

## Delegates Report



This Delegates Report is presented for Council's consideration under the provisions of clauses 63 and 65 of the Yarra City Council Meeting Procedures Local Law 2011.

<b>Committee</b>	Friends of Baucau
<b>Appointed Councillors</b>	Cr Amanda Stone
<b>Date of Council Meeting</b>	7 <sup>th</sup> October 2019
<b>Date of Report</b>	3 <sup>rd</sup> October 2019
<b>Report Author</b>	Cr Amanda Stone

### DELEGATES REPORT

Friends of Baucau continues to meet monthly with a current focus on following up on the successful trip to Bacau in April, in conjunction with the northern Neighbourhood House Network. This trip has been reported on by Yarra's Manager of Community Partnerships, Aldo Malavisi.

#### News about Baucau

That trip formed constructive relationships between a number of neighbourhood houses in the Cities of Yarra and Darebin with women's groups in the Baucau District. It developed an understanding of mutual interests and potential for collaboration. The formation of Women's Association for Development in Baucau provides an entity which the Neighbourhood House Network and Friends of Baucau can work with.

The Alphington Community Centre Coordinator has joined the Friends of Baucau committee following this trip and has initiated a number of collaborative ventures, including funds raised through the Alphington Country Women's Association to support the Uma Pas Women's Safe House and Refuge Services which supports families affected by domestic violence across the whole Municipality of Baucau.

#### Fundraising

Friends of Baucau has recently applied for a DFAT Friendship Grant to further this work with the Women's Association for Development in Baucau. The outcome of this application will be known in February.

Following the very successful Trivia Night in August, a Barefoot Bowls Evening will be held at Fitzroy Bowls Club on 19<sup>th</sup> October to raise funds for permaculture programs which are part of the national school curriculum in Timor Leste. (Friends of Baucau has previously funded the participation of a number of young people in camps run by Permatil, the provider of training in permaculture in TL.)

Coffee sales continue to provide a steady source of funds, including at Access Yarra locations.

## Other Issues

- The 20<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the 1999 referendum, which saw Timor Leste gain its independence, has seen a number of celebratory events, including the launch at Northcote Town Hall this week of a book by Darebin resident and writer Pat Walsh who was an official Australian observer of the historic 1999 referendum. In his book, The Day Hope and History Rhymed in East Timor, he recounts “the excitement of the day when, after 500 years of colonialism and struggle, hope and history finally rhymed in East Timor.”
- Many of the Timor Leste Friendship groups have expressed concern about the ongoing prosecution of Witness K and his lawyer Bernard Collaery in relation to the exposure of an Australian bugging operation of Timor Leste offices during negotiations over oil and gas reserves in the Timor Sea.
- These concerns have been raised repeatedly by Friends of Baucau Committee members also. Some background is included in an attached media article. Witness K has recently agreed to plead guilty in an apparent desire to end the drawn out process. Bernard Collaery will defend the charges. Friendship Groups have expressed concern about the human rights implications of this case and a number have encouraged citizens to contact both government MPs and opposition MPs to urge them to discontinue the legal action. The Attorney General has the ability to cease the legal action. Opposition MPs are being urged to express opposition to the action. A Notice of Motion proposing a Council position on this matter is included in the agenda for this Council Meeting.

## Local Government Timor-Leste Network Meeting

This network is convened by the state Department of Environment, Land, Water and Planning (DELWP) and meets approximately 3-4 times a year.

At this week’s meeting, an update was provided on the delayed process of decentralisation in Timor Leste, with the first municipal elections still planned for 2021. Updates from other councils and friendship groups on recent trips to Timor Leste revealed some frustration with the slow pace and inability to action the municipal agreements that many councils have signed with municipal districts in TL. How to maintain the connection and momentum will be the subject of the next meeting.

Yarra seems to be the only council to dedicate resources to advancing the Municipal Agreement specifically, Darebin having recently followed suit.

Friendship groups and local governments are engaged in similar projects with their respective partner districts, many focusing on permaculture training and development. Friends of Lospalmos in Mornington recruited staff and equipment locally to take to Timor Leste recently and run a week of eye clinics.

This group also discussed the Witness K/Bernard Collaery case. Mornington Shire Council passed a resolution in August calling for the cessation of the prosecution against both.

Council’s support through the provision of meeting venues, sales of coffee and providing resources to further the Municipal Agreement has been expressed by Friends of Baucau and conveyed here in this report.