

ITEM NO: 18**SUBJECT: EAST TIMOR FRIENDSHIP COMMITTEE - 2010 ACHIEVEMENTS REPORT
- CONFIRMATION OF NEW COMMITTEE MEMBERS - ENDORSEMENT OF
AGREEMENT WITH EAST TIMOR SISTERS - APPROVAL OF EXPENSES
FOR TOURISM RESEARCH PROJECT - TREK4TIMOR 2010****FILE NO: F01154 - 11/55578**

Management Plan Link*Principal Activity:* Social - Looking After People*Service:* Cultural Development*Project:* Support cultural development

Recommendations:

1. *That the Council receive the report on the activities of the BMETFC;*
2. *That the Council appoints Denis Rice, Ursula De Almeida, Fiona Christian and Anne McKenzie as members of the Committee;*
3. *That the Council endorses the agreement between BMETFC and BMETS;*
4. *That the Council notes the expenses of \$767.00 incurred as part of the Tourism Research Project and be endorsed from the BMETFC budget vote; and*
5. *That the Council notes the recent successful Trek4Timor event and the \$61,000 raised and formally notes the role of Maggi Williams as Convenor of the Organising Committee of this event.*

Report by the General Manager:**Reason for report**

The purpose of this report is to inform the Council about the activities of the Blue Mountains East Timor Friendship Committee (BMETFC) during 2010 and the first part of 2011.

It is also to seek endorsement for the appointment of new committee members, endorse an agreement with the Blue Mountains East Timor Sisters (BMETS) Group and to seek endorsement for expenses to be taken from the BMETFC budget for costs incurred as part of the recent tourism project.

The role of members of the BMETFC and in particular the role of our member, Maggi Williams as Organising Committee Convenor and the successful Trek4Timor event during September 2010 that raised \$61,000 for projects in Timor should also be noted.

Background

The BMETFC was established by unanimous decision of Blue Mountains City Council at its January 2005 meeting. It adopted the subdistrict of Hato Builico as its partner community following a recommendation by the consul general of Timor-Leste, Senhor Abel Guterres.

Friendship relationships such as the one between the Blue Mountains and Hato Bulico are an extremely important process for providing support for the development efforts of the people of Timor-Leste.

A formal agreement was signed in November 2007, between the BMCC and the District Administrator for Hato Bulico, which forms the basis of our ongoing relationship.

Hato Bulico sub-district is comprised of three villages and twenty-one sub-villages. It is in the district of Ainaro in the mountainous centre of Timor-Leste, 100km south of Dili. Hato Bulico is situated at the foot of Mount Ramelau, Timor-Leste's highest mountain.

In July 2007 members of the BMETFC met with Hato Bulico community members who formed a local Committee (HB Comite). In September 2007, with the assistance of Beba Sequierra, the HB Comite developed a strategic plan.

In April 2008, the BMETFC developed its own Strategic Plan in response to the priorities identified in the HB Comite Plan. Each year since then this plan has been updated in response to recommendations from the HB Comite and BMETFC members who have visited the area.

Activities in 2010

There have been several private self-funded trips to Timor-Leste by members of BMETFC during 2009 and 2010 as follows:

March 2009 – Judy Finch and Carol Cooper attended an International Women's Peace Conference hosted by Timor-Leste and held in Dili over 3 days. Aunty Carol Cooper attended on the special invitation of Kirsty Sword Gusmao. Whilst in Dili, Ms Finch and Aunty Carol Cooper had the opportunity to meet with four members of the Hato Bulico community.

February 2010 – Maggi Williams and Gail Clifford participated in a sports program with schools in the Hato Bulico sub-district. This included distribution of sports equipment which had been purchased with funds obtained from the Australian East Timor Friendship Schools Program. They also participated in a sport workshop organised by Kate Owen, an Australian Volunteer International (AVI) from Ballarat and held with teachers from Hato Bulico sub-district.

March 2010 - BMETFC hosted a visit to the Blue Mountains by Padre Adriano who is now resident in Hato Bulico and a member of the HB Comite.

June 2010 – Gabrielle Kirby spent some time in Hato Bulico teaching English Language classes.

June/July 2010 – Mary Waterford, Judy Finch and Gabrielle Kirby visited Hato Bulico where they met with HB Comite members and established procedures for reporting on projects and expenditure of funds sent from the Blue Mountains. They also attended a celebration event in Dili where one of the Master of Ceremonies was a young woman whose education scholarship is funded by BMETFC.

April/August 2010 – Fiona Christian and Anne McKenzie spent five months living in Timor-Leste, including three and a half months in Hato Bulico researching the potential for income generation for residents through tourism projects and documenting walking trails for promotion amongst potential tourists. Outcomes from this project include the booklet, "Walking in Hato Bulico Timor Leste" and a Hato Bulico website, (<http://hatobulico.wordpress.com/>).

October 2010 – John and Elaine Telford visited East Timor and although unable to visit Hato Bulilico they did have contact with the HB Comite through Allau (Laurindo) Amaral, a young man from the community who is now working in Dili. They also met with Bronwyn McNamee who had just spent a week working with teachers in the Ainaro District, including the Hato Bulilico sub-district.

The above list of visits is testimony to the commitment of members of the BMETFC to ensuring that the Friendship Agreement with Hato Bulilico is not just a symbolic gesture of friendship, but that it produces practical outcomes which enhance the opportunities for people in the Hato Bulilico sub-district to access education, health and income-generating programs.

Projects supported in 2010

The main projects in Hato Bulilico which have been supported with funds from the BMCC in 2010 are:

1. Scholarships for secondary and tertiary level students from families who could not otherwise afford the school fees;
2. Seedlings for reforestation of walking paths;
3. Sports equipment for schools across the sub-district; and
4. Tourism research for Walking Tracks in Hato Bulilico.

Trek4Timor Blue Mountains 2010

This event was organised and managed by BMETFC and BMETS with the help of other community volunteers. In order to be able to offer tax deductibility for donations, we arranged for it to be auspiced by the Mountains Community Resource Network. The Trek4Timor was held on a glorious spring day in September and was a huge success with 250 people trekking either 13km or 45km. Each trekker paid a \$30 registration fee which covered the costs of staging the event and they were each required to raise a minimum of \$150 in sponsorship. They took to this with such enthusiasm that we raised a total of \$61,000 which will go to supporting projects in Timor-Leste, including Hato Bulilico.

We have an agreement with the Kangaroo Valley East Timor Support Group that we will alternate with them in staging this event, so the next one in the Blue Mountains will be in 2012.

The success of the event was due also to the dedicated work of a Joint Committee headed by Maggi Williams and to the support of at least 100 volunteers who acted as marshals and checkpoint crew. The local business community also supported the event with donations and some entered a team of trekkers in the event. The St John Ambulance volunteers provided First Aid and WICEN provided a communication network.

In November 2010, the Joint Committee agreed to contract Ursula De Almeida to undertake some research into potential avenues for supporting a variety of projects in Timor-Leste, including in Hato Bulilico, so that the funds raised by the trek for Timor would be spent on projects which provide the maximum benefit to the citizens of Timor-Leste. Her report is now being considered by the Joint Committee.

AVI in Timor-Leste

Judy Finch, a member of BMETFC is currently in Timor-Leste for 12 months as a volunteer with Australian Volunteers International (AVI). A part of this role she will be working with the HB Comite to develop a targeted plan for expending the Trek4Timor funds to bring maximum benefit to the community.

MOU with BMETS

Because the BMETFC is collaborating with BMETS on activities such as the Trek4Timor, members of both groups believe it would be advantageous to sign a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) between the two groups which sets out the roles of each group and details a procedure for settling any disputes between the groups if such should arise when working together on projects.

A copy of the MOU is available and we suggest that it be incorporated as an attachment to the Terms of Reference for the BMETFC which already contains a clause stating: “where required, work with other community organisations, government and corporate entities to achieve goals.”

Tourism project reimbursement of expenses

While Fiona Christian and Anne McKenzie were completing the tourism research project, they incurred personal expenses of \$767. These expenses included the purchase of stationery and dictionaries, a kettle and other kitchen equipment for the local school, minor plumbing repairs for the local school, handwoven tais (scarves) for the BMETFC and payment for the local guides who assisted with investigating the walking tracks. It is further noted that all travel, accommodation and living expenses for Ms Christian and Mc McKenzie were self funded.

New BMETFC Committee Members

One Member of the Committee, Gabrielle Kirby has resigned.

The Committee requires that the Council approve the appointment of Denis Rice, Ursula De Almeida, Fiona Christian and Anne McKenzie as new committee members.

Sustainability Assessment

Effects	Positive	Negative
Environmental	Nil	Nil
Social	The Council is supporting the development of long term relationships between the Hato Bulico community and our own. Money spent by the BMETFC is also carefully and strategically directed towards projects which will have be greatest positive outcomes in the community in terms of providing physical resources for by the community to use, development of a sustainable tourism industry and education of secondary and tertiary students and.	Nil
Economic	Nil	Nil
Governance	In accordance with the Council’s adopted policies, the operation of the Committee is being conducted in a transparent manner particularly with regard to spending the approved budget.	Nil

Financial implications for the Council

There is \$3,925 remaining to be spent in the approved budget for 2010-11 and the payment Anne McKenzie and Fiona Christian’s expenses of \$767 will be deducted from here. The expenses have been reviewed by the BMETFC and are considered to be reasonable and important for the success of the BMETFC projects.

Legal and risk management issues for the Council

NIL

External consultation

NIL

Conclusion

The BMETFFC members have been very active and by working in partnership with BMETS and with the support of a wide section of the Blue Mountains community, we have been able to support a number of projects of benefit to the Hato Bullico Community.

We would like to thank the Council for their support of BMETFFC and we seek endorsement of our recommendations.

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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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