

Towards self-sufficiency in Timor-Leste

After living and working in Timor-Leste for more than seven years, founder and director of the Timor Learning Centre, Libby Bleakley, of the Rotary Club of Blackheath, NSW, understands that to make a project sustainable and successful in the developing world, the local community needs to be consulted and ultimately take responsibility and ownership of the venture. Hence, 10 Timorese staff are now employed to facilitate the running of the centre.

A registered Rotary Australia World Community Service (RAWCS) project, the Timor Learning Centre aims to establish strong social foundations by

bringing the community together.

“By building respectful relationships, crime is reduced, especially violence within families and communities,” Libby says. “The centre supports and empowers its members to take ownership in progressing the development of their country.”

Operated in a similar vein to Australia’s Police Community Youth Centres (PCYCs), the centre consists of a women’s sewing centre, English school, and Plus Fitness gym. Workshops are run on health

and nutrition, crime prevention (specialising in child protection, sexual assault and domestic violence issues), arts and craft, and other educational activities.

As well as donations through RAWCS, Libby has established a number of initiatives to help fund the centre’s \$40,000 annual running costs and workers’ wages.



PICTURED: Timor Learning Centre founder Libby Bleakley teaching English to some of the centre’s students.

ABOVE: Libby with her youngest Timorese goddaughter.

Roasters With Altitude

Roasters With Altitude is a small, boutique coffee roaster sourcing Arabica coffee beans ethically farmed from organic and sustainably grown crops in developing countries. The focus of Roasters With Altitude is to support fair-trade – they specialise in coffee from Timor-Leste, but also source beans from Australia, Ethiopia, Columbia, Brazil, Mexico and Sumatra. These beans are then roasted in the Blue Mountains, NSW.

Through Roasters With Altitude, Libby has now expanded her connections to include the farming community, dealing directly with farmers when choosing beans.

“By supporting the farmers in newly developing economies, Roasters With Altitude hopes to play a significant part in their development towards self-sufficiency,” Libby says.

Established to help farmers find markets for their produce, all profits go directly towards running the Timor Learning Centre.

Freshly roasted to order, coffee can be ordered from www.roasterswithaltitude.com.au as well as products sewn by the women in the Timor Learning Centre.



On a Mission

In the remote community of Peppermint, NT, Libby Bleakley embarked on her first mission for the Australian Federal Police.

After serving in the NSW Police Force for nearly two decades, and having endured great personal suffering, she was ready for a new challenge.

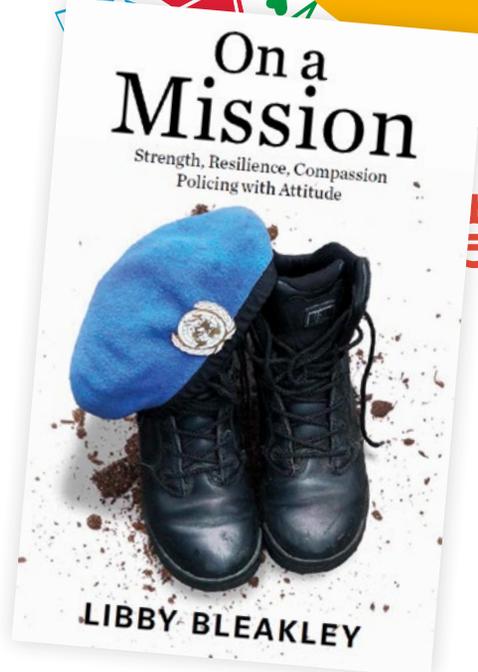
Far from any town and several hours drive from the nearest facilities, Libby developed lifelong connections with many of the locals in this beautiful place.

Libby's passion for community and policing took her into the international arena when she was deployed to Sudan as part of the UN Police.

The following year, she was back on the other side of the world in Timor-Leste, again with the UN Police, as the country was undergoing extraordinary change. In the heart of the jungle, Libby found amazing people and a unique opportunity to help the community build their future.

On a Mission is a heart-warming memoir, told with Libby's infectious sense of humour and love for humanity on every page, that will take you on her adventures around the world and into the communities where she developed life-changing bonds.

All profits from the sale of *On a Mission* go to the Timor Learning Centre. Copies can be ordered from www.roasterswithaltitude.com.au.



BELOW: Women from the Timor Learning Centre proudly model some of the aprons they have sewn, which are sold to raise funds for the centre.



Footpath library in Port Macquarie to provide books for the homeless

By Laura Telford,
Port Macquarie News

A collaboration between the Rotary Club of Port Macquarie Sunrise, NSW, and Orange Sky Laundry will see a footpath library set up in Port Macquarie.

The footpath library is a concept used worldwide to provide free reading material to the community, and the Rotary Club of Port Macquarie Sunrise wants to target those rough sleeping or living on the streets.

Club member Ian Simpson said the program has just started and will continue on a three-month trial.

"We are exploring whether there is demand for a footpath library in the Port Macquarie region by connecting with existing homeless services, including Orange Sky Laundry," Ian said.

"At this stage, we have no idea how many people will use the service or even what kinds of reading materials people are looking for, but that is why we have this trial to see if it will be beneficial.

"As well as connecting with Orange Sky Laundry, we are hoping to join with other organisations that help the homeless, like the Soup Kitchen and Vinnies Night Patrol, and see if books there would also be a good thing."

Following the trial, Ian said the project will be run on a demand-driven basis.

"We will be waiting to get feedback



PICTURED: Orange Sky Laundry volunteers Malcolm and Tracy with vehicle manager Carly Bullard, centre, on the first day of the footpath library trial in Port Macquarie.

on if the project is viable long-term and if it is, we hope it will continue long into the future.

"There is no obligation of those who take a book to bring it back, but we hope that by going through services that are already doing great work in the community we can help foster that sense of community helping the community."

Vehicle manager for Orange Sky Laundry Mid North Coast Carly Bullard said they are excited about what this collaboration could mean.

"Orange Sky Laundry is more than

happy to collaborate with the Rotary Club of Port Macquarie Sunrise, and when we put the donated books out on Saturday we have a great deal of interest," Carly said.

"Days are long and if any of our friends doing it tough don't have something planned for the day, a book can keep them occupied and even into an escape back to childhood memories with some of the comics.

"The project is encouraging, and I think we are all keen to see how it goes at other shifts and into the future."