

ITEM NO: 15

SUBJECT: EAST TIMOR FRIENDSHIP COMMITTEE ANNUAL REPORT

FILE NO: F08559 - 14/211600

Delivery Program Link

Principal Activity: Civic Leadership

Service: People and Safety

Recommendations:

1. *That the Council endorses the revised Terms of Reference;*
 2. *That the Council approves the change of the name from the Blue Mountains City Council East Timor Friendship Committee to the Blue Mountains City Council Hatobuilico Friendship Committee;*
 3. *That the Council acknowledges the achievements of the Blue Mountains East Timor Friendship Committee (BMETFC) 2013-2014;*
 4. *That the Council acknowledges the contributions of members of the BMETFC for 2013-2014: John Telford (Chair), Maggie Williams, Elaine Telford, Jude Finch, Mary Waterford, Jason Clarke, David Ludenia, John Tweedie, Pamela Nash, Jim Angel, Councillor Romola Hollywood and Councillor Don McGregor and the support of Sally Thompson as the staff representative;*
 5. *That the Council endorses the membership of the Blue Mountains City Council Hatobuilico Friendship Committee for 2014-2015: John Telford (Chair), Maggie Williams, Elaine Telford, Jude Finch, Mary Waterford, David Ludenia, John Tweedie, Pamela Nash, Jim Angel, Councillor Romola Hollywood and Councillor Don McGregor;*
 6. *That the Council thanks the committee members of the Trek for Timor for their work organising the Trek for Timor which is a flagship fundraising event that demonstrates the Blue Mountains community's support for the people of East Timor; and*
 7. *That the Council approves the payment for the current financial year to the value of USD\$8000 for scholarships to the Hatobuilico Komite via Mountains Community Resource Network, the auspice of Trek for Timor.*
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Report by Group Manager, People and Systems:**Reason for report**

Following an extensive consultative review process involving Councillor representatives of the committee, committee members and key council officers this report is presented to the Council for the purposes of:

- Inform the Council of the outcome of the review of the Committee's Terms of Reference as resolved at the Ordinary Council meeting (23 July 2013);
- Seek endorsement of the revised Terms of Reference (see attachment);
- Update the Council on the achievements of the Committee in 2013-2014 and the projects that are planned or underway for 2014-2015; and

- Acknowledge the work of the committee members over the last 18 months.

Background

The BMETFC was established by resolution of the Blue Mountains City Council at the Ordinary Meeting held on 25 January 2005, Minute 6. It adopted the sub-district of Hatobuilico as its partner community following a recommendation by the then Consul General of Timor- Leste, Senor Abel Guterres.

Hatobuilico sub-district is in the district of Ainaro in the mountainous centre of Timor-Leste, 100km south of Dili. Hatobuilico, which is comprised of three villages and twenty-one sub-villages, has a population of approximately 12,000 people, most of whom are subsistence farmers. Hatobuilico is situated at the foot of Mount Ramelau, Timor-Leste's highest mountain.

Friendship relationships, such as the one between the Blue Mountains and Hatobuilico, allow the Council to provide support for the development efforts of the people of Timor-Leste.

A formal agreement was signed in November 2007, between the Council and the District Administrator for Ainaro, which includes Hatobuilico. This forms the basis of our ongoing relationship.

Council sent a formal delegation to Hatobuilico to sign this agreement. It was led by the then Mayor Jim Angel, a Councillor, a council support officer and several Blue Mountains community members. This was recognised by both Blue Mountains City Council and the District Administrator as a government-to-government agreement.

In July 2007, members of the BMETFC met with Hatobuilico community members who formed a local committee, (HB Komite). In September 2007, with the assistance of Beba Sequeira who works for a national NGO based in Dili, the HB Komite developed a Strategic Plan.

In April 2008, the BMETFC developed its own Strategic Plan in response to the priorities identified in the HB Komite Plan. Each year since then, this plan has been updated in response to recommendations from the HB Komite and BMETFC members who have visited the area.

This strategic planning has resulted in numerous successful short and long-term projects which have a primary focus on education outcomes. The quantity and degree of these outcomes has been vastly increased by community activities and events, particularly through the Trek for Timor fundraising initiative in 2010, 2012 and 2014, which raised awareness and funds and which were supported by the members of the committee and the Council.

Other examples include hosting VIPs including Kirsty Sword Gusmao and Dulsie Soares Vice Minister for Basic Education.

Review of the Terms of Reference

At the Ordinary Meeting of the Council on 23 July 2013, the Council resolved for the Committee's Terms of Reference to be reviewed within the following 12 months. This review was to be undertaken as part of the committee's annual strategic planning process.

The review involved:

- Comprehensive analysis of the goals, objectives of the Friendship Committee and its achievements to date;
- Consideration of the governance requirements of an advisory committee of Council;
- The strategic relationships with other community groups in the Blue Mountains that also

- support community development in East Timor; and
- Consultation with the Council's governance officers.

Underpinning the review of the Terms of Reference are the goals:

- To promote a clear understanding of the relationship between the Council, its advisory committee & the wider community on the purpose of the relationship between Blue Mountains and Hatobuilico;
- To develop the friendship relationship between the Blue Mountains and HB through trusted on-the-ground links in Hatobuilico, that over time can support the implementation of local government in East Timor in the future; and
- To strengthen governance processes.

The draft Terms of Reference are attached to this report.

Renaming the committee to better reflect its purpose

As noted above, the Council's resolution to review the Terms of Reference led the committee to closely analyse its purpose and role as an advisory committee to Council. It was acknowledged that while there are a number of community-based activities occurring across the Blue Mountains including the Blue Mountains East Timor Sisters and the Trek for Timor, the Advisory Committee to Council fulfils a specific role of enabling the Council to develop its friendship relationship with the community of Hatobuilico as per the agreement signed in 2007. To recognise this, the Committee recommends that its name be changed to the Blue Mountains City Council Hatobuilico Friendship Committee. The Terms of Reference have also been refined to reflect the focus of this committee in supporting a productive friendship relationship with the Hatobuilico community.

Activities and achievements of the committee during 2013-2014

Scholarships for secondary & tertiary students from Hatobuilico

The Blue Mountains East Timor Friendship Committee has funded a scholarship program since the inception of the friendship relationship and over 200 students have received assistance to attend secondary school and university. All of these students face obstacles in undertaking their education including the scale of fees, coming from very poor families (mostly subsistence farmers), low levels of literacy in the families, the need to board in Dili to attend their school or college.

58 students were supported with scholarships in the first semester of 2014 with four students graduating from University:

- Julio da S. Xavier: Public Health Faculty in UNPAZ
- Anina Soares: Political Science Faculty at UNITAL
- Nuno Bestias Timan: Economic Management at IOB
- Barbara A.B. de Araujo.

Anina's concluding work was entitled "The Role of the Central Government and the Participation of Community toward Sanitation and Environment". Her motto that inspired her academic achievement was: "There is no success without effort, sacrifice and tears".

Nuno's research on the "Application of data collection of HARDWARE and SOFTWARE" is now being put to good use in his job as the Ainaro District Coordinator for (early warning response to violence) ATRESS Program of Belun NGO. His inspirational motto is "Need patience to face any challenge because all challenges are experiences to achieve the success".

Funds to contribute to scholarships for August–December 2014 were transferred in August 2014.

Visit from East Timorese Vice-Minister for Education, Mana Dulsie Soares

In July 2013, the Council resolved to support the visit from the East-Timorese Vice-Minister of Education Dulsie Soares. The purpose of Mana Dulsie's visit was to inform the committee and the Council about education policy in East Timor that would guide us in the development of the school at Taurema.

When Mana Dulsie Soares visited the Blue Mountains in August 2013 she praised the efforts of the Blue Mountains community in assisting the development of educational opportunities for East Timorese people at a local community level. She said that the East Timor government does not yet have the capacity to provide appropriate education to all villages so the community-to-community support provided by the Blue Mountains Friendship Committee and Blue Mountains East Timor Sisters is responding to a vital need. The Blue Mountains support through education scholarships allows children from poorer families to continue their secondary and tertiary studies. Scholarships are funded from:

- The Friendship Committee's Council funding allocation;
- Funds raised by Blue Mountains East Timor Sisters through their garage sales and annual booksale; and
- Funds allocated from the joint Trek-for-Timor events.

During her stay in the Blue Mountains, Mana Dulsie, was given a formal reception by the Blue Mountains City Council. It was hosted by then Deputy Mayor, Mark Greenhill. Mana Dulsie also addressed a Public Forum on the "Achievements and Challenges of Education in East Timor", and met on two occasions with members of the Friendship Committee and Blue Mountains East Timor Sisters.

Maulelo Music Project

In May 2014, the Council resolved to provide \$1000 towards a project to record the Maulelo, a Mambae ritual performance, in Mulo, a village subdistrict of Hatubuilico. The Mambae are considered one of the largest and oldest of the ethnolinguistic clan groups in East Timor. Many of the ritual ceremonies of the Mambae disappeared during Indonesian occupation and now much of the traditional culture is hidden. The Maulelo is a ceremony/performance unique to the Mambae in the Ainaro district.

The Lia Na'in Afonso Pereira and Fausto Mendonca from Mulo an Aldeia in the sub district of Hatubuilico explained that the Maulelo is a combination of dance, theatre and ceremony unique to the Mambae living in what is known as the Ainaro district. It is only known by very few elders in Hatubuilico, but rarely performed.

Researcher and filmmaker, Ms Ros Dunlop from Teekee Media says, "This was the first time the people of Mulo had performed Maulelo since Indonesian occupation. Thanks to the generous donation from Blue Mountains City Council and the faith you have in the Maulelo project, we have been able to preserve and instigate the passing on of a tradition which was in danger of disappearing. I look forward to being able to show the film at the end of the year or early in the New Year in the Blue Mountains!"

In May 2014, the Council also resolved to request a copy of the film of the Maulelo Ceremony Project for Blue Mountains City Council Library.

"Working Together with Timor-Leste – the next Ten Years" Conference held in Melbourne July 25/26, 2014

At the end of July, five representatives from Blue Mountains East Timor Friendship Committee attended at a national conference in Melbourne. It was convened by the Australia Timor-Leste Friendship Network & Victorian Local Govt Association, and hosted by the Darebin City Council. Representatives of most East Timor Friendship groups in Australia

were delegates to the conference. Blue Mountains East Timor Friendship Committee members funded their own travel, accommodation and registration.

The conference aimed to explore future Australian/East-Timor friendship and community development relationships following “more than 13 years of activity by Australian Governments, Local Government Friendship groups, aid organisations, businesses and community groups, working with their Timorese counterparts to support the task of establishing the new nation”.

Keynote speakers included:

- Senor Abel Gutierrez, TL Ambassador to Australia
- Mrs Armandina Gusmao, TL Consul-General for NSW
- Senor Agio Periera, Min.of State & President of TL Council of Ministers
- Senor Samuel Mendonca, Sec.State for Local Government
- Senor Miguel Carvalho, Dir. General, Dept of Local Development
- Senor Abelio Caetano, Dir. General, Dept of Decentralisation.

The benefits of attending the conference were threefold:

1. The Timor-Leste government ministers and Director-Generals laid out the process and timetable for establishing a local administrative structure across the nation;
2. The Ministers and Director-Generals also shared details of the Timor Leste's Integrated Local Development Project where funding is made available for projects decided upon and managed at the local suco level; and
3. BM Friendship Committee members were able to meet with the Ainaro District Administrator and with representatives of the Ballarat Friendship group which is linked to Ainaro, where we discussed strategies for more effectively working together to support development in the district and sub-district.

John Tweedie, a member of the Blue Mountains East Timor Friendship Committee is currently in Timor-Leste and will be following up on some of these strategies while there, and will report back to the Friendship Committee at our November meeting.

From the committee member's perspective, the conference was an invaluable opportunity to network with other Friendship Groups from around the country and share ideas about what strategies have been found to work effectively.

Other related Blue Mountains-led projects

Taurema school

Since 2012, members of the Blue Mountains East Timor Friendship Committee and the Blue Mountains East Timor Sisters have been in dialogue with community members in the small village of Taurema in the Hatobuilico sub-district. The Taurema community has determined a local priority is to build a primary school in their village to support their children's education. Following the 2012 Trek-for-Timor, the Funds Allocation Committee set aside \$60,000 of the funds raised towards the building of the primary school. The building project is overseen by the Office of Kirsty Sword-Gusmao. This office contracts the builders and it also persuaded the Timor-Leste Government to build a road from Hatobuilico to Taurema to make it possible for trucks carrying building materials to travel into the remote village.

On 19 September 2014, the Taurema community held an official sod-turning and the Blue Mountains community sent the following message of support:

“The community of the Blue Mountains are delighted that these long awaited hopes and prayers have been answered and that the children will soon be enjoying a learning space worthy of their commitment to bettering their futures.”

It is expected that the formal opening of the school will be in December 2014.

Trek-for-Timor Blue Mountains 2014

Trek-for-Timor Blue Mountains was held on 21 September 2014. Trek-for-Timor is a major biennial fundraising event to support projects in Timor-Leste. This is the third year it has been held. The event is auspiced by Mountains Community Resource Network and organised by a dedicated team of volunteers, many of whom are involved with the Blue Mountains East Timor Friendship Committee and Blue Mountains East Timor Sisters Project. Donations are administered by APHEDA which makes payments to approved projects in East Timor and monitors the progress of these projects. This year’s event had great support from Blue Mountains City Council with Councillors and staff participating in teams for the event. It is anticipated that the event will raise around \$50,000.

Building community awareness

The Blue Mountains Gazette recently published two articles about Blue Mountains Community support for projects in Timor-Leste. In August the Sydney Morning Herald published an article about the Blue Mountains Trek for Timor.

Sustainability Assessment

Effects	Positive	Negative
Environmental	NIL	NIL
Social	Continue to build positive friendship relationship with the Hatobuilico community of East Timor.	NIL
Economic	Support and encourage the Hatobuilico economy and community to grow and prosper through a friendship agreement with the Blue Mountains City.	NIL
Governance	NIL	NIL

Financial implications for the Council

The advisory committee has an annual budget allocation of \$11,000. The payment for the current financial year to the value of USD\$8000 for scholarships to the Hatobuilico Komite is to be paid via Mid Mountains Community Resource Network, the auspice of Trek for Timor, who has established mechanisms to make international monetary transfers to the Hatobuilico Komite East Timor. Donations are administered by Union Aid Abroad - APHEDA which makes payments to approved projects in East Timor and monitors the progress of these projects.

Legal and risk management issues for the Council

NIL

External consultation

There has been consultation with the Blue Mountains City Council East Timor Friendship Committee and the Mountains Community Resource Network regarding the scholarship payment.

Conclusion

That Council endorses and approves the recommendations which seek to: Inform the Council of the outcome of the review of the Committee’s Terms of Reference as resolved at the Ordinary Council meeting (23 July 2013); endorse the revised Terms of Reference; update the Council on the achievements of the Committee in 2013-2014 and the projects that are planned or underway for 2014-2015; and, acknowledge the work of the committee members over the last 18 months.

AUTHOR: Jennifer Whichelo, Project Support Officer Compliance

AUTHORISERS: Jasmine Cooper, Executive Officer

Stuart Liddell, Acting General Manager

Does this paper need to go to a briefing session OR have Ward Councillors been briefed?: No

ATTACHMENTS/ENCLOSURES

1	Blue Mountains Hatobuilico Friendship Committee - Terms of Reference	14/211376	Attachment
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