

Gordon D. McIntosh  
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Dear Xanana

I am taking the opportunity of your visit to Melbourne to discuss a letter you wrote to me in the 1980s when I was a Senator in the Australian Parliament. For your information, I have attached a copy of the letter.

I want to say, immediately, that I apologise most sincerely for never replying to the letter. I would like to add, however, the reason is that I never received the original letter in the 1980s.

I have only recently seen the attached copy of the letter. It was found this year in the archives of Sydney's East Timor Relief Association and sent to me with the permission of one of the collection owners, now senior TL government minister Agio Pereira.

I have had assistance of East Timorese friends in Perth to translate the letter into English. I have read it many times and was very moved by the contents of the letter and felt honoured by the confidence you showed in me by addressing such detail on the background and aspirations of the East Timorese people and of course, your vision for the future of East Timor.

My great regret is that I did not receive the letter at the time you wrote it and did not have the opportunity to reply. In fact, I feel quite angry at times that the original letter never came to me. I do however take comfort in the fact that, along with others inside the Australian Parliament, and the very many organisations and friends of East Timor and the Timorese Community continued to do what you asked of me in the letter: to continue to work for justice for the East Timorese people.

In concluding this letter, I would be particularly grateful to meet you some time in the near future to discuss the letter and the occupation years more generally. Perhaps next time you come to Perth? Perhaps if I can manage to visit Timor-Leste again? Either way, I hope it is possible to meet you again in person soon.

With my very best wishes,

Gordon McIntosh

