

**Media Release:**

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## **Precious Timor-Leste Artefacts Arrive in Darwin**

His Honour Mr Tom Pauling AO QC, Administrator of the Northern Territory joined Mr Diamantino (Dino) Ribeiro, President of Darwin's Portuguese and Timorese Social Club to inspect a shipment of precious Timor-Leste artefacts being unpacked by the Museum and Art Gallery of the Northern Territory (MAGNT).

MAGNT Curator of Southeast Asian Art and Material Culture, Ms Joanna Barrkman, said the container held 47 precious cultural objects on loan from the National Collection of Timor-Leste.

"Over the next few months we will continue to prepare these beautiful cultural objects for the first ever international display of the National Collection of Timor-Leste since the nation gained independence in 2002," Ms Barrkman said.

"The MAGNT is very honoured to be the first museum in the world to host this collection and the opportunity to present the cultural heritage of Timor-Leste, in conjunction with the National Directorate of Culture, Timor-Leste is providing a positive exchange of knowledge and skills between both institutions."

MAGNT conducted a salvage operation in association with United Nations Transitional Administration in East Timor (UNTAET), saving 500 objects from the Dili museum collection following the 1999 riots when much of the Timor-Leste's cultural heritage was destroyed and it is some of these objects that the Timor-Leste government have now sent to Darwin for inclusion in the joint exhibition.

"MAGNT already has considerable holdings of Timorese objects in its collection, many of which will also be displayed for the first time, in conjunction with the National Collection of Timor-Leste," Ms Barrkman said.

President of the Darwin Portuguese-Timorese Club Mr Diamantino Ribeiro said the Portuguese and Timorese community are very excited about the exhibition.

"With Darwin in such close proximity to Timor-Leste, events such as this are welcomed and our Timorese community in Darwin is pleased to assist developing the international profile of Timor-Leste," Mr Ribeiro said.

"It is a fantastic opportunity for everyone to be engaged in the exhibition and for the public to learn and understand more about the culture of Timor-Leste."

His Honour Mr Tom Pauling AO QC, Administrator of the Northern Territory as patron of the forthcoming exhibition said he valued the opportunity to see these items for the first time.

"I look forward to seeing these important cultural objects as they arrive, and think the Territory is very privileged to host the first ever international exhibition of Timor-Leste artefacts," Mr Pauling said.

"This is a truly collaborative exhibition, which has grown out of a strong working relationship between MAGNT and their colleagues in Timor-Leste's Directorate of Culture, and will serve to bring attention to the need for long-term care and preservation of Timor-Leste's vulnerable cultural heritage."

The *Husie Bei Ala Timor Sira Nia Liman – From the Hands of Our Ancestors* exhibition will open at MAGNT November 2008.

Ends

**Media Note – for more information contact Joanna Barrkman on 8999 8249.**

**Photo opportunity with His Honour Mr Tom Pauling AO QC, Administrator of the Northern Territory and Mr Diamantino (Dino) Ribeiro, President of Darwin's Portuguese and Timorese Social Club inspecting some of the artefacts at the Museum and Art Gallery of the Northern Territory (MAGNT) is available at 10.00am, Wednesday 16 July 2008**

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