

# Darwin to Dili rally record smashed

It was a typical sunny Darwin day when the 2015 Darwin-Dili Yacht Rally began.

At 1100 hours on Saturday, July 11, 2015, to the cheers of onlookers at East Point and with vocal encouragement from those watching from the decks of their own boats, rally participants jockeyed for position near the start line west of the Darwin Sailing Club. This was the sixth running of the rally but, with no entries in the multihull division this year, the seven vessels that originally expressed interest were reduced to five monohulls: *Antipodes*, *Skye Melody*, *Finally*, *Evolution NT* and *Annadora III*. Although entries were down on recent years, the anticipation of a good race was still high.

The Ministry of Tourism Timor-Leste, organisers of the event along with the committee, were generous in support, having offered prize money of US\$15,000.

The NT Government also provided support and the Cruising Yacht Association of the NT (CYANT) provided technical support and

advice to the committee through funding from the NT Government. Too Wheels Adventures continued its support by committing US\$2,500 towards trophies and a cash prize for the last yacht over the line.

The race was started by Mr. Joao Mendes Goncalves, Head of Mission and State Representative of the Office of Timor-Leste Prime Minister, Mr. Jose Quintas, senior staff and special representative of the Timor-Leste Minister for Tourism, HE Francisco Kalbuadi Lay and Mr. Nathan Barratt MLA who was representing the NT Chief Minister, Hon. Adam Giles. Representatives of the Ministry for Tourism and members of the media were also in attendance.

Geoff Hill's *Antipodes* had a crew of 20 and had sailed from the Philippines to participate in a number of events on the north Australian sailing circuit.

Graeme Hay's *Skye Melody* was once again carrying over 120 boxes of donated medical and educational supplies for



*Antipodes* took out line honours, breaking the race record by around 10 hours.

distribution to the Bairo Pite clinic in Dili. She was also carrying three Timorese participants, two members of the Darwin Timorese community, Jose Luis Madeira Valadares and Lourenco Manual Da Silva, who hope the rally will develop ties between communities.

The third person sailing with them was Miguel da Silva Araujo, a Timorese sailor from Dili.

*Antipodes*, a Smith Santa Cruz 72, led the fleet over the start line heading off on the 425 nautical mile trip to Dili. The race began in gentle breezes with the expectation of freshening winds later.

By 0730 hours on Sunday morning *Antipodes* had covered almost half the course to Jaco Island, leaving 240 nautical miles to go before reaching Dili. *Skye Melody* had cleared Cape Fourcroy and was into the Timor Sea experiencing 15 knots of wind and seas to 1.5 metres.

The other three yachts were further behind having had a frustrating night with low winds. *Evolution NT* broke its steering around Jaco Island and finished the course under emergency steering.

Extreme care was necessary as the boats approached and traversed Timor. Especially close to Dili which is a busy working port with a number of large cargo vessels anchored outside.

Dili Harbour is surrounded by fringing drying reefs and must be entered between designated port and starboard channel markers.

The yachts proceeded to the yacht anchorage on the port side of the main wharf, aware of a small reef in the centre of the yacht anchorage area.

*Antipodes*, the line honours favourite, broke the race record of 52 hours 7 minutes set by *Australian Maid* in 2013.

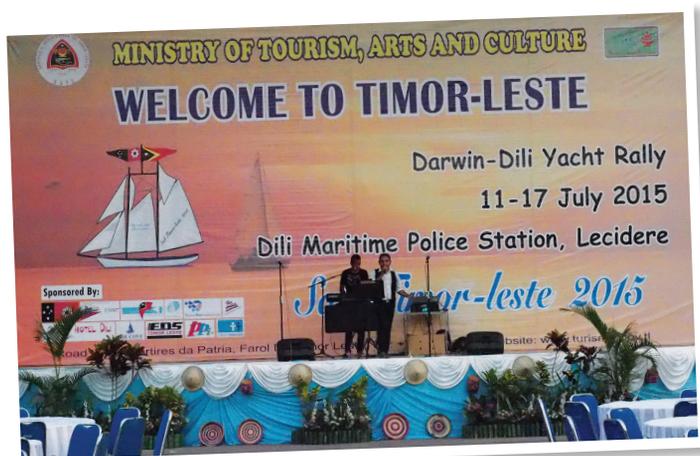
She arrived in Dili in 42 hours 59 minutes. Following into Dili were *Finally*, *Skye Melody*, *Evolution NT* and *Annadora III*.

*Annadora III* took out three awards: best dressed yacht across the start line; best dressed crew across the start line and last yacht to finish under sail.

Barrie Morgan was named 'fleet person of the rally' in recognition of his consistent participation in the event since 2010 when it recommenced after a 36 year break, following successful events in 1973 and 1974.

The welcome from the Timor-Leste people was exceedingly warm. In addition to the awards ceremony and dinner, two tours were provided: a half day Dili tour and a full day tour into the districts.

Timor-Leste waters and coastline offer a range of spectacular sights



ABOVE: Entrants were welcomed to Dili at the welcome dinner.