

Report on the visit to Timor-Leste, June-July 2019 by the Project Officer as part of:

- A Hume and Moreland City Council / Friends of Aileu delegation to Timor-Leste
- The CERES Global Timor 2019 sustainable agriculture, school and community gardens visit

Purpose

This report provides a summary of the visit to Timor-Leste, in June-July 2019, undertaken by Chris Adams (Friends of Aileu Project Officer) as:

- Part of a Council / Friends of Aileu delegation comprising Friends of Aileu Community Committee members Hume Cr Karen Sherry (Committee Chair), Hume Cr Joseph Haweil (Committee member) and Moreland Deputy Mayor Cr Mark Riley
- Co-facilitator for the CERES Global Timor 2019 engagement visit on local agriculture, permaculture and school and community gardens.

The report also outlines activities refers to the friendship and study tour visit to Moreland and Hume undertaken by Mrs Victoria Mesquita do Rego, Aileu Municipal Secretary, in June 2019.



Delegation members with the Aileu Municipal Administrator (Centre Rear), municipal staff and Directors of Government Departments

Introduction

The Friends of Aileu Project Officer undertook the trip as part of his 2019 work plan, developed from the Friends of Aileu Strategy and Action Plan 2016-2020. The Strategy and Action Plan supports implementation of the Friendship Agreement 2016 and the Municipal Cooperation Agreement 2016.

The Councillor delegates undertook the trip in their capacities in relation to the Friends of Aileu Community Committee.

The Project Officer's travel was for the period Friday 28 June to Monday 15 July 2019:

- Friday 28 June: Accompanying Mrs Victoria Mesquita do Rego, Aileu Municipal Secretary, returning to Timor-Leste after her two-week friendship and study tour visit with Friends of Aileu and Moreland and Hume City Councils (14 to 28 June)
- Friday 28 June to Tuesday 9 July: Facilitating the visit of the Council / Friends of Aileu delegation of Councillors Mark Riley, Karen Sherry and Joseph Haweil (accompanying the councillors while they were in Dili 1 & 2 July, in Aileu 2 to 6 July and in Dili 6 & 7 July)
- Tuesday 9 July to Monday 15 July: Continuing the work of the Friends of Aileu delegation and co-facilitating the CERES Global group during their visit to Aileu 8 to 13 July.



CERES Global participants first evening meal together



Mrs Victoria with homestay hosts Glenyys & Graham

Aileu Municipal Secretary's study tour visit to Moreland and Hume

Mrs Victoria Mesquita do Rego, Aileu Municipal Secretary and Friends of Aileu contact person, visited Moreland and Hume for a two-week friendship and study tour visit in June. Mrs Victoria was provided homestay accommodation by Glenyys and Graham Romanes as a guest of Friends of Aileu.

Mrs Victoria gained an appreciation of the functions of local government in Australia and of the operation of the Friends of Aileu as a Council partnership project and community initiative, through personal interactions, meetings and site visits with:

- Councillors, managers and staff at both Moreland and Hume, including in the areas of community development and environmental sustainability and waste management, with visits to Council depots, Sunbury Landfill, Killara Primary School (a Resource Smart School Award finalist), Fawkner Neighbourhood House and Fawkner Community Grocer
- Friends of Aileu Community Committee members and partner organisations including Merri Health, North Richmond Community Health, Rotary Club of Greenvale, Wild

Timor Coffee, CERES, including participants in the upcoming CERES Global Timor 2019 engagement, Moreland Community Gardening and other organic permaculture gardening practitioners

- A visiting Timor-Leste parliamentary delegation, an APHEDA Union Aid Abroad seminar on Timor-Leste Seasonal Workers Program, members of Melbourne's resident East Timorese community, including the Melbourne East Timorese Activity Centre and East Timorese Students Association in Victoria.

Mrs Victoria also participated in several community and sightseeing activities, including a Koorie Heritage Trust workshop and tour, a murnong (indigenous yam daisy) planting day at Joe's Garden, Merri Creek, Coburg, the ReLink community Cup at Victoria Park, visits to Woodlands Park, Victoria Market and St Kilda Beach and services at St Patrick's Cathedral and St Francis' Church, Melbourne.

While in transit in Darwin, on the return trip to Timor-Leste, Mrs Victoria met with Heather McGrath of the Sandringham Sacred Heart Parish Social Justice Group and discussed their activities in the Remexio Administrative Post, Aileu.



Aileu Municipal Secretary, Mrs Victoria:
at Fawkner Community Grocer & Food Bowl



with Hume staff at Sunbury Landfill and Recycling Centre

Council / Friends of Aileu delegation

All planned outcomes for the delegation's visit were achieved, principally via meetings, site inspections and other activities with:

- Timor-Leste Vice-minister for State Administration, Ministry Directors and staff
- Australian Ambassador to Timor-Leste
- Staff at Xanana Gusmao Reading Room and Alola Foundation
- Timor-Leste Prime Minister, Minister for Education, Youth and Sports and Minister for Public Works, during the Prime Minister's official visit to Aileu
- Aileu Municipal Administrator, other staff of the Aileu Municipal Administration and its administrative Posts, and representatives of various Government Ministries in Aileu
- Managers and staff at the Aileu Hospital and Aileu Agriculture office
- Mr Ilidio Maufelo, Village Chief of Aisirimou Suco, Aileu Vila Administrative Post

Friends of Aileu

A partnership established in 2000

Building Strong Communities in Timor-Leste and Australia

- Representatives of various community-based partners and other organisations in Aileu, including:
 - Aileu Resource and Training Centre (ARTC)
 - Uma Ita Nian Clinic and St Francis Assisi Disability Workshop
 - Aileu Anan Association, together with former Friends of Aileu scholarship recipients, members of the Rotaract Club of Aileu, Aileu University Students Association and Aileu Municipal Youth Centre
 - Projetu Montanha NGO, a youth training and development activity in Aileu
 - Dili Vanilli vanilla farm in Aileu
- ARTC staff and members of the satellite Manu Casa Resource and Training Centre, travelling to Manu Casa Suco, Lequidoe Administrative Post, visiting the community centre and their reforestation and water source protection project
- Aileu Municipal Youth Centre members and participants in friendship games organised to mark the delegation's visit and the upcoming 20th anniversary of the friendship relationship.



Delegation members with staff of Uma Ita Nian Parish Clinic



Returning to Aileu from Manu Casa, Lequidoe (in distant hills)

As part of its orientation to Timor-Leste, the delegation also visited:

- In Dili: Santa Cruz Cemetery, Chega! Exhibition, Cristo Rei statue and the Cathedral
- In Aileu: St Peter and St Paul Church, Das Flores School and the local market
- In Dili and Aileu: a range of local cafes and restaurants, including Delicious Timor (with the CERES group) and Agora Food Studio, which both showcase innovative use of local ingredients.

In Dili, the Project Officer also:

- Participated in an event for the Timor-Leste launch of several books authored by speakers at two conferences being held at the Timor-Leste National University and at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs building
- Met again with the Vice-minister for State Administration
- Met with others including:
 - The Timor-Leste facilitator for the Australia Timor-Leste Friendship Network
 - Members of the Anan Association, Aileu Rotaract, Aileu University Students Association, Dili Rotaract and Dili Rotary
 - Several former Timor-Leste alumni of Australia Award scholarships.

CERES Global sustainable agriculture, school and community gardens visit

With the CERES Global group, the Project Officer:

- Helped coordinate consultation with the Aileu Resource and Training Centre (ARTC), local village leaders, farmers and other community members and participation in hands-on working bees for the Kadalak Dame garden site.
- Accompanied by Domingos Sarmiento, Aileu Rotaract past president, Joaquinho dos Reis of ARTC and Luis Pereira Amaral of PERMATIL (Timor-Leste's permaculture NGO) travelled to Suco Liurai, Aileu Administrative Post:
 - Visited Mantane Primary School, Aileu, inspecting the school garden
 - Met with the Mr Elidias Gomes, Village Chief of Suco Liurai, visiting:
 - Dom Baumeta Central School inspecting the school garden and the nearly completed water supply rehabilitation project for the school and nearby sub-villages, both funded by Friends of Aileu
 - Ai-Kleu cultural and historic site
 - A local informal organic agriculture and marketing cooperative coordinated by Aileu resident Emelita Sarmiento.
- Accompanied by Domingos and Joaquinho visited Rui and Emelita Sarmiento's family farm in Kabis Fatin, Aileu, which they operate on organic principles.
- Accompanied by Joaquinho and Luis, travelled to Suco Selo Craik, Aileu Administrative Post visiting:
 - Cotobauro Primary School and Lion Catholic Primary School, inspecting their school gardens
 - A local farm and nursery in operated by Mr. Leopoldino, one of the village leaders who works with ARTC.
- Visited Aileu CAFÉ Reference School, in Aileu town, inspecting the school garden and the science laboratory, for which Friends of Aileu had contributed to obtaining the microscopes.
- Visited the organic garden at the home of Gisele and Eduardo, managers of Projeto Montanha.
- Visited the Hardie-Mesquita Dili Vanilli vanilla farm, attending an evening musical event of Timor-Leste culture and resistance history presented by Ros Dunlop.



CERES Global at Mantane School Garden



CERES Global and Mana Emelita at Suku Liurai organic farm coop.

The CERES group also spent the previous week 1 to 8 July:

- In Dili, participating in two conferences
 - The Victoria University / Timor-Leste National University Sustainable Development Goals conference
 - The Timor-Leste Studies Association conference
- On Atauro Island with NaTerra, a permaculture training and local development NGO.



Preparing catalpa (rice cakes) in Atekru, Atauro



Maize and cassava field in dry season, Atekru, Atauro

Outcomes

During the visit the Aileu Municipal Administrator:

- Was presented with copies of the Friends of Aileu Annual Report for 2018, including a summary report in Tetun language.
- Commended the Friends of Aileu and Moreland and Hume City Councils for their active and beneficial friendship engagement.
- Advised his support for:
 - Renewal of the friendship relationship in 2020
 - Friends of Aileu's proposal to record video interviews with Aileu officials and community members, for use as part of:
 - Activities proposed to mark the upcoming 20th anniversary of the friendship relationship.
 - Ongoing communications and promotion for the friendship relationship
- Indicated his interest in considering an invitation to undertake a friendship and study tour visit to Melbourne in May 2020, to help mark the 20th anniversary.
- Re-iterated his desire to work with Friends of Aileu to re-establish the University Scholarship Program with improved criteria and processes to achieve a better targeted, and more transparent, equitable and effective program for the development of the talents of young people from Aileu, taking account of the report on the interview survey of previous scholarship recipients.

The councillor members of the delegation gained valuable first-hand experience of the conditions, development challenges and progress in Timor-Leste and Aileu, including in relation to Friends of Aileu sponsored activities. They also developed personal connections amongst partner organisation representatives and community members, and gained a better understanding of their lives, work and aspirations for the future.



Delegation members at Aileu Resource and Training Centre library, presenting:
Educational materials from Prime Sci! (Swinburne and Monash) Stories of Friendship Groups and Australian East Timorese families

Proposed Further Action

The Project Officer and Councillors reported at the Friends of Aileu Community Committee meetings on 23rd July and 3rd September on:

- The visit by the Aileu Municipal Secretary
- The Council / Friends of Aileu delegation to Timor-Leste
- The CERES Global visit.

The Project Officer will continue work with:

- The Friends of Aileu Community Committee to prepare:
 - A draft Friendship Agreement 2020, for Moreland and Hume City Councils and the Aileu Municipal Administration to consider as a basis for renewing the friendship relationship
 - Proposals to celebrate the 20th anniversary of the friendship relationship in May 2020 and a potential study tour visit by the Aileu Municipal Administrator
 - An updated Strategy and Action Plan and a new Communications Plan for Friends of Aileu for the period beyond 2020.
- The Aileu Municipal Secretary and others on:
 - Re-commencing the Friends of Aileu university scholarship program
 - Improvements to waste management in Aileu.
- Other relevant partners as required to support the above activities and to continue collaborations for the proposed CERES Global engagement in 2020, and other sustainable livelihood, education and training, youth development and community health initiatives.