Friends of Suai/Covalima Annual Report 2017-18

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# Acknowledgements

Council respectfully acknowledge the Yaluk-ut Weelam Clan of the Boon Wurrung. We pay our respects to their Elders, both past and present. We acknowledge and uphold their continuing relation to this land.

# Message from the Chair

It is a pleasure to present the 18th Annual Report of the City of Port Phillip Friends of Suai/Covalima (FoS/C). You will read in the report about a number of key activities undertaken in the past year and here I would like to note some highlights of the 2017-18 year.

A significant change during the past year was the retirement of Pat Jessen who had been the FoS/C Coordinator for the past 14 years. At Pat’s farewell in November 2017, the Mayor Cr Bernadene Voss paid tribute to her magnificent contribution to the success of the Friendship between the CoPP and the community of Suai, Covalima and we noted how much her work was valued by all of us here in Australia as well as by the staff team in Suai. Carlene Harlock was appointed as the new Coordinator by the CoPP and she comes to the position well equipped and with a sound understanding of the friendship relationship and with experience of East Timor and in particular, of our partner the Covalima Community Centre (CCC). Carlene completed a field placement in Suai with the CCC in June 2016 as part of her studies, which has enabled her to hit the ground running in taking up the position.

An important development in March 2018 was the settlement of the maritime boundary dispute between Australia and East Timor. This has implications for the development of the oil and gas fields in the Timor Gap and for the Tasi Mane infrastructure development in Covalima, planned for the south coast petroleum project.

As we continue to work within the framework of a joint Strategic Plan with the CCC, I would like to highlight some of the achievements and outcomes for the CCC in the past year:

* Playing an important role in ensuring local community engagement with a Village Lighting Scheme which provides solar panels to households in a small hamlet near Suai, which brings electricity to people who would otherwise continue off grid. Having a solar powered electric light means these households have lower risks to health or danger from kerosene lamps, pay less for their energy and have improved security at night.
* Continuing to support women’s empowerment including the successful development of leadership skills through training and encouragement to women to participate in economic and civil life.
* Increasing their partnerships with other local NGOs and international NGOs so as to extend the range of community projects in Covalima.
* Providing advocacy for local communities adversely affected by the Tasi Mane infrastructure developments.
* Building on the success of the Scholarships Program that enables young people from Covalima to continue with vocational training and education

In the City of Port Phillip Friends of Suai continues to engage with our local community here to publicise the Friendship and encourage support for our work.

* Another successful Trivia Quiz night was held which raised over $8,000 for scholarships.
* Albert Park College students raised $7000 for the upgrade of the basketball court at Suai Senior Secondary School.
* Kim McGrath, author of ‘Crossing the Line: Australia’s Secret History in the Timor Sea’ presented to community members at our AGM in Dec 2017.
* Five City of Port Phillip residents travelled to Suai as international observers for the parliamentary election in July and visited the staff at the CCC.

Thank you to all the volunteer members of FoS/C and to our donors who have contributed so much time, skills and financial support to enable the Friendship to flourish. Thanks also to Coordinators Pat Jessen and Carlene Harlock for their dedication, vision and leadership. And lastly thank you to the Council for its support, which has been instrumental in enabling the Friendship to succeed and deepen.

# Strategic Goal 1: Strengthen capability and involvement in the Covalima community

The Covalima Community Centre (CCC) works in friendship with the City of Port Phillip to meet the aims and objectives of the Statement of Friendship 2010-2020 and the Memorandum of Understanding between the District Administration of Covalima and City of Port Phillip 2010.

The CCC maintains a well-managed and inclusive community centre for Covalima which facilitates training and participation through the provision of affordable and inclusive courses, projects and access for local community members and groups. The CCC Commission (the management committee), staff and volunteers also provide leadership in community development activities throughout Covalima district of Timor-Leste.

The CCC has partnerships with local and international NGOs on a range of programs. They also manage programs and projects funded through community donations from Friends of Suai/Covalima (FoSC) members and supporters.

## Education and training

### English language and computer training

The CCC continued to deliver both English language and computer training courses and now also offers a six-month course combining both. There were 120 enrolments for English language training and 100 for computer training, including employees from local NGOs and government.

The CCC are focussed on extending their reach into rural communities and this year they opened a training branch with six computers in the rural village of Taroman, Fatululic. There are also plans to use laptops to deliver ‘mobile training’ in local villages.

### Work experience opportunities for local students

The CCC also offers practical training placements and work experience for local students and graduates. Four administration students from the local Vocational Training Centre and nine students from the local technical secondary school were given the opportunity to undertake a placement over six weeks. They learnt about computer programs, hardware, organisational and financial management. Each student was awarded with a certificate and enjoyed the opportunity to learn and apply their knowledge.

### Support for science and maths teacher training

A proactive and innovative group of science and maths teachers in Suai have formed a group called Knua Pratika (translation: ‘Village Practice’) with the objective of developing skills to implement practical activities to use along with theory in the school curriculum. They aim to share ideas and bring teachers together for training.

With financial and practical support from FoSC, the CCC and the Centre of Study of Science and Maths (SESIM) staff in Dili, the group held a two-day in-service training program in June 2018. There were 36 science and maths teachers at the workshop, with many travelling great distances to attend. The teachers participated in a range of activities and discussions with a focus on using everyday objects to create fun learning experiences. The training was considered a huge success with positive feedback from both trainers and participants. FoSC will continue to provide support for initiatives from this enthusiastic group of local teachers.

### Suai Secondary School library

The library at the Suai Secondary School continues to play an important role in the school and is utilised by students and teachers. There are more than 4,000 books in four languages, including fiction, non-fiction and reference materials.

Donated science equipment is also stored in the library for use by teachers in the classroom. There are 120 pieces in the collection and equipment is utilised by biology, physics and chemistry teachers for in-class activities.

## Scholarships and employment

Each year FoSC provide scholarships for disadvantaged students from Covalima district to further their education at senior secondary schools, vocational training colleges and universities in Timor Leste. There have now been 140 scholarships offered since 2012. The application and registration process is organised through the CCC and pastoral care is provided to all students during their studies.

At the end of 2017, four students graduated from hospitality, administration and automotive courses and early in 2018 one student completed a Certificate 2 in English language teaching. There were 23 students who continued their studies in 2018 and seven new students also commenced. The 30 current students, including 21 females, are studying in fields including nursing, teaching, community development, construction, agriculture, hospitality and electrical studies.

### Employment

The CCC continues to monitor employment outcomes for scholarship recipients and report that since 2012, 54 students have been employed. Graduates have found employment with local NGOs, government institutions, restaurants, shops and businesses. Two students who completed their studies in 2017 have found employment; one at the local airport and another as an assistant trainer at the local training college. Some students also received temporary employment during the parliamentary elections. Many graduates have also participated in volunteer work or chosen to continue their studies.

## IT Social Enterprise

The InfoTimor social enterprise at the CCC continues to generate income by selling and repairing computers and also offering training opportunities for students and local organisations.

In June 2018 a shipment of donated computer equipment from the City of Port Phillip arrived in Suai. The donation included desktop computers, keyboards, monitors and laptops. There are plans underway to pilot mobile training programs, using laptops, in two villages in 2018-19.

## Health

### WASH at Suai Secondary School

The WASH facilities at Suai Secondary School are in good condition. All toilets and basins were painted, cleaned and repaired during a humanitarian assistance visit by US, Australian and Timorese military personnel in June 2018. The school has also employed a technician to ensure that equipment is working and water remains accessible.

FoS/C have an ongoing commitment to health and hygiene at Suai Secondary school and to support local training. In June 2018, teachers and staff at the CCC attended workshops delivered by WASH trainer Dulce Soares. The objective was to review the school health program activities, including operation, monitoring and maintenance, and to prepare the team for future health training.

It is recognised that behaviour change takes time and requires a whole of school approach. A WASH Committee has been established to involve teachers, parents, students and community members in discussions and strategies related to health and hygiene practices at the school. An ongoing commitment from the school and WASH Committee are vital and FoSC and the CCC will continue to provide support and encouragement, with the goal of improving health outcomes for students and improving female student attendance.

### Village Lighting Scheme

In August 2017, FoS/C and the CCC partnered with the Alternative Technology Association to install a Village Lighting Scheme (VLS) in the small coastal sub-village Laen Tolu, in Suai Loro. Solar PV systems were installed in 40 households, providing house lighting, a rechargeable torch and the ability to recharge the torch and a phone.

Each household attends community meetings and contributes to a maintenance fund. Local technicians have been trained to maintain and repair the solar systems. Community members have reported social, health and economic benefits from having lighting in the evening and from no longer relying on the use of kerosene lamps.

The CCC are playing a key role in monitoring and community engagement in Laen Tolu. Scoping and community consultation processes have commenced for the implementation of a second VLS in Covalima, with funds raised by FoS/C supporters.

## Environment and agriculture

In partnership with Oxfam, the CCC is implementing the rural livelihoods Haforsa program. Working with 12 farmer groups in four villages in Covalima district, the program aims to help rural communities to increase their food security and income. Activities include training in food production, crop diversification, livestock practices, horticulture and agriculture. The CCC reports that there are over 750 direct beneficiaries from the program.

Nine of the community groups are also involved in the Saving for Change program in which each group accumulates their savings and approve small loans to each other from their pooled savings. Each group has received training to set up the program as well as ongoing training and mentoring.

The program also assists communities to be more resilient to the changing climate by encouraging water and land conservation and reforestation. Through the program, CCC staff have participated in training on conducting rapid assessments during a disaster and the program coordinator has visited Flores, Indonesia to participate in a comparative study on reforestation programs.

### Reforestation - With One Seed

Deforestation is of great concern in Covalima district and there is a lot of community interest in growing trees to replant depleted forests. In November 2017, FoSC provided support for a delegation from Covalima to travel to Baguia in Baucau district, to visit the ‘With One Seed’ (Ho Musan Ida) reforestation program. The delegation was led by the CCC Director and included CCC Commission members, representatives from local NGOs, the Department of Forestry and Ministry of Agriculture & Fishery. The visit was an opportunity to learn directly from local staff about the model which provides education, training and income to subsistence communities who are growing trees. All parties were very enthusiastic about replicating the program in Covalima. The team in Baguia have plans to visit the CCC to provide further information and to engage with local communities in the coming months.

## Women’s empowerment

Gender equality and the empowerment of women is a key focus area for the CCC across all programs. With the aim of contributing to women’s economic empowerment, the CCC work in partnership with the International Women’s Development Agency (IWDA) to deliver the Rural Women’s Development Program (RWDP). RWDP staff facilitate nine women’s groups which include 130 female participants. The main activities undertaken by these groups include horticultural and agricultural activities, farming, traditional local handicrafts and food production. The women share their skills and knowledge at quarterly forums for the groups and also participate in training. Some groups have been very successful and have won awards and national recognition from government departments and NGOs.

The partnership with IWDA includes implementation of a Women’s Leadership program. Women are largely absent from local leadership positions in Timor Leste. The RWDP aims to empower women to be strong and take part in making decisions in their families and in their communities, and to participate in development and become leaders.

Women are provided with training to develop their confidence and skills in leadership, public speaking and models of decision making. IWDA and CCC are now also partnering with a local NGO Ba Futuru, to deliver leadership programs in local communities.

The RWDP also facilitates the involvement of women in events including the International Women’s Day celebration and the International Day for the Elimination of Violence Against Women commemoration. These events are well attended in Covalima and provide an opportunity for women to participate and celebrate their culture.

## CCC Staff Development

FoSC continue to look for opportunities to strengthen skills and capacity for CCC staff, Commission members and volunteers.

**Community Development workshops, training & mentoring**

CCC staff attended a community development and engagement workshop in July 2017 which was conducted by Bridging Peoples; a Dili-based training organisation. Senior staff also then received ongoing mentoring via Skype webinars and attended a reflection workshop on the process of community engagement. Staff report that they now have a better understanding of community engagement and can implement what they have learnt in their day to day activities with communities.

**Webste training by Dr Richard Jones**

The Weebly website training was delivered to 9 CCC staff (4 women and 5 men). Staff learnt about creating and designing a webpage for the CCC. The CCC webpage is currently being developed by staff and can be viewed here: <http://suaicovalima.weebly.com/>

**Disability inclusion training by Ra-es Hadomi Timor Oan (RHTO)**

In partnership with IWDA, the CCC organised the national disability organisation (RHTO) to train 28 staff and volunteers. The training provided staff with a better understanding of how to work inclusively with people with disability, and to build disability awareness. After the successful training, RHTO installed ramps to all CCC buildings and renovated toilets for disability access.

There were many other training activities and workshops throughout the year offered by other CCC partner organisations. Staff members participated in training on topics including disaster rapid assessment, mapping and stakeholder analysis, report writing and advocacy.

# Strategic Goal 2: Practice good governance and management in our friendship

The CCC is a registered NGO and has completed registration processes with the Ministry of Justice in order to receive its association certificate. The centre continues to practice good governance with a focus on transparency, accountability and participation. All staff and volunteers have job descriptions and an employee code of conduct has been developed. Policies have been implemented in many areas including Finance, Fraud, Procurement, Anti-Corruption, Child Protection and Information Management.

The CCC has a constitution and is government by a Commission who meet quarterly to discuss CCC programs and provide guidance. Commission members also participate in relevant training programs at the CCC to develop their skills in governance and to better understand CCC programs.

## CCC Financial management

The CCC fulfils the requirements of the City of Port Phillip funding agreement and provides six monthly acquittals and reporting on all activities. Clear records are also provided on all programs and projects funded by FoSC community donations.

This year the CCC have transitioned to using Quickbooks for financial accounting and reporting. Support and training has been provided by CC Business Solutions in Dili; the external auditors of the CCC. The CCC have prepared all accounts and are waiting for the 2016-17 audit to be conducted.

To strengthen the organisation’s accountability, transparency, organisational management and budget management, the CCC have conducted staff meetings on the topics of budget expenditure and financial management. Monthly meetings have also been held with the CCC programs team leader and coordinators to discuss finances, activities, budgets and challenges.

## 2016-2020 Strategic Plan

The CCC is working to achieve its mission to build a community in which ‘everyone has the opportunity to develop their capacities so that they can contribute to the social and economic development of the District of Covalima’. The new CCC strategic plan is an important tool for defining the direction of the centre. Reporting on activities, outcomes and achievements in the CCC six monthly and annual report are aligned to the six key focus areas in the strategic plan.

### Land rights

Key focus area 5 in the CCC strategic plan is to ‘contribute to increased knowledge of land rights in Covalima’, and the CCC are working hard to achieve this goal. FoSC commend the CCC on their advocacy work to support local communities in Covalima. Many communities have been impacted by infrastructure developments as part of the Tasi Mane south coast petroleum project. The CCC work with the Covalima Network, a group of representatives from 17 NGOs and receive funding support from the Oxfam Land and Inclusive Development program. The network meets regularly to discuss local issues and provide training and advocacy to support communities. There is a strong focus on land issues and the group work to ensure people have access to information and resources.

### Disaster risk reduction

The CCC have submitted a successful funding proposal to implement a Disaster Risk Reduction (DRR) program. Funded by Give2Asia and the International Institute of Rural Reconstruction, the nine-month pilot project was implemented in June 2018. The DRR program complements the work being done through the Haforsa program at the CCC and aligns to the CCC key focus area 2 to ‘improve agriculture and environmental practices in Covalima.

### Community and stakeholder meeting

On 30 June 2018, a CCC Commission and staff meeting was held and involved community leaders and stakeholders. The objective of the meeting was to share information, celebrate the achievements of CCC programs and to review the strategic plan and priorities. Invited community leaders were asked to nominate to become CCC Commission members in the future.

The FoSC Coordinator attended this meeting and reported that the presentations from staff were well received and many issues were discussed relating to climate change and deforestation. There is great enthusiasm for a community forestry program to commence in Covalima.

## Election observer mission

A group of six FoS/C volunteers travelled to Suai as international election observers for the parliamentary election in July 2017. The group, which included five local City of Port Phillip residents, participated in election briefings and visited scholarship recipients in Dili before travelling by car to Suai. On election day they worked in pairs and visited several local voting centres including the hospital. The group reported that people showed great pride in voting. The experience was an opportunity to reflect on the long struggle for independence and contemplate the future of this young nation.

The group also met with staff at the CCC, members of RWDP women’s groups and visited a local kindergarten during their stay. The visit continues to strengthen the relationship between our two communities. The Suai community expressed their appreciation for the international observer presence and volunteers have continued to support FoSC activities after returning home.

# Strategic Goal 3: Build community awareness and involvement in City of Port Phillip

## Albert Park College fundraising

Albert Park College (APC) students have a strong passion for sport and have an extremely successful Basketball Academy. This year the school community fulfilled their commitment to fund the repair of the basketball court at Suai Secondary School. Students in Suai, who also have a passion for basketball, currently can only play half-court due to a broken goal post and damaged court surface.

APC have fundraised $7,000 to resurface and install hoops and backboards at Suai Secondary School. The Principal and students at Suai Secondary School are extremely grateful and have invited APC students to visit their school for a basketball tournament and other activities.

## Community donations

Many local residents are interested in supporting education and training for young people in Covalima. Donations of books and equipment are regularly received and their distribution and use is facilitated by the FoSC Education Working Group. Items have been added to the collections at the Suai Secondary School library, distributed to other local schools, scholarship students or to the CCC. Over 150 books have also been distributed to English language teachers in four local schools to be used in the classroom.

## Fundraising activities

### 2018 Trivia Night

The third annual trivia night held at the Middle Park Bowling Club with wonderful MC Councillor Louise Crawford, was a great success. Over 130 people attended the event and the total amount raised was $8,000. There was entertainment provided by the Timorese student band, with special guest Ego Lemos also joining in for a few songs. A big thank you is extended to the FoSC Community Engagement volunteers and those who donated items for the raffle and silent auction. Funds raised at the event ensure that we can fulfil our commitment to the ongoing scholarship recipients and improve employment outcomes in the future.

### Film Event – An Inconvenient Sequel

In partnership with the Port Phillip Eco-Centre, FoSC organised a film fundraising event at Classic Cinema. Over 100 people attended the screening of the Al Gore film ‘An Inconvenient Sequel’. Guest speaker Professor John Thwaites spoke about the importance of taking action on climate change and supporting the reforestation of subsistence farmland in East Timor by purchasing carbon social credits. The event was a great opportunity for the community to learn more about our Friendship, the importance of reforestation in Timor-Leste and the work of With One Seed.

# Strategic Goal 4: Build our knowledge of friendship between our communities

## Site visit by Timor Leste delegation

In addition to our Statement of Friendship, the City of Port Phillip has also signed an MOU to support decentralisation of government in East Timor. Plans and opportunities for this support are coordinated through Local Government Victoria and the Ministry of State Administration in East Timor.

In August 2017, a delegation of twenty senior government officials, state secretaries, urban planners and waste management teams from Timor-Leste visited Melbourne. Local Government Victoria provided formal urban planning, waste management and community engagement training, including visits to local Councils. City of Port Phillip was invited to host the delegation and provided an on-site visit on Friday 11 August.

The delegation received a warm welcome from the Mayor Cr Bernadene Voss, Councillor David Brand and the CEO. An impressive presentation on Acland Plaza and Triangle site was delivered by Craig McLean, Coordinator, City Design, and Cr. Brand provided background on the history of the Triangle site. They were interested to hear about Port Phillip’s place-based /precinct planning approach, and learn about the tourism precinct.

The aim of the MOU is to strengthen the capacity of Timorese municipalities and to support the decentralisation of government services. This government to government relationship aligns well with our community to community Friendship and we will continue to seek opportunities to provide support in the future.

## Coordinator monitoring visit

Carlene Harlock, the new FoS/C Coordinator, undertook an annual monitoring visit to Suai in June 2018. This visit was an opportunity to work with the CCC team, share information and establish relationships in the Covalima community. During the visit Carlene was able to meet with key partners and community leaders to learn about development plans in Covalima. There were also opportunities to visit CCC programs in local schools and villages, and to meet with scholarship recipients in Dili.

A highlight of the visit was a community meeting involving CCC Commission members, staff, volunteers and community leaders. All program coordinators at the CCC did a presentation on their programs and sought feedback from the attendees. It was an opportunity for everyone to receive and give feedback and to review the strategic plan and priorities. There was an overwhelming response that our Friendship is highly valued and focussed on community needs and priorities.

## Angelo’s placement at CCC

Angelo Jong is the Timorese advisor to the FoS/C Community Reference Committee and was born in Covalima district. He is in Melbourne studying the Masters in Community Development at Victoria University. As part of his studies, Angelo completed a practical placement at the CCC from November through to February.

Working at the CCC for a three-month period gave Angelo a good opportunity to develop strong relationships with the team and to become involved in the work being undertaken at the CCC and in local communities. He played an important role in many activities including improving administrative processes, assisting with funding applications and providing training.

A focus of his work and research was on community engagement and monitoring in Laen Tolu, after the installation of solar lighting in 40 households. He also worked closely with the CCC Health Officer to review the roles and responsibilities of the WASH Committee at the Suai Secondary School.

The contribution Angelo made was significant and he became a highly valued member of the team; always willing to learn and share knowledge. FoSC and the CCC are very grateful for his support.

## Around Covalima

There has been a significant improvement to local roads in Suai in the last 12 months. Most roads in and around Suai and nearby villages are now paved and there are pedestrian crossings in the centre of town. This work has coincided with the building of the four lane 155km South Coast highway as part of the Tasi Mane petroleum project. The highway is still under construction and currently starts near Suai Secondary School and is heading towards Ainaro.

The Tasi Mane project plans also include the building of an airport (now completed), supply base and wharf. Some local villages have been impacted by these projects through land acquisitions and relocations. The CCC and the Covalima Network continue to provide support, advocacy and information on these developments to local leaders and their communities.

Early in 2018, Covalima experienced very heavy rains and a long wet season, resulting in frequent mud-slides and floodings. There is strong community support for addressing these issues and the CCC continue to play an important role in identifying and responding to community priorities.

# Financial reports

The following tables summarise the Friends of suai/Covalima program income & expenditure report for 1 July 2017 to 30 June 2018.

## Combined activities

| **Financial category** | **Amount (in AUD)** |
| --- | --- |
| Total Funds Available (opening balance at 1 July 2017 plus total income) | $174,067 |
| Total Expenditure | 119,328 |
| Closing balance 30/06/2018 (total funds available less expenditure) | 54,740 |

## Income

| **Income source** | **Amount (in AUD)** |
| --- | --- |
| City of Port Phillip allocation | 81,733 |
| Coffee sales | 1,419 |
| Fundraising - Trivia night | 8,184 |
| Fundraising - Film night | 1,911 |
| Fundraising - Library book sales | 2,338 |
| Donations | 36,656 |
| Bank interest | 530 |
| **Total Income** | **132,769** |

## Expenditure

| **Expenditure** | **Amount (in AUD)** |
| --- | --- |
| CCC Core Grant | 45,000 |
| Printing and publications | 1,473 |
| Catering, events and meetings | 4,474 |
| Telephone and internet | 1,622 |
| Travel - 2018 monitoring visit | 4,128 |
| Travel - 2017 election monitoring costs | 2,025 |
| Scholarships | 33,363 |
| Scholarship books | 195 |
| Community engagement training | 4,554 |
| Science and maths training | 3,039 |
| WASH training | 1,618 |
| Website training | 1,467 |
| Computer shipment | 2,556 |
| Library books | 223 |
| Quickbooks | 1,029 |
| Modem | 494 |
| Basketball court | 2,927 |
| Suai vehicle costs | 2,947 |
| Baguia delegation | 2,638 |
| Bank fees | 264 |
| Coffee | 1,658 |
| CCC meetings and workshops | 1,265 |
| Fundraising expenses | 370 |
| **Total Expenditure** | **119,328** |

## Council funds and donation reporting

For an accessible version of detailed financial reports for Council funds and donations, please contact the Friends of Suai/Covalima Coordinator on 9209 6598.