



Bondia Baguia

December 2014



Stonnington Baguia MOU

Friends of Baguia are delighted to announce that the City of Stonnington has signed a Memorandum of Understanding to guide how it will continue to work with the Sub-District of Baguia over the next 5 years. This historic signing was on 28th by Mayor Adrian Stubbs and Baguia Sub-District Administrator Antonio dos Ramos. Friends of Baguia wish to thank the Council for agreeing to this MOU and continuing to support the people of Baguia.

Friendship Conference by Judy Lowe

In late July Friends of Baguia committee members had the opportunity to take part in the Melbourne conference 'Working Together with Timor-Leste: The Next 10 Years'. We were very happy to host Antonio dos Ramos (Baguia Sub-District Administrator) and Leopoldina Guterres (Director Baguia High School) to attend the conference.

This was made possible through a City of Stonnington community grant. The Conference provided a great opportunity for a diverse group of people working to support Timor-Leste to discuss ways to meet the challenges of the next phase of nation-building and to work together in doing so. The conference featured keynote speaker Sr. Agio Pereira, Minister of State and President of the Council of Ministers.

Delegates appreciated the opportunity to share both our successes and challenges working in Timor-Leste and to learn from each other's experiences. A special Timorese inspired conference dinner was held on Friday 25 July. Entertainment provided by Timorese singer-songwriter, Ego Lemos, ensured a lively night of music and dancing was enjoyed by everyone.



Baguia Conference stand - Committee, Timorese & supporters

From Parliament to Snow

Apart from attending the Conference our Timorese guests were kept very busy with Melbourne

city tours, a guided tour of Victorian Parliament by MP Judith Graley, a guided tour of the Waste Station and Malvern Gardens by Stonnington staff, a visit to Cranbourne Botanic Garden, and a day trip to Lake Mountain for their first ever experience of snow! Leopoldina also visited several schools.

Desks & Chairs Galore! By Derarca



Container loading team at Rotary DIK Footscray - Job finished!

The Rotary Club of Hawthorn generously organised a 40ft Container to be shipped to Baguia. In September, at the Rotary DIK (Donations In Kind) Footscray warehouse Rotarians and FoBaguia members packed 240 school desks, 820 chairs, 122 rolls of material, 10 blackboards, 2 sewing machines, 154 boxes of donated goods - clothes, bedding, toys, school and kindergarten supplies. Musical instruments and 2 sound systems were also donated by members of the Glen Waverly Uniting Church.

The Timor End By Derarca



Leopoldina & Meagan with instruments donated by Steve Fraser

I flew to Timor at the end of October to organise the Container unloading and the logistical issues of getting so much gear safely up to Baguia. In true Timor-style all well-laid plans kept constantly changing. However, in a 2-day operation involving 5 large trucks and my 4WD packed to the hilt with valuable musical instruments and sound systems it all finally arrived in Baguia! The largest truck with all the palletised desks took 5 hours to travel the last 79kms of dreadful road from Baucau. Then came the exhausting job of unloading it all – but there were Timorese smiles all round as each truck arrived over a 6 hour period – “Obrigada” – Thanks to Australia was constantly being said to me! The next week, local trucks were hired to take the desks and chairs from Baguia town to those schools that needed desks and had road access. I supervised 1 loading and tried to restrict load sizes. It was a relief that despite an obvious lack of OH&S and school boys riding Timor-style on top of trucks – no one was hurt.

As always the strong Rufagua villagers had to carry their 25 desks and 50 chairs up their steep mountain goat track for 2 hours.



A load of desks & chairs heading up to Aflocai Primary School

Christmas has come early to Baguia – as the Rotary boxes had loads of brand NEW clothing: suits, skirts, jackets and fleeces! The Timorese wanted to know the Australian prices of items and their eyes were wide at the prices I quoted. Everyone was beaming smiles – that heavy fleece jacket on the right was so treasured by its new owner he wore it every day fully zipped up despite 33C humid temperatures!



Leopoldina & teachers in new jackets & skirts from Rotary



Parabens! / Congratulations to Sergio



We congratulate Sergio da Silva Simoes as the first student to graduate on a **Friends of Baguia University scholarship**.

After 6 years studying Education & Chemistry at UNTL, he graduated on 21 November, sending Derarca a text message in Tetun that expressed his **“Thanks and blessings to all of those from Friends of Baguia who have supported me for all these years and enabled me to successfully attain this Degree”**

Note: Sergio's full story was in our last newsletter

THANKS to Youth off the Street – Overseas Relief Fund for their continued support since 2008 for the operating costs of the Baguia Computer Training Program. This has been invaluable in providing skills to rural children and adults.

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Council's support for Antonio & Leopoldina's visit to Melbourne is greatly appreciated.

