

# TIMOR SEA JUSTICE CAMPAIGN

A FAIR GO FOR EAST TIMOR



## Timor Sea Justice Campaign News

### Memo suggests more bullying behaviour from Australia

Monday, March 31, 2014

A memo, anonymously sent to the Timor Sea Justice Campaign possibly gives insight to Australia's hard-nosed diplomacy engaged in the dispute over gas and oil resources in the Timor Sea.

No one in the TSJC can vouch for the authenticity of the memo that was sent to email address listed as a contact on [www.timorseajustice.com](http://www.timorseajustice.com). However, a decision was made to post a copy of the memo online as, if it is genuine, details of its contents would be in the public interest.

It can be downloaded here: [Memo\\_March2014](#)

The memo documents an extremely blunt message delivered by Australia's new ambassador in East Timor to a contact considered to be close to the Timorese Government.

TSJC spokesperson, Tom Clarke, said whilst he had no way of being sure that the memo was authentic, the comments attributed to the Australian official fit the pattern of bullying behaviour that he has come to expect from the Australian Government when it comes to the dispute over

Timor's oil and gas resources.

"Saying the dispute "cannot and will not be quarantined" is a not-so-thinly-veiled threat. If this memo is authentic, I think fair-minded Australians would be disgusted by our Government's bullying behaviour," said Mr Clarke.

In 2002, two months before East Timor became independent, Australia withdrew its recognition of the maritime boundary jurisdiction of the International Court of Justice and the International Tribunal on the Law of the Sea. As this left East Timor with no legal avenue in which to challenge Australia's refusal to establish permanent maritime boundaries, Australia was able to jostle the tiny new nation into a series of temporary deals that all short-change East Timor.

Mr Clarke said Australia's behaviour throughout the dispute has been like that of a schoolyard bully.

"Australia has snubbed international law and short-changed East Timor out of billions of dollars, it stands accused of spying on our tiny neighbour for economic gain. Yet our Government seemingly wants to throw a hissy fit because East Timor has the audacity to simply ask for what it is legally entitled to," said Mr Clarke.

In 2005, a number of Timorese NGOs had their funding cut from AusAid after they had endorsed an open letter criticising the Australian Government's refusal to establish permanent and equitable maritime boundaries with East Timor in accordance with international law.

"Australia needs to stop trying to throw its weight around and instead focus on doing the right thing. To move forward, our Prime Minister, Tony Abbott, should enter fresh negotiations with Timor to establish permanent boundaries with East Timor half way between the coastlines," Mr Clarke said.

*For further comments, contact Tom Clarke on 0422 545 763*