

## A big bon voyage

### Timor-Leste here we come!

As this newsletter goes out we're getting ready for a lot of exciting airport farewells.

This week our amazing teenage patient Rofina returns home, after a bumpy, but ultimately triumphant, health journey (more details about our "Wonder Girl" overleaf).

Our CEO Ken Dusting is also off to Timor-Leste this week for a round of meetings with government and non-government contacts that will help support our plans to greatly expand the scope of our work.

And our final impending goodbye is to our volunteer medical team, which is packing up its kit bags and preparing for another round of clinics in Timor-Leste this month. Our medicos and support staff will be catching up with previous patients and identifying new ones for treatment in

Australia. Find out more in Dr Noel's medical roundup, and please keep an eye on our Facebook page and other social media channels (or the news pages of our website if you prefer) for updates from the field.

Our work is complex, labour-intensive, expensive, sometimes heartbreaking but ultimately so very rewarding. When we see the rosy cheeks and huge smile of a patient like Rofina, who is returning to school, hope and happiness, it makes it all worthwhile.

We can't thank enough all of the people whose donations allow us to keep on doing what we do best.

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

## 'Joy and sadness'

### Medical roundup with Dr Noel Bayley

It's been a mixed few months for East Timor Hearts Fund since last I wrote to you. There has been some joy, and some sadness.

Young Rofina was very ill when she arrived last November. She endured three major operations and a prolonged stay in intensive care. But the final result is a healthy and very happy girl, soon to return to East Timor.

Natalina, the first patient treated by our new partner Barwon Health, had a quick and uncomplicated stay for an aortic valve replacement, and returned home in January, transformed with a new lease on life.

Sadly, Manuel, who had a rare heart condition and was extremely ill on arrival late last year, passed away before we were able to help him. This has been a source of distress for us and of course for his family and friends.

One of the keys to preventing further similar tragedies is earlier referral and intervention. To help reduce lead times and improve access to our services we are increasing to three the number of clinics we conduct in Timor-Leste in each year. We will also continue to work in regional areas of Timor-Leste. The medical team's visit this month will include a clinic in Maliana, around 150km south-west of the capital of Dili.

Thank you for your support.

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

## Rofina, Wonder Girl!



Rofina, 14, arrived in Australia late last year, critically ill, weighing only 32 kilos, and longing to return to school, play with her friends and read books again. Rofina was a very challenging case but we and our partners, Monash Health and Monash Heart, never gave up and neither did she. Three major heart surgeries later our "Wonder Girl" is transformed, returning home happy and healthy to a much brighter future.

## We ♥ you, Barwon Health!

A newly signed agreement with Barwon Health will see up to six patients a year, almost a third of our cases, treated at University Hospital Geelong. See "news" on our website for details!



Donate at [easttimorheartsfund.org.au](http://easttimorheartsfund.org.au)

## Three minutes with...

### Inacio Carvalho

#### Patient support volunteer

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

I first became aware of East Timor Hearts Fund in 2010. After learning more about the amazing work that ETHF was doing in Timor-Leste I decided that I wanted to



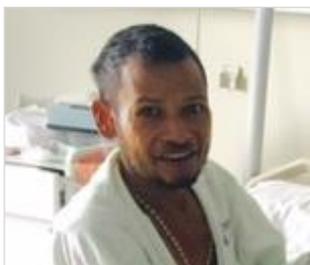
volunteer and contribute my spare time to this incredible charity that is making a big impact on Timorese people's lives. In 2014 I had a big open heart surgery. I can always share my experiences with the patients. I can relate to their stories when they tell me that they feel breathless, tired and have pain in the chest.

#### What does your role entail?

As a patient support volunteer my duties include things like welcoming the patients at the airport, cooking Timorese meals, hospital visits, shopping, sightseeing and interpreting etc. Basically I help make the patients feel at 'home' away from home.

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

I like cooking, spending time with my family, watching soccer and listening to Timorese music.



### Vale Manuel

Our deepest condolences to the family and friends of Manuel Ximenes, who tragically passed away in December, shortly before his scheduled surgery. Our profound sympathies go to Manuel's wife, Josefa, his five children and his extended family. Our commitment to them is that we will honour Manuel by redoubling our efforts to assist patients and to help improve heart health in Timor-Leste. Please read the full tribute to Manuel on our website.