

## Media Release

### **A Crude Injustice for Indonesian seaweed farmers & fishermen**

A new Western Australian made documentary shines a light on the ongoing impact of a forgotten Australian oil disaster on the lives of thousands of Indonesian fishermen and seaweed farmers.

*A Crude Injustice* is the story of what happened after millions of litres of crude oil spewed into the Timor Sea from a stricken oil rig sitting halfway between the West Australian coast and the island of Rote in Indonesia.

The 26-minute documentary film is the result of a seven-year investigation by Australian independent filmmaker Jane Hammond.

On August 21, 2009 a wellhead in the Montara oil field blow out causing oil to flow into the Timor Sea for more than 70 days. The Australian Government sprayed thousands of litres of toxic dispersants into the sea in a bid to break up the slick.

The fate of the oil and the dispersants remains in dispute. But in West Timor seaweed farmers and fishermen say the pollution reached their shores, smothered their seaweed and killed their fish stocks.

Ms Hammond was working as a print journalist on The West Australian newspaper in August 2009 when the environmental disaster unfolded. She followed the story for years and became increasingly frustrated at what she saw was a possible miscarriage of justice.

In 2013 Ms Hammond decided to make a documentary about the event but first she needed to learn how to make a film, use a video camera and edit so she went back to University to pick up the skills needed to tell the story.

"I wanted to tell the story from the point of view of those whose lives had been impacted and to take Australian audiences to West Timor to meet those people and engage with the issue," Ms Hammond said.

"Working as a journalist I couldn't understand why the issue had been so easily forgotten by the Australian public and that the polluting company PTTEP continued to deny that the oil had made landfall in Indonesia despite so many eye witness accounts saying the opposite."

Ms Hammond travelled to West Timor in 2015 and again in 2016 to meet and interview those impacted by the spill. The film takes the audience into the lives of the fishermen and seaweed farmers as they describe the event and what it has meant to their families.

*A Crude Injustice* is narrated by WA actor Myles Pollard and edited by Nicholas Dunlop.

The film was made possible with the assistance of a grant from the West Australian Government funded Screenwest and LotteryWest and from the Film and Television's Philanthropy Program.

**Further information: Jane Hammond +61 (0)403 926 467**

