

ORDINARY MEETING OF COUNCIL
13 JULY 2009

3.	FRIENDS OF SUAI COMMUNITY TASKFORCE 2008 ANNUAL REPORT
LOCATION/ADDRESS:	N/A
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR:	GREG WOOD
PREPARED BY:	MICHELE LEONARD
FILE NO.:	10/01/70
ATTACHMENTS:	1. 2008 ANNUAL REPORT 2. FRIENDS OF SUAI STATEMENT OF FRIENDSHIP 2000 3. MOU BETWEEN COPP AND SUAI DISTRICT ADMINISTRATION 2004 4. FOS TERMS OF REFERENCE

1. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- 1.1 This report highlights the key issues, activities and achievements undertaken by the Friends of Suai Community Taskforce in 2008. The 2008 Friends of Suai Annual Report is tabled as Attachment 1.
- 1.2 The Friends of Suai Committee was established by Council in 2000 following the signing of a *Statement of Friendship* between East Timor and the City of Port Phillip for a 10-year period (Attachment 2). A secondary Memorandum of Understanding between the District Administration of Covalima (district administration for the township of Suai) and the City of Port Phillip Council was signed in 2005 (Attachment 3)
- 1.3 The purpose of the Committee is to work with and assist Council develop sustainable and productive relationships between the Port Phillip and Suai communities.
- 1.4 The Committee's Terms of Reference (Attachment 4) have been reviewed by the Committee and no changes are recommended. Community committee members are listed in the 2008 Annual Report (Attachment 1) and Cr Rachel Powning is the current councillor delegate.
- 1.5 The annual report (Attached 1) identified the breadth of work undertaken by the in 2008. Achievements in the areas of education programs, agriculture, the arts, information technology, and fundraising were significant.
- 1.6 The relationship with the City of Port Phillip is highly valued in the district and continues to offer key opportunities in building and supporting community efforts, both through the community centre and the district administration.

2. RECOMMENDATION

That Council:

- 2.1 Accepts the Friends of Suai Community Taskforce Annual Report 2008.
- 2.2 Thanks the members of the Friends of Suai Committee for their work and achievements during 2008.

3. BACKGROUND AND CONTEXT

- 3.1 The *Statement of Friendship* between East Timor and the City of Port Phillip was established in 2000. Following this the locally elected Suai Community Centre (SCC) Commission was established as was a parallel committee, the Port Phillip Friends of Suai. Both committees provide leadership, strengthen community relations and contribute to the building of Suai local-level municipal government into the future.
- 3.2 The *Statement of Friendship* was a forerunner to the establishment of some fifty other Local Council relationship agreements now operating across Australia with East Timor. These agreements have been set up with varying administrative and funding arrangements, and most work through the District Administrative structures. The relatively unique focus of the Port Phillip friendship agreement is the grass roots capacity building achieved through working directly with the local community centre and its committee members including the District Administration.
- 3.3 In May 2005 the secondary Memorandum of Understanding between the District Administration of Covalima (the administrative district for the township of Suai) and the City of Port Phillip Council, signed by the District Administrator for Suai and the Chief Executive Officer City of Port Phillip, strengthened the relationship and the program into the future.
- 3.4 A review of program of activities for the period 2004-2007 was presented to Council in June 2008. Analysis of stakeholder feedback showed that project activities undertaken during that period were well received by the communities of Suai and Port Phillip.
- 3.5 In 2008 the Committee's Terms of Reference (Attachment 4) were reviewed by the Committee and no changes were recommended. Community committee members are listed in the 2008 Annual Report (Attachment 1) and Cr Rachel Powning is the current councillor delegate.

4. CONSULTATION AND STAKEHOLDERS

- 4.1 This report has been prepared in consultation with:
 - Members of the Friends of Suai Committee (in particular, Committee Chairperson Bill Armstrong and Cr Rachel Powning)
 - Community Governance Coordinator (Jennifer Stone)
 - Manager Community Development and Engagement (Michelle Leonard)

5. DISCUSSION

- 5.1 The announcement by government in 2008 of plans for a supply- base in Suai and rapid development of oil and gas brought forward the immediacy and need for workforce skill development, targeting youth, and others in the community. The community centre staff and commission requested skill development targeting technical and language training programs.
- 5.2 Discussions with partners in East Timor and Australia have led to the design of a computer hardware and software enterprise and training; development of partnerships to provide broadband internet with access by the community to the web; development of a model for train the trainer program for teachers of English language by Australian ESL teachers; development of a partnership for women's empowerment program based at the Community Centre in Suai; and funding for a library at the public secondary school in Suai.
- 5.3 Ongoing small scale projects in agriculture, education and health continue to be developed by the Suai Community Centre Commission to meet community needs.
- 5.4 The Friends of Suai Committee has continued its work with the committee in Suai to build local capacity and enhance the friendship through community development initiatives. The community centre and its committee are functioning very effectively despite previous civil unrest in East Timor.
- 5.5 Friends of Suai Committee membership is active and committed to strengthening the friendship agreement. The Committee met 10 times during 2008 and members have contributed many additional hours of project work and fundraising. The sum of \$50,000 was raised through community donations for the Suai Secondary School Library during 2008.
- 5.6 During 2008, three FoS Committee members self-funded their travel to Suai to assist in training and planning with both the Community and Youth Centres.
- 5.7 The goodwill and community leadership contributed by local residents and community organisations has resulted in substantial financial contributions and person involvement of citizens and staff.

6. ALIGNMENT TO COUNCIL PLAN

- 6.1 The principles and practice of good governance underpin the work of the Committee and all collaborations with the Suai community.
- 6.2 The active participation and contribution of community members is an active demonstration of community leadership and skill sharing fostered through a Council program.
- 6.3 The program has developed a clear environmental approach with the delivery of 19 solar power installations to assist the development of health centres and outposts and key community centres in Suai to provide reliable and clean energy for their services to the community. Agricultural projects have been developed on sound

environmental principles of reforestation of denuded land, and permaculture and a food demonstration model at the Agriculture High School.

- 6.4 The Friends of Suai Committee promotes a high level of cultural awareness and activity through the international relationship both in East Timor and Australia. Through support to the community centre in Suai, Council is ensuring that opportunities for social equity and development are implemented through local initiatives. The activities of Friends of Suai are targeted at developing grassroots skills, particularly among women and youth.

7. FINANCE / RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS

- 7.1 All activities have been done within the allocated program budget plus additional funds generated through community fundraising.
- 7.2 Friends of Suai community members are volunteers and program coordination and implementation is supported by Council with a .6 EFT council officer.
- 7.3 The total program budget (staff and activities) for the Suai–Port Phillip Friendship Agreement for 2008 was \$122,000.

8. LEGAL & RISK IMPLICATIONS

- 8.1 East Timor faced civil unrest in 2008 including the attempted assassination of the President and the death and arrest of rebel leaders.
- 8.2 Issues of poverty alleviation and ongoing resolution of security, justice and resettlement issues are a paramount challenge for East Timor.
- 8.3 The structure of the community centre commission continues to strengthen local leadership. It has recently attracted a small external grant based on its accountable and good governance capacity.
- 8.4 The relationship with the City of Port Phillip is highly valued in the district and continues to offer key opportunities in building and supporting community efforts and friendship, both through the community centre and the district administration.

9. IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGY

9.1 TIMELINE

- 9.1.1 The Friends of Suai 2008 Annual Report documents activities at the eight year point in the ten year agreement.