



CHANGING LIVES: Two of the children of an East Timorese farmer who travelled for hours to the clinic which was already at capacity but the team could not turn away. **TOP:** One of the patients waiting for surgery.

and meals, but for those it helped it was clearly priceless. In the two decades he has been going to East Timor, some 40 trips plus about another 10 by colleagues without him, Dr Moore's team has repaired 1064 cleft palates and lips. That's a lot of individuals whose lives were changed in a way hard to imagine. This past trip they operated on about eight people a day for the week

for a total of 41 surgeries including 27 clefts after eventually assessing 78 patients. These include the subsistence farmer's three kids with cleft palates and lips who arrived late on the initial day of assessments, with little more than big smiles and hope. Of the 78 patients seen, one had multiple severe problems and may have to come to Adelaide for surgery. But the emphasis is on treating

patients in their homeland as it is low-cost and less socially disruptive. Very importantly, the Australian team also continued to train local clinicians including Dr Joao Ximenes. This dedicated young doctor, on a salary of about \$700 a month, has now performed about 160 cleft surgeries and in turn is training his own team. **CONTINUED PAGE 64**

IDYLLIC: A beach in the capital, Dili



Spotlight on Timor

■ The Democratic Republic of Timor-Leste - known to most Australians simply as East Timor - comprises the eastern half of Timor island, the islands of Atauro and Jaco, and the enclave of Oecusse which is surrounded by Indonesian West Timor.

■ At just over 15,000sq km it is about three times the size of Kangaroo Island, with a population of about 1.1 million, predominantly Roman Catholics. The distance from Darwin to the capital, Dili, is about 720km.

■ The island was colonised by Portugal in the 16th century. In November 1975 the Revolutionary Front for an Independent East Timor declared independence but it was invaded by Indonesia on December 7, 1975.

■ Five Australian, New Zealand and British journalists in the town of Balibo covering the expected invasion were killed by Indonesian forces on October 16, 1975. Australian journalist Roger East who travelled there to investigate the deaths was executed in Dili two months later.

■ In 1999 the East Timorese voted for independence, prompting vi-



olence in which a reported 1500 people were killed. Australian troops led an international peace-keeping force but most of its infrastructure was destroyed.

■ Timor-Leste became a sovereign state on May 20, 2002.

■ With two-thirds of its population living on about \$US2 a day, Timor-Leste remains one of the poorest countries in the region, the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade says.

■ Its economy mostly depends on oil reserves in the Timor Sea.

■ Timor-Leste's tourism website lists world-class diving, stunning beaches and rich cultural experiences as highlights.