

Timor looking for 'sympathy' over oil: Downer

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East Timor was trying to stir up sympathy within Australia for its claims on oil and gas revenues in the Timor Sea, the Foreign Affairs Minister, Alexander Downer, said today.

Mr Downer said Australia had been incredibly generous to East Timor, but in the battle over oil and gas revenues Australia would stand by its rights.

Australia and East Timor are in dispute over the boundary between the nations.

The drawing of the boundary will divide control of the estimated \$30 billion in royalties from Timor Sea oil and gas deposits, including the multi-billion dollar Greater Sunrise field.

Australia wants East Timor to honour an agreement signed last year.

Under this deal Australia, won an 82 per cent slice of royalties from the Greater Sunrise oil and gas field, but this is yet to be ratified by the East Timorese parliament.

However, East Timor wants the new seabed boundary halfway between the two countries - but Australia would lose potentially billions of dollars in royalties.

Mr Downer said East Timor would receive 90 per cent of government revenue from a joint development area, whereas a previous deal with Indonesia would have resulted in a 50-50 split.

"In the end when two countries are adjacent with each other, if one is richer than the other that isn't an argument for the poorer country being able to take territory from the richer country," he told the Ten Network.

"The tactic here is to try to create public controversy in Australia by a lot of emotive criticism of Australia."

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