



## 4 Reasons why a border is in Australia's National Interest

*August 22, 2016*

### 1. It would complete our maritime border work

Australians have a right to a complete border. But right now there is a missing part; the 1.8% which is unresolved between us and East Timor.

We have 'drawn the line' and agreed where our territory ends with all of our other maritime neighbours.

Why? Because we want to, so that we are clear on what belongs to us and what belongs to them. Good fences do make good neighbours in our suburbs and in the seas between nations.

Our Government has the power to sit down and negotiate this remaining gap and complete our border work. Lets do it now. Finish the job so that it is sorted out and our kids don't have fix it.



## 2. It would be good for Australian business



A complete border creates more certainty which is good for business. This goes for business in the Timor Sea and for other Australian business setting up in Timor.

Permanent trumps temporary and provisional, reducing risk and consolidating confidence.

Opportunities in East Timor for Australian business are waiting in sectors like minerals, tourism, agriculture and infrastructure development. There is interest from around the world with China and the members countries of ASEAN beginning to move. East Timor is on our doorstep and can be at the heart of a profitable regional economic development.

Completing the border - its good for business.

## 3. It would enhance our international reputation

Australia punches above its weight internationally and has done for years. That has helped us to shape things to our advantage and have a say in the 'global arena'. But some of the gloss is coming off because our walk is not matching our talk.



Settling the border with East Timor would enhance our reputation as a 'good international citizen' and back up our words on international law with a great example of action. It would add to our credibility when we speak about issues such as the South China Sea and be a 'good look' as we seek to seek a role on the Human Rights Council 2018-2020.

But this is not just about looking good, it is about maintaining credibility to remain 'a player'.

## 4. It is good for regional security

It is in Australia's interests to have a strong, stable and prosperous neighbour and build



the best bilateral relationship with our northern neighbour. This is purely pragmatic, an investment in Australia's position in the region.

The world of international relations is always dynamic, there is no 'status quo' and countries are constantly building alliances

and friendships. Agreements are constantly being signed in areas that include economic cooperation, information sharing, labor flow, visas and military training.

The Chinese navy visited Dili for the first time in January. The Cambodian Prime Minister was there last week.

The last time an Australian Prime Minister visited? Took that long one hour flight from Darwin?

2008.

Timor is looking to join ASEAN as soon as possible and more than ever is focussing its attention towards Indonesia and South East Asia.

As we enter 'the Asian Century' to let this border issue remain a root of bitterness in the relationship will cost us.

Better to sort it out now and increase engagement on all levels to boost our regional relationships and ultimately serve our national interest.

Lets do it.