



Submission No 7)

Inquiry into Australia's Relationship with Timor-Leste

Name: AusAID (Supplementary)

Joint Standing Committee on Foreign Affairs, Defence and Trade
Foreign Affairs Sub-Committee



Australian Government

AusAID

The Australian Agency for International Development (AusAID) wishes to respond to evidence provided by CARE Australia on Monday 17 June 2013 to the Inquiry of the Foreign Affairs sub-committee into Australia's Relations with Timor-Leste.

CARE Australia gave testimony in relation to AusAID's Seeds of Life program and AusAID's support to the *Lafaek* publication.

Seeds of Life

CARE Australia's statement that "*there is not yet planning to reach the program across the whole of East Timor although it is a small country*" (page 2 of the Hansard transcript) is incorrect. The Seeds of Life program has a direct presence in 11 of Timor-Leste's 13 districts and is on target to reach the remaining two districts (Dili and Cova Lima) by July 2013.

Expanding the Seeds of Life program throughout Timor-Leste will help further spread the benefits of increased crop production to more farming households. A quarter of all Timorese farming households are today growing more and better staple crops to feed their families as a result of research and trialling undertaken by the Seeds of Life program. By 2015, the number of recipients is anticipated to reach around half of all farming households, helping 65,000 rural families in all districts of the country to address food insecurity and alleviate the impact of Timor-Leste's hungry season.

Lafaek

CARE Australia raised funding of the *Lafaek* magazine, and cited a 'complex contracting arrangement' (page 4 of the Hansard transcript) as an impediment to further support by AusAID. Funding to *Lafaek* was stopped in 2010 as a result of a request from the Government of Timor-Leste. Following a new request by the Timorese Government for *Lafaek* to be supported, AusAID entered into discussions in May 2013 with CARE Australia's Timor-Leste office about reinstating support to *Lafaek*. These discussions are continuing.

Improving education outcomes remains a major focus of AusAID's efforts in Timor-Leste. AusAID is committed to working closely with the Timorese Government and with partners such as CARE Australia to increase access to, and the quality of, education for young Timorese. Separate to *Lafaek*, AusAID is also supporting the development of multilingual learning materials for early grades of primary school. In 2012, 94,500 primary school books in Tetum were delivered to all primary schools in the country, including providing training to school teachers on how to use the material.

Under AusAID's transparency initiative, detailed information on all of AusAID's programs in Timor-Leste is available on the AusAID website (www.ausaid.gov.au).

AusAID thanks the Foreign Affairs sub-committee for the opportunity to provide clarifying material.