

6 Timor-Leste

Timor-Leste (previously known as East Timor) is a small nation in South-East Asia. It is situated north of Australia, and is Australia's third-closest neighbour after Indonesia and Papua New Guinea.

Its location is centred on latitude 8 5° south, longitude 125 55° east.

Population

The United Nations estimated that the population of Timor-Leste in 2016 was 1 211 000. Australia's population is about 20 times larger. Population density is about 82 people per square kilometre – much denser than Australia (3 per km²), but not as densely populated as neighbouring Indonesia (144 per km²).

On average, people in Timor-Leste live to the age of 68, which is less than both Australia (82) and Indonesia (72). Timor-Leste is a poor nation. Average annual income is US\$1920, which is about half of Indonesia's figure (US\$3440) and much lower than Australia's figure (US\$60 070).

The main religion in Timor-Leste is Catholicism. This was introduced when Timor-Leste was a Portuguese colony from 1520 to 1975. Tetum and Portuguese are the official languages, although Tetum and other local languages are used by most people. English and Indonesian are also spoken.

Environment

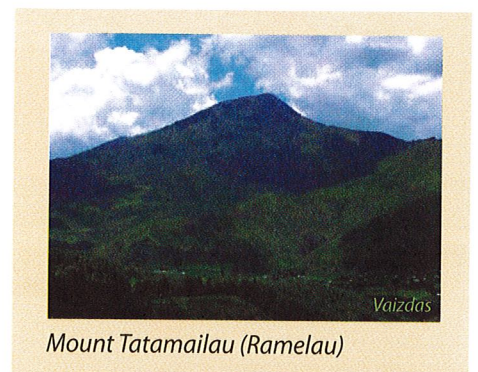
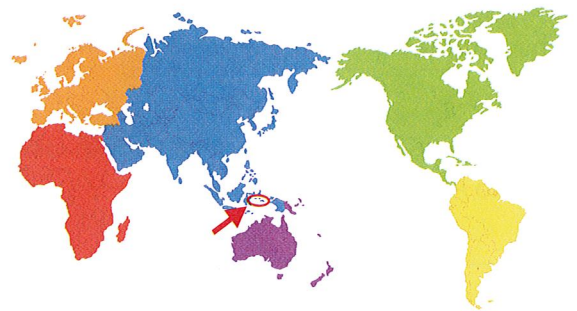
Timor-Leste is situated just south of the equator. It experiences a hot, humid tropical climate, with a wet season from December to April and a dry season from May to November.

Much of Timor-Leste is mountainous. Even though Timor-Leste is small in area, its highest mountain, Tatamailau (2963 metres) is much higher than Australia's highest mountain, Mount Kosciuszko (2228 metres).

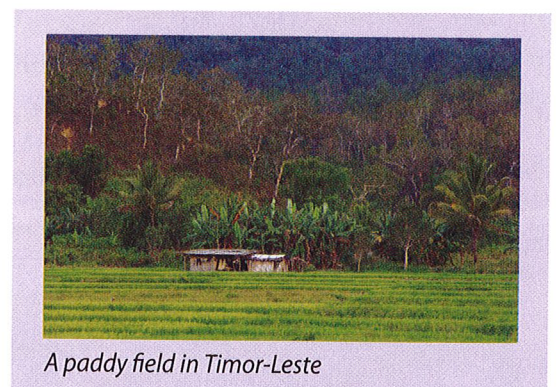
Settlement Patterns

A large proportion of the population is centred along the northern coast, in and around the capital, Dili.

Dili is the largest city in Timor-Leste, with about 225 000 people. Small towns and villages are found in other areas, with no other settlement having a population greater than 30 000. Crops include rice, corn, coffee, mangoes, bananas and vanilla.



Mount Tatamailau (Ramelau)



A paddy field in Timor-Leste