Timor Awakening

A renewal and rehabilitation program for Veterans founded on solidarity, camaraderie and holistic health care.

Executive Summary

Under the inspiration and sponsorship of RSL Qld, Veterans Care Association and Adventure Professionals are offering to deliver a pilot programme of renewal and rehabilitation for 200 Australian veterans and 120 Timorese Veterans, centred around 10 immersion experiences of 11 days duration in Timor-Leste with first deployment commencing in July 2016. The name for this project is Timor Awakening (TA).

Whilst the immersion and concentration component of this program is 11 days in Timor-Leste, the program extends over a period of 12 months of engagement, follow up, pastoral care and guidance.

Veterans Care Association has done extensive scoping and planning to facilitate an inaugural Timor Awakening that deploys on 17 July 2016, with a second deployment to commence on 18 Sep 2016. Expressions of interest for the July and Sep Timor Awakenings are currently available at www.veteranscare.com.au. Applications for the first 2 programs are to close on 1 May. All unsuccessful applicants will be followed up pastorally to explore alternative pathways for them.

The conduct of TA will be seen as a significant contribution to the health and wellbeing of veterans, will provide inspiration to the fledging Timorese veteran community, as well as enhancing the broader relationship between our two nations. The TA pilot programme will significantly enhance the image of RSL Qld as the leader in providing holistic care to our veterans, and will be warmly received by RSL members desirous of seeing Veterans caring for Veterans in accordance with our charter.

Timor Awakening, a QLD initiative, has been designed to meet the criteria of five of the key objectives of the QLD RSL, with a clear focus on Objects 1 and 8 from the QLD RSL constitution.

1. provide for the sick, helpless, wounded, aged, vulnerable, destitute and needy among those who are serving or who have served in the Australian Defence Forces and their dependants;
2. perpetuate the close and kindly ties of friendship created by a mutual service in the Australian Defence Force or in the forces of nations traditionally allied with Australia and the recollections associated with that experience;
3. maintain a proper standard of dignity and honour among all past and present members of the Defence Forces of the nation and to set an example of public spirit and noble hearted endeavour;
4. encourage Members, as citizens, to serve Australia with that spirit of self-sacrifice and loyalty with which they served as members of the Australian Defence Forces; and
5. provide welfare to the sick, helpless, wounded, vulnerable, aged, destitute and needy.
General Information Pack
Prepared by Michael Stone
Correct as at 4 Apr 16

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**Background**

Various RSL Sub-Branch Presidents raised interest to put together an inclusive Veteran rehabilitation program, noting that many Veterans may not have qualified or been fit and able for previous Adventures run by other ESOs. RSL Qld President recommended Timor-Leste as the country for this program and endorsed the project as an activity he wished RSL QLD to support.

We have identified that the major shortcoming in the Kokoda and other Veteran treks was the lack of an intentional, truly integrative/holistic rehabilitation programme that enveloped the Trek experience, and gave lasting positive outcomes for participants, and for Veterans and communities in the host country. Indeed without continued support and engagement some participants can regress after their overseas experience due to unfulfilled expectations and follow up necessary to develop and maintain better lifestyle choices. There is also the issue that many more people seek places on these trips than we have capacity for, and as RSL members they need to get some alternative support and care when they miss out.

Veterans Care Association, together with Adventure Professionals, have created an evolved approach to Veteran rehabilitation in the ‘Timor Awakening’ Program. The support of veterans with disability is a complex and challenging activity requiring professional expertise. The 12 month program for each ‘Timor Awakening’, and highly experienced expert ‘Veteran’ staff, has been carefully designed to do exponential good to lives of Veterans and their families.

**Timor-Leste for Rehabilitation for Veterans and their Families**

Timor-Leste is a country that has an enduring relationship with Australia and especially Australian soldiers. It is a new nation that shares a special birth story with successful historic involvement and support from Australian troops. The country has experienced great trauma and many challenges in their path to independence. A country born from hope, this positive outcome provides the perfect backdrop to help veterans realise that through hope, spirituality and friendship, a positive future is possible.

The Timor Awakening Program is intent to be a truly holistic healing and rehabilitative activity. Each day of the experience will expose people to the breathtaking beauty of the physical scenery and will incorporate active reflection on historical moments in the lives of the Timorese people and the Australian troops that have supported them at various stages. Our professional counselling staff (Tour Chaplain, Psychologist and Veteran guides) will take them on a journey of healing the soul, helping participants to re-appreciate the goodness of their lives and reimagining the possibilities of the future journey drawing on the experiences of their past.

Opportunity will be available for individual counselling and group interactions and activities will be provided at stops each day for the participants too, as they feel comfortable, share their own stories, especially those practices that have been beneficial to them. The holistic health team at Veterans Care will be involved to positively prepare people for the trip, accompany on the journey and structured periodic follow up and support in the months after, such as:

- Provision of information resources about Timor, the Australian experience, such as articles, links to online documentaries, book recommendations.
- Post-Tour assisting each participant to develop a holistic plan and guiding them to the whole range of Veterans support options available, and how each may support each individual specific to their needs.
- In particular helping each participant get connected with a regular Veterans group in their area, starting with their local RSL sub-branch.
Timor Awakening Overview

Vision: To raise the level of Holistic Health and Wellbeing in the wider Veteran Community.

Length of Program: 2 Years (July 2016 – June 2018).

Number of participants: 200 (20 Aust Veterans per trip) + 120 Timorese Veterans / F-FDTL (12 per trip).

Objectives:

- **Welfare.** To promote a renewed Physical, Emotional, Mental and Spiritual Wellbeing for Veterans, Families and their Supporters.
- **Education.** To provide educational services on Holistic Health and Total Wellbeing issues challenging Veterans, Families and their Supporters.
- **Self-Responsibility.** To develop Self- Responsibility Holistic Wellbeing Lifestyle Regimes for individual Veterans, Families and their supporters to access.
- **Social Enterprise.** To assist Veterans, Families and their supporters to establish social enterprises so they may develop their own sense of Self-Worth and Community Connectedness.
- **Pastoral Care.** To provide spiritually based pastoral care for the total wellbeing of the Veterans, Families and their Supporters.
- **Engagement of Veterans with existing support structures.** Facilitate Veterans and families engaging existing support structures such as joining their local RSL Sub-Branch, utilising Govt provided support mechanisms, utilising support provided by ESOs (tailored to their location and individual circumstances).
- **Engagement with Timor-Leste Veteran Community.** As outlined page 11.
- **Engagement of Australian Veterans interested in supporting Timor-Leste in various forms.**
- **Developing Veterans to be mentors / sponsors / battle buddies for other Veterans.**
- **Promote Timor-Leste as a special pilgrimage for all Australians, as per Gallipoli and Kokoda Track.**

What each participant gets

Return flights from Darwin to Dili
Accommodation for 10 nights in Timor-Leste
All transport within Timor-Leste
Individual Tour Kits (including Tour Shirt, Tour Hat, Medical Kit, Maps, Guidebook)
Expert Australian Guides and Tour Leaders (ADF Veterans with language and extensive experience in TL)
Professional pastoral care (Tour Chaplain, Holistic Health Care Educator and Psychologist – all ADF Veterans)
Expert Timorese guides (Timor-Leste Veterans)
All meals and water in Timor-Leste
All cultural and historical activities (daily as per the itinerary)
Comprehensive travel and medical insurance
A tailored holistic health plan for the following twelve months
Pastoral care and follow up throughout the 12 month period

What each participant is responsible for

Flights to Darwin from home location
Vaccinations and Medical Certificate (required for Insurance)
Enter and Exit Visa for Timor-Leste (US$40)
Spending money – for coffee or additional drinks, snacks, gifts etc (in USD)
Personal clothes and packing list
Bring your phone or a spare phone without sim card (we provide sim card and first US$10 phone card)
PASTORAL ENGAGEMENT PLAN

The vision and primary purpose of the Timor Awakening (TA) programme is to raise the holistic health and wellbeing of veterans and their families, by a wide range of modalities involving education, communal lived experience, inspirational mentoring, reflection, peer sharing, development of a Health and Wellbeing (HWB) Plan, guided specialist interventions, and progressive Veterans Care Association review and positive reinforcement.

VCA staff will engage with participants and families formally and informally across a 12 month time frame to check on their individual HWB, and make recommendations for any necessary therapeutic interventions.

The engagements will be pastoral in nature, showing concern for the whole person in their family situation, and once personal HWB plans are developed by D+10, reviews will be made on progress across the body, mind, soul, relationship and life purpose, aspects of the plan.

At the same time VCA staff will administer diagnostic tools to measure HWB progress over the life of the programme for feedback to individuals and future analysis by Gallipoli Medical Research Foundation. This needs to be done as sensitively and un-intrusively as possible to get accurate input and minimise concerns that this is a social experiment.

The following minimum interventions are planned, but of course at any stage participants will be available to contact VCA for advice and referral for special needs.

D-60 All participants and families contacted by visit, phone or Skype - 1st review data collected
D-30 Group gathering at Kookaburra Café, Brisbane – briefing and sharing
D to D+10 Daily group input/review
D+1 In country – Individual review plus 2nd data collection
D+10 In country – Individual review plus 3rd data collection
D+40 Participants and families reunion Kookaburra café / Skype, 4th data collection
D+130 Phone/Skype individual review
D+220 Participants and families contacted by visit or Skype, 5th data collection
D+360 Participants and families reunion/ Skype, 6th data collection

Each 12 month TA experience will this involve a minimum 5 x individual reviews (100 interventions) and 13 group reviews.

10 x TA experiences will involve a minimum 1000 interventions and 130 group reviews. These will be facilitated by VCA staff supported by Providence House psychology team.
KEY HOLISTIC HEALTH AND REHABILITATION ASPECTS OF TIMOR AWAKENING

Pre – deployment

- Screen and select the appropriate participants for this experience, including:
  - Detailed EOIs including nomination form and health overview.
  - Selection board detailing participants for next Activity, first Reserves and first priority for future activity.
  - Follow up phone call reviewing suitability of selected participants.

- Prepare participants and their families before the Adventure, including:
  - Provision of detailed instruction and packing list.
  - Weekly communication to participants with advice and resources. Create a forum for all participants to ask and share questions.
  - Provision of resource materials through website.

- Provide suggestions and support to alternative rehabilitation pathways for unsuccessful applicants.
  - Establish a database of all nominations.
  - Provide advice on support mechanisms in their area (RSL sub-branch, ESOs, health support).
  - Provide advice on whether individual is reserve, or 1st priority on next trek, and advice on how they can prepare for future trek.

- Comprehensive body mind and soul health assessments before the Trek, provided in person or by phone/skype by Veterans Care Psychologist.

During Timor Awakening

- Accompany participants on the Adventure, offering personal counselling and education in holistic (body, mind, soul and relationship) health rehabilitation:
  - Daily group sharing discussions;
  - Daily interaction with other veterans;
  - Daily experiences of AS/TL history, communities and TL Veterans to feel grateful and inspired.
  - One on one session within first two days with Chaplain and Psychologist.
  - One on one session within final two days with Chaplain and Psychologist.
  - Additional counselling and motivation from expert staff as required.

- Modelling these to our Timorese Veteran co-participants.

Post deployment

Upon return to Australia:

- Facilitate reintegration with families, provide ongoing counselling and support for up to 12 months, in the context of:
  - Development of a written personal holistic health plan, and
  - Guide participants into community engagement with RSL sub branches where they might mentor, give peer support and sponsor future participants.
  - Provide avenues to support Timorese NGOs, veterans or charities if they are interested.

- Comprehensive body, mind and soul health assessments after the trek to validate the efficacy of our therapy.
PRINCIPAL STAFF – TIMOR AWAKENING

Michael Stone - Principal Guide (Veterans Care)
Michael deployed to East Timor in 1999 and 2001 as a platoon commander in 2 RAR. He returned as a Training Team commander in 2004 to the Timorese First Infantry Bn, largely comprised of former guerilla fighters. He is a fluent speaker of the local language, Tetun. In the 2006 crisis Michael was the main negotiator between warring factions, responding to critical incidents on a daily basis as well as being the spokesman for International forces. In 2007 President Jose Ramos-Horta seconded Michael to his cabinet, where he worked as a senior advisor for four and a half years. On behalf of the President Michael was General Manager for a numerous major national events, including the Tour de Timor, from 2009 – 12. Featured on Australian Story in 2007, “The Peacemaker”, and 2009, “The President’s Man”.

Chaplain Gary Stone – Tour Chaplain and Mentor (Veterans Care)
Gary Stone is an Australian Army Veteran of over 47 years service. He has served in operations in 7 theatres throughout his career and has been one of the leading experts in the military in cultural preparedness and character development, helping prepare thousands of soldiers deploying to Afghanistan, Iraq, PNG and Timor-Leste. Gary has extensive experience and relationships in Timor-Leste, having been there 29 times and founder of the organisation, Friends and Partners of East Timor (which won the national RSL Peace Prize in 2005). As founder and President of Veterans Care Assn, Gary is focused on providing veterans and their families holistic care, empowering them for a positive life.

Glenn Azar – Tour Leader (Adventure Professionals)
Glenn spent most of his life working in the Australian Military as an Infantryman, Physical Training Instructor, medic and registered Nurse. Glenn served on active operations in East Timor and Bouganville. Glenn’s company, Adventure Professionals, provides his clients with the most memorable adventures available with superior organisation and safety standards. Adventure Professionals have a close relationship with the veteran community, successfully and safely running numerous Kokoda Treks for veterans and their families.

Caitlin Proctor – Psychologist (Veterans Care)
Caitlin Proctor has been assisting Veterans Care in a voluntary and part time capacity for the past 12 months. Caitlin has had 10 years’ service in the Army Reserve. She is qualified and experienced as a psychologist, a Gestalt therapist, an Enneagram coach, a pre marriage educator, a sexual assault counsellor and has been a Lifeline counsellor. But most of all she has a pastoral heart and loving disposition to make people feel comforted.

João (JC) Miguel Carrascalão – Tour Guide (Ex ADF Vet, resides Dili/Darwin)
JC is a former Australian Army SGT Medic, with Timorese Australian heritage. JC provided broad service in Timor-Leste in varied roles: UNTAET Special Investigations, Military Advisor to F-FDTL, Liaison Officer ISF, Medical Specialist and Mentor with United Nations. Recently JC returned from three missions in Mali. JC has travelled throughout Timor-Leste extensively and is currently a resident in Dili. John is highly active in Timorese cultural activities and is one of the foremost experts on Timor-Leste history and culture to have served with the ADF. JC is fluent in Portuguese and Tetun languages.
**Historical Highlights of Timor Awakening**

Few places in the world harness the capacity to experience history with the actual survivors and instigators of key events. Warmly welcomed by the people of East Timor, back drop to one of the most scenic places on earth, a tour of this quality, rich in history and culture is something that is sure to appeal to a vast number of enthusiastic adventure travelers.

- Learn of the amazing survival story of Sparrow Force, a cooperation between Australian Commandos and Timorese ‘Criados’, the only unit in WW2 to be overrun and never captured by the Japanese.

- Hear historic accounts of the 1975 Indonesian invasion of Timor, visiting historical sites in Dili and the districts, including the Balibo Fort, site of the murder of the Balibo 5 journalists.

- Learn of the 24 year Timorese resistance struggle lead by Falintil, meeting former armed members of the resistance, visiting many sites of battles, hide outs and atrocities; and learn how they employed guerrilla tactics to defy unthinkable odds.

- Meet members of the youth movement who rallied publically in Timor and throughout Indonesia. Visit the sacred site of the 1991 Dili Massacre, the ‘Santa Cruz’ cemetery, and learn of the trigger that led to the historic UN endorsed 1999 referendum.

- Visit the key sites of Australian military involvement from the time of INTERFET through to present day, including Dili, Batugade, Motoiin, Balibo, Maliana, Tonabibi, Bobonaro, Aidabeletan, Baucau. Hear of key historical engagements in location from our expert guides.

- Through eyewitness accounts and site visits, understand the 2006 Crisis, how the various battles unfolded and Australia’s involvement. Meet former gang and political leaders who were key protagonists in the crisis.

- Visit the sites of the attempted assassination attempts of 11 Feb 2011, along with a thorough first-hand account.
ITINERARY – Timor Awakening 17-27 July 2016

Day 1 (Sun 17 July 16): Travel - Darwin to Dili. 1:30pm: RV - Giancarlo Café and Bar, Darwin Airport. 3:30pm: Fly from Darwin to Dili. Afternoon/evening at hotel – introductions, briefings, dinner and socialising on rooftop beer garden at Hotel Timor Plaza. **Accom:** Timor Plaza Hotel. **Mode of Tpt:** Hotel shuttle.

Day 2 (Mon 18 July 16): Discover Dili. Esplanade walk, Breakfast at hotel, Santa Cruz Cemetery, Resistance Museum, Palacio Governu, Dare WW2 Memorial & Museum (Morning Tea), Komarka Bidau (old prison – Chega Museum), Lunch at ETDA - Fatuahada, Dili Heliport (WWII Airstrip), JRH House, Sunset at Cristo Rei. **Accom:** Timor Plaza Hotel. **Mode of Tpt:** 2 x Buses.

Day 3 (Tue 19 July 16): Dili to Baucau (126km). Morning walk, breakfast at hotel, visit F-FDTL Navy Hera, Manatuto, Laleia, visit 1st Battalion TL Army (lunch), beach or pool swim. **Accom:** guesthouses in old Baucau town.


Day 6 (Fri 22 July 2016): Loihuno to Hato builico. Morning walk, breakfast at guesthouse, Natabora, Alas, Betano – Visit site of HMAS Voyager, Same - lunch, Same fort / WW2 holes, Resistance sites, Hato builico. **Accom:** Guesthouses Hato builico.

Day 7 (Sat 23 July 2016): Mt Ramelau to Ainaro. Pre-dawn walk up Mt Ramelau, sunrise on summit, BBQ breakfast at base of Ramelau, drive to Ainaro, lunch – Ainaro, Timorese veteran lead resistance tours. **Accom:** Local Ainaro guesthouses and community accom.

Day 8 (Sun 24 July 2016): Ainaro to Balibo. Morning walk, Zumalai, Bobonaro, Maliana markets walk around - lunch, Tonobibi, Nanura River, Australia House, Balibo Fort, local veteran tour, traditional welcome ceremony and dinner at Balibo Fort. **Accom:** Balibo Fort.

Day 9 (Mon 25 July 2016): Balibo to Dili. Morning walk, Motaín (TL/Indonesian Border – visit border post), Batugade Fort, Atabae (morning tea), Maubara Fort (Dutch Fort), Liquica lunch at new resort, (Liquisa church massacre)/beach swim, Tibar (WWII), Dinner function – TPH. **Accom** – Timor Plaza Hotel.

Day 10 (Tue 26 July 2016): Dili (Contingency Day). Free day for self exploration. Potential activities include diving, shopping, fishing, follow up to any places of interest in Dili. Breakfast at Hotel Timor Plaza, Lunch and Dinner at Timor Plaza restaurant (for those interested).

Day 11 (Wed 27 July 2016): Travel Dili to Darwin. Breakfast at Hotel Timor-Plaza. RV reception 8.45am. 9am tpt to airport for check in, NLT 9.30am.
INTRODUCTION TO THE TIMORESE COMMUNITY

"As veterans, you fought tirelessly for your people's rights, lives and freedom you suffered loss, hardship, hunger and injury, and your resolve, courage and strength during this time will be long remembered," ... "The experiences we have as soldiers stay with us forever. A conflict ends and peace is declared, but our past becomes part of us."

Australian Governor General Peter Cosgrove
Addressing Timorese Veterans, Dili, Timor-Leste, 3 March 2016

Veterans. With the assistance and an enduring commitment from RSL Australia, Timor-Leste are in the process of establishing their first national organisation for veterans. Timor-Leste has generations of veterans, from Portuguese conscription, 24 years of Independence struggle and retired F-DTL soldiers. In partnership with the Timorese veterans Committee, Timor Awakening will further the bond between Australian and Timorese Veterans and look to support Timorese veterans and their families, as follows:

- 6 x Veterans to join us on the Tour.
- Invite Veterans in key District locations to tell their story, take us for bush walks showing us hide-outs and places of historical interest from the Independence struggle.
- Each Australian Veteran will be invited to bring a pair of hiking shoes / slouch hat to give to a Veteran.
- A small ceremony will be conducted at the Cemetery of the Martyrs (war cemetery).

F-DTL. The Falintil-Defence Force of Timor-Leste (F-DTL) is the national armed forces of Timor-Leste. Formed 1 Feb 2001, the first 650 members of the F-DTL were selected from 1,736 former FALINTIL applicants (Guerrilla fighters from the 24 year Independence struggle). With many veterans still serving with the F-DTL, and given a void of national veterans body in the past, the F-DTL are tightly linked to the Veteran network throughout the country. Timor Awakening seeks to nurture a relationship between Australian Defence Force Veterans and members of the F-DTL, providing soldiers from both countries to share stories and learn from each other’s history. Initiatives will include:

- Invite 6 x F-DTL members to accompany the Tour.
- Request permission to visit the bases of Hera (F-DTL Navy Base) and Baucau (F-DTL 1st Inf Bn). We could propose to play a 'friendly' game of sport at each base (Soccer or Volleyball).
- Have a meal with soldiers at Baucau (we can contribute money towards an extra nice meal).
- Visit the Cemetery of the Heroes and conduct a small ceremony of remembrance.
- Invite ideas from F-DTL and the Australian Defence Cooperation Program (DCP).

NGO’s & Volunteer Projects. The hard work of Non-Government Organisations, volunteers and friendship city programs have played a critical role in relief, education and empowerment in the history of Timor-Leste. On Timor Awakening we will visit select NGOs and volunteers throughout TL to learn from their insights and projects, as well as to identify potential ways that our Veterans can support in the future (as volunteers back in TL or for projects they can raise money for). Timor Awakening is to have lunch at ETDA, a skills based independent trg institution, which has received support from Australians, especially Australian veterans. We will eat lunch in their training restaurant, inaugurate a plaque of friendship and inviting two trained tour guides from the institute on each Tour.

Timorese Culture. Timor Awakening will include daily immersion with Timorese culture, travelling through 8 of the 13 Districts and experiencing a wide range of planned and unplanned activities in the cities and in the far reaches of the Districts. The warm, hospitable and forgiving nature of the Timorese, a culture rich in values and resilience, will serve to inspire us in our own lives and hopefully stimulate a call to action in the service of others as a means of rehabilitation.

In addition, Timor Awakening has a clear focus on buying local, employing local and providing tourism opportunities in rural communities to enhance the experience, especially to Timorese Veterans, Widows and their Families.