

# Tammy Kassiou secures another major global business award for her work in Timor-Leste

*Tammy Kassiou wins global acclaim for the GEM Institute, transforming education, skills and opportunity in Timor-Leste.*

SYDNEY, NSW, AUSTRALIA, June 19, 2025 /EINPresswire.com/ -- Tammy Kassiou, founder and chair of the [GEM Foundation](#), has once again been honoured on the global stage, receiving a 2025 Asia-Pacific Stevie® Award in the Achievement Category: Innovative Achievement in Corporate Social Responsibility. The award recognises Kassiou's bold vision and enduring commitment to transforming education and employment outcomes in Timor-Leste.



Tammy Kassiou, founder and chair of the GEM Foundation, recognised for her award-winning impact in education and social development in Timor-Leste.

Kassiou founded the Gem Foundation in 2024 with the aim of building world class education and learning facilities across Timor-Leste, from early learning centres to campuses offering tertiary level courses. The Gem Foundation officially opened its first vocational education and learning campus, the [Gem Institute](#), in Dili in 2024.

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Empowering people with the confidence, communication and skills to shape their own future.”

*Tammy Kassiou*

Kassiou's latest global award centres around the GEM Institute which, in just over a year, has grown to become a world-leading education and training hub, providing foundational and advanced courses that open vocational pathways into high-demand sectors such as business, hospitality, health, aged care, law and tourism.

The institute has already seen record-breaking enrolments, with more than 500 students enrolling in the first six months alone. The programs focus on delivering employment-ready skills

that prepare Timorese citizens for roles both locally and internationally.

In early 2025, the GEM Foundation partnered with the British Council to launch Timor-Leste's first permanent IELTS testing centre, fully integrated into the GEM Institute. Previously, IELTS testing in Timor-Leste was only available a few times a year via visiting service providers from Indonesia. Now, learners can access test preparation, academic and general IELTS testing and results on-demand - all in-country.

"This was a major barrier for people seeking international education or employment. Now, they no longer have to wait or travel. The GEM Institute provides everything in one place, learning, preparation and testing," Kassiou said.

A broader mission to build capacity and confidence The GEM Institute is not only addressing global workforce shortages but also building local capacity. Programs include English for healthcare, legal professionals, tourism and hospitality workers and business leaders.

The Institute recently introduced English for business and government officials and is working with industry leaders to integrate real-world worksite experiences into its offerings.

"We've designed our courses to build practical capabilities and open doors for students to thrive, whether that's in Timor-Leste or abroad," Kassiou said.

"Our goal is to empower people with the confidence, communication and skills to shape their own future."

The partnership with the British Council was hailed by the organisation's Director for Southeast Asia, Summer Xia, as a milestone moment for the nation.

"With this new test centre, Timorese citizens can access IELTS with flexible dates, faster results and training programs to build vital communication skills. This is about building bridges to opportunity and supporting the aspirations of Timor-Leste's communities."

The Stevie Awards honour innovation and positive impact across 29 nations in the Asia-Pacific.



Graduates from the GEM Institute in Timor-Leste celebrate completing programs that build real-world skills for local and international employment.

For Kassiou, a respected Australian entrepreneur and humanitarian, the award reaffirms her belief that meaningful change begins with access to education and opportunity.

“The GEM Foundation was founded to build hope, self-sufficiency and opportunity. This Stevie award recognises what can happen when you invest in people. Education is the most powerful tool we can offer and we’re proud to be delivering that in Timor-Leste,” she said.

“I am humbled to be recognised for my work in Timor-Leste. I am supported by the most incredible team and together we look forward to continuing to bring world class education and learning to the people of Timor-Leste.”

#### About the GEM Foundation

Founded by respected entrepreneur Themalina Kassiou, affectionately known as Tammy Kassiou, the GEM Foundation is a Timor-Leste registered organisation which oversees education and training initiatives in Timor-Leste including The Gem Institute. Kassiou also established [ISAT](https://isat.tl), a leader in job capability training across various industries and Branditall, a diversified service provider. Its services include cold storage and food services as well as broader import/ wholesale capabilities: uniforms, international standard personal protective equipment and branded merchandise.

<https://isat.tl>

<https://thegeminstitute.com>

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