

Australians back Timor-Leste in maritime dispute

Australians favour international law to determine Timor maritime boundary between Timor-Leste and Australia, even if that delivers Timor-Leste a substantial share of the oil and gas in the Timor Sea.

The poll of 10,271 residents across Australia showed 56.5% support for establishing a maritime boundary in accordance with current international law, with only 17% opposed to the change.

A maritime boundary in accordance to international law would mean the formal end of the disputed [Treaty on Certain Maritime Arrangements in the Timor Sea](#).

The Treaty has been marred in controversy since the [revelations](#) that Australia bugged East Timor’s diplomatic mission during negotiations. In late September 2016, a court of arbitration at The Hague [ruled](#) that an international tribunal has standing to hear East Timor’s complain, paving the way for a renegotiation of the maritime boundary.

“Fairness is a nationally defining trait for Australians. This polling suggests that most people want Timor-Leste to have a fair go with regards to resources in the Timor Sea,” Executive Director of The Australia Institute, Ben Oquist said.

“This shows there is public support for negotiations to mark the maritime boundaries between our two countries, as currently there are none.

“It would be terrible if Australia’s behaviour in this affair has the potential to undo the good will and strong friendship forged through our support of East Timorese independence.

“The Government should heed the public mood on this issue and enter future negotiations with a new spirit of amity and respect for international law,” Oquist said.

POLLING RESULTS

ReachTEL conducted a survey of 10,271 residents across Australia on the evening of 30th August 2016.

Question: *Now thinking about Australia’s international relationships. There is currently no permanent maritime boundary between Australia and East Timor. Drawing a boundary in accordance with current international law is likely to deliver East Timor a substantial share of the oil and gas located in the Timor Sea.*

Should Australia try to establish a permanent maritime boundary in accordance with current international law?

	Total	Female	Male	18 – 34	35 – 50	51 – 65	65+
Yes	56.5%	54.2%	58.8%	46.8%	57.8%	61.4%	64.3%
No	17.0%	13.2%	20.9%	20.1%	17.5%	15.7%	12.2%
Don't know	26.6%	32.6%	20.3%	33.1%	24.7%	23.0%	23.5%

	Total	L/NP	Labor	Greens	Oth/Ind	Und
Yes	56.5%	54.6%	61.5%	63.8%	49.0%	48.7%
No	17.0%	20.5%	13.0%	10.3%	21.3%	13.7%
Don't know	26.6%	24.9%	25.5%	25.9%	29.8%	37.5%

	Total	NSW	VIC	QLD	WA	SA	TAS	NT	ACT
Yes	56.5%	55.5%	55.7%	58.9%	55.4%	55.8%	60.8%	45.4%	65.5%
No	17.0%	19.5%	15.8%	14.7%	17.5%	15.9%	16.0%	17.5%	14.6%
Don't know	26.6%	25.0%	28.4%	26.4%	27.1%	28.4%	23.2%	37.1%	19.9%

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