

## Visit to Timor-Leste, June-July 2018

### Friends of Aileu (East Timor) Project Officer

#### PURPOSE

This report provides a summary of a visit to Aileu, Timor-Leste, in June-July 2018, undertaken by the East Timor Project officer on behalf of the Friends of Aileu.

#### POLICY CONTEXT/STRATEGIC ALIGNMENT

The East Timor Project Officer undertook a working visit to Timor-Leste during June-July 2018, as part of the Project Officer's 2018 work plan as discussed at the Friends of Aileu Community Committee. The work plan is designed to support delivery of the Friends of Aileu Strategy and Action Plan, endorsed by Council in August 2016. The Strategy and Action Plan supports implementation of the Friendship Agreement 2016-2020 (renewed in 2016) and the Municipal Cooperation Agreements (commenced in 2016).

#### INTRODUCTION/BACKGROUND

The visit was undertaken between Tuesday 19 June and Saturday 14 July, including 24 nights:

- Friends of Aileu activities only: 10 nights (Darwin 1, Dili 5, Aileu 4)
- Friends of Aileu activities combined with the role of co-facilitator for a CERES Global permaculture/school gardens visit: 14 nights (Dili 3, Aileu 7, Venilale 1, Atauro 3).



CERES group being introduced to sacred / historical site & Aileu origin story by elder of the Suku Liurai community

## OUTCOMES

The visit achieved all planned outcomes, principally:

- Several meetings with Joao Tilman do Rego, Aileu Municipal Administrator, Victoria Mesquita do Rego, Aileu Municipal Secretary and Friends of Aileu contact person, Camilo da Costa, Aileu Vila Community Development Officer assisting the Municipal Secretary with friendship liaison, other staff of the Municipal Administration and members of the Aileu Relationship Commission, during which:
  - The Aileu Municipal Administrator commended Friends of Aileu and Moreland and Hume City Councils for their active and beneficial friendship engagement which compare very favourably other less active international engagements
  - A volunteer role to assist Camilo da Costa with friendship liaison was discussed for Domingo Sarmiento, the former President of the Rotaract Club of Aileu who undertook a professional development placement with Friends of Aileu in March-April 2018.



Meeting with members of the Aileu Relationship Commission

- Participating in a meeting of the Aileu Relationship Commission (the counterpart to the Friends of Aileu Community Committee) and a meeting between Municipal Administration and Relationship Commission members with past, continuing and prospective student participants in the Cr Andy Ingham Aileu University Scholarship Program, where the new candidate selection process being developed by the Aileu Relationship Commission's was further developed explained to candidates.
- Several meetings with representatives of the Aileu Anan Association and the Rotaract Club of Aileu, including developing plans for these organisations to assist Friends of Aileu and the Aileu Relationship Commission with an evaluation of the outcomes for the university scholarship program from 2004 to the present, and with collecting interviews for inclusion in a proposed multi-media publication to celebrate the 20<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the friendship relationship in 2020.
- Several meetings with representatives of Aileu Resource and Training Centre (ARTC), Uma Ita Nian Parish Clinic and its St Francis Assisi Disability Workshop, and the Maryknoll Sisters in Aileu, including discussions on progress with implementing activities supported by Friends of Aileu.

# Friends of Aileu

A partnership established in 2000

Building Strong Communities in Timor-Leste and Australia

- Gaining an updated understanding of the developing roles, responsibilities, capabilities of the above and other partner organisations, their recent and current activities and future priorities relevant to the friendship relationship.



CERES group & Catechists working on Kadalak Dame Peace Garden



With host family at Venilale permaculture garden

- Contributing to the success of the CERES Global permaculture/school gardens group's visit, including its engagements with:
  - The ARTC and the Aileu Parish Catechists, sharing design ideas and engaging in a hands-on activity to install a sample water-sensitive garden bed as part of the overall development of the Kadalak Dame Peace Garden as a follow up to the concept design that was developed as part of the 2016 CERES Global permaculture design certificate group's visit
  - The Director, staff and students of the Dom Baumeta Central School, reviewing progress with the demonstration permaculture school garden funded by Friends of Aileu, identifying opportunities to support this by fundraising for improvements to the village water supply and receiving an invitation to broker a school to school friendship relationship
  - The Director, staff and students of the Aileu Portuguese Reference School, receiving an invitation to broker a school to school friendship relationship
  - Fernando Madeira of Da Terra NGO, learning about the ways permaculture approaches are being combined with local knowledge, needs and aspirations as part of integrated community-centred development processes centred on improving agriculture diversity and sustainability in remote villages in Baucau, Venilale and Atauro
  - Meeting with Ego Lemos of PERMATIL and school garden program facilitators to discuss progress with and priorities for further development of this program endorsed by the Timor-Leste Ministry of Education
  - Visiting the Leublora Green School in Maubisse and a vanilla farm in Aileu
  - Partner organisation representatives Joaquin dos Reis, ARTC, Domingos Sarmiento, Aileu Rotaract and Ana Tilman, Aileu Oral Health Education Project, who participated in various aspects of the above engagements.



Inspecting water source for Dom Baumenta School



CERES group at Aileu Reference School

- Participating in a range of networking activities in Dili, including:
  - Meeting with Ego Lemos of PERMATIL and members of the joint Timor-Leste-Australian team undertaking an assessment of the school garden program
  - Meeting with Victoria University alumni and members of the NGO Life Skills Education
  - Attending the celebration for the appointment of the VU alumnus Dulce de Jesus Soares as Minister for Education, Youth and Sports in the new government formed following the elections earlier this year
  - Attending the Timor-Leste launch of the Kim McGrath's book 'Crossing The Line', by Steve and Terry Bracks and Alfredo Pires, Timor-Leste Minister of Petroleum and Resources
  - Meeting with the Director, Administration Manager and former Director of FONGTIL, the Timor-Leste NGO Forum.

## PROPOSED FURTHER ACTION

Further discussions will be undertaken with relevant parties to:

- Provide input to finalising the scholarship program selection process and developing updated operating parameters for the Aileu Relationship Commission and friendship liaison
- Finalising a brief and budget for the Aileu Anan Association to assist with evaluation of the outcomes for the university scholarship program and with collecting interviews for inclusion in a proposed multi-media publication to celebrate the 20<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the friendship relationship in 2020
- Preparing for a follow up CERES Global engagement in 2019, to include further collaboration on the Kadalak Dame Peace Garden development
- Realise the school to school relationships proposed with Dom Baumeta Central School and the Aileu CAFÉ Reference School, and initiate related fundraising including for the water supply system and priorities for the school garden programs
- Identify professional development opportunities for Joaquin dos Reis as part of the ARTC staff development program.