

Timor 'a lesson'

By **DEBBY VILENSKY**

TO experience the reality of government and the lead-up to a foreign election, politics graduate Aidan Hoy left the lecture hall and paid his own way to East Timor to see things for himself.

Described as a memorable learning experience by the 25-year-old Gwelup resident, he said he did not know what to expect and spent most of his time in Dili.

"Visiting Timor-Leste put into perspective the many intricate challenges that poor, post-conflict countries face and the classroom can only highlight this to a certain extent," he said.

"The Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade's travel advisory for Timor-Leste was at the highest possible level before I departed, and the United Nations classifies Timor-Leste as a 'least developed country'."

In 1999 the Timorese voted for independence from Indonesia, sparking widespread violence that Mr Hoy said was still evident as he walked the streets.

"What made Timor-Leste stand out was the wrecked buildings, refugee camps and abundance of white UN vehicles, all symbolic of what the country has gone through and the challenges it faces," he said.

Ramos Horta won East Timor's May election with a 69 per cent majority over Francisco Guterres.

Mr Hoy said the experience gave him a chance to see the political situation of one of the world's newest but poorest countries.

In addition, he also experienced life beyond politics and received a warm reception from the Timorese people themselves.



Aidan Hoy experienced East Timor politics and a warm reception from the Timorese themselves .

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