

## Opening of new UNSW Law School building

By John Pender

The Hon Murray Gleeson AC, Chief Justice of Australia, opened the new Law Building at the University of New South Wales on 21 September 2006.

In doing so the chief justice referred to the difficulties of ordinary citizens in affording the services of lawyers, especially if they became involved in litigation, and noted that the reasonable availability of legal services to ordinary people is no less a question of access to justice than the availability of services to those at the extremes of disadvantage. The chief justice stated:

Impressing upon law students the importance and value of serving people across the whole community, and bringing home to them the personal satisfaction and fulfillment to be gained from identifying and answering the needs of all their fellow citizens, is a challenge. Law admitting authorities, in co-operation with law schools, need to see to it that new entrants to the profession have not only the capacity but also the interest to serve the general community's need for legal advice and services.

The opening of the building was also marked by a public lecture delivered by his Excellency Dr Jose Ramos-Horta, Prime Minister of East Timor as the Inaugural Hal Wooten Lecture on 10 October 2006. The Hon Hal Wooten AC QC was the foundation dean of the University of New South Wales Law Faculty and the lecture is intended to commemorate his founding vision for the faculty.

In his lecture Dr Ramos-Horta acknowledged that the May 2006 crisis in East Timor was a major set back not only for the country's security but for the systems which protect that security – the police and the judiciary. Dr Ramos-Horta discussed the difficulties in establishing democracy in circumstances where East Timor's

infrastructure is relatively limited. While critical of some aspects of the UN administration, he also acknowledged that the East Timorese Government, in which he had served as foreign minister, had to take partial responsibility for recent events.

He spoke with hope for his country's future and praised the professionalism of the Australian and other international troops currently serving there. 'Today we [the East Timorese Government] struggle to maintain ideals of freedom, of fairness and justice. It is four years since East Timor's independence and we are still faced with the immense challenge of creating a functioning government in the wake of the devastation of 1999 and in the midst of widespread poverty,' he said.



His Excellency Jose Ramos-Horta, Prime Minister of East Timor.

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