

ITEM NO: 10

SUBJECT: BLUE MOUNTAINS HATOBUILICO FRIENDSHIP COMMITTEE ANNUAL REPORT 2014-2015

FILE NO: F09170 - 15/196386

Delivery Program Link

Principal Activity: Looking After People

Service: Cultural Development

Recommendations:

1. *That the Council acknowledges the achievements of the Blue Mountains Hatobuilico Friendship Committee (BMHFC) 2014-2015 including:*
 - a) *support for scholarships to enable up to 48 students from the Hatobuilico sub district to undertake secondary and tertiary education in 2014-2015;*
 - b) *support for the Maulelo Music Project;*
 - c) *implementation of the new Terms of Reference and committee structure; and*
 - d) *strengthening the friendship relationship with Hatobuilico through the self-funded trips by the Committee representatives to open the school in Taurema and meetings with local community leaders to re-establish the local committee in Hatobuilico.*
 2. *That the Council endorses the annual plan for the 2015-2016 financial year including:*
 - a) *the review of the scholarship programs including the recommendation to continue the scholarships program for existing students only;*
 - b) *the donation of a DVD copy of the Maulelo Music Project to the Blue Mountains City Council library; and*
 - c) *the hosting of the visit from Dr Kirsty Sword Gusmao AO, Goodwill Ambassador for Education to recognise 10-years of friendship between the Blue Mountains and Hatobuilico.*
 3. *That the Council notes that the value of the Australian dollar has dropped to around two-thirds of the value of the US dollar which has caused significant impact on the ability to sustain the current scholarship program at the level of previous years.*
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Report by Group Manager, People and Systems:**Reason for report**

This report is to provide Council with an overview of the Committees activities throughout the 2014-2015 and its proposed plan for the future. It builds on the resolutions of the Council in November 2014, April 2015, July 2015 and August 2015.

Background

In November 2014, following a review of the Blue Mountains East Timor Friendship Committee's Terms of Reference, the Council resolved to change the committee's name to the Blue Mountains Hatobuilico Friendship Committee (BMHFC) to better reflect its purpose. The review also considered the governance requirements of an advisory committee of Council and aimed to promote a clearer understanding of the relationship between the Council, its committee and the wider community activities to support community development

in Timor-Leste. The revised terms of reference also set out the reporting requirements for this Advisory Committee of Council.

In June 2015, a delegation of members of the Council's Blue Mountains Hatobuilico Friendship Committee including Councillor Romola Hollywood, Blue Mountains Trek for Timor and Blue Mountains East Timor Sisters travelled to Hatobuilico for the opening of the school in Taurema Village. This school was built with funds raised from Blue Mountains Trek for Timor. This trip also helped strengthen the friendship relationship and a new local committee, known as the Hatobuilico Ramelau Komite, was re-established to better enable the friendship relationship between our two communities to continue.

Blue Mountains City Council's friendship relationship has been strengthened by partnerships with organisations based in the Blue Mountains: in particular, Blue Mountains Trek for Timor and Blue Mountains East Timor Sisters. These organisations have raised funds and directed support to projects and priorities identified by the local Hatobuilico community through its strategic planning process.

2014-2015 Activities

Supporting education through student scholarships

On the advice of the Blue Mountains Hatobuilico Friendship Committee, Blue Mountains City Council has continued to direct the majority of its funding to scholarships for disadvantaged students to help them complete their high school or tertiary education. Since the Friendship Relationship began, Blue Mountains City Council has supported over 200 students with either secondary or tertiary education.

In the second semester of 2014 (July-Dec 2014), 48 students were supported with scholarships with a number of students graduating from High School or University at the end of 2014.

In the first semester of 2015 (Jan-June 2015), 39 students have been supported with the majority of these students enrolled in university courses.

Students are enrolled in tertiary courses as diverse as Education, Nursing, Public Health, Psychology, Law, Economics, Information Technology, Management, International Relations and Engineering.

Throughout 2014-2015, day-to-day management of the scholarship program has been made possible through administrative support from Asia Pacific Support Collective for Timor Leste (APSC-TL) in Timor-Leste. The committee is grateful for the ongoing support and facilitation that APSC-TL has provided.

A key challenge for the sustainability of the scholarship program has been the drop in the value of the Australian dollar against East Timor's currency which is the US dollar. In early 2013, the value of the Australian dollar was roughly equivalent to or slightly more than the value of the US dollar. However, from late 2014 and through 2015, the value of Australian dollar has dropped to around two-thirds of the value of the US dollar. In view of the sharp decline in the value of the Australian dollar, the Friendship Committee requests that Council in preparing the budget for the 2016-2017 financial year, notes the significant reduction in the value of the Australian dollar and associated drop in the value of funding for this program in real terms.

Maulelo Music Project

In May 2014, the Council provided \$1,000 towards a documentary project to record the Maulelo, a Mambae ritual performance, in Mulo, a village within the Hatobuilico sub-district.

This project was completed by filmmaker Ros Dunlop in 2014-2015 and her letter of thanks is attached to this report.

The Mambae are considered one of the largest and oldest of the ethnolinguistic clan groups in East Timor. Many of the ritual ceremonies of the Mambae disappeared during Indonesian occupation and now much of the traditional culture is hidden. This was the first time the people of Mulo had performed Maulelo since Indonesian occupation. The Maulelo is a combination of dance, theatre and ceremonial performance unique to the Mambae in the Ainaro district. The Maulelo project enables the preservation and continuation of a tradition which is in danger of disappearing.

While reports to the committee indicated that the project was very successful, there were some unavoidable delays in finalising the production of the documentary recording. At the last meeting in October 2015, the committee received three copies of the DVD and will be donating one copy to the Blue Mountains City Council library.

Visit to Hatobuilico to strengthen friendship ties and to open the school in Taurema

As noted in the full report to Council on the outcomes of the trip on 18 August 2015, a delegation of 12 people representing the Blue Mountains Hatobuilico Friendship Committee, Blue Mountains East Timor Sisters and Trek for Timor made self-funded trips to participate in the official opening of the new primary school in Taurema on 3 June 2015.

This school was built with funds raised through Blue Mountains Trek for Timor in 2012 and 2014. The project was managed through the Office of Kirsty Sword-Gusmao with the support of Manager Jenny Coles who was formally thanked by the Mayor through the Mayoral Minute of 21 July 2015.

During the visit to Hatobuilico, representatives from the Blue Mountains Hatobuilico Friendship Committee met with the new Xefe do Posto Administrativo Snr Abilio Mendonca and community members to discuss the strengths and challenges of the friendship relationship between our two communities over the last 10 years. It was agreed that the friendship relationship was important and the local friendship committee in Hatobuilico would be re-established as it had not been active recently due to changes in staffing at the Hatobuilico sub- district level.

The new Hatobuilico Ramelau Komite is now overseeing the development of a new strategic plan. This will involve consultation with each of the 21 communities in the Hatobuilico sub-district. The Strategic Plan will provide a guide for future projects that could be developed with the support of the Blue Mountains Friendship Committee and partner community organisations such as Blue Mountains Trek for Timor.

2015-2016 Proposed Plan

Supporting education through student scholarships

As previously noted the dramatic change in the exchange rates has meant that funding available from the Blue Mountains City Council budget allocation of \$11,600 for the scholarship program has been reduced by nearly a third in real terms. For this reason, the committee has resolved in this financial year 2015-2016 not to allocate scholarships to new students but rather to focus on meeting its existing commitments to students currently enrolled in the scholarship program. Current projections for the current financial year 2015-2016 indicate that by not taking any further scholarship enrolments and with 5 to 6 students graduating each semester in 2015-2016 that the committee will be able to meet existing scholarship arrangements.

The Blue Mountains Hatobuilico Friendship Committee is also undertaking a review of the scholarship due to the budget constraints that have been noted above.

Creating a new strategic plan to scope priorities for future projects in Hatobuilico

The Friendship Committee's decision not to allocate new scholarships is also timely because, as highlighted in the report to Council in August 2015, the new Hatobuilico Ramelau Komite is undertaking a strategic planning process in 2015-2016 to review and identify priorities for local initiatives and projects to support their community. In 2015-2016, members of the Blue Mountains Hatobuilico Friendship Committee will be working with the Members of the Hatobuilico Ramelau Komite to develop and review priorities for future local projects. Once these priorities are received, the Blue Mountains Friendship Committee together with the other community-based fundraising groups for Timor will consider what projects may be able to be supported within the current resources.

Celebrating 10 years of Friendship with Hatobuilico

On 28 September 2015, the Blue Mountains Hatobuilico Friendship Committee hosted a function with guest speaker Dr Kirsty Sword Gusmao AO who has visited the Blue Mountains on several occasions and is the Goodwill Ambassador for Education in Timor Leste. The aim of the evening was both to recognise ten years of friendship between the Blue Mountains City Council and the Hatobuilico sub district and to focus on developing the relationship into the future.

The theme for the evening was Timor into the Future and around 75 community members heard about the different ways in which the Blue Mountains community has actively supported relationships and projects with Timor. Representatives from Blue Mountains Hatobuilico Friendship Committee, Blue Mountains Trek for Timor, Blue Mountains East Timor Sisters and Springwood East Timor Support Group spoke about their work with Timor.

Dr Kirsty Sword Gusmao spoke about the development of the education system in Timor-Leste including the implementation of a new curriculum, the building of new schools in rural areas including the one in Taurema and promising new programs that show that children learn to read more easily if they are first taught in their local community language.

Members from the Blue Mountains Trek for Timor also announced that they will be establishing a new community-based not-for-profit incorporated association that will provide auspicing arrangements for future fundraising projects such as Trek for Timor. This new group will be called Blue Mountains Together for Timor Inc.

In 2015-2016 and 2016-2017, the Blue Mountains Hatobuilico Friendship Committee will explore how it may be able to develop a formal partnership with this new community group.

Committee Members In-Kind Contributions

In 2015-2016 the committee is also undertaking a review of the in-kind contribution from members of the Friendship Committee including self-funded trips to Timor as these in-kind contributions are vital to supporting a meaningful and effective friendship relationship with our neighbours in Timor.

2015-2016 Proposed Budget Allocation

<i>Annual Activities / Events and Incidentals</i>	<i>Approximate Cost</i>
Semester 2 Scholarships and graduation Fees (July – Dec 2015)	\$5,640
Semester 1 Scholarships and graduation Fees (Jan – June 2016)	\$4,572
Civic Event: Kirsty Sword Gusmao, Goodwill Ambassador Education: Together Celebrating 10 years of Friendship with Hatobuilico	\$900
Administration Costs	\$488
TOTAL	\$11,600

Committee membership 2015-2016

Members of the Blue Mountains Hatobuilico Friendship Committee: Clr Romola Hollywood (Chair), Clr Don McGregor (Vice Chair), John Telford, Jude Finch, Mary Waterford, Pamela Nash, Elaine Telford, Maggi Williams, Jim Angel, John Tweedie, David Ludenia, Lydia Kolar (Council Support Officer)

Members of the Hatobuilico Ramelau Comite: President: Bernardino dos Reis Tilman (Mauchiga), Secretary: Joao de Deus Maia (Mulo), Treasurer: Angela Amaral Saldanha (Nuno-Mogue), Communication: Antonio Soares de Deus (Program & planning), Monitoring: Analeo de Costa (links to Church, Youth).

Sustainability Assessment

Effects	Positive	Negative
Environmental	Nil	Nil
Social	Continue to build positive friendship relationship with the Hatobuilico community of Timor-Leste.	Nil
Economic	Support and encourage the Hatobuilico economy and community to grow and prosper through a friendship agreement with the Blue Mountains City.	Nil
Governance	Nil	Nil

Financial implications for the Council

Council’s funding contributions to the Blue Mountains Hatobuilico Friendship Committee is forecast annually in Council’s budget with the 2015-2016 budget allocation being \$11,600.

Legal and risk management issues for the Council

Nil

External consultation

Nil

Conclusion

This report highlights to Council the achievements of the Blue Mountains Hatobuilico Friendship Committee throughout the 2014-2015 financial year.

It also recommends Council endorsement of the Committees 2015-2016 annual plan including:

- The review of the scholarship programs including the recommendation to continue the scholarships program for existing students only;
- the donation of a DVD copy of the Maulelo Music Project to the Blue Mountains City Council library; and

- the hosting of the visit from Dr Kirsty Sword Gusmao AO, Goodwill Ambassador for Education to recognise 10-years of friendship between the Blue Mountains and Hatobuilico.

Finally this report requests that Council recognises the impact of the drop in the value of the Australian dollar against East Timor’s currency which is the US dollar. This has created a significant challenge for the sustainability of the scholarship program due to the associated drop in the value of funding for this program in real terms.

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Does this paper need to go to a briefing session OR have Ward Councillors been briefed?: No

ATTACHMENTS/ENCLOSURES

1	Mau-lelo Bui-lelo Project - Notification of project completion	15/208982	Attachment
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