



A project to promote  
the preservation of archival materials  
about East Timor, 1974-1999,  
for future generations of  
Australians and East Timorese

Clearing House for **Archival Records on Timor**

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## **CHART – Clearing House for Archival Records on Timor**

The CHART Project is an Australian initiative to promote the preservation of a wide range of materials about East Timor held in Australia – with a particular emphasis on the period 1974-1999.

### **Preamble**

Many Australian individuals and organisations as well as East Timorese living here have, over the past twenty five years, created and accumulated a wealth of materials about the dramatic, often tragic events in East Timor since the beginning of the decolonisation process in 1974.

This rich collection of documents, public and private letters, pamphlets, news clippings, organisational minutes, photographs, posters, sound and video recordings contains the broad history of Australian involvement with East Timor, whether for or against Timorese aspirations.

For the East Timorese, these records include irreplaceable parts of their history, much of which has been lost due to loss of life and property destruction. The preservation of this material will fill critical gaps in their historical record and contribute to nation building in East Timor.

Most of this dispersed mass of material remains in private hands and there is a danger that, over time, much of this material may be neglected or lost. The Project aims to ensure that this does not happen.

### **Mission**

CHART aims to promote the preservation of archival materials about East Timor for future generations of Australians and East Timorese.

### **Activities**

The main work of the project will be to:

- ◆ Identify material holders in Australia and encourage and assist them to preserve and document the content of their collections.
- ◆ Identify the location and scope of materials already held in Australian repositories.
- ◆ Develop and maintain a central database of the location and content of the dispersed collection of Timor materials in Australia and make this information available on the Internet through a CHART Web site.
- ◆ Inform material holders of possible long-term options for housing their collections.
- ◆ Invite those retaining their collections indefinitely to consider making them available for public listing and research.
- ◆ Monitor archival developments in East Timor and identify materials in Australia which may be of particular interest to archive projects in East Timor.
- ◆ Identify Australian repositories interested in housing collections of East Timor materials.

- ◆ Identify ‘key’ and rare documents of the Timor story and promote their preservation through photographic or electronic imaging projects.
- ◆ Provide a central point for discussion on different options to ensure the long-term survival of the records and access to them.

### **CHART – A guide, not a collector**

It is not the desire or intention of CHART to collect or control people’s Timor material.

In encouraging holders to preserve and document their collections, CHART will offer guidance on preservation techniques and provide printed guidelines on how to sort and list the contents of their collection.

CHART will also offer guidance to people wanting suggestions on what to do with their materials – on the assumption that many are looking for proposals which will offer both security and access over the longer term. The final decision on what happens to the materials rests entirely with the owner.

### **Long-term housing options include:**

#### Holding for future deposit in East Timor

The first steps have been taken in the creation of a professional, nationally-constituted National Archive in Timor itself.

In time, it is expected that this Archive or other bodies there will seek to collect or copy a range of pre-1999 materials from Australia and elsewhere internationally. Work here and now to preserve and list materials in Australian collections will help future East Timorese archivists determine their needs and explore collection possibilities.

To enhance the long-term security of original and rare materials being sent to Timor, we recommend that an archival-quality copy be retained in Australia.

#### Deposit in an Australian repository

The CHART Project does not propose the creation of a new entity to collect, preserve and house Timor collections in Australia. Existing established institutions already have the infrastructure to preserve the materials and provide public access under procedures which safeguard the integrity of the collections.

Some private collections of material which include significant Timor content - from parliamentarians, activists and non-government organisations - have already been lodged in Australian libraries. A more diverse range of existing repositories willing to house materials will need to be identified.

#### Pooling ‘miscellaneous collections’

Many of us have miscellaneous collections of newsclips, newsletters, periodicals or photocopied articles from them, books, pamphlets as well as not-widely-distributed material such as photocopies of letters from Timor or Indonesia. By themselves they don’t amount to much and we no longer wish to keep them.

CHART will suggest to such material holders the pooling of these 'bits and pieces' with other people's background material to develop useful research collections. It is expected such collections would be of interest to future East Timor libraries and archives as well as Australian repositories.

CHART will offer to coordinate a centralised gathering and sorting program for such material in each State.

#### Other options

Commercial photographic imaging projects may be an option for significant individual collections of material to ensure their long-term preservation and access. Jill Jolliffe's collection, "The East Timor question, 1975-1996", copied by MMF Publications (Netherlands) and available in some university libraries, is a striking example of this option.

CHART is open to any other suggestions on strategies to preserve the record.

### **Organisation**

#### Coordinating Committee:

John Waddingham (Perth, Timor Information Service 1975-84) – initial national coordination. Once state coordinators have been recruited, these will be asked to join the Committee.

#### Advisors:

Dan Midalia (Perth, Archivist)

Ana Noronha (East Timor, Director of East Timor Human Rights Centre)

Pat Walsh (Melbourne, ACFOA).

Others to be announced

### **Funding**

It is anticipated that the distributed work of the project will be done on a voluntary basis, but there will be a need for modest funds to meet ongoing materials and communications costs at both the local level and for national coordination work.

A Victorian educational business, Video Education Australasia, has provided \$10,000 to assist East Timor archival initiatives. Some CHART national coordination work costs, including essential travel, communications, web site and database establishment, will be met from this grant.

Specific funding grants may be sought for such things as professional sorting and indexing of major individual collections, photographic or electronic imaging projects for key documents.

John Waddingham  
13 November 2000