

Friends and Partners with East Timor Incorporated

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Like to know more about us and/or our projects?

Email: info@fpet.org.au

Or Write: FPET PO Box 191 The Gap 4061



Aje, Goris, Meka & Queta farewell from Brisbane

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

- Welcome to our new-look newsletter! Thanks to new editor Brendan Carroll for his ideas and enthusiasm – also heartfelt thanks to retiring editor Rad Speedy for his great work.
- Our focus this year has been on the “Friends” part of the partnership, and the best way to progress is to visit each other – there have been 8 visits to and from Atabae, the highlight being the July visit of Aje, Goris, Meka and Queta to Brisbane.
- 2004 also saw re-evaluation of how best to deliver our aid – we cannot continue to load Fr Marsellus with extra work administering our assistance, especially in areas not directly related to the Church. We have produced a Vision Statement and a working document, “Managing Our Relationship”, which summarises our current thinking (available on request).
- Much work has gone into researching and planning in three priority areas nominated by the Atabae community – education, health and water supply. 2005 should see good progress in delivering assistance to Atabae, starting with the arrival of our PALMS volunteers, Nick and Jane, early in the New Year.
- My 2004 Report is available to anyone who would like more details on our current activities. At this time of peace and goodwill, Season’s Greetings to all our members and supporters as we look forward to an exciting 2005.

JIM JOHNSON (3300 6332)



Jane and Nick Eager
See story on next page.

Thanks to our donors and supporters in 2004. The generosity of people is inspiring and is an acknowledgment of the friendship and partnership with Atabae. FPET transferred funds of \$17,000 to Atabae over the last 12 months for teachers’ salaries, school fees, and support for widows and orphans, organ for church, beds and nets for the boarding schools, typewriters for schools, motor vehicle costs in Atabae and \$1,080 in medical goods etc. We will continue to identify with the people of Atabae the areas in which our financial support will have the greatest benefit to the community. **Treasurer, Jack Brady (3300 4811)**

So,

WHAT CAN YOU DO NOW? - You choose:

1. Pray, and/or
2. Become a member of FPET, or
3. One-off donation, either to PALMS Overseas Fund (Atabae) for community development (tax deductible) or to FPET (non-tax deductible) for Atabae parish works, or
4. Monthly direct debit, as above.

Let us know and we will contact you:

Name: _____

Address: _____

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Phone and/or email: _____

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Current Classroom Atabae School.

• **Volunteers for Atabae** – Pray that it works out

- FPET has been seeking a nurse to help improve health services in Atabae and also wants to reduce the workload on Fr Marsellus who has been managing our projects as well as caring for the parish.
- A married couple, Nick and Jane Eager from Gosford, have now volunteered through PALMS to work in Atabae. Jane is a nurse and Nick is a naturopath, an experienced youth worker and was formerly an Army Engineer.
- Nick and Jane are now preparing to start a two-year term in Atabae from the beginning of February. This should greatly enhance our Atabae community relationship.

• **Microcredit for local development**

- Through donations to the PALMS Overseas Fund (Atabae), an amount of US\$2,562 has been provided to expand a microcredit group in Atabae. A small part of the money will provide materials for a secure office while most will finance expansion to meet the local demand.
- To qualify for a loan, members have to deposit regular savings contributions. The money is mainly lent for income producing purposes but may also meet emergency expenses.
- In recent years microcredit services have proved to be a vital part of sustainable development in underdeveloped communities. Most users progress over time to larger loans with bigger payments until they become relatively self-sufficient.

Projects Co-ordinator, Nick Delaney (3300 4338)

“Love thy neighbour” Friendship and Hope

On my recent visit to Atabae I was met with open arms and smiling faces as can be expected from these amazing people. Father Marsellus and Brother Hendricus were extremely interested how everything was going in Brisbane and wanted to further pass on their gratitude for the continued work of so many people back home. They proudly guided me around the church compound showing me the five running classrooms, kindergarten and two boarding houses. I was impressed at the progress. At the time there were 30 children housed within and all equally excited about our visit.

The following day we had morning tea, Timor style, with Alfredo and his family who were overjoyed to see us. As with all the children they wanted to know how everyone was doing back in Brisbane and all the names of previous visitors to Atabae continued to pop up. This reinforced to me the basis of our mission here, one of humanity, fellowship and brotherhood. There are many projects underway in Atabae under FPET, in varying stages of development, but the essential element that will not be lost is the hope and friendship that FPET has given. "Love thy neighbour"

by Major Michael Stone (Australian Army) elsewhere on the ground in East Timor.



Goris & Meka learn to operate the radio

CONNECT EAST TIMOR – (CET)

None of the rural areas of Timor Leste have any form of telecommunications and in crisis situations there is no way that nearly half the population can call for help.

The Connect East Timor (CET) Campaign is working to provide basic telecommunications services throughout rural Timor-Leste. CET is very appreciative of the support from all our donors, including FPET. Much of the equipment required to complete the whole task has been obtained by DONATIONS IN KIND but SIGNIFICANT funding is needed to put the whole system in place. Without desperately needed cash donations for additional solar panels and installation costs, the donated equipment will never be deployed in East Timor.

CET plans to initially locate radios into 7-8 villages of Atabae district to test the concepts and supporting logistics for deploying this technology. (PALMS Overseas Fund, Atabae is providing \$A10, 000 to ensure this demonstration project goes ahead –Ed)

CET and the Timor Leste Government are now asking AusAID and other international agencies to help fund a more extensive pilot project enabling relevant education and health applications to be developed (think School of the Air and Flying Doctor!). CET also plans to re-vitalise Australian-based awareness and fundraising campaigns aimed at government, corporate and individual donations.

For more information check the CET website:

www.connecteasttimor.com or call Peter de Haas on (07) 40976605 or by email: connectet@bigpond.com

Stop Press: We were very pleased to receive news that Goris, who came to Brisbane in July/August, has commenced his tertiary studies. He is training to become a teacher and Catechist at Dili's Institute of Religious Studies, run by Fr Yulius Yasinto. Estuda diak Goris!!
By James Johnson.

Timorese Australians, Sport and PhD

- As our partnership with the people of Atabae has blossomed this year, it has been complemented by our relationship with the local Timorese community, particularly Sr Eufemia Lacerda and the Timorese young people. This has resulted in our members joining with the Timorese community for important celebrations and masses, as well as the Timorese assisting us, such as with the visit of the Atabae young people.

One of the most fruitful connections has been the direct link with the Timorese young people. This produced great friendships and occasional sports days where “Australian” young people challenged the Timorese young people at soccer, volleyball and basketball.

- The first two sports days (one of which was held when the young people from Atabae were here) resulted in convincing wins for the Timorese. However, the third match-up in August saw the Aussies defeat an under strength Timorese side in soccer and play a draw in basketball. Regardless of the winners, fun and friendship were gained by all.

- On another topic, I will be returning to Timor in November and December. This trip is for my PhD study (which is based around the experience of religion, violence and oral culture in Timor). After visiting Atabae last year with the sponsorship of FPET, this experience became the basis for my continued study. I (like James and Anna) was deeply affected by the trip and I am very grateful to FPET for giving me the opportunity to visit East Timor.

By Joel Hodge.