

# The 1997 Australia-Indonesia Maritime Boundary Treaty: A secure Legal Regime for Offshore Resource Development?

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## ***Abstract***

*The Treaty between the Government of Australia and the Government of the Republic of Indonesia Establishing an Exclusive Economic Zone Boundary and Certain Seabed Boundaries was signed in Perth, Australia, on March 14, 1997. The Treaty establishes an area of overlapping jurisdiction in the Timor Sea in which the exclusive economic zone of Indonesia overlays the continental shelf of Australia. Although the 1982 United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea does not provide well for such a situation, and many other provisions of the Law of the Sea Convention relate to the coastal state in a manner which leaves the question of state rights and responsibilities vague for the overlapping area, the Treaty between Australia and Indonesia relies exclusively on the Law of the Sea Convention to govern the relationship between the two states. It fails to address important issues relating to, inter alia, installations and structures, marine environmental protection, and marine scientific research. Therefore, if a secure and stable regime for resource development is to be achieved under the Treaty, Australia and Indonesia might need to supplement the Treaty with some further instrument of clarification, such as, for example, a protocol to the Treaty or a series of memoranda of understanding.*

**Keywords** Australia, boundary, continental shelf, delimitation, exclusive economic zone, Indonesia, installation, marine scientific research, seabed, sovereign rights

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