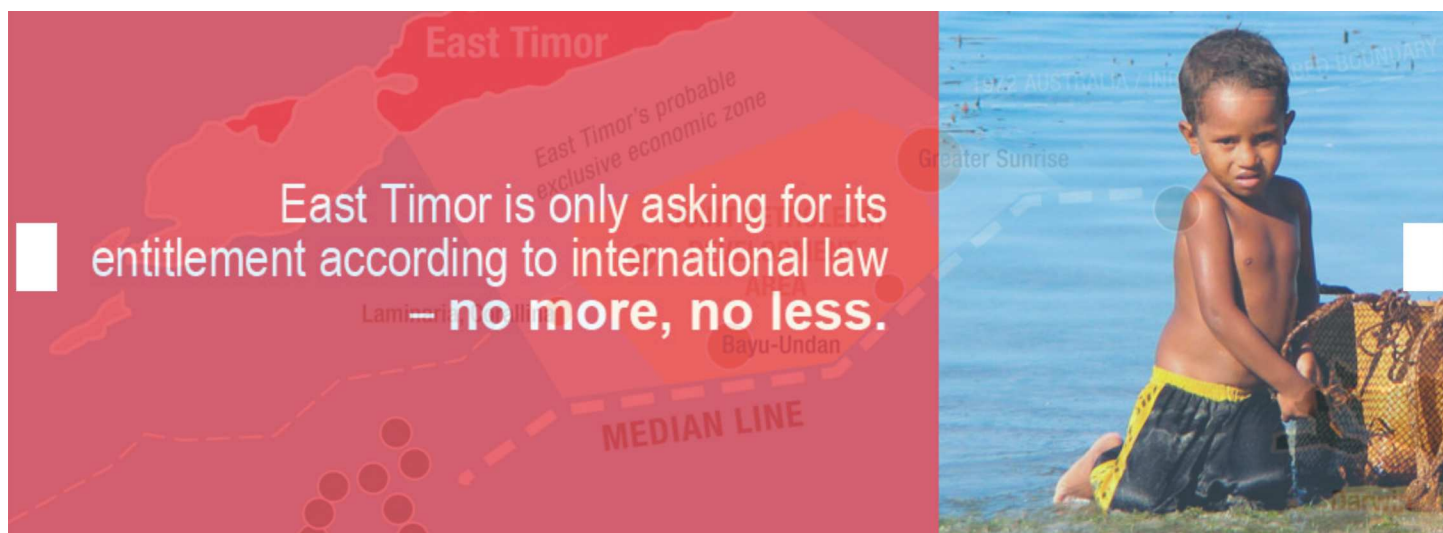


TIMOR SEA JUSTICE CAMPAIGN

A FAIR GO FOR EAST TIMOR

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Timor Sea Justice Campaign News

Thinking globally, acting locally: Australian councils supporting campaign for fair and permanent maritime boundaries

Sunday, December 13, 2015

The Moreland Council in Melbourne's inner north is the latest Council to call on the Australian Government to immediately enter negotiations with East Timor to establish permanent maritime boundaries in accordance with international law.

The resolution passed by Moreland last week to coincide with the 40th anniversary of the invasion of East Timor by Indonesia, follows similar resolutions from Leichhardt Council in Sydney and the Mornington Peninsula Shire.

The Moreland Mayor, Samantha Ratnam, said she was pleased with the council's willingness to take an expansive view of its role in an increasingly interconnected world.

"Moreland has a long standing connection with Timor Leste through our friendship city relationship and we also have a proud tradition of taking a stand against injustice," said Ms Ratnam.

The motion calls on the Government to immediately commence negotiations about establishing permanent boundaries for the first time with East Timor and to resubmit to the maritime boundary jurisdiction of the International Court of Justice. (Australia withdrew its recognition of the ICJ's authority on these issues just two months before East Timor became independent in 2002.)

"Just as is the case when neighbours might dispute the position of a fence line, any attempts at negotiation are likely to go much better when the

Latest News

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authority of the independent umpire is respected," said Ms Ratnam.

Below is copy of the statement presented and the motion passed. Big thanks to Councilor Sue Bolton for bringing the matter to council.

Meanwhile, the Federal MP for the same area, Kelvin Thomson, raised the issue in the Australian Parliament with a detailed statement. [A transcript can be found here](#). Great work Kelvin.

Background

7 December was the 40th anniversary of the invasion of East Timor.

The Timor Sea Treaty following the restoration of independence in Timor-Leste in May 2002 did not settle the maritime boundaries between Australia and Timor-Leste. If these boundaries were set in accordance with International Law, the significant fields of gas located outside the treaty zone of co-operation would belong to Timor-Leste as part of its exclusive economic zone. If so, one such field – the Greater Sunrise Field – located just 150 km from Timor’s shore and may generate some \$40 billion for Timor-Leste.

However, immediately prior to the restoration of independence in Timor-Leste, the Australia government withdrew recognition of the maritime boundary jurisdiction of the International Court of Justice and the International Tribunal for the Law of the Sea.

Even a minor adjustment of these maritime boundaries in accordance with International Law would shift billions of dollars of potential revenue from Australia to Timor-Leste. Yet Australia refuses to negotiate a permanent maritime boundary with Timor-Leste placing in jeopardy its legacy in, and friendship with, Timor-Leste.

This Moreland council has had a long and distinguished record of support for the people and government of Timor Leste. Moreland and Hume councils first established a friendship relationship with the District of Aileu in Timor-Leste in 2000, and have continued that relationship, signing five-year Friendship Agreements in 2005 and 2010.

Former Moreland Mayor Lambros Tapinos visited the district in 2014 to discuss practical assistance for the local district of Aileu

Motion:

That the Moreland council

1. Calls on the Australian government to immediately commence negotiations on permanent maritime boundaries with Timor-Leste, using a median line approach;
2. Calls on the Australian government to resubmit to the maritime boundary jurisdiction of the International Court of Justice and the International Tribunal on the Law of the Sea, so that the boundaries can be settled by an independent body if necessary;
3. Resolves to write to the Prime Minister and Foreign Minister to inform them of this resolution.

Tweets Follow

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Thanks to [@KelvinThomsonMP](#) for raising in Parliament the need for permanent & fair maritime boundaries with [#Timor kelvinthomson.com.au/editor/assets/...](#)
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 **Timor Sea Justice** @TimorSeaJustice 10 Dec
...Not to mention the TSJC's very own Jean McLean; also made of Lego at the [@NGVMelbourne's #WarholWeiwei](#) exhibition [pic.twitter.com/8qnD2QyQJ](#)



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