

Terms of Reference: Friends of Aileu Community Committee

Background

The friendship relationship with Aileu was established on 4 May 2000, with the signing of an MOU by the Mayors of Moreland City Council (now Merri-bek City Council) and Hume City Council and Xanana Gusmão (then President of the National Council of Timorese Resistance), on behalf of Aileu.

The rationale for the establishment of the relationship was the desire by the two Councils, and members of their communities to:

- express solidarity with the people of Aileu, and
- assist in the re-building of Aileu and the restoration of local democracy following the end of the Indonesian occupation of East Timor in 1999.

The friendship relationship has evolved over time in response to the interests, needs, capacities and aspirations of our respective local governments, and of the community organisations and community members involved. The relationship, however, remains rooted in a commitment to the principles and values on which it is based, including sustainability, mutual respect, mutual understanding and Timorese-led decision making.

The friendship relationship was reaffirmed by the signing of a Friendship Agreement between the two Councils and the Aileu District Administration in 2005. The Friendship Agreement has been renewed periodically, most recently in 2020 with the Aileu Municipal Administration and the Timor-Leste Government's Ministry of State Administration (**Attachment 1**).

Following a request from the Timor-Leste Government's Ministry of State Administration to the Government of Victoria, in 2016 Moreland City Council (now Merri-bek City Council) and Hume City Council each signed a Municipal Cooperation Agreement with respect to Aileu (**Attachments 2 and 3**), which provides a framework for provision of support during the transition to responsible local government.

The friendship relationship is supported by MOU's or other agreements between the two Councils with various partner organisations in Australia, including community organisations and businesses.

The friendship relationship is underpinned by the existence of:

- The Friends of Aileu Community Committee (refer to these Terms of Reference), and
- The Aileu Friendship Commission, which includes representatives of the Aileu Municipal Administration and Aileu NGOs, community organisations and community members, and which provides advice to the Municipal Administration.

Type of Committee	<p>The Friends of Aileu Community Committee is a joint working group of Merri-bek City Council and Hume City Council.</p> <p>This committee is not governed under Merri-bek City Council's Advisory Committee and Reference Group framework or terms of reference, as its scope is quite different and there is a need to maintain flexibility for it to evolve as required and agreed between the two Councils.</p> <p>Organisational Arrangements are agreed periodically between the relevant Directors of the two Councils, most recently reviewed in 2020.</p> <p>The committee has no delegated powers, therefore cannot make any binding decisions on behalf of either Council.</p>
Purpose of the Committee	<p>The purpose of the Friends of Aileu Community Committee is to help Merri-bek City Council and Hume City Council mobilise community perspectives, knowledge, skills and resources to contribute to the friendship relationship with the Municipality and people of Aileu, Timor-Leste.</p>
Role of the Committee	<p>The role of the Committee is to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Work with and make recommendations to the two Councils, principally via the Project Officer East Timor (Friends of Aileu), to support the development and implementation of the Friendship Agreement, the Municipal Cooperation Agreements, and the Friends of Aileu Strategy Plan (Attachment 4). • Advise and assist with the conduct of awareness raising and fundraising activities and events in Australia • Advise and assist with the design, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of programs, projects and activities undertaken with or by partner organisations in Aileu and Timor-Leste.
Scope of the Committee's activities	<p>The scope of the activities of the Friends of Aileu Community Committee includes but is not limited to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Providing information and advice to inform Council decision making in relation to the friendship relationship • Providing information and advice to the Project Officer on the development, review and implementation of the Friends of Aileu Strategy Plan • Helping to identify, prioritise, design, implement, monitor, evaluate and report on activities that contribute to achieving the Goals and Objectives of the Friends of Aileu Strategy Plan

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Helping to identify interests, skills, knowledge and resources that may be applied to support community development priorities agreed with the Aileu Municipal Administration and the Aileu Friendship Commission, in collaboration with government, non-government and community organisations in Aileu • Promoting friendship, mutual respect and understanding with the people of Aileu through the sharing of experiences, culture, stories, perspectives, knowledge, skills and resources • Contributing to communications, activities and events that: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Raise awareness about the friendship relationship ○ Build networks and partnerships to support the relationship • Raise funds to support community development activities in Aileu.
Committee Structure	<p>The Committee will consist of Councillor representatives, Community members, Special Interest members, Partner Organisation representatives and Co-opted members.</p> <p>Merri-bek City Council and Hume City Council will each appoint a Councillor representative to the Committee.</p> <p>Appointments of Community members, Special Interest members, Partner Organisation representatives and Co-opted members will be made following responses to a call for Expressions of Interest or to invitations to nominate for vacant positions, taking account of each Councils governance and authorisation arrangements.</p>
Accountability	<p>The Community Committee is accountable to the two Councils through the Convenor, the Council officer responsible for coordinating the committee, which is usually the Project Officer East Timor (Friends of Aileu).</p>
Term	<p>The Community Committee term will align with the Council term and its Terms of Reference and membership will be refreshed as required by 30 June in the year after the end of each term of Council, taking account of each Councils governance and authorisation arrangements.</p>
Roles and Responsibility	<p>Community members and Special Interest members (see definitions below)</p> <p><u>Role:</u> To contribute respectfully to discussion and recommendations and to assist with agreed activities according to the interests, knowledge, skills and availability of Committee members.</p>

	<p>Responsibility: Responsible for seeking and considering relevant information, including through:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reading reports and papers distributed for Committee meetings and any sub-committees or working groups • Listening to and considering the contributions of other Committee Members • Where relevant bringing community perspectives to such meetings. <p>Partner Organisation representatives:</p> <p>As above for Community members and Special Interest members, but additionally:</p> <p>Responsibility: Also responsible for representing the views of their organisation, informing their organisation of relevant Committee decisions and facilitating the involvement of their organisation in relevant activities.</p>
<p>Councillor representatives, Chair and Deputy Chair (up to 4)</p>	<p>Merri-bek City Council and Hume City Council will each appoint a Councillor representative to the Committee.</p> <p>Councillor representatives are appointed at the start of each term of Council and may be confirmed or varied annually or otherwise as determined by Council.</p> <p>Each Council may also appoint an additional Councillor as an alternate representative.</p> <p>The Councillor representatives shall allocate the roles of Committee Chair and Deputy Committee Chair amongst themselves by agreement.</p> <p>The roles of Chair and Deputy Chair may be rotated between a Merri-bek and a Hume Councillor on an annual basis or as otherwise agreed.</p> <p>If neither the Chair nor Deputy Chair are available for a given meeting another Councillor or Committee member will chair the meeting as agreed with the Project Officer/Convenor.</p>
<p>Community members (up to 12, 6 each from Merri-bek and Hume)</p>	<p>Persons who live, work, volunteer or study within the areas of the Merri-bek or Hume City Councils are eligible for appointment as Community members.</p>
<p>Special Interest members (up to 4)</p>	<p>Persons who have personal or professional affiliation or connection to Aileu or Timor-Leste, or relevant specialist knowledge, skills or experience, are eligible for appointment as Special Interest members, whether or not</p>

	they live, work, volunteer or study within the areas of the Merri-bek or Hume City Councils.
Co-opted members (up to 4)	The Committee may appoint up to four co-opted members with interests, knowledge, skills or networks that complement those of other committee members
Partner Organisation Members (up to 10)	Community organisations or enterprises that actively support the friendship relationship may become a Partner Organisations based on an MOU or other form of agreement. Each Partner Organisation will be invited to nominate a representative and may also nominate an alternate representative.
Role of Staff Members	Council Officers who provide support for the Committee and for the implementation of the Friendship Agreement include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Project Officer East Timor (Friends of Aileu), the Convenor, who is employed as agreed between the Merri-bek and Hume City Councils, and whose role is funded jointly by the two councils • The relevant Unit Manager Merri-bek City Council and Coordinator Hume City Council, to whom the Project Officer reports.
Committee Meetings	<p>Times and dates and locations of meetings shall be determined at the discretion of the Chairperson and or Convenor, after seeking input of all other members of the Community Committee.</p> <p>Generally, committee meetings will be held, as far as practicable:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Bi-monthly • From 6:00 pm (for approximately 2 hours duration) on the second Tuesday or Thursday of the nominated month • Alternatively at Merri-bek and Hume City Council premises or venues, with meetings also being held on-line as necessary or as agreed. <p>The Chairperson or the Committee may establish a Reference Group of Community Members to provide advice and assistance to the Project Officer between Committee meetings, and other sub-committees or working groups for particular purposes.</p> <p>The Reference Group and any other such sub-committees, working groups or other meetings shall:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • As far as practicable be chaired by a Committee member with agreed support being provided by the Project Officer

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Operate in the manner determined by the Committee or, in the absence of a Committee determination, as they see fit. <p>The Reference Group and all other sub-committees, working groups or other meetings are accountable to the Committee and shall report to the Committee at the next Committee meeting or as otherwise agreed.</p>
Notice and attendance of Meetings	<p>As far as practicable:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Meeting Agenda and Reports will be distributed at least one (1) week prior to each meeting Meeting Minutes will be distributed within two (2) weeks following each meeting. <p>Members may request items to be included on the agenda by advising the Project Officer/Convenor at least two (two) weeks prior to the scheduled meeting.</p> <p>Members should endeavour to advise the Project Officer/Convenor of their attendance or non-attendance two (2) days prior to any scheduled meeting.</p> <p>Guests or other persons may also be invited to participate in Committee or other meetings in a non-voting capacity.</p>
Quorum	<p>A quorum for a meeting of the Committee is five (5) members plus the:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Project Officer/Convenor or another member of Council staff. The Chairperson or Acting Chairperson Members who attend on-line will also be counted for the purposes of quorum.
Code of Conduct	<p>All Members of the Committee are expected to comply with the following expectations to ensure safe, respectful and effective conduct of meetings:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Prepare for each meeting and be active participants Contribute to discussions during meetings, providing advice and opinions on topics of discussion Always treat others with respect, dignity and courtesy.
Conflicts of interest	<p>All members of the Committee must avoid any conflict of interest in relation to their participation in discussion, provision of advice or contribution to the making of recommendations.</p> <p>This includes the requirement to declare any real, potential or perceived conflict of interest, absent oneself from the part of any meeting considering any relevant matter and not attempt outside the meeting to influence the decision or the action to be taken following it.</p>

	See Attachment 5 for further guidance on managing conflicts of interest.
Decision making	<p>Recommendations of the Committee will usually be taken on a consensus basis as determined by the Chairperson.</p> <p>Any Committee member may request the Chairperson to call for a vote, with the determination to endorse a Committee recommendation, to be made by a simple majority.</p>
Financial management	<p>Funds raised by or donated to the Friends of Aileu shall be held in the Merri-bek City Council bank account and managed according to Council's policies and procedures.</p> <p>Such funds will be expended to support agreed programs, projects or activities, consistent with the Friends of Aileu Strategy Plan, considering recommendations by the Project Officer and approvals in accordance with Merri-bek City Council delegations, policies and procedures.</p> <p>The Project Officer's recommendations shall take into account:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Input from the Friends of Aileu Community Committee • Alignment of the proposal with priorities for Aileu identified in consultation with the Aileu Municipal Administration and Aileu Friendship Commission, in collaboration with relevant government, non-government and community organisations in Aileu and Timor-Leste • An assessment of the project plan and budget submission prepared by the implementing organisation, e.g.: government, non-government or community organisation based in or working in Aileu, or providing services for the benefit of Aileu • Information available on the implementing organisation's capacity to deliver value for money in a transparent and accountable way • Endorsement of the project plan and budget submission by the Aileu Municipal Administration or Aileu Friendship Commission • Any general or specific purpose for which funds were raised or donated, including as defined or requested by local partner organisations. <p>The Project Officer will manage a budget of income and expenditure relating to fundraising and donations and will provide regular reports to the Committee. The Friends of Aileu Annual Report will also include a financial statement.</p> <p>Local partner organisations may manage and report on their own funding contributions, donations and other resources provided for projects</p>

	<p>consistent with the Friends of Aileu Strategy Plan, in accordance with the relevant partnership agreement or project brief.</p> <p>The Project Officer may seek input from the Committee on priorities for the use of funds allocated in each Council's East Timor Project Cost Centre budget, for instance in relation to communications, awareness raising and fundraising activities and events, strategy planning and travel between Australia and Timor-Leste.</p>
Reporting requirements	<p>Meeting minutes and reports, or summaries thereof, will be presented to Council for noting and inclusion on the public record.</p> <p>Councillors, with support from the Convenor and/or Community members, will report back to their respective councils on their activities on the Committee following Committee meetings.</p> <p>The Committee, through the Council Representatives and the Project Officer, will seek an opportunity to present the Friends of Aileu calendar year Annual Report to a meeting of each Council, involving Reference Group Members where practicable.</p>
Other Publications	<p>Other publications include periodic Friends of Aileu newsletters, information on Councils' and social media such as the Councils' and the Friends of Aileu Facebook pages.</p> <p>Other project information will be prepared by the Project Officer, considering input from the Committee where applicable, and will be made available to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The two Councils, including for publication on their websites • Committee members and local partner organisations • The Aileu Municipal Administration, the Aileu Friendship Commission, the Timor-Leste Ministry of State Administration and other Aileu and Timor-Leste government and civil society partner organisations where applicable.
Relevant information and references	<p>Attachment 1: Friendship Agreement 2020, Moreland-Hume-Aileu</p> <p>Attachment 2: Moreland-Aileu Municipal Cooperation Agreement</p> <p>Attachment 3: Hume-Aileu Municipal Cooperation Agreement</p> <p>Attachment 4: Friends of Aileu Strategy Plan 2020</p> <p>Attachment 5: Managing Conflicts of Interest</p> <p>Council websites:</p> <p>Friends of Aileu (merri-bek.vic.gov.au)</p>

	https://www.hume.vic.gov.au/Your-Council/Governance/Information-for-Public-Inspection/Special-Committees Friends of Aileu Facebook page: https://www.facebook.com/friendsofaileu/
TOR adopted	CEO, Merri-bek City Council 11/01/2023 Director City Services and Living, Hume City Council: 24/02/2023
Review	These Terms of Reference will be reviewed by 30 June in the year following the end of each Council term and be refreshed as required or as otherwise directed by Council or agreed by the Committee.