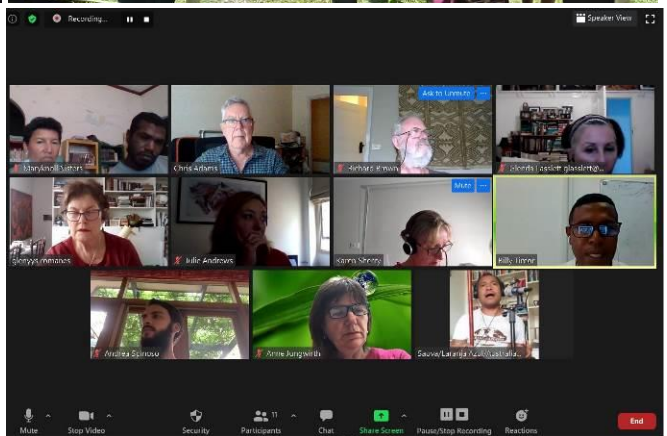


Friends of Aileu

Linking Moreland and
Hume communities
with Aileu, Timor-Leste.



Friends of Aileu Annual Report 2020 (Summary)

Activities and Achievements in 2020
and an Outlook for 2021

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Moreland
City Council



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Timor-Leste: one of Australia's nearest neighbours

Aileu Municipality, which covers a largely mountainous, partly forested and agricultural area of 730 km², is home to 50,000 people (7,600 households) 139 small hamlets (aldeias) that are administered as 33 rural villages (sucos) within four Administrative Posts (Aileu Vila, Laulara, Lequidoe and Remexio).

Moreland City Council and Hume City Council acknowledge the Wurundjeri Woi Wurrung people, including the Gunung-Willam-Balluk clan in Hume, as the Traditional Custodians of the lands and waterways in the areas now known as Moreland and Hume.

1 Highlights of 2020

1.1 A challenging year

... locally

Friends of Aileu's program for 2020 got off to a good start on 16 February, with the fourth annual **CERES Gathering for Aileu**, organised by the Grassroots Gatherings community in collaboration with CERES and Friends of Aileu. Participants shared music, culture, food and stories of friendship and raising funds for the youth development activities in Aileu - *for more details*.



Friends of Aileu at CERES Gathering for Aileu Sydney Road Street Party (with CERES intern)

At the **Sydney Road Street Party** on 1 March, Friends of Aileu shared its stall with partners CERES and Moreland Community Gardening, engaging productively with many passers-by on what was a busy and hot day.

Plans for activities to mark the **20th anniversary of Friends of Aileu in May 2020**, including with a visit by the Aileu Municipal Administrator, were discussed at the Friends of Aileu Community Committee meeting in March. However, restrictions introduced to manage the COVID-19 pandemic meant that these activities were unable to proceed.

Other activities, including the annual **Trivia Night scholarship fundraiser and a CERES Global engagement visit to Aileu** were also cancelled, as were various Council and community festivals and events in which Friends of Aileu is usually participates.

Remaining promotional and fundraising activities and committee meetings were conducted on-line, with **virtual meeting technology** being used to facilitate direct participation by partner representatives from Aileu in several meetings.

To mark the **20 years of friendship with Aileu**, in lieu of the cancelled public activities:

- A series of social media posts was published celebrating highlights of friendship activities over the years
- Moreland resident and former Brunswick councillor Elisabeth Jackson commenced work on a short history of the friendship relationship, which will provide a basis for the development of communications material to help mark the 21st anniversary of the friendship relationship with Aileu in May 2021
- Certificates of Appreciation were prepared recognising the contributions to the friendship relationship of individuals and public and community organisation partners in Aileu.

... and in Timor-Leste

The Timor-Leste economy has been significantly affected by the **COVID-19 pandemic**. While infection case numbers were kept very low and no serious illnesses or deaths were recorded, the closure of borders and the restrictions on internal travel, assembly and commercial activity have been severe, especially for poorer and otherwise disadvantaged households, including the dependant elderly and those living with disabilities.

The Australian Embassy and Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade (DFAT) played a major role in supporting the Timor-Leste Ministry of Health manage the COVID-19 pandemic. Friends of Aileu was able to support several of the many community outreach and relief efforts undertaken by health authorities and community groups in Aileu.



COVID-19 pandemic: Trader at Aileu market / Aileu Health staff delivering relief supplies

We note the passing of **Mr Martinho Matos, former District Administrator (2004-2016)** in November. Mr Martinho was a consistent supporter of the friendship relationship, warmly welcoming many delegations to Aileu and undertaking two friendship visits to Moreland and Hume, in 2005 and 2010 and will be sadly missed.

1.2 Governance and communications: maintaining the relationship

... locally

Actions during the year to maintain a sound basis for the friendship relationship included:

- Renewal of the friendship relationship, with the signing of the **Friendship Agreement 2020** by the mayors on behalf of the two Councils, the Chair of the Friends of Aileu Community Committee, the Timor-Leste Minister for State Administration and the Aileu Municipal Administrator
- Adoption by Friends of Aileu Community Committee of an updated **Strategy Plan 2020** which provides a guide for how we will progress the friendship relationship over the coming five years
- **The Friends of Aileu Community Committee** meeting five times throughout the year, providing advice to the two Councils and providing invaluable guidance, support and coordination for the friendship relationship and its various activities

Committee leadership was provided by the 2019/20 Council representatives:

- Cr Joseph Haweil, Hume City Council, as Chair
- Cr Karen Sherry, Hume City Council representative
- Cr Annalivia Carli Hannan, Moreland City Council representative.

- Maintenance of the Friends of Aileu pages on the Council websites, operation of the Friends of Aileu Facebook page and publication of the **Update newsletters: April, August and December.**

The Friends of Aileu Community Committee also considered a range of communications issues and opportunities, in preparation for development of a **Communications Plan**, which is proposed to be finalised in 2021.

... and in Aileu

A significant development was the reconvening of the local government and community committee which advises the Municipal Administrator and oversees friendship activities in Aileu.



Meeting of the Aileu Friendship Commission

The **Aileu Friendship Commission**, which resumed regular meetings in August after a period of inactivity, has commenced a review of its terms of reference.

The Municipal Administrator also tasked the Commission with developing improved procedures for managing the **Aileu University Scholarship Program** and the selection of candidate students for the 2021 academic year for consideration by Friends of Aileu. The Commission made good progress on these issues at further meetings held in October and December.

1.3 Partnership activities: working in friendship for a sustainable future

... in Aileu

The achievements of Friends of Aileu are largely based on the strong partnerships developed with organisations including Merri Health, Dental Health Services Victoria, North Richmond Community Health, CERES, Grassroots Gatherings, Moreland Community Gardening, Timorlink, Professor Patricia Vickers Rich and Prime Sci! (Swinburne University), Greenvale Rotary, Campaspe East Timor Association in Friendship (CETAF) and Wild Timor Coffee.

Support for a range of friendship activities could continue, despite the limitations on fundraising opportunities resulting from the COVID-19 restrictions, with funding from:

- The generous **donations, fundraising efforts and in-kind contributions** by these partners, particularly Merri Health, Dental Health Services Victoria and partners, CERES, Grassroots Gatherings and CETAF, supported using on-line fundraising platforms and income from the sale of Wild Timor Coffee (providing a total of \$46,397 in fundraising and donations)

- The annual **Hume City Council education donation** (2019/20 donation \$5,200 **).

Activities undertaken by Aileu partner organisations supported by Friends of Aileu and local partners in 2020 included:

➤ **The work of the Aileu Resource and Training Centre, including:**

- The staff development program, with Ana Maria Marquez nearing completion of an accounting degree (** covered by \$2,600 from Hume City Council's annual education donation)
- The O Mundo Perdido (The Lost World) geological exhibition: additional resources from Professor Patricia Vickers Rich, Prime Sci! at Swinburne University
- Kadalak Dame peace garden project and the Manu Casa village reforestation and water source protection project, collaborating with local farmers in agricultural experimentation and diversity, improving food security and developing opportunities for increased participation in the local economy



Installing water bore at Kadalak Dame Garden

Tending the Manu Casa community nursery

- The annual Aileu Expo of traditional arts and culture and local produce and products.



Aileu Expo 2020

➤ **The work of the Uma Ita Nian (Your Home) Parish Health Clinic and the community of the Maryknoll Sisters, including:**

- A sewing and knitting skills project to increase options for women's economic participation
- A sales kiosk to contribute to the clinic's financial sustainability.



Learning new skills / Uma Ita Nian women's sewing group / Exhibition at Aileu Expo 2020

- **Environmental training:** Sponsorship of participation by Aileu youth at two water resource management training camps conducted by the Timor-Leste permaculture NGO PERMATIL, being a three-day camp in March (71 Aileu participants) and a four-day camp in October (32 Aileu participants), followed by support for participants to construct water retention and groundwater recharge structures in their seven home villages.



Trainees receiving certificates / PERMATIL water conservation camp / Creating recharge pond

- **Waste management promotion, art and crafts:** The work of the Aileu youth group Arte Mambai Rai Husar, who recovered recycled materials to produce art and attractively designed furniture and other products.



Arte Mambai Rai Husar recycling waste / Classes in Peace House, Municipal Youth Centre

- **Completion of the renovation of Uma Dame (Peace House) community meeting rooms at the Aileu Municipal Youth Centre:** The electricity connection and installation of power and lighting.
- **Construction of rubbish bin and Research for a possible public toilet project:** The Rotaract Club of Aileu completed construction of a rubbish bin at the Aileu Technical and Vocational School (ESTV), with funding from Rotary Club of Greenvale, and undertook a study tour to Timor-Leste's Atauro Island where they researched examples of composting toilets in village communities and an eco-resort, with funding from donations in memory of Gary Jungwirth.



New rubbish bin at ESTV / Rotaract Club of Aileu / Study tour group Atauro eco-resort

- **The Oral Health Education Project:** Continuation of this project, coordinated by Dr Martin Hall of Dental Health Services Victoria with support from North Richmond Community Health and other professional collaborators and donors, and delivered by Aileu teachers in six Aileu schools with support from a dental health worker.
- **Teacher education:** During 2020 Friends of Aileu supported the studies of five young people from Aileu by paying the fees for their 3-year Bachelor of Teaching courses at the Baucau Teachers College, run by Marist Australia with local staff and with courses nationally accredited in Timor-Leste and to equivalent Australian standards.

All students performed well with the following results:

| Name | Year | Semester 1 | | | | Semester 2 | | | |
|---------------------------|------|------------|---|--------|------|------------|---|--------|------|
| | | HD | D | Credit | Pass | HD | D | Credit | Pass |
| Abilio Sarmiento da Costa | 3 | 6 | - | 3 | - | 2 | 5 | 2 | - |
| Maria Imaculada | 2 | 3 | 4 | - | - | 5 | 3 | - | - |
| Zeferino Simoes Mendonca | 1 | 2 | 2 | 2 | | 1 | 3 | 2 | - |
| Maria Ratu da Fatima | 1 | 3 | 1 | 2 | 1 | 1 | 2 | 3 | - |
| Alarico Matus | 1 | 3 | 4 | - | - | 3 | 2 | 1 | - |



Abilio



Maria Imaculada



Zeferino



Maria R da F



Alarico

Friends of Aileu intends to support the same five students in 2021, including Abilio who has indicated his desire to undertake a 4th year of study to complete the newly accredited Bachelor of Education.

- **Training for Aileu health workers:** Delivery of refresher training for health workers of the Municipal Health Service, conducted by Dr Gustodio Alves, Emergency Medicine Department Head at Dili National Hospital, and other volunteer doctors originally from Aileu.



Volunteer trainers and Aileu health workers MOSSA delivering COVID-19 relief packages

- **COVID-19 community relief:** Supply of basic household commodities as economic relief for disadvantaged households impacted by COVID-19 State of Emergency restrictions, by Aileu Municipal Health, Arte Mambai Rai Husar and the Aileu Solidarity Movement (the Municipal Youth Centre collaborating with the Motorcycle Trail Club).



Aileu Municipal pandemic response committee

- **Medical supplies and equipment for Aileu Municipal Hospital**, including for a COVID-19 quarantine facility.

... and locally

Friendship and cooperation were also expressed locally, through activities such as:

- **Moreland and Hume City Councils representation in the Victorian Local Government Timor-Leste Network** convened by the Department of Environment, Land, Water and Planning to work with Timor-Leste Government and municipalities supporting the decentralisation process through assistance with sector public sector skills development, including participation in meetings in February, August and December.

- **Friends of Aileu maintaining its links with the Timorese community and supporters in Melbourne**, including through liaison with, and participation in activities of, the Melbourne East Timorese Activity Centre, the East Timorese Students Association Victoria, the Australia Timor-Leste Friendship Network and the Australia East Timor Association.



Maubere Timor (FALANTIL veterans band) in Brunswick

2 An Outlook for 2021

2.1 Context

The new Councils, formed in Moreland and Hume following the elections in October 2020, include a significant number of first term councillors and feature mayoral leadership teams with significant previous involvement the Friends of Aileu. A major priority for both Moreland and Hume City Councils is to improve their customer service delivery in-line with evolving community expectations and the requirements of the Local Government Act 2020.

In Aileu it is anticipated that new appointments to senior local government positions, including Municipal Administrator, Municipal Secretary and Departmental Directors/Managers, will be finalised by the Timor-Leste Government by early 2021. Preparing for and responding to the gradual decentralisation of service responsibilities to the municipal level and development of capacities to establish representative democracy will continue to be priorities for the Aileu Municipal Administration.



Aileu Municipal Administration staff members



Plans for the future Aileu University City

Aileu has been designated Timor-Leste's University City, with progress being made on securing suitable land for initial developments planned to commence in 2021. As this vision is realised Aileu will complement the capital city of Dili as a major centre for tertiary education.

These priorities will be pursued alongside the major focus that the two Councils and the Aileu Administration, and their businesses, community organisations and populations will necessarily have on post-COVID recovery and climate change responses.

2.2 Plans

While the COVID-19 pandemic limited fundraising opportunities during 2020, Friends of Aileu finished the year with a balance in its donations account sufficient to cover ongoing commitments, including the university and teacher training scholarships other initiatives to be agreed in the areas of education and training.

Unexpended funds available for scholarship, training and education support include funds from previous Trivia Night fundraisers and Moreland City Council donations made in lieu of foregone councillor travel and allowances relating to the 2019 and 2020 terms of Council.

Fundraising will be undertaken, and new donations sought, to support other activities in Aileu, principally in the areas of community health, youth, arts, environment.

With the easing of coronavirus restrictions late in 2020, we look forward to resuming a more complete program of fundraising, awareness raising and other activities in 2021, including:

- The fifth annual CERES Gathering for Aileu on 28 February
- An event in May celebrate the 21st anniversary of the friendship relationship with Aileu
- The Trivia Quiz fundraiser for the Aileu University Scholarship Program in August.



Virtual meetings and internet-based fundraising



Aileu Commission discussing scholarship program

2.3 Challenges and opportunities

Challenges and opportunities for Friends of Aileu, include:

- Increasing knowledge of and support for the friendship relationship within the Moreland and Hume communities and amongst Council staff
- Building on the experiences during the pandemic, including making more effective use of digital technologies, including virtual meetings, social media and on-line fundraising platforms
- Strengthening existing partnerships and community involvement, including to complement the budget reserve available to support activities in education and training, including collaboration on the resumption of the Aileu University Scholarship Program and exploring opportunities to support Aileu's development as the nation's University City
- Renewing the membership and strengthening the operation of the Friends of Aileu Community Committee to facilitate it in its roles of advising the two Councils
- Engaging effectively with the Aileu Municipal Administration, the Aileu Friendship Commission and other Aileu partners, while the ability to travel between Australia and Timor-Leste is likely to remain uncertain.