



**Australian Government**

Conference Program

# **TIMOR-LESTE - AUSTRALIA ECONOMIC AND BUSINESS CONFERENCE 2025**

6 - 8, August - Dili



## Summary of Key Proceedings:

### Timor-Leste Australia Economic and Business Conference 2025

	6 August	7 August	8 August	
Morning	International delegate arrivals	<b>TLAUCON25: Day One</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Welcome remarks</li> <li>Keynote and plenary presentations and panels for all conference delegates</li> </ul>	<b>TLAUCON25: Day Two – Option A</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><b>Keynote Panel</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Plenary panel discussion on ASEAN accession</li> </ul> </li> <li><b>Thematic Panels</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Delegates choose which stream to attend: <b>minerals</b> or <b>manufacturing</b></li> </ul> </li> </ul>	<b>TLAUCON25: Day Two – Option B</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><b>Tourism and Agriculture Showcase Site Visits</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Delegates will be invited to attend optional site visits focused on either tourism or agriculture opportunities in Timor-Leste.</li> <li>N.B. A longer timeframe has been allocated for tourism and agriculture focused site visits to allow delegates to see more of Timor-Leste, current business practices, and potential investment opportunities.</li> </ul> </li> </ul>
		<b>Thematic Panels</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Delegates choose which stream to attend: <b>tourism</b> stream or <b>agriculture</b> stream</li> <li>Optional breakout sessions scheduled during lunch</li> </ul>	<b>Manufacturing and Processing Showcase Site Visit</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Delegates will be invited to attend an optional site visit focused on manufacturing and processing opportunities</li> <li>Optional breakout sessions scheduled during lunch</li> </ul>	
Evening	<b>Opening Ceremony and Gala Dinner</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Event by invitation only</li> </ul>	<b>Timor-Leste Australia Business Council Networking Drinks, sponsored by TradeInvest, the Australian Embassy and Austrade</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Separate registration required at <a href="http://www.tl-abc.org/sunsetdrinks">www.tl-abc.org/sunsetdrinks</a></li> </ul>	<b>No Formal Conference Proceedings:</b> Free time allocated to self-guided B2B engagement. See details at <a href="https://www.tlaucon2025.com/b2b-matching">https://www.tlaucon2025.com/b2b-matching</a> for businesses who have expressed interest in further B2B engagement.	

# Thursday 7 August: Timor-Leste – Australia Economic and Business Conference - Plenary Agenda

**Location:** Main Hall, Dili Convention Centre ([Google Maps](#))

Time	Event Description
8:00 – 9:00	Guest arrival and registration Trade fair opens
9:00 – 9:02	MC introduction and opening remarks
9.02 – 9.05	Welcome and opening remarks by <b>His Excellency, Vice-Prime Minister and Minister Coordinator for Economic Affairs and Minister of Tourism and Environment, Mr. Francisco Kalbuadi Lay</b>
9:05	Welcome and opening remarks by <b>Her Excellency, Minister for International Development, Minister for Small Business and Minister for Multicultural Affairs, Dr. Anne Aly</b>
9.15	Keynote speech to dignitaries and conference delegates of the 2025 Timor-Leste Australia Economic and Business Conference by <b>His Excellency, the Prime Minister of the Democratic Republic of Timor Leste, Mr. Kay Rala Xanana Gusmão</b>
9:30	<b>Morning tea</b>
9:50	<b>Video Presentation</b>
9:55-10:50	<p><b>In Conversation: The Economic and Business Landscape of Timor Leste</b></p> <p>This high-level dialogue brings together senior economic and business leaders from Timor-Leste and Australia to unpack the current business and investment climate in Timor-Leste. With the country’s accession to ASEAN, ongoing economic reforms, and sectoral openings in tourism, agriculture, manufacturing, resources and infrastructure, Timor-Leste is experiencing growing investor interest. This session will offer insights into economic conditions, government actions, capital readiness, and the practicalities of operating in a young, strategically located economy.</p> <p><b>Moderator:</b> Dr. Fabia Shah, Counsellor, Governance and Economic, Australian Embassy</p> <p><b>Panel Members:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• H.E. Mr. Francisco Kalbuadi Lay, Vice-Prime Minister and Minister Coordinator for Economic Affairs and Minister of Tourism and Environment</li><li>• Mr. Nicholas Moore AO, Australia’s Special Envoy for Southeast Asia</li><li>• Mr. Helder Lopes, Governor, Central Bank of Timor-Leste</li></ul>



# Thursday 7 August: Timor-Leste – Australia Economic and Business Conference - Plenary Agenda

**Location:** Main Hall, Dili Convention Centre ([Google Maps](#))

Time	Event Description
10:50 – 11:00	<b>MOU Signing Between Chamber of Commerce and Industry Timor-Leste and East Kimberley Chamber of Commerce and Industry</b>
11:00 – 11:50	<p><b>Doing Business in Timor-Leste</b></p> <p>This panel brings together business leaders who are operating in Timor-Leste’s evolving commercial landscape. From agriculture and logistics to services and retail, panellists will share first-hand insights into the opportunities, risks, and realities of doing business in Timor-Leste. This session will go beyond policy to explore what works, what doesn’t, and why investors are finding long-term success in one of Southeast Asia’s youngest emerging markets.</p> <p><b>Moderator:</b> Mr. David Freedman, Resident Representative, World Bank Group</p> <p><b>Panel Members:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Ms. Pamela Jape, Managing Director, Jape Group Australia</li><li>• Ms. Hergui Luina Fernandes Alves, President of the Women’s Business Association of Timor-Leste (AEMTL) and Vice President for Promotion and Cooperation, Chamber of Commerce and Industry Timor-Leste</li><li>• Mr. Shane Walden, Managing Director, ANL Container Line and Australia’s Business Champion to Timor-Leste</li></ul>
11:50 – 12:05	<p><b>Timor-Leste is Open for Business</b></p> <p>This presentation will provide an overview of the country’s investment framework and the role TradeInvest plays in supporting investors. It will outline the step-by-step investment process, highlight key priority sectors and explain the incentives available to investors. Participants will gain a clear understanding of how TradeInvest facilitates investment and promotes Timor-Leste as a destination for sustainable business growth.</p> <p><b>Keynote Presentation:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Mr. Arcanjo da Silva, Executive Director, TradeInvest Timor-Leste I.P.</li></ul>

# Thursday 7 August: Timor-Leste – Australia Economic and Business Conference - Plenary Agenda

**Location:** Main Hall, Dili Convention Centre ([Google Maps](#))

Time	Event Description
12:05 – 13:15	<p><b>Lunch and Trade Fair</b></p> <p><b>Lunchtime Breakout Session</b> <b>12:15 – 13:00: Scaling Up Labour Mobility and Skills for Timor-Leste</b></p> <p><b>Moderator:</b> Ms. Ovania Auxiliadora de Fatima Mendonca, Senior Program Manager, Workforce Development, Australian Embassy</p> <p><b>Panel Members:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Mr. Geraldo Ximenes, Labour Mobility Engagement Manager, Pacific Labour Mobility Support Program</li><li>• Mr. Mark Cantoni, Managing Director, Canex Resources</li><li>• Mr. Joao Correia Pereira, National Director for Overseas Employment, SEFOPE</li><li>• Dr. Fabia Shah, Counsellor, Governance and Economic, Australian Embassy</li></ul>
13:15 – 14:10	<p><b>Women in Business: Leadership, Growth and Insight</b></p> <p>This panel brings together leading women entrepreneurs and executives from Timor-Leste and Australia to discuss their experiences navigating business in diverse sectors. Panellists will share their journeys, explore their unique perspectives as women in business, and offer practical insights into building successful businesses in Timor-Leste and Australia.</p> <p><b>Moderator:</b> Ms. Suzy Wilson-Uilelea, Director, Northern Territory Office, Australian Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade</p> <p><b>Panel Members:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Ms. Ana Paula da Costa Xavier, General Manager, Similie</li><li>• Ms. Carmen Araujo, CEO, Invest People</li><li>• Ms. Kathleen Goncalves, Vice President for Commerce and Industry, Chamber of Commerce and Industry Timor-Leste, Founder and Advisor to the Executive of Associacao Empresarial das Mulheres de Timor-Leste, President of Associação Commercial da Comunidade Chinesa Timor Oan</li></ul>

## Thursday 7 August: Afternoon Breakout Agenda – Tourism Stream

**Location:** Main Hall, Dili Convention Centre

Time	Event Description
14:15 – 15:10	<p><b>Building Demand and Destination Marketing</b></p> <p>This session will explore how Timor-Leste can attract more international visitors through increased destination marketing and forging stronger regional partnerships. It will highlight global good practices and opportunities to work with Australian partners to position Timor-Leste as an emerging adventure and eco-tourism destination. Panellists will discuss how to turn curiosity into bookings, ensure Timorese businesses are ready to meet the needs of international visitors, and build a coordinated approach that grows demand and delivers lasting economic benefits.</p> <p><b>Moderator:</b> Ms. Mufizah Moslim, Director, Seamore Solutions</p> <p><b>Panel Members:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ms. Flora Brytes, Founder &amp; CEO, Timor Getaway and Co-Founder, Prospares Group</li> <li>• Mr. Ishwar Persad, PROSIVU Tourism Planning Adviser, Ministry of Tourism</li> <li>• Mr. Anas Madeira, Founder, Dili Dirt Bike and Co-Founder, Timor Unearthed</li> </ul>
15:10 – 15:40	<b>Afternoon tea</b>
15:40 – 16:30	<p><b>Exploring Opportunities for Timor-Leste's Blue Economy</b></p> <p>The blue economy is one of Timor-Leste's greatest underdeveloped assets, offering major opportunities for sustainable growth in tourism, fisheries, conservation and related services. This session will help domestic and international audiences understand the breadth and value of these opportunities, outline the Government of Timor-Leste's strategy for unlocking them, and hear directly from businesses already operating in this space on what it takes to succeed.</p> <p><b>Moderator:</b> Dr. Laura Bateman, Senior Economic Consultant</p> <p><b>Panel Members:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ms. Kate Barker, Owner, Dreamers Dive Academy</li> <li>• Ms. Ines Araujo-Goncalves, Principal Coordinator, Blue Economy Unit, Land and Maritime Boundary Office</li> <li>• Mr. Alex Sarmiento, Co-Founder, Carbon Offset Timor Foundation</li> <li>• Ms. Bernardete Fonseca, Country Director for Timor-Leste and Acting Regional Director for Asia Pacific, Blue Ventures</li> </ul>
16:30 – 16:40	<b>Recap, summary and end of day's conference proceedings</b>

# Thursday 7 August: Afternoon Breakout Agenda – Agriculture Stream

**Location:** Breakout Room, Dili Convention Centre

Time	Event Description
14:15 – 15:10	<p><b>Unlocking Agricultural Investment in Timor-Leste</b></p> <p>This session explores the current agriculture investment landscape, challenges, and opportunities in Timor-Leste. Panelists will discuss challenges, strategies and practical opportunities including improved agriculture practices, enhanced local processing, and strengthening market access, unlocking greater returns for investors and producers.</p> <p><b>Moderator:</b> Mr. Prakhyat Thapa, Market Development Adviser, Market Development Facility</p> <p><b>Panel Members:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Mr. Daniel Leong, President, Asosiasaun Cafe Timor (ACT) &amp; Director, Orijem Timor</li> <li>• Ms. Marcia Exposto, Country Manager, Tosca</li> <li>• Ms. Elizabeth Brennan, Co-Vice President, East Kimberley Chamber of Commerce and Industry</li> </ul>
15:10 – 15:40	<b>Afternoon tea</b>
15:40 – 16:30	<p><b>Unlocking Opportunities in Niche Agriculture Products</b></p> <p>Timor-Leste's agricultural sector is diversifying beyond traditional staples to include a growing range of high-value niche products such as vanilla, ginger, turmeric, cinnamon, specialty coffee and more. These products not only offer export potential and higher margins for producers, but also open new opportunities for agribusiness investment, value-added processing, and international trade partnerships. This session will showcase Timor-Leste's emerging niche agriculture story, explore the business models and market opportunities that are working, and highlight how Australian businesses and regional partners can support growth through sourcing, investment or technical partnerships.</p> <p><b>Moderator:</b> Professor Brett Inder, Monash Business School</p> <p><b>Panel Members:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Mr. Bobby Lay, Executive Director, Timor Global</li> <li>• Ms. Hergui Luina Fernandes Alves, President of the Women's Business Association of Timor-Leste (AEMTL) and Vice President for Promotion and Cooperation, Chamber of Commerce and Industry Timor-Leste</li> <li>• Mr Nur Rahman, Australia's Business Champion for Brunei &amp; Director, Farmfresh Industries</li> </ul>
16:30 – 16:40	<b>Recap, summary and end of conference day proceedings</b>

## Thursday 7 August: Evening Business Networking Drinks

**Location:** The Sail – Rooftop Bar, Palm Springs Hotel Dili ([Google Maps](#))

Time	Event Description
17:30 – 19:30	<p><b>Timor-Leste Australia Business Council Sunset Networking Drinks, sponsored by TradeInvest Timor-Leste, the Australian Embassy and Austrade</b></p> <p>The Timor-Leste Australia Business Council (TL-ABC) will host an informal networking event for Australian and Timorese business representatives, investors, and stakeholders. The event will provide an opportunity to connect outside the formal conference program and will focus on introducing the TL-ABC, its objectives, and its role in strengthening trade and investment ties between the two countries. Attendees will learn how the Council aims to support business collaboration and private sector development, and how they can engage with its activities.</p> <p><b>Separate registration is required – numbers are limited. Register at <a href="http://www.tl-abc.org/sunsetdrinks">www.tl-abc.org/sunsetdrinks</a></b></p>



# Friday 8 August: Timor-Leste – Australia Economic and Business Conference - Morning Agenda

**Location:** Dili Convention Centre ([Google Maps](#))

Time	Event Description
8:00 – 9:00	<b>Guest arrival, registration and trade fair opens</b>
9:00 – 9:05	<b>MC welcome and summary of previous day</b>
9:05 - 9:55	<p><b>What Timor-Leste’s Accession to ASEAN and the WTO Means for Business</b></p> <p>Timor-Leste’s recent membership of the WTO and its imminent accession to ASEAN marks a new chapter for the country’s integration into regional and global markets. These milestones are set to reshape its trade, investment, and regulatory landscape, opening doors for deeper engagement between Timorese and Australian businesses to access the thriving markets of ASEAN economies.</p> <p><b>Moderator:</b> Ms. Maria Martins da Silva, Senior National Economic Adviser, Coordinating Ministry of Economic Affairs</p> <p><b>Panel Members:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• H.E. Ms. Milena Maria da Costa Rangel, Vice-Minister for ASEAN Affairs</li><li>• H.E. Mr. Augusto Junior Trindade, Vice-Minister of Commerce and Industry</li><li>• Mr. Sidonio Freitas, Vice President for ASEAN &amp; WTO Affairs, Chamber of Commerce &amp; Industry Timor-Leste</li><li>• Mr. Jorge de Carvalho Martins, General Coordinator, Coordinating Ministry for Economic Affairs</li></ul>

# Friday 8 August: Morning Breakout Agenda – Minerals and Resources Stream

**Location:** Breakout Room, Dili Convention Centre

Time	Event Description
10:00 – 10:50	<p><b>Minerals and Resources in Timor-Leste: Responsibly Unlocking the Potential</b></p> <p>This session will provide an overview of Timor-Leste’s minerals and resources sector, exploring both the current landscape and the pathways to responsible and sustainable development. As the country works to diversify its economy and unlock the value of its mineral resources, panellists will discuss recent progress in exploration, emerging trends and opportunities, and the strategic priorities shaping the sector’s growth. The conversation will also draw on global experiences to highlight how Timor-Leste can establish robust governance systems and align with international standards and good practice.</p> <p><b>Moderator:</b> Ms. Reinalda Pires, Timor-Leste Engagement Coordinator and Government Affairs Lead, Santos</p> <p><b>Panel Members:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Mr. Chris Daws, CEO, Estrella Resources</li> <li>• Mr. Grant Wilson, Executive Chairman, Tivan Limited</li> <li>• Mr. Mika McLennon, Director, MDM Mining &amp; Civil</li> <li>• Mr. Rafael Danilson Magno de Araujo, President of National Minerals Authority (ANM, I.P.)</li> </ul>
10:50 – 11:20	<b>Morning Tea and Trade Fair</b>
11:20 – 12:20	<p><b>Resources-Linked Economy: Opportunities for Local Business and Services</b></p> <p>This session will examine the economic opportunities that can emerge alongside minerals development in Timor-Leste, with a focus on building a competitive, inclusive local supply chain. Panellists will discuss the services and industries that typically grow around mining operations, such as water and energy solutions, logistics, construction, catering, maintenance, and ICT, and how local businesses can prepare to meet these needs. The conversation will highlight opportunities for partnerships between international companies and Timorese SMEs, and explore what kind of workforce development, business support, and policy frameworks are needed to enable local participation.</p> <p><b>Moderator:</b> Mr. David Williams, Director - Asia, Palladium Group</p> <p><b>Panel Members:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ms. Cristina Da Silva-Cruz, Managing Director, Konnekto</li> <li>• Ms. Xaninha Miranda, Operations Manager, Caltech Group</li> <li>• Mr. Jose Goncalves, President and CEO, Murak Rai Timor, E.P.</li> <li>• Mr. Efandy Gomes Pinto, CEO, Uni Graca GLOESS</li> </ul>

# Friday 8 August: Morning Breakout Agenda – Manufacturing Stream

**Location:** Main Hall, Dili Convention Centre

Time	Event Description
10:00 – 10:50	<p><b>Manufacturing in Timor-Leste: Foundations, Enablers, and Lessons</b></p> <p>This session will set the scene for manufacturing investment in Timor-Leste by spotlighting strategic enablers such as the new Tibar Bay Port, preferential trade access under LDC status, a young, cost-competitive workforce, and the country’s imminent ASEAN membership. It will explore case studies from companies already operating on the ground, sharing candid insights on navigating logistics, regulation, and workforce development. The session combines high-level opportunities with practical business stories, offering investors a balanced view of what it takes, and what can be gained by manufacturing in Timor-Leste today.</p> <p><b>Moderator:</b> Ms. Maria Rita Pires, Operations Officer, IFC and World Bank Group</p> <p><b>Panel Members:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Mr. Vinay Mathur, Partner, Think Forward Consulting</li> <li>• Mr. Ammar Ali Mirza, CEO, Leste Food &amp; Beverage Co.</li> <li>• Ms. Claricia Lay, Owner, Mahanaim Garments</li> </ul>
10:50 – 11:20	<b>Morning tea &amp; trade fair</b>
11:20 – 12:20	<p><b>Pathways for Growth – Strategic Opportunities and Sectoral Prospects</b></p> <p>This session will explore opportunities to grow the manufacturing sector in Timor-Leste, using concrete examples of sectors with potential. Panellists will discuss the critical building blocks needed, such as consistent inputs, logistics, utility access, skills development, and financing, as well as policy and infrastructure priorities that can support growth. The session will also highlight specific investment opportunities in areas such as food and fish processing, garment production, and recycling and circular economy industries. Drawing on local and regional experience, speakers will reflect on how Timor-Leste can position itself to attract early-stage manufacturers and develop niche industrial capabilities.</p> <p><b>Moderator:</b> Professor Brett Inder, Monash Business School</p> <p><b>Panel Members:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ms. Claudia Ximenes, Owner, Vera Juice and Founder, Timor-Leste Innovation Hub</li> <li>• Ms. Sarah Green, Principal Client Relations, Caltech Group</li> <li>• Mr. Rafael Ribeiro, Director - Chairman of Timor Port SA</li> <li>• Dr. Hernani Agostinho Soares, Vice President for Strategic Planning &amp; Economic Development, Chamber of Commerce and Industry Timor-Leste</li> </ul>

# Friday 8 August: Timor-Leste – Australia Economic and Business Conference – Lunch Agenda

**Location:** Main Hall, Dili Convention Centre ([Google Maps](#))

Time	Event Description
12:20 – 12:25	Closing Remarks and Thank You to Delegates by <b>H.E. Caitlin Wilson, Australia’s Ambassador to Timor-Leste</b>
12:25 – 12:30	Closing Remarks by <b>H.E. Mr. Francisco Kalbuadi Lay, Vice-Prime Minister and Minister Coordinator for Economic Affairs and Minister of Tourism and Environment</b>
12:30 – 13:30	<p><b>Lunch &amp; Trade Fair</b></p> <p><b>Lunchtime Breakout Session</b> <b>12:50 – 13:30: Requirements to Export Agricultural Products to Australia</b></p> <p>This session will provide practical guidance on the regulatory requirements for exporting products from Timor-Leste to Australia. It will highlight key export certification processes in Timor-Leste and outline Australia’s import regulations for high-value commodities. Participants will hear from government and industry representatives, with a focus on improving biosecurity consistency, building export capacity, and facilitating direct engagement between relevant authorities and the private sector.</p> <p><b>Moderator:</b> Ms. Wendy Coombes, Assistant Director International Capacity Development, Australian Department of Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry</p> <p><b>Panel Members:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Dr. Manuel da Costa, National Director, Ministry of Agriculture, Livestock, Fisheries, and Forestry</li><li>• Mr. Daniel Leong, President, Asosiasaun Cafe Timor (ACT)</li></ul> <p><b>N.B.</b> Guests attending the Manufacturing and Minerals Showcase Tour will need to be ready for departure at 1pm from the Dili Convention Centre. Please see meeting point on the map in your conference booklet or speak to a support staff member for assistance.</p>