The opening of Timor-Leste’s first permanent Consulate-General in Darwin today is evidence of the country’s growing ties with Northern Australia.

“Timor-Leste is one of the Northern Territory’s most important neighbours and the opening of this new Consulate-General marks an exciting new chapter in our close relationship,” Chief Minister Adam Giles said.

“We have stood shoulder to shoulder with Timor-Leste through some of its darkest days and it is a great pleasure to now stand beside our neighbour as it enters a new era of economic independence.

“The future development of Northern Australia depends on these relationships with Asia and I am thrilled to see Timor-Leste cementing its ties here long-term.

“Congratulations to Francisco Jose Felipe, who will become the Consul-General of Timor-Leste based in Darwin with responsibility for the Territory and northern Western Australia. Mr Felipe is a long time Territorian who came from to Darwin from Timor-Leste in the 1970s.

“Dili is just a one hour flight away from the Territory, making it our closest international capital city, and it makes good social and economic sense to formalise our diplomatic relationship.

“The new Consulate-General will be hugely important to both countries, allowing for more effective business, community and government ties.

“It is particularly good news for the Territory’s large Timorese community who will now have access to a Consulate-General on their doorstep.

“The opening of this office means the governments of our two closest neighbours, Timor-Leste and Indonesia now both have representation in the Territory.

“This is hugely important as we work to develop regional interaction, particularly tri-lateral links between Timor-Leste, eastern Indonesia and Northern Australia. We will be working closely with the new Consul-General in this space.
“I have made engagement with Timor-Leste a priority for this government and made my first official overseas visit to Timor-Leste in May 2013. I returned earlier this year and met with the President and Prime Minister who are both very supportive of this growing relationship.

“I welcome the Consul-General and his staff to their new positions and look forward to expanding our political, cultural and economic ties with Timor-Leste over the years ahead.”

Media Contact:

Danielle Parry 0413 081 801