As a result of experiences during the Second World War, Australian strategists came to believe that it was essential to make sure that Portuguese Timor could not be used by any forces hostile to Australia in any future conflict. In 1943, Australia made an agreement with Portugal that it would meet for discussions on trade, mutual defence and other matters concerning Portuguese Timor as soon as practicable. It was with this aim in mind that Australia appointed its first consul to Portuguese Timor, who arrived in Dili on 26 January 1946. That consul, Charles Eaton, seems to have been optimistic of Australian opportunities to develop trade and defence arrangements with the Portuguese and that optimism appears to have been shared by the Australian government. By the time Eaton was replaced in October 1947, however, that enthusiasm appears to have been on the wane. By late 1949, Australia was considering closing its consulate in Dili and the second consul, Doug White, was withdrawn on 23 June 1950. This book, illustrated with many rare photographs, seeks to discover why it was that Australia established the Dili consulate with such enthusiasm in 1946, but by late 1949 was considering withdrawing its consul and closing the facility altogether. In the event, the consulate remained open and a description is given of the situation up until 1971, when its doors were closed for good. Australia, however, seems to have lost interest in the colony well before then.

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