Complete the following form and mail to our PO Box.

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**'Strong Women, Strong Nation' 'Feto Forte, Nasaun Forte'**