

**Media Release:**

**20.11.08**

## ***Husi Bei Ala Timor Sira Nia Liman – From the Hands of our Ancestors*** **exhibition opens at MAGNT**

The first international exhibition of traditional and contemporary art and crafts of Timor-Leste, *Husi Bei Ala Timor Sira Nia Liman – From the Hands of our Ancestors*, at the Museum and Art Gallery of the Northern Territory (MAGNT) will open to the public this Saturday, 22 November 2008.

MAGNT Curator of Southeast Asian Art and Material Culture, Joanna Barrkman and Timor-Leste Secretary of State for Culture, Mr Virgilio Simith, will present a floor talk in the gallery to visitors at 11am highlighting the importance of the exhibition to Timor-Leste and Australia.

“Mr Simith was a former museum curator in Timor-Leste during the Indonesia era and was instrumental in the development of National Collection of Timor-Leste, so will be able to provide valuable insight into the material on display,” Ms Barrkman said.

“*Husi Bei Ala Timor Sira Nia Liman – From the Hands of our Ancestors* exhibition has been a collaborative partnership between the MAGNT and the Timor-Leste National Directorate of Culture.

“The exhibition has been nearly a year in the making and features pieces from the National Collection of Timor-Leste, which includes ancestral, customary Timorese artefacts, as well as pieces from MAGNT’s collection and loans sourced from the Australian Museum and private collections.

“The collaborative exhibition features more than 130 pieces including textiles, ceramics, wooden carvings, ceremonial house doors and body adornment of Timor-Leste and will give insights into the distinctive living cultures of this young nation.”

The exhibition will be officially opened by the official patron His Honour Mr Tom Pauling AO QC, Administrator of the Northern Territory, Ms Alison Anderson, Minister for Natural Resources, Environment and Heritage, Northern Territory Government and Dr João Cancia Freitas, Minister Education and Culture, Timor-Leste Democratic Republic for Culture on Friday, 21 November 2008 with entertainment provided by Timorese musician Ego Lemos and dancers from Darwin’s local Timor-Leste community.

A 180-page full colour tri-lingual catalogue, written in English, Tetum and Portuguese sponsored by ConocoPhillips Australia and ConocoPhillips Timor-Leste, will make the National Collection of Timor-Leste and the MAGNT collections accessible to the people of Timor-Leste and international audiences and is available at the exhibition opening.

Ends

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

### **Media Photo Opportunities:**

**Media interviews with MAGNT Curator Joanna Barrkman, Timor-Leste Minister of Education Hon Dr Joao Cancio Freitas and Mr Iliwatu Danabere, Director of Arte Moris (the first ever fine-art school and associated community of artists in the Democratic Republic of Timor-Leste) are available prior to the official opening on Friday 21 November at 11am. Overlay of the exhibition can also be filmed. Meet at MAGNT Foyer.**

Media can attend the official opening event on Friday 21 November from 5.30pm – presentation continues to 7.15pm with entertainment including Timor-Leste musician Ego Lemos, Timor-Leste drummers and dancers, local Timor-Leste Choir and Larrakia welcome. Gallery will remain open till 9pm.

**Images:**

1. *Tais fetu*, woman's tubeskirt, pano das mulheres, MAGNT Collection
2. *Xanana*, Cesario Augusto Soares Lourdes, Acrylic on canvas, Loan from Arte Moris Art School
3. *Ai bahat ema halai kuda*, horse and rider carving, National Collection of Timor-Leste

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