



Friends of Baguia

Timor Leste

Newsletter 9: October 2007

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

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COMING EVENTS for your diary

Social Event - A Chance to Meet Leopoldina and hear about life in Baguia

Wednesday 14 November 2007 - 6.30 to 8.30pm

Come and join us for refreshments and a wine, and learn more about East Timor!

RSVP by 9th Nov : Therese on 9576 0048 or enquiry@baguia.org.au.

Venue: St Joseph's Community Centre,
56 Fitzgerald St, South Yarra.
Parking available - enter off Chapel St.

Next Committee Meeting:

Wednesday 12 December 2007 - 6.15 to 8.15pm
Malvern Library. *All Supporters welcome.*

A Chat with Leopoldina

We are delighted to have brought out from Timor, Leopoldina Guterres, a Baguia High School teacher. She is attending English and Computer classes, and is staying in Stonnington until mid-December. She would welcome any opportunity to meet our supporters. Maybe you would like to invite her along to a function or event? To visit your school? Or simply have her over for dinner? Please contact Derarca O'Mahony on 0412 761 763 or enquiry@baguia.org.au.



Leopoldina in Stonnington - talking to the Committee about Baguia.

What are the most interesting things you have found in Australia in the one week you have been here?

Firstly, I like the relaxed, informal meetings and welcoming events I have experienced, as this contrasts strongly to the formality of Timorese traditions. Secondly, I am surprised at how everything must be so quick and short and on time! Not like in Baguia, where life is very slow paced. Lastly, the Australian food is very different to the simple rice meals we eat in Baguia.

What aspect of family life do you enjoy most with your husband and six children?

When I have time, I enjoy going for a walk with my children around Baguia, and watching them play.

What do you like most about your job as a teacher?

I want my students to achieve well in their studies and future life. Also, I enjoy teaching them the English language.

What is the best thing about Timor gaining Independence?

In Indonesian times we were unaware of many other countries such as Australia, but now we have met many foreigners and have had great experiences with them. On a personal level, if we were still ruled by Indonesia, I think I would have reached 80 years old and never have had the chance to come to Australia!! As a Nation, now we have the opportunity to improve our lives ourselves.

If you could change one thing in Baguia – what would it be?

I would like all students in Baguia Sub-District to have good English, so that they can pursue opportunities anywhere in the world. Secondly, I would want to introduce them to using computers.



Melina Sehr speaking at Prahran Town Hall, with Kirsty and Xanana (seated).

THE BEGINNINGS OF OUR FRIENDSHIP

Melina Sehr (Stonnington Councillor)

One of the highlights of my time as Mayor was meeting the President of East Timor and setting up the Friendship Relationship with East Timor.

When President Gusmao came to Melbourne in 2003, the City of Stonnington provided the Prahran Town Hall free of charge for his community event. As Mayor at the time, I was invited as a honorary guest and (much to my horror) was requested to say a few words in front of about 4,000 people with about 3 seconds preparation time!!

Thankfully, our CEO Mr Hadley Sides and I had already been entertaining the idea of offering in-kind support to East Timor in the form of a Friendship relationship, so I had some words to that effect in my head. I put the offer to the President in front of the all the people in the Town Hall, and the President in his response to me stated he was extremely keen to take us up on the offer. Later, we also spoke further about it privately. The Consul General, Mr Abel Guterres contacted me a week later with the suggestion of Baguia. Council unanimously voted in favour of establishing the relationship and a community group to provide on-going support.

It was truly humbling meeting the President and his wife, Kirsty Sword Gusmao. What struck me the most was they were both so down-to-earth and friendly. I was really surprised to learn that Kirsty was a Melbourne girl. I asked her about the contrast in lifestyle between Melbourne and East Timor, and she commented how it was very challenging and hard to get used to. I got the impression she missed home dearly, but was so in love with her husband that she would never leave his side. The other surprising thing about them was their strong family bond - both were fantastic parents who had their children on the stage with them during the formalities - Kirsty even breast-fed during it all. There were

interruptions from time to time by their young kids (one of whom was not even a year old) but they did not seem to care (and neither did we - it added to the atmosphere). I was sad when we parted ways, and always smile to myself when I think of our meeting each other.

A BIG THANK YOU to:

Tom Horniblower and friends in Ballarat for raising funds to provide scholarships for school fees to students living in Baguia who are **Refugees from the violence in Dili.**

Also to **Marianne Hale and the Korowa Girls** who raised more funding to enable us to continue these Refugee scholarships into the forthcoming school year which has just commenced.

John MacDonald for his very generous donation.

The **City of Stonnington** for their grant to commence a computer project in Baguia. This has been a key request from the community of Baguia, so this funding is an exciting start!

WELCOME to our new Stonnington Council Liaison Officer - Lisa Stafford.

Thanks to Aysin Akdeniz for her previous work assisting our Friendship Group.



Wine Range

Don't forget to put in an order and check out our 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 wine-tasting evening!

Wine Order forms can be downloaded from www.baguaia.org.au.

Wine enquires: Contact Adrienne on 9822 1867.

CONTACTS for FRIENDS of BAGUIA

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