



Friends of Baguia

Timor Leste
Newsletter 8 : July 2007

Bondia = Good Morning in Portuguese and Tetum. the two official languages

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COMING EVENTS for your diary

Next Committee Meeting:

Wednesday 8th August 2007 - 6.15 to 8.15 pm
Malvern Library.

All Supporters welcome.

New Wine Range!

We are bringing you a new taste experience with a completely new expanded range of wines. Each wine style now has an individual distinctive "Friends of Baguia" label. Check out our Shiraz Viognier or Alpine Valleys Verdelho - these went down well at our recent wine-tasting evening!

Wine Order forms can be downloaded from www.baguaia.org.au. Wine enquires: Contact Adrienne on 9822 1867.

Incorporation

Friends of Baguia became an Incorporated Association in May 2007 and is now governed under it's new Rules of Association. In line with this a special meeting was held on 19th June to establish the new Committee, who are:

President:	Derarca O'Mahony
Vice President:	Tony Dawson
Secretary:	Maureen Watson
Treasurer:	Gwenyth Bigger
Fundraising:	Adrienne James
Membership:	Gaye Mitchell
Public Officer:	Tom Moloney
Committee:	Therese Dawson

In addition to our current **Supporters** who receive this Newsletter free, FoBaguia now has a paid **Membership** (\$5) for those who wish to also have voting rights.

Timorese Teacher Exchange

In October we are planning to bring out to Stonnington, Mrs Leopoldina Guterres as part of our friendship and cultural exchange with Timor. Leopoldina is a language teacher from Baguia,

who also speaks Indonesian and Portuguese. She will be here for approx 3 months to gain improved English teaching and curriculum skills, along with basic computing skills.

Leopoldina is a charming, friendly, mother of six children who speaks good English. Please let us know of any Stonnington schools that may be interested in working with Leopoldina to give her experience. Are you interested in hosting Leopoldina for a day/evening/weekend to learn more about Timor, or show her some of Victoria? Please contact Derarca on 0412 761 763 or enquiry@baguia.org.au



Leopoldina & her youngest boy Fortunato

A BIG THANK YOU to:

Rotary Toorak for "Adopting a Teacher" - they are providing the funding to pay one year's salary to the voluntary Principal/Teacher at the Baguia Community Senior High School.

Jerilderie and Berrigan communities (NSW) for the Raffle organised by Pat Dobbin, which raised \$1,235 for the Baguia orphanage.

Jean Ling (fundraising committee) who has single-handedly raised over \$2,000 to date, with all her lunches and short-breads.

Bede Doherty (wine expert) for donating his time at our recent wine launch to teach us about wines, and make it a very entertaining evening!



— City of —
STONNINGTON

CONTACTS for FRIENDS of BAGUIA

PRESIDENT: Derarca O'Mahony 0412 761 763

ENQUIRIES: Aysin Akdeniz (03) 8290 1333

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Incorporation No. A0050160K

www.baguaia.org.au



Ann Mills cutting cake with Fr Jojo at official opening

Rufagua School - Realising a Dream!

By Ann Mills (AVI in Baguia from 2003 to 2005)

Early in 2003, Joao Gusmao who was formerly from the village of Rufagua, began working on a proposal to the Australian Embassy requesting assistance to rebuild the Rufagua mountain school that had been completely destroyed in high winds. Joao's idea resulted from attending my English classes in Baguia where proposal writing had been work-shopped. My records have an entry in October 2003 which states:

A proposal to DAP (Direct Assistance Program) in the Australian Embassy in Dili, written by Joao Gusmao for the rehabilitation of Rufagua school, was successful in attracting partial funds... received \$1,234.40.

From that day, the Rufagua community began the fulfilment of their dream to rebuild their school. Numerous entries in my journal testify that the journey took 3 years and involved many trials, tireless manual voluntary work, and lobbying by the entire community. This was financially supported by many Australians including the valuable assistance of Friends of Baguia.

In October 2006, I returned to Timor and had the great honour of attending the official opening of the Rufagua Primary School. After an arduous 2 hour climb up the mountain to Rufagua, we joined with government officials and were warmly greeted by crowds of people eagerly awaiting our arrival. Welcome speeches completed, we were presented with traditional tais. Then led by young girls in colourful traditional dress playing tebe drums and accompanied by boy dancers to the new school.

Around 300 people attended Mass, which was celebrated by the Parish Priest, Fr Jojo, accompanied by Rufagua students singing and doing the readings. Following Mass, Norm Bruce, (AVI manager of Rotary Roofing Factory in Baucau, who built the roof of the school), and I were invited to cut the ribbon to the new Rufagua school. The school was blessed by Fr Jojo, and then everyone proudly inspected it.

All adjourned to a huge makeshift shelter for a concert. There was much merriment as the audience was treated to various concert items including singing, dancing, skits and a humorous dance item that caused so much laughter all were left with aching jaws and tears streaming down faces. The concert hall was quickly converted to a dining hall for a celebratory

lunch, more speeches and the cutting of the official cake. During the speeches, we were repeatedly asked to convey the deep gratitude of the Rufagua people to their friends in Australia, without whom the dream would not have been realised. This theme was repeated often by individuals during the day and night.

As night descended, the music began and the dancing started. Naturally, in Timorese fashion, both continued until daybreak! Then began the slow descent down the mountain to Baguia. A truly memorable occasion!

The people in Baguia Sub-district assert that their children are their future, and thus place a high priority on educating the younger generation. Thank you to Friends of Baguia for your part in assisting the people of Rufagua to realise their dream.

Presidential Election Report

By Melanie Delahunty, a new supporter, who has just returned from East Timor.

I have visited East Timor three times as a theatre nurse with an Orthopaedic medical team. We spend a week consulting patients and performing surgery. This year we visited Baucau which is 70km from Baguia, during the week of the Presidential elections on the 9th May.

It was a fascinating time to be in East Timor, especially with locals discussing their experiences and feelings. The most noticeable emotion was a sense of privacy; everyone would discuss their excitement at their democratic right to vote but wouldn't enter into a discussion about the candidates or their preferences.

Leading up to the election I felt no tension in the air. The day of the election was one of surprising calm, even at the polling booths where the lines were incredibly long. There was a strong feeling of presence with the Portuguese Army driving around in their armored Humvee's and UN observers on every street corner. In the hospital there was a celebratory environment as staff returned from voting showing off their dyed fingers, the method used to know who had voted, as a badge of honour.

After a week in East Timor during the election I felt unsettled. Until the parliamentary elections in June the country is at a stand still, waiting for discussions to be made, plans to be put into place and finances to be utilized.

Footnote: All the elections have now been completed peacefully, and The Age reported on 17 July that Fretilin and Xanana's party have agreed to form a unity government. Viva democracy!

Please pass this newsletter on to any friends who may be interested.