

ITEM NO: 9

SUBJECT: BLUE MOUNTAINS HATOBUILICO FRIENDSHIP COMMITTEE ANNUAL REPORT 2015-2016

FILE NO: F09798 - 16/233493

Delivery Program Link

Principal Activity: Civic Leadership

Service: Governance and Risk

Recommendations:

1. *That the Council acknowledges the achievements of the Blue Mountains Hatobuilico Friendship Committee (BMHFC) 2015-2016 including:*
 - a) *undertaking a review of the existing scholarship program including finalising all scholarships to students in this program;*
 - b) *developing a plan for a new scholarship program in consultation with the Hatobuilico Komite and the not-for-profit organisation – the Alola Foundation;*
 - c) *hosting East Timor into the Future: celebrating our first ten years of friendship with guest speaker Dr Kirsty Sword Gusmão Goodwill Ambassador for Education Timor-Leste and community organisations - Blue Mountains East Timor Sisters, Springwood East Timor Support Group, Blue Mountains Trek for Timor;*
 - d) *supporting Cinema Lorosae’s translation of the movie Paper Planes into Tetun and screening of the film in Hatobuilico; and*
 - e) *attending the Australian-East Timor Friendship Conference in Melbourne in October 2015.*
 2. *That the Council endorses the annual plan for the 2016-2017 financial year including:*
 - a) *the establishment of a new scholarship program to be administered by the Alola Foundation, which will enable six students from the Hatobuilico community to undertake tertiary education in areas of study that will benefit their local community; and*
 - b) *updating the Council website to reflect on the achievements of the last ten years, the activities of the Friendship Committee and links with other local organisations and activities in the Blue Mountains to support the development of East Timor.*
 3. *That the Council notes the establishment of the not-for-profit organisation Together for Timor Inc which aims to undertake fundraising and co-ordinate the development of projects to support community development in Timor, and in particular in Hatobuilico;*
 4. *That the Council writes to the organising committee of the Trek for Timor to thank them for their extraordinary efforts enabling the community to raise over \$70,000 worth of funds which will support projects in Hatobuilico, which will in turn, help strengthen the Blue Mountains Hatobuilico friendship relationship;*
 5. *That the Council endorses the new membership of Jenny Coles to the Blue Mountains Hatobuilico Friendship Committee; and*
 6. *That the Council endorses the proposed budget allocation for the 2016-2017 financial year.*
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Report by Group Manager People & Systems:**Reason for report**

This report was prepared by the Chair of the Blue Mountains Hatobuilico Friendship Committee and provides Council with an overview of the Committees activities throughout the 2015-2016 and its proposed plan for the future.

Background

Blue Mountains City Council is one of a number of local government areas across Australia that has a formal friendship relationship with a district or sub-district in Timor-Leste. These friendship relationships were established following Timor-Leste's independence as a sovereign nation in 2002. The aim of these friendship relationships is to support community development, particularly with the eventual establishment of local government in Timor-Leste.

In 2005, in consultation with the then Consul General of Timor-Leste Senor Abel Guterres, Blue Mountains City Council established a friendship relationship with the sub-district of Hatobuilico, in the district of Ainaro. A formal agreement was signed in 2007.

The sub-district of Hatobuilico is mountainous region, 100km inland from Dili. Hatobuilico is very isolated due to its geography and the quality of the roads. It comprises three sucos Nunomogue, Mulo and Mauchiga. Most community members are subsistence farmers and improving access to education is a consistent priority for the local community.

Other Councils involved with this region are Ballarat City Council which has a friendship agreement with the District of Ainaro and the City of Greater Bendigo Council which has a friendship relationship with the sub-district of Maubisse. These friendship relationships are still active today.

Over the last 10 years, Blue Mountains City Council's friendship relationship with Hatobuilico has been strengthened by partnerships with other community-based organisations in the Blue Mountains: in particular, Blue Mountains Trek for Timor and Blue Mountains East Timor Sisters which are auspiced by the Mountains Community Resource Network (MCRN). These organisations have raised funds and directed support to projects and priorities identified by the local Hatobuilico community. It is estimated that community fundraising through the Trek for Timor and has led to investment of more than \$200,000 in community projects and infrastructure in the Hatobuilico sub-district.

In addition, over the last 10 years many members of the Blue Mountains Friendship committee and the other community groups have made self-funded visits to Hatobuilico. This has also strengthened local ties and built relationships with local leaders and community members.

In 2015, a number of Blue Mountains community members established a new not-for-profit organisation called Together for Timor Inc. This aim of this group is work with Blue Mountains City Council and the wider Blue Mountains community to build a better knowledge and understanding of the people of Timor-Leste and their needs. It will also fundraise and co-ordinate the development of projects to support community development in Timor, and in particular in Hatobuilico. This new organisation has the capacity to strengthen the objectives of the Council's Blue Mountains Hatobuilico Friendship Committee.

Overview of Blue Mountains Hatobuilico Friendship Committee activities - 2015-2016

1. Review of the student scholarship program

To strengthen the development of the Hatobuilico community, the Council has been supporting a scholarship program for university and some high school students from Hatobuilico subdistrict. When the scholarships were first established, administration was undertaken by the local Hatobuilico Komitee. However, due to changes in the Hatobuilico Komitee, administration of payments were transferred in late 2013 to the non-government organisation based in Dili called Asia Pacific Supportive Collective – Timor Leste (APSC-TL). APSC-TL administered the scholarship administration until early 2016.

As highlighted in the Council report for 2014-2015, the committee has now undertaken a review of the scholarship program which has led to the following outcomes:

1. Consultation with the local Komitee in Hatobuilico and agreement to redevelop the scholarship program
2. Distribution of the final scholarship payments to remaining students in the existing scholarship program
3. Negotiations with the Alola Foundation to establish a new scholarship program which will be designed to target six students in total, a male and female from each of the three sucos who meet the following criteria:
 - o Low income family
 - o Demonstrated academic potential in secondary school
 - o References from Xefe de Suco and school director
 - o Value of training for future of HB such as education, agriculture and health
 - o Balance between 3 Sucos
 - o Gender balance
 - o Preference to be given to students who are not already enrolled in a university course
 - o Additional requirements: Personal development course; study skills training; reporting requirements.

The Committee is grateful to the work of two of our long-standing committee members, Jude Finch and Mary Waterford, who are currently living in Timor Leste and working in Australian Volunteer International roles. They played an active role in overseeing the winding up of the existing scholarship program and ensuring students received their payments.

The committee also thanks Leo Fernandes, a local Timorese from Hatobuilico, for assisting with the administration of the final scholarship payments and APSC-TL for undertaking the administration of the scholarships over the last three years.

Jude Finch's and Mary Waterford's final report to the Committee on the scholarship program, stated that three students had passed away during their university studies. As Jude Finch stated "This is an horrific statement about the status of health in Timor-Leste". It also highlights how our ongoing involvement is still needed.

John Tweedie is now negotiating on behalf of the Committee with the Alola Foundation to establish a new scholarship program. The Alola Foundation is a major Timorese NGO founded in 2001 by the former first lady of Timor Leste, Kirsty Sword Gusmao. It has a strong track record in scholarship administration and currently has a similar scholarship arrangement for the Bendigo East Timor Support group, as well as one for the Australian Embassy in Timor. The Committee thanks John Tweedie for his work liaising with the Alola Foundation to establish the new scholarship program. The Committee anticipates that the new scholarship program will commence in early 2017.

With the conclusion of the current scholarship program, the Committee resolved to direct the remaining funds from 2015-2016 to support health and hygiene projects at the Taurema

Primary School (US\$1200) and for teacher support at the Nain Feto Ramelau Senior Secondary School in Hatobuilico (US\$4000).

2. Recognition of Wentworth Falls resident Jenny Coles, General Manager of the Office of Kirsty Sword-Gusmao through a Mayoral Minute

In July 2015, the Mayor formally recognised the work of Wentworth Falls resident Jenny Coles in supporting community and educational development in Hatobuilico. Jenny Coles was the General Manager of the Office of Kirsty Sword-Gusmao and played a key role in the development and project management of the building of the primary school in the village of Taurema in the sub-district of Hatobuilico. The Mayoral minute also recognised the contribution of the organisers, participants and sponsors for Blue Mountains Trek for Timor in 2012 and 2014, which raised the funds to enable the school at Taurema to be built.

3. East Timor into the Future: celebrating our first ten years of friendship

In addition to the opening of the school in the village of Taurema, 2015 marked the first ten years of friendship between the Blue Mountains and Hatobuilico. To recognise a decade of friendship, the Committee held a special event on 28 September 2015 at the Blue Mountains Cultural Centre.

The guest speaker was Dr Kirsty Sword Gusmão OA, Goodwill Ambassador for Education, Timor-Leste. Kirsty Sword-Gusmao spoke about the importance of education in the development of Timor-Leste and expressed her gratitude to the Blue Mountains community for our support of a variety of programs over the last ten years.

Representatives from the Friendship Committee, Blue Mountains Trek for Timor, Blue Mountains East Timor Sisters and the Springwood East Timor Support Group also spoke about the activities that they have undertaken to support the development of Timor-Leste, with a large number of their projects also supporting the sub-district of Hatobuilico. The event was attended by around 80 community members demonstrating the strong ongoing interest in Timor-Leste. A new Tais, (woven traditional Timorese cloth often given as a greeting or an expression of thanks), commissioned by the Friendship Committee and made by Timorese women, was presented to the Mayor.

4. Australian-East Timor Friendship Network (AusTimorFN)

The Blue Mountains Hatobuilico Friendship Committee is a member of Australian-East Timor Friendship Network which is based in Victoria. Committee members Councillor Romola Hollywood, John Tweedie, Pamela Nash and David Ludenia self-funded trips to Melbourne to attend the Friendship Network Forum on 24 October 2015. This was an opportunity to hear from department officers from the Victorian Government about their work, on behalf of the Australian Government, to provide training and development opportunities for Timorese as the country moves towards more de-centralised decision-making and service delivery and the eventual establishment of local government. The conference also provided an opportunity to hear about projects being undertaken by other Friendship groups. In addition, the group was briefed by former Federal MP Janelle Saffin and other campaigners about the Timor Sea Justice Campaign. This campaign is calling on the Australian Government to negotiate permanent maritime boundaries with Timor-Leste in accordance with International Law.

In response, our Council submitted a motion to the Australian Local Government Conference seeking support to call on the Australian Government to resolve the maritime boundary issues between Australia and Timor-Leste. Unfortunately, this motion was not accepted into the conference program. However, the campaign for Timor Sea Justice is continuing.

5. Supporting the translation and screening of the film Paper Planes in Hatobuilico

In April 2016, the committee was approached by Matt Wilkinson from Cinema Lorosae seeking funding support to translate and screen the hit Australian film "Paper Planes" for children and families in communities across Timor Leste. The Friendship Committee approved \$500 to support the translation and the screening of Paper Planes in Hatobuilico. Matt Wilkson said about Cinema Lorosae's project:

"It's been a whirlwind, with many kilometers traveled, many dusty roads and best of all, many smiling faces. Thanks again for your support. I'm so happy to let you know that this project has exceeded our expectations in terms of the number of remote villages visited and the great response from the thousands of Timorese who have enjoyed the film experience.

"This is not the end for Paper Planes and I'm excited to announce that the film will be distributed to all Primary schools in Timor-Leste as part of the National Science curriculum! Stay tuned for a report and photos from the official handing over of the film to the Education Ministry."

6. Ongoing contact with the Hatobuilico Komite and community

As mentioned above, two members of the Blue Mountains Hatobuilico Friendship Committee, Jude Finch & Mary Waterford, have a current 'leave of absence' from attending Committee meetings as they are both working as AVIs (Australian Volunteers International) with organisations based in Dili. While living in Timor-Leste, they have been regularly visiting Hatobuilico to build relationships, progress plans and projects with the local Komite and community. Committee member John Tweedie has also undertaken a number of self-funded trips to Timor-Leste and his visits to Hatobuilico have facilitated ongoing discussion about current programs and possible future projects.

7. Conference on Decentralisation held in Dili in August 2016

Various sessions at this Conference were attended by members of our Hatobuilico Friendship Committee, Mary Waterford, Jude Finch and John Tweedie. The conference focussed on decentralisation, including the support provided by Victorian Local and State Government to the Timorese government's decentralisation process. It also included sessions on education initiatives and on the National Program for Suco (village) Development (PNDS).

The PNDS is a government sponsored community driven development program which provides an opportunity for villages to create a positive and sustainable impact on their day-to-day life through providing funding and training for programs in Health, Water & Sanitation, Education, Agriculture, Food security & livelihoods and construction of Roads & Bridges. The funding for these programs is limited and friendship groups from Australia can be most effective when working at the community level, if they familiarise themselves with the PNDS programs in their particular district and supplement the local programs or assist in initiatives not covered by the local programs.

Over the longer term, a role of the Committee will be to assist Council in building the relationships that may provide support to Timor-Leste when it establishes local government structure. It is noted that the development of Local Government structures in Timor-Leste is a complex process which will take time to be implemented through regional and isolated areas of the country.

8. Strengthening connections between the Friendship Committee and other Blue Mountains-based community organisations

The Springwood East Timor Support Group invited Councillor Romola Hollywood to be the guest speaker at their annual fundraising dinner in November 2015. Councillor Hollywood spoke about the role of the Friendship Committee and the special relationship that our community has with Hatobuilico. Cr Hollywood also reported on the self-funded visit of

committee members to the opening of the Primary School in Taurema, which was built with funds raised by Blue Mountains Trek for Timor.

In addition, representatives of the Friendship Committee also attended the Springwood East Timor Support Group’s 20th Anniversary Cricket Match at Tom Hunter Park in Springwood in March this year.

With the establishment of Together for Timor Inc, it is anticipated this organisation will also provide opportunities for partnerships and mutual support.

9. Building connections with other Friendship Committees in NSW

Representatives of the BMHFC committee, Cr Romola Hollywood and John Tweedie, met with the NSW Facilitator of AustTimorFN, Máire Sheehan, in August 2015. This meeting provided an opportunity to provide an update of the committee’s activities as well as find out about the activities of other friendship groups in NSW. Held against the back drop of the proposed Council amalgamations, it was noted that a number of local Councils that have active friendship groups, such as Pittwater and Leichhardt may be amalgamated. The committee has agreed to keep in touch with Maire Sheehan following the outcome of the local government elections for amalgamating Council in September 2017.

2016-2017 Plan

The Blue Mountains Hatobuilico Friendship Committee’s plan for 2016-2017 will focus on the following activities:

- Establishing the new scholarship program which will be administered by the Alola Foundation. It is anticipated that the initial establishment of the new scholarship will involve significant liaison between the BMHFC, the Hatobuilico Committee and representatives from the Alola Foundation. However, once established, the scholarship program will be significantly streamlined. While quotes are still to be finalised, it is likely that cost of supporting 6 students from Hatobuilico to undertake a 4-year university degree course through the Alola Foundation will absorb the majority of the Friendship Committee’s budget.
- Working with the new members of the Hatobuilico Komite to identify educational and community development priorities for the local community – this would be done in partnership with the representatives from Blue Mountains Trek for the Timor and the newly established organisation Together for Timor Inc
- Updating and improving the information available about the work of the BMHFC on the Council’s website
- Continuing the planned summary of the in-kind contribution from members of the Friendship Committee including self-funded trips to Timor as these in-kind contributions which was put on hold due to other priorities in 2015/2016
- Continuing to build relationships between local community groups in the Blue Mountains that are working to support the development of Timor-Leste and with other friendship groups, particularly those based in the district of Ainaro.

2016-2017 Proposed Budget Allocation

<i>Annual Activities / Events and Incidentals</i>	<i>Approximate Cost (AUD)</i>
6 Scholarships @ US\$1,000each	US\$6,000
Alola Foundation 10% for the administration costs	US\$600
plus one-off incidental cost associated with the establishment of the new scholarship program	US\$400
Total Cost = US\$7,000	\$10,775
Framing of the 10 th Anniversary Tais	\$300
Other incidental costs	\$525

TOTAL	\$11,600
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Committee membership 2016-2017

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, Jenny Coles, Lydia Kolar (Council Support Officer)

Members of the Hatobuilico Ramelau Komite to 2016: 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).

It should be noted that the membership of the Komite will change due to new local administration and recent elections for the Xefe du Sucos.

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 2016-2017 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 2015-2016 financial year. It informs Council of the establishment of the not-for-profit organisation Together for Timor Inc. which aims to work with Blue Mountains City Council and the wider Blue Mountains community to build a better knowledge and understanding of the people of Timor-Leste and their needs

It also recommends Council endorsement of the Committees 2016-2017 annual plan including:

- Establishing the new scholarship program which will be administered by the Alola Foundation
- Updating and improving the information on the website
- Approving Jenny Coles as a member of the Friendship Committee, noting that she will bring considerable knowledge, skill and networks to support the work of the committee.

And in conclusion recommends that Council writes to the organising committee of the Trek for Timor to thank them for their extraordinary efforts enabling the community to raise over

\$70,000 worth of funds which will support projects in Hatobuilico, which will in turn, help strengthen the Blue Mountains Hatobuilico friendship relationship.

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

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