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## Veteran Vocational Education Training Scheme (VVETS) Timor-Leste, 2021-2023

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**Overview.** In recognition and respect to the support and sacrifice that the poorest of Timorese communities provided through many conflicts, veterans of Australia and Timor-Leste are providing pathways out of poverty, pathways of peace, pathways of dignity through education. As part of the Timor Awakening program, Australian and Timorese veterans have been collaborating in the development of an education centre south of Same, Timor-Leste. Whilst many development projects and international support halted due to the Covid19 crisis, the veteran's education centre in Same made remarkable progress, and starts classes in January 2020. The facility is to provide vocational education, training and life skills for rural youth to enable poverty alleviation, develop rural markets and support labour mobility. This brief outlines VVETS plan to build 4 more education centres, established in rural nodes through all four of the historic Falintil regions. The rollout timeline of this scheme, including consultation, construction and commencement of studies is July 2021 to June 2023. The budget for the completion of five vocational education centres by 30 Jun 2023 is AU\$2.4 million.

**Background.** A\$200,000.00 has been raised since March 2019 from the Australian veteran community. Funds committed have resulted in the construction of an educational centre that includes an auditorium hall, dormitory building, fresh water bore, sanitation block, teaching accommodation, outdoor classroom building, kitchen, remembrance garden, access road and covered eating area. Effective partnerships have been established with local stakeholders to plan, build and run the school, with MOUs defining specific responsibilities. Veterans Care Association, Australia is responsible for fundraising for the infrastructure build, school fit out and overall planning, providing detailed reporting in accordance with ACNC standards. The Friendship Association between Veterans and Combatants of Timor-Leste and Australia (AAVCTLA) is responsible for the provision of the land, community engagement, management of construction, acquittal and reporting of construction costs. AHHA Education is responsible for the organisation and provision of education and training. The robust partnerships allow immediate progress for the proposal outlined in this document to be executed without the need for international travel. The VVETS project has been done in cooperation with the Timor-Leste National Veterans Council, the Timor-Leste Government and local authorities.

**Veteran Educational Centres (VECs).** The centres will be located throughout the four regions of the Falintil resistance, outside major cities and accessible to rural communities. The primary focus of education will be English language with skills training and experience for tourism, hospitality, agriculture, small business, semi-skilled labour, sufficient to qualify for seasonal labour and pacific labour schemes. In each centre a living-in teaching and boarding community provide ongoing management and development including cooking, cleaning, repairs, construction, agriculture, compost, recycling and animal husbandry. Each centre is to have educational projects based on climate change awareness and technology, tree planting for carbon capture, developing local historical tourism, support to the disabled and environmental education and protection. Innovation, trade skills and business training projects will be developed specific to each location.

Each Veteran Education Centre will have the following capabilities:

1. **Multi-purpose hall and historical museum.** *Assemblies, forums, public information, events, cinema.*
2. **Boarding Accommodation.** Separate male and female dormitories.
3. **Teaching accommodation.** Supervisor quarters, shared teacher rooms.
4. **Outdoor protected multi-purpose teaching area.** Teaching tables, blackboards, chairs.
5. **Kitchen.** To supply all student meals, cater for functions and events.



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6. **Eating / Study area.** With a section that can be utilised as a training restaurant.
7. **Historical commemoration area.** Flag poles, commemoration garden, historical plaques.
8. **Trade skills workshop.** Fit with work benches, tools, construction supplies.
9. **Agricultural gardens, compost, animal husbandry areas (pig, chicken, goat breeding).**
10. **Visitor accommodation for paying volunteers, visiting groups and tourists.**
11. **Independent water supply and reserve storage.** Bore (if required), steel water tanks.
12. **Transport.** A utility vehicle and minibus/people mover.
13. **Ablutions.** Student ablutions as well as visitor / event toilets.
14. **Library and IT Centre.** A room or building with computer stations, WIFI and physical library.

The community hall, kitchen/restaurant and visitor accommodation provide hospitality training, experience and income for each centre. Animal husbandry and agriculture support nutrition for students and staff at each centre and surplus provides additional income at local markets. The trade skills workshop will actively work on innovative projects that create renewable technology, help establish income for rural families or cooperatives, and generate income for the centre.

**Educational Outcomes.** Managed by partner AHHA education, youths aged from 16 to 29 go through 30 months of holistic education training in employment and life skills. Students study subjects such as English Language, IT, Life-Skills, Character, Leadership, Management and Mental Skills. Programs are based on action-learning. At the end of the course students will be able to; find better employment, live a just and moral life, and create a positive impact on family, community and nation. The primary objective is to provide high quality and holistic education through a structured program of employment and life-skills, to disadvantaged youths who face barriers to education due to poverty, aptitude, prejudice or attitude. Innovation workshops encourage development of practical technologies that can develop, produce and sell/micro loan tools, machines and rural technologies that can create income flow for rural households. **Part-time classes.** Part-time courses are also offered to veterans, school-going youths, university students, company employees, local authorities or to anyone who wants to learn one of the languages offered. Classes are interactive, student-focused, practice intensive, and fun.

#### **Locations and Budget of Veteran Education Centres (VECs).**

VEC 1 - Daisula, Same, Manu-Fahi Municipality.	Budget: AU\$320,000.00 (US\$224,000.00)
VEC 2 – Loihuno, Ossu, Viqueque Municipality.	Budget: AU\$520,000.00 (US\$364,000.00)
VEC 3 – Baguia, Baucau Municipality.	Budget: AU\$520,000.00 (US\$364,000.00)
VEC 4 – Bazartete, Likisa Municipality.	Budget: AU\$520,000.00 (US\$364,000.00)
VEC 5 – Com, Lautem Municipality.	Budget: AU\$520,000.00 (US\$364,000.00)

**Total Budget:** AU\$2,400,000.00 (includes project management and facility fit out to handover)

**International Veteran/Volunteer Outreach Program.** Australian, New Zealand, and other regional veterans will be invited to visit, volunteer and contribute to these education centres. The visitor accommodation will also act as hubs for historical, adventure and environmental tourism activities.

**International School Outreach Program.** VVETS will renew a national outreach to schools in Australia to consider Timor-Leste as a partner country for study, penpal exchanges, immersion trips and fundraising. These are all historical destinations and will benefit greatly from a flow of tourists.

**Conclusion.** The aim of the Veteran centres is to empower rural poor citizens with skills that will benefit rural economic development, international trade cooperation and opportunity for rural Timorese to qualify for the seasonal labour and pacific labour schemes. The development of these centres will create jobs and invigorate learning and cooperation outside of Dili, in particular for historical tourism, agriculture and climate change. Australian Government financial support to this project will be a practical Covid19 recovery stimulus with enduring impact.

