

Bairo Pite Clinic, Dili, The Democratic Republic of Timor-Leste is a partner of the Australian Foundation for Peoples of Asia and the Pacific

MEDIA RELEASE – 22 September 2009

Ten Years On, GFC Compounds Basic Healthcare Crisis In East Timor

Instead of celebrating the tenth anniversary of the opening of the internationally recognised Bairo Pite Clinic in Dili, Timor-Leste (26 September), Dr Dan Murphy (the Clinic founder known to the Timorese as Dr Dan), will continue to treat 300 patients each day while struggling to find the money to fund this free, essential healthcare service for the Timorese, made worse by the Global Financial Crisis (GFC).

Dr Murphy, who recently accepted Timor-Leste's highest honour from Dr Jose Ramos-Horta, President of the Democratic Republic of Timor-Leste, was proud of the Clinic's achievements but said, "While this should be a celebration, the reality is we are struggling to keep our doors open due to a lack of funding."

"With the support of Australians, the clinic has come a long way in terms of delivering healthcare services to improve the health of the Timorese but now, in the wake of the GFC we've seen much of the funds we rely on, diminish," Dr Murphy said.

The Clinic, previously a military clinic used by the Indonesian government and abandoned when Indonesian forces withdrew from Timor-Leste, was established in 1999 by Dr Murphy to serve the immediate needs of a population affected by the violence of the Indonesian withdrawal.

In the ten years since opening its doors, the Clinic has developed from providing basic emergency treatment for victims of war-like violence, to providing the only comprehensive free healthcare service treating around 300 patients per day from in and around Dili.

In the past ten years, the Clinic has conducted an extraordinary one million occasions of patient care, delivered around 7,000 babies and through its Mobile Clinic programme, provided access to essential healthcare for around 4,500 people living in remote regions across 8 districts of Timor-Leste.

In its mission to capacity build, the Clinic has also initiated 30 scholarships abroad in health related fields, facilitated rotations for 350 foreign medical students from 25 nations, and with the support of Australia, the Clinic has referred 15 successful state-of-the-art cardiac surgical interventions by leading healthcare facilities of whom Baby Maria was one.

Today, the Clinic is the most highly visited health service in the country, employing 50 local staff and 8 local volunteers to deliver free healthcare services to a large number of Timorese including: maternity and infant care, child health, vaccinations, TB and malaria treatment, HIV diagnosis, in-patient and dental services as well as health outreach and training for local healthcare workers. The clinic also operates a basic medical laboratory and pharmacy.

There is no doubt that the extraordinary success of Dr Dan's Bairo Pite Clinic has had a dramatic impact on saving lives and improving the health of the Timorese and yet, the day-to-day struggle to fund this essential service, compounded by the impact of the GFC now threatens to limit these services in the immediate future.

Margaret Duckett, Chief Executive Officer of the Australian Foundation for the Peoples of Asia and the Pacific Ltd (AFAP) has seen the dramatic effects of the GFC on many developing nations and services including the Bairo Pite Clinic in Timor-Leste.

“The impact on the Bairo Pite Clinic and indeed all of the communities with whom we work has been devastating. With the GFC exacerbated by a fall in the value of the Australian dollar and significant inflation in some of the countries in which we work, it is a sad reality that today, our activities in partnership with these communities including Timor-Leste, have had to be scaled back to our mutual disappointment,” she said.

“We hope that Australians will remember that despite some people doing it very tough here, comparatively speaking, Australians are managing the GFC well and we are urging them to continue to support this remarkable healthcare service that would otherwise be unavailable to the Timorese people,” Ms Duckett said.

Dr Murphy also appealed to the Australian community to continue their support for the Clinic saying, “For our tenth anniversary, our only wish is to continue to provide free healthcare that sees innumerable daily ‘*miracles*’ enjoyed by our dedicated staff and the long suffering citizens of Timor-Leste.”

100% of all donations go directly to support the work of the Bairo Pite Clinic.
To make a tax deductible donation today, please go to: www.afap.org

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JOURNALIST NOTES

BAIRO PITE CLINIC

The Bairo Pite Clinic

The Bairo Pite Clinic which was founded by Dr Dan Murphy in 1999 is supported by the Australian international aid organisation, The Australian Foundation for the Peoples of Asia and the Pacific (AFAP).

Located in Timor-Leste's capital city of Dili, the Clinic was established in 1999 to serve the immediate needs of a population affected by the humanitarian crisis. As the violence subsided, Bairo Pite Clinic has adapted and transformed from an emergency medical service to a more comprehensive community healthcare service.

Today, the Bairo Pite Clinic remains one of the most highly visited health clinics in the country, seeing an average of 300 patients per day, cared for by fifty Timorese staff and three permanent international volunteers. Dr Murphy and his colleagues at the Bairo Pite Clinic were honoured for having provided a continuous and reliable source of free health support to the population of Timor-Leste during arduous circumstances and often when little other support was available.

Dr Murphy's vision and tireless commitment has resulted in the Bairo Pite Clinic becoming the largest and most successful non-government sponsored clinic in Timor-Leste.

Web: www.bairopiteclinic.org



The Australian Foundation for Peoples of Asia and the Pacific (AFAP)

the reason we endeavour

AFAP's purpose is to make a positive difference to the lives of people throughout Africa, Asia and the Pacific.

AFAP was established in Australia in 1968 and incorporated in the state of NSW in 1983. AFAP aims to be a leading agent for poverty alleviation through innovative and appropriate community-based development focused in the Pacific, Asia and Africa. In consultation with the community, they develop creative models to address health, environment and climate change, sustainable agriculture, education and other key development issues. They are known for their professional competence, ethical practice and ability to work effectively with people from diverse cultures which ensures the provision of a high quality of service.

AFAP are recognised in Australia and internationally for their capacity to build sustainable partnerships that result in significant development impacts. AFAP receives funding from corporate and government donors and the Australian public.

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