A new English Language centre is strengthening the relationship between the Northern Territory and Timor-Leste as students study to gain employment in the NT in areas of labour shortage.

Minister for Education Peter Chandler opened the English Language centre at the Sentru Formasaun Profisional Training School today, in Becora, Timor-Leste.

“Currently 84 students are learning English at this centre, in 2016 it is anticipated that these students will receive a fully accredited Australian qualification in English,” Mr Chandler said.

“This is a very exciting project which will provide students with the opportunity to obtain seasonal employment in Australia while contributing to the economic growth of Timor-Leste.

“I was fortunate enough to first visit this school earlier in the year and was extremely impressed with the quality of the facilities and the training that the students receive.”

As part of the partnership, the Northern Territory Government is funding three staff members including teaching principal, Maria Albion.

“Ms Albion speaks fluent Portugese and is supported by four Timorese staff members including one Charles Darwin University Bachelor of Education graduate,” Mr Chandler said.

“The Territory Government is also providing the latest technology including laptop and desktop computers, iPads and a satellite connection to the Northern Territory Department of Education NTSchools network.

“The Batchelor Institute and NEC have partnered with us in this program and without their support we would not have the quality program in place that we have today.

“As our closest neighbour we are committed to further develop Timor-Leste and continue to strengthen our political, economic and cultural ties.

“Through this centre the Northern Territory is showcasing its education system and expanding the footprint of the NT Open Education Centre to deliver transnational education in Asia.
“I look forward to the strong partnership and watching the possibilities that may emerge following the successful implementation of this program.”

The centre is a key implementation of the *Northern Territory International Education and Training Strategy 2014-2024.*

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