

Wednesday 10 February 2016

ACTU welcomes ALP announcement on Timor Sea

The ACTU and Union Aid Abroad-APHEDA welcome today's announcement by Tanya Plibersek that a Labor government will settle the dispute over the Timor Sea consistent with international law.

Quotes attributable to ACTU President Ged Kearney:

"This announcement marks the day that the Australian Labor Party made the decision for Australia to return to honouring international law, and commits to standing shoulder to shoulder with our closest neighbour, Timor-Leste."

"Timor-Leste is one of the poorest nations on earth, and since its independence in 2002, successive Australian governments have cynically denied them full access to their rightful resources in the Timor Sea – resources they desperately need."

"The Timorese people cannot wait any longer - I call on the Prime Minister to follow the example set today by Tanya Plibersek and immediately commence negotiations to settle fair, permanent boundaries based on current international law and practice."

"The independence of Timor Leste was won through the staggering sacrifices of its people. This struggle was widely supported by working people in Australia. By recognizing Timor's right to sovereignty over its territorial waters and maritime resources the Australian government can honour this sacrifice."

Quotes attributable to Kate Lee, Executive Officer of Union Aid Abroad-APHEDA:

"Since 1999, the Australian government has spent more than \$1 billion on aid for Timor Leste."

"This figure is dwarfed by the at least \$2 billion received by the Australian government in revenues from oilfields in the disputed region of the Timor Sea."

"There is no amount of development assistance that could compensate the Timorese people for Australia unjustly seizing any portion of their resources in the Timor Sea."

"The Timorese people need justice, not charity."

"If implemented, this decision will be the single most important thing Australia can do for Timor Leste."

ENDS

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