

## Welcome!

This is the first of what we hope will become a regular newsletter that will provide you with information about developments with the Friends of Baguia.

The Friends of Baguia is a Community based group that is working to develop a functioning friendship agreement with the sub-district of Baguia.

We want to work in partnership with the people of Baguia on projects that will benefit their community and identify opportunities where the people of Baguia can contribute to the Stonnington community.

For any additional information please contact:  
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8290 3310

## Friends of Baguia Coordinating Group.

### **Tuesday the 1<sup>st</sup> March 2005**

Those in attendance:

- Angela Lecomber,
- Tony Dawson,
- Susan Cosgrave,
- Kathy Sholl,
- Alister Sholl,
- Jean Ling,
- Derarca O'Mahony,
- Cr Anne O'Shae,
- Rod Amos (City of Stonnington)

There was no formal agenda for this meeting, but the evening's discussions fell into the following categories:

- Why are we here?
- What is our purpose?
- How will we do it?

It was suggested that a record of the meeting should be included in a newsletter rather than as formal minutes, because the group's discussions and decisions would be of interest to a broad range of people who have expressed interest in the Friends of Baguia. The newsletter is to be titled: **Bondia Baguia**.

(Note: "Bondia" is the East Timorese greeting for "Good day" or "Good morning").

## Why are we here?

Initially there was some discussion pertaining to how the committee should be structured, and the point was raised that the group needed to be clear about their objectives.

Rod had received advice from Bernie Milane, who chairs the VLGA (Victorian Local Governance Association) Timor Leste Working Group, that it was very important that the Friendship group be driven by the community and that Council be a support to that group.

It was decided that the Friends of Baguia group did not need formal committee roles and positions at this stage in its development. Also, the group would be known as the "Coordinating Group" rather than an Organising Committee. It was acknowledged that there was a need for formal meetings so that members maintain a sense of commitment to all the people in the Friendship group and to also ensure that agreed activities and actions are followed through.

## What is our purpose?

The common understanding was that everyone shared an empathy with the Timor Leste community and that together they could coordinate a functional relationship between the sub-district of Baguia and the City of Stonnington to achieve positive outcomes that would benefit and strengthen both communities.

The group recognised that contact needed to be made with other organisations / councils who have been through the initial phase of setting up a friendship group to see whether any ideas/experiences could be captured to assist in setting up Stonnington's Friendship group.

Members of the Friendship group had already made contact with people who are currently participating in friendship groups in other municipalities, and some of the good advice from these groups, included:

1. The main drive has to come from the community.
2. Try to identify a group or project that you can partner with on an existing project.
3. Recognise that any project needs to be sustainable in the long term (ie don't raise funds for a kinder if there is no money to staff the kinder in the years to come.)
4. Don't assume you know what assistance is required.

## How will we do it?

The group endorsed the proposal that the "Friends of Baguia Coordinating Group" would operate for an initial phase of six months, meeting on a monthly basis. This would provide time for the group to create relationships, gain a better understanding of what the group should be doing to advance the friendship agreement, and to establish the group's capacity to achieve the identified requirements.

It was agreed that some of the monthly meetings would be held on a more informal basis with a guest speaker on a Timor related topic. It was hoped that these gatherings would encourage the participation of people who are interested in the Friendship Agreement, but do not wish to be part of the Coordinating Group.

The City of Stonnington will provide the administrative support and provide resources in terms of photocopying and postage. In addition some of the "legwork" will be completed to assist members of the group to achieve identified goals. This support will be provided by Rod Amos.

Next Meeting: Tuesday 12, April 2005  
RSVP: 7, April 2005.

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## Friendship Agreements,

### **(Reprinted from VLGA website)**

In 1999 Darebin City Council approached the VLGA (initially unsuccessfully) to address the issue of local democracy in East Timor. This was seen as a matter consistent with the VLGA's own charter. The VLGA has worked to assist the ballot and peace process and then to facilitate Victorian local governments' role in the community rebuilding phase.

Since the independence referendum and its bloody and destructive aftermath in August/September 1999, a number of local governments have begun to establish 'Friendship City' relationships with communities in East Timor. The Friendship City model is about building community-to-community relationships over a long period. These relationships offer people in our communities the

opportunity to get involved at the grass roots level with a specific community in East Timor.

Local governments have an extremely important, long-term role to play in East Timor. By virtue of our close links to the general community, and our close relationships with the people of East Timor, we are well placed to offer long-term material support, expertise, and friendship to this emerging nation. The VLGA East Timor Working Group is open to all Victorian local governments. It is providing some co-ordination and inspiration to the work of local governments and, through the relationship with CAA/Oxfam, it is connecting local governments' efforts to on-the-ground programs in East Timor.

## Library Books for Timor Leste

When: Friday 29 April, 2005

Where: Hawthorn Town Hall  
360 Burwood Road, Hawthorn

Tickets: \$50

Time: Doors open 7.30pm

Trivia starts 8.00pm

A gourmet buffet at your shared table will be provided. Drinks BYO. Souvenir bottles of wine will be available for purchase.

For tickets contact Patti

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## Coffee With Abel Gutteres

On Sunday the 12<sup>th</sup> of December a group of 18 people met with Abel Gutteres. Abel spoke for about 10 minutes about the growth of Friendship city relationships and the groundswell of support from communities around Australia. He emphasised the friendship aspect rather than a rich country a helping a poor country.



**Morning  
Coffee with  
Abel Gutteres  
at Gorgio's in  
Malvern  
12 Dec, 2004**

## VLGA Timor Leste Network & Support Group Workshop

**Saturday 5th March 2005**

*(Brief summary, by Kathy and Alister Sholl)*

Approximately 40 people were present representing Timor Leste, VLGA staff, and about 10 local friendship groups.

The main messages from all the speakers, in no special order, were:

- Hasten slowly, listen to what our friends want.
- Remote areas appear to be forgotten by government, and need boosting to a decent level before main towns get even further ahead.
- We should not give material things that can be made locally.
- Aim to increase local employment, knowledge and most importantly confidence.
- Need to encourage consensus in local communities. During the struggles, everyone co-operated by necessity, but since independence, an attitude of everyone for themselves is growing.

The Friendship Group community has a wide knowledge and experience. We must not ignore this resource. Some groups have been operating for 5 years, while some like Stonnington are just starting.

The "Time of Hunger" was discussed by the Timor Leste delegates, whose views varied according to their place of origin. Some participants noted that you couldn't expect people to be interested in health and education when they are hungry.

Sending crop seeds optimised for Australia is usually not beneficial, with risk of degrading seed stocks of the best local strains.

An on site Liaison will soon be based in Dili, to co-ordinate activities. One person for Australian Volunteers International, and another for VLGA Friendship Groups. The Friendship Schools may have a third.

Next Workshop to be held within 3 months. Let Friends of Baguia have something to report.

## Tetum Language Classes

A new 8-week term of classes commences on March 12<sup>th</sup>. East Timorese students who are studying at University in Melbourne run the classes. They are held on Saturday mornings from 10am to noon at the following address:

Melbourne East Timorese Activity Centre (METAC)  
The Factory (a one-storey small blue building)  
Belgium Avenue  
Richmond 3121

Contact: Immanuel 0401 049 825  
or [timor@iprimus.com.au](mailto:timor@iprimus.com.au)

## Tetum Course Review

*(from Jean Ling and Kathy Scholl)*

*Haló ema hotuhotu. (Hello, or Hi everyone)*

Early in February thirty-four willing students met at Melbourne University for a week to learn to read, write, and speak Tetum. We came from different areas, some from country, some from interstate, but most from Melbourne. A multitude of occupations were represented: from Uni students to surgeons and nurses; from church groups to teachers and journalists. There was one of almost everything and of course a sprinkling of Friendship group members.

Some had been to Timor Leste, and some were going. Each had a mission. Our common aim was to improve our communication skills, with the intensive short course being designed to provide those skills in a matter of a few hours per day.

We repeated phrases over and over, we were courageous, mistakes were made, we laughed, we sighed, but we learned. We had to pronounce Tetum like a native speaker! At the end of the week, having made a lot of new friends and contacts in the Timor Leste network, we achieved much, we came away not only enthused but also inspired.

*Boa sorte até logu.*

*(Good luck, see you later)*

## Timor Sea Justice Campaign

Are looking for prominent Australians to sign an Open Letter to the Australian negotiating team by March 7th. For further details refer:

[www.timorseajustice.org](http://www.timorseajustice.org)