



# Friends of Suai Newsletter August 2009

St Kilda Town Hall  
99a Carlisle St St Kilda  
ph 9209 6598



friends of suai

Friends of Suai

## The New HILFRANDE Library

In July 2009 the new library for the Suai Secondary School, funded by donations from Rotary Club of Balwyn, Port Phillip residents and other Community donations and was opened by Snr Virgillio Smith from the Secretary of Culture Department of Education in Dili. It is an important civic building available to students and local community.

The Friends of Suai is now assisting with the acquisition of good books in the 4 main languages of Timor Leste through community donations to fill the shelves. See below if you would like to donate funds to assist.

The new Library HILFRANDE has been dedicated to the three priests killed in the Suai Massacre at the Lady Fatima Church in May 1999 HILFRANDE was taken from the three Priests' names Hilario, Francisco and Dewanto. (see over for commemoration details).



Friends of Suai meet second Wednesday of the month at 6pm at St Kilda Town Hall- new members welcome.

Your tax deductible donations can be made online at

<http://www.portphillipgives.com.au/>  
or contact Pat Jessen on 9209 6598

## 1999 Suai Massacre

The Suai Church Massacre and its surrounding events led to the formation of the Friends of Suai in Port Phillip and Suai. The Suai Church Massacre took place in Suai, on 6 September 1999.

It followed a free and independent ballot held on August 30th when the Timorese were asked to vote for Autonomy within Indonesia or for Independence. They voted for independence.

When the result of the ballot became known, a terrible wave of violence spread across East Timor, orchestrated and funded by the Indonesian Military Forces. A scorched earth campaign saw most homes and the infrastructure of East Timor burned to the ground.

As news of the first killings in nearby places began to spread, people in Suai began to panic. Some ran to the mountains and hid. Some were able to drive away through the border and fly out of Timor. Others sheltered in Our Lady of Fatima Church in the centre of town and in the unfinished cathedral in the Church grounds. The people thought they may be safe in the church, and if they were not, then at least if they died there, then their loved ones would be able to find their bodies afterwards. Despite threats and growing violence the three priests who were there - Father Hilario, Father Dewato and Father Soares - decided to stay with the people.

Nobody really knows exactly how many people died on those days September 5th and 6th, 1999. People say that at least 50 in the church and more in the unfinished cathedral were pushed to their deaths from a high shelf where they were sheltering. The three priests were killed and some people estimate 200 people died.

**There will be a 10 year commemoration rotating Library Exhibition in September 2009 in St Kilda, Port Melbourne and Albert Park libraries to remember this and look at the achievements in the last 9 years of friendship with the City of Port Phillip**



### **Five English Language teachers for Suai 2009**

It is with much pleasure and excitement that the Friends of Suai announce the team of Volunteers who will conduct the pilot Intensive English Language Program in Suai, Timor Leste in September 2009. The teachers will be in Suai for the 10 year church commemoration as part of the friendship.

*Suai media space*  
**puts culture and creativity at the centre of friendship.**  
**Check it out at**  
**[www.suaimediaspace.com](http://www.suaimediaspace.com)**

Other ways of helping: English Language text books and dictionaries

There is a need for appropriate teaching resources or class sets to be sent to Suai teachers. Can you help? Talk to Pat if you think you can help in some way 9209 6598

Congratulations to our team members: Jenny Green, Jennifer Jaensch Desleigh Kent, Helen Nankervis and Barbara Selvay. The friends of Suai would like to thank all those who indicated their interest in joining the team this year. The standard of applications was impressive as was the willingness of people to fund their own participation.