Literary East Timor: Readings by local writers

Sunday 13 December 2pm – 4 pm
St Kilda Library

Local writers Sara Niner and Sian Prior will be joined by Timorese poet Beti Gomes to read from their recent works focusing on East Timor in a Sunday afternoon reading at St Kilda Library. The event is hosted by council’s Friends of Suai, friendship group.

“This literary event will be a very strong blend of local writers who have written in-depth accounts of events in East Timor, it is not to be missed,” said Mayor Cr Frank O’Connor.

Journalist and writer Sian Prior will read an excerpt from her article Remembering Balibo, published recently in Australian literary magazine Meanjin. In the essay Sian, explores the cultural significance of the deaths of five Australian-based newsmen in the small East Timorese border town of Balibo in 1975 and why we should continue to remember and re-tell this particularly shameful episode in Australian political history.

In it she writes, “Members of the Whitlam, Fraser, Hawke and Keating ministries had all been either active or complicit in covering up the murders of the five newsmen... And we the Australian voters had let them get away with it.”

Writer and researcher Sara Niner spent 10 years working on the political biography of Xanana Gusmão, leader of the East Timorese struggle for self-determination and first President of the new nation of Timor-Leste. The book is an intimate portrayal of how Xanana faced the unenviable task of leading a traumatised people out of the terrifying violence and destruction that ended the Indonesian occupation.

Sara says, “The biography will explain the complexity of politics in Timor-Leste today and make the sometimes volatile situation there understandable to Australians.”

The book Xanana: Leader of the Struggle for Independent Timor-Leste will be launched by Terry Bracks on Human Rights Day, Thursday 10 December 2009, 6-8pm, at the Bella Union, Trades Hall crn Lygon and Victoria Sts Carlton.

For more info go to www.friendsofsuai.org.au or contact Coordinator Pat Jessen on 9209 6777.

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Media enquiries: Katie Elles, Media Officer, 03 9209 6163 / 0435 657 336 or Mayor Cr Frank O’Connor on 03 9209 6431 / 0432 289 012 www.portphillip.vic.gov.au