

"OPERATION TIMOR-LESTE" - COMMUNITY BUILDING IN EAST TIMOR AS AN ALTERNATIVE TO SCHOOLIES WEEK

BACKGROUND

With growing community disillusionment with the personal, health and financial costs involved in 'Schoolies Week', the Rotary Club of Kerang (Victoria) in 2007, issued a challenge to year 12 students at their local school to join a transforming event of a lifetime - become a member of '*Team Cambodia*' - step out of their comfort zone, and spend 10 days helping in a variety of community building tasks in Cambodia. It turned out to be a truly peak life experience for all involved.

The KALAMUNDA PROPOSAL

Based on the success of the Kerang project, Youth Action Kalamunda and the Rotary Club of Kalamunda with initial partnership support from Community Vision Kalamunda, Kalamunda Chamber of Commerce and the Bank of I.D.E.A.S, has created "*Operation Timor-Leste*". This initiative offers year 12 students at local Kalamunda schools with a 'Schoolies Week' alternative – join a Team that will engage in a variety of community building activities in the small East Timorese village of Triloka. East Timor is the world's newest nation and a very close neighbour. It is a country with strong historic links to Australia. It is also a country with immense developmental challenges, including the lowest GDP per capita income in Asia and 80% unemployment rate.

The overall goal of this initiative is to create a unique opportunity for both East Timorese and Kalamunda young people to think and act as global citizens, develop mutual cross cultural awareness, achieve personal challenges, learn new life skills and positively make a difference to the quality of life for members of a small Timorese village.

Hosted by the local NGO – Fundasaun Lafeek Diak and a women's training college, Centro Treino Integral e Dezenvolviment, and supporting the Alola Foundation, the Team will undertake over a 10 day period (21/11-1/12) a range of possible activities such as -

- refurbishing the community health clinic and doctor's house
- repairing the village hall
- renovating several local houses
- creating a youth sports area
- conducting children and youth game sessions
- teaching English

The "*Operation Timor-Leste*" Team will be joined by a group of unemployed local young people in these activities. Triloka is located 15 kms from East Timor's second largest town, Baucau, where the team will be accommodated at the Canossian Sister's Guest House. Here in the evenings they will have the opportunity to socially and culturally interact with a group of young women trainees from across East Timor, training for self employment.

WHAT IS REQUIRED TO MAKE THIS OPPORTUNITY HAPPEN?

- Community Partners who can assist with fundraising – while students will contribute towards their own travel costs (\$950 of the required \$1350), the Team would like to raise between \$15,000 – \$20,000 for community project material costs and travel assistance.
- 10 Year 12 students who are willing to be personally challenged and experience an opportunity of a lifetime.

FOR MORE INFORMATION

Please contact a member of the organising team –

Steve Hall
Lyn Harris

ph: 0408072522
ph: 92930021

Juliana Plummer
Peter Kenyon

ph: 0427519224
ph: 0417183719