

Friends and Partners with East Timor Incorporated

(FPET) ABN 11987 413446

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Like to know more about us and/or projects ?
View our website: www.fpet.org.au
Or Email: info@fpet.org.au
Or Write: FPET PO Box 191 The Gap QLD 4061



Concelebrated Mass in Atabae 19 March 2005

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE – EAGERS HOME!

“The best laid schemes o’ mice an’ men gang aft a-gley.”

(Robert Burns)

- FPET plans in Atabae have received a setback – Nick and Jane Eager, having settled in and started to become effective in furthering the partnership, unexpectedly found that Jane is pregnant – this was a happy explanation for her recent poor health, but it deteriorated to the extent that they felt they had to return to Australia without delay.
- They are profoundly disappointed to abandon their planned two years in Atabae; they feel enriched by the East Timor experience and want to stay involved with FPET: they now have to rebuild their lives in Australia and prepare for baby: please pray for them.
- Talking with Nick and Jane on their return, we reflected on the **many positives** from their time in Atabae
 - Although not easy, Atabae is a viable posting for volunteers.
 - The Timorese received them warmly in Atabae - they were happy to return “home” after weekly visits to Dili: they made good friends and were very upset to say goodbye to them.
 - Whoever follows will have a much-improved set-up – furnished house, water, electricity, fridge, computer, mobile phone, transport, interpreter, network of contacts.
 - Having volunteers in Atabae has proved to be a very effective way of delivering our assistance - two volunteers worked well, as they were able to support each other in the physically demanding and culturally different environment.
- The bottom line – we are determined to replace Nick and Jane as soon as we can find suitable candidates. If any of our supporters have any suggestions on volunteers for Atabae, please talk to us about it.

JIM JOHNSON (3300 6332)

Our Independent Parish

- In October 2001, soon after I arrived in Atabae, we asked Bishop Belo if the parish of Atabae could become independent from the parish of Balibo. He agreed that it was a good idea, however it wasn't until November 2004 when our new bishop, Bishop Alberto visited, that it was finally agreed upon. In February the date for official independence was set for 19th March so the rush was on!
- More than a thousand people came from around the parish and beyond to celebrate this special day with us. Bishop Alberto was accompanied by Archbishop Ranjith (Papal Nuncio for Indonesia and East Timor) from Jakarta, and Bishop John from the USA. Mass was not only celebrated by these three bishops but also 17 other priests and myself, with the Archbishop giving the homily. Most of the people had to sit outside the church under the shelters provided. No one minded though and everyone enjoyed the service and wonderful singing of the choirs. Afterwards an enormous feast was enjoyed by all who came. It was catering on biblical proportions! Even though the day went for more than nine hours everyone enjoyed themselves and left thoroughly satisfied.
- We are all very happy being an independent parish having a direct say in how things are run. Becoming our own parish is both exciting and challenging. We plan is to build up the spiritual lives of the people. This includes re-building our community by having 15 to 20 families come together once a week as a group to pray and grow in God's love with one another to benefit the community.
- We thank you for all your support both financially and spiritually on the day and ask that you continue to keep praying for us as we enter a new and exciting time in the parish. Please pray that the Holy Spirit guide us in the decisions we make here to bring us closer in union with our heavenly father.

God Bless you all, Father Marsellus.



Some of us met Nick and Jane as they passed through Brisbane on their way back to Gosford from Atabae

So, **WHAT CAN YOU DO NOW? - You choose:**

1. Pray for and/or join FPET
2. Donate, either to PALMS Overseas Fund (Atabae) for community development (tax deductible) or (non-tax deductible) for Atabae parish works.
3. Monthly direct debit, as above.

Let us know what you would like to do and we will contact you:

Name: _____

Address: _____

Phone and/or email: _____

To: Friends and Partners, PO Box 191 The Gap 4061

FPET WEBSITE (www.fpet.org.au)

- More information on our activities: e-mail link for contact or feedback about website, FPET, East Timor.
- Full colour newsletters for download or viewing on the website 'About FPET' page.
- Helpful 'Links' page for anyone interested in East Timor and other organisations working there.

Jane Eager at a busy time at the Atabae clinic immunising an infant. Health care is a major issue in East Timor, especially in the rural areas like Atabae. We are now seeking another experienced nurse to work in the Atabae community.



Education is a high priority

- Education is a major key to the future sustainable development of East Timor. Education standards need raising substantially to enable the country to develop an independently viable economy. It is a high priority for the government and people throughout East Timor.
- FPET is providing considerable assistance in funding restoration of primary schools in Atabae Parish and paying salaries for a number of teachers in the church schools which are filling gaps in the government primary school system.
- FPET has funded the construction of simple boarding facilities at Atabae to enable children from the smaller villages to attend the lower secondary school in Atabae. We have also paid some expenses for a few students to attend other secondary schools and other advanced education centres but we are still looking at how to help most effectively with secondary and further education.
- Funding for education is one of the main purposes for which we need your financial support. Keep watching our website for more about our projects because education will remain a long-term priority.
Projects Co-ordinator, Nick Delaney (3300 4338)

RADIOS REACHING VILLAGES

- Connect East Timor is this month installing VHF Radios in 7 Atabae district villages. Whilst volunteer techs Robert Moore and Michael Witt are in E T, they will also: train local Atabae operators; test and commission all equipment and give written Tetun instructions
- The 7 villages to be connected in this stage will be opened up for 2-way messages on health, education, farming, meetings, visits and emergencies.
- The fully self contained radios have a loud speaker, microphone, batteries and external connections to an antenna & solar power supply, mounted on a high roof.
- FPET has contributed A\$10,000 to this project and helped arrange local project support.
- After this "Demonstration Project" the next stage planned is a "Pilot Project" to 22 more villages in different districts.
- More information - www.connecteasttimor.com

Beautiful but Poor

For a land that has known such horror, East Timor is a land of absolute beauty. The scenery is breathtaking and the Timorese are so very kind and gentle. Our 3 months have included some of the most challenging experiences of our lives.

- We moved from an Australia life of materialism and plenty to that of Atabae where everything we go to do is completely foreign to us, and everyone around us lives a life of material **poverty**.
- We are living in a palm hut right in the **heart of the village** surrounded by Timorese going about their simple day to day lives. The roosters never fail to wake us at the crack of dawn followed by the dogs, pigs, goats, chickens and the locals chatting on in Tetun.
- We have no electricity, therefore no TV, no lights and certainly no air conditioning to starve off the relentless heat. Storing **food** is difficult as fresh fruit and vegetables don't like 37 degree temps. We have become very inventive with cooking as the range of food is very slim. Quite often we head down to the beach to do some fishing, unlike home, we have managed to catch some beautiful sized fish... our only meat source!!
- Along with our neighbours, we gather our **water** from the well each day for cooking, showering and handwashing our clothes.
- We've been learning **Tetun** since our arrival, and we can now hold a simple conversation. Its wonderful to be able to communicate with the locals in their native tongue.
- **JANE**- Work for me as a **midwife** is completely different to home. Witnessing my first Timor birth had me in tears, it's wonderful living out your dream of working in a developing nation and seeing a miracle unfold all at the same time. Atabae has 3 midwives and the clinic appears to be quite well run. The rest of the sub-district however has no trained midwives. There is still a need to train some local women in the remote villages about safe birthing practices.
- **NICK**- My job is quite **varied**. I have been feeling my way. Many locals are eager to learn English so I tried my hand at English teaching as I learnt about the people's needs.

Nick and Jane Eager (before they knew they would be returning)



Nick Eager met with Catechist Fernando de Silva, his wife and child when he visited Aidabeleten to organise with the villagers for the building of the new primary school which we now hope to have ready for the start of the next school year in September.

School for Aidabeleten

- Thanks to a great effort by Nick Eager a much-needed school will soon be built at Aidabeleten. This village has had no school since the previous one was destroyed in the violence around the time of the Indonesian withdrawal. Since it is about a 90-minute walk to the nearest school, it was not possible for the younger children to attend school.
- Nick and Jorge (an Atabae friend, guide and interpreter) undertook an arduous six-hour round trip walk to visit the village before the Eagers returned to Australia. Nick assessed the materials required and arranged for construction to commence about the end of May when the corn harvest is completed. The villagers are delighted and have volunteered to do the construction work because they have been seeking a new school ever since losing the previous one. The school will have three classrooms and should be well ready for commencement of the next school year in September.

HEADLINES (full stories on our website) –

- **FPET WINS ANZAC PEACE PRIZE** - The RSL has awarded the prestigious 2005 ANZAC Peace Prize...nominated by The Gap Sub-Branch...
- **2ND INDEPENDENCE SPORTS DAY** - Another successful day for the friendship between Australians and East Timorese...teams were very even...