

## Our graduate

### Angela achieves her dream

There's always lots going on for East Timor Hearts Fund but the one thing that's really gladdened our hearts recently is news that patient Angela, 23, has just graduated from university with a Bachelor of Tourism. Angela had been too sick to attend university before her heart procedure in March. Now, she says she is "one of the luckiest people in the world". (More about Angela's achievement overleaf).

We are also extremely thrilled to welcome His Excellency, Xanana Gusmão, as our first patron. Xanana has been a long-time supporter of our work, and we look forward to him becoming even more involved in the future. Our other big news is entering into a partnership with one of Australia's biggest regional health networks, Barwon Health, which will see up to six

patients a year treated at Geelong University Hospital. Our thanks to deputy chief operating officer Peter Watson and the management team at Barwon Health for their support.

And finally, we recently commissioned some expert research into the benefits and effectiveness of our program. The study, which is available on our website, found that for every dollar invested, our program returns \$9 in social and health benefits.

We're proud of these results and hope that they help supporters like you to give with confidence, knowing that every dollar you contribute not only changes individual lives, but provides social benefits many times over.

Thank you for your support in 2015.

– **Ingrid Svendsen,**  
**board chair**

## 'A huge advance'

### Medical roundup with Dr Noel Bayley

Since our last newsletter, we've had two patients treated at MonashHeart. Ana, 21, with very severe and life threatening mitral stenosis, has had a very successful mitral balloon procedure performed by Professor Rick Harper and his team, with an excellent result.

Rofina, 14, with the same problem, was extremely ill when we saw her in Dili in September. For technical reasons a balloon was inappropriate, so she went to open heart surgery at Monash Medical Centre.

As I write, she's still in ICU, making a slow but satisfactory recovery.

Dr Alan Appelbe, a cardiologist from Geelong, in regional Victoria, joined the team in Dili in September. He was a huge help at our clinics, and has also been instrumental in our new partnership with Barwon Health, which will see up to six patients a year receive open heart procedures at Geelong University Hospital.

This is a huge advance and, with the continued support of donors in Australia, will help us to significantly increase the number of patients that we treat in Australia.

Thank you for supporting our work.

– **Dr Noel Bayley,**  
**honorary medical adviser**

## 'One of the luckiest people in the world'



**Patient Angela returned to university after her heart procedure in March. Here she tells how it felt to graduate recently.**

"When I was very sick I had to stop my studies for almost one year. I was always breathless, dizzy, very tired and I had difficulties walking long distances. It was really difficult for me and my family, especially for my loving parents. With their love and caring I just knew that I could never give up hope.

When I was receiving my award I just thought that I am one of the luckiest people in the world! I now have excellent health, and I've achieved my dreams. I can contribute my knowledge to my beloved country Timor-Leste. None of this would have been possible without ETHF, Bairo Pite Clinic, MonashHeart and Monash Health, volunteers and donors. You have helped me achieve my dreams.

May you all continue to do your wonderful work giving that second chance in life to the Timorese people. Like me, they will be able to contribute to the development of Timor-Leste. My family and I will be forever grateful. God bless you all. Obrigada barak!"

## Three minutes with... Dr Alan Appelbe



### **How did you become involved in ETHF?**

As a medical student in 1982 I spent three months in Africa working in hospitals. I was inspired by experience and intended to so volunteer work again. Thirty years were to elapse before I saw a note by Noel Bayley, East Timor Hearts Fund honorary medical adviser, on the Cardiac Society website looking for cardiologists. I have known Noel for many years and it seemed like the perfect time to become involved. Having experienced my first trip to Timor in 2015, and seeing desperately ill young people with valvular heart disease, I regret waiting 30 years to return to volunteer work.

### **What does your role entail?**

I have a particular interest in heart ultrasounds, valvular heart disease and congenital heart disease and I am part of the team that travels to Timor. I help with assessment of the patients. This involves listening to their hearts and performing an ultrasound.

### **What do you do in your spare time?**

I am married with three grown children. We enjoy bike riding and bushwalking. We have had a Trust for Nature covenant on our property for 25 years and so we spend a lot of time propagating, planting and weeding 20 acres of remnant vegetation near Geelong in Victoria, Australia.