17 yachts will set sail this morning in the 2012 Sail Timor-Leste/Darwin-Dili Yacht Rally.

Minister for Education and Training Chris Burns will join sailing enthusiasts and representatives from the Time-Leste Government as they make their way out of Darwin Harbour.

Minister Burns said the sailing tradition between the two countries began in 1973, when boats left Darwin bound for what was then called Portuguese Timor.

“"The rally re-commenced at the request of the Timor-Leste Government as an annual event in 2010 following a break of 35 years and the Northern Territory Government is also very proud to support the event.

“The Rally is one more example of the strong and growing links that exist between the Northern Territory and Timor-Leste, particularly through the Arafura Games, the Timor Sea Cup and the growing number of Territory competitors in the Tour de Timor.

"My thanks and congratulations go to the Timor-Leste Government for hosting the Rally and the Cruising Yacht Association of the Northern Territory for the provision of technical assistance to coordinate the Rally.

Mr Gil Alves, Minister for Tourism, Commerce and Industry will represent the Timor-Leste Government at the official start of the Darwin Dili Yacht Rally.

Competitors are expected to sail into Dili Harbour within 3-5 days, with formal celebrations scheduled for their arrival.

“I look forward to for the official trophy presentation in Dili on 20 July,” Dr Burns said

Background on the Rally and the progress of the 2012 event may be found on the dedicated Rally website [http://www.sailtimorleste.org/](http://www.sailtimorleste.org/)

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