



9.1 FRIENDS OF SUAI/COVALIMA ANNUAL REPORT

EXECUTIVE MEMBER: TONY KEENAN, INTERIM GENERAL MANAGER, COMMUNITY AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

PREPARED BY: CARLENE HARLOCK, COORDINATOR FRIENDS OF SUAI/COVALIMA

1. PURPOSE

- 1.1 To inform Council on the 2017-18 achievements of the Friends of Suai/Covalima (FoS/C) Community Reference Committee (CRC).

2. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- 2.1 City of Port Phillip has a longstanding relationship with the coastal town of Suai in Covalima district, Timor Leste. The ten-year friendship agreement signed in 2000 was renewed for a further ten years in 2010.
- 2.2 Friends of Suai/Covalima (FoS/C) Community Reference Committee is an advisory group to Council, and is resourced and supported by the FoS/C Program Coordinator. The structure also includes working groups and general membership.
- 2.3 FoS/C work in partnership with the Covalima Community Centre (CCC) in Suai. The program budget includes \$48,000 which provides core funding to the centre, including staffing, communication, transport and administrative costs. This consistent funding has allowed the CCC to form partnerships with local and international development organisations.
- 2.4 The FoS/C 2017-18 Annual Report details the achievements of our community to community friendship and the report is aligned to the FoS/C Joint Strategic Plan (2010-2020).

3. RECOMMENDATION

That Council:

- 3.1 Endorses the 2017-18 Friends of Suai/Covalima (FoS/C) Annual Report (Attachment 1).
- 3.2 Acknowledge the contribution of the FoS/C Community Reference Committee and FoS/C working groups.
- 3.3 Acknowledge the work of the Covalima Community Centre and the role it plays in enhancing the lives of the Covalima community.



4. KEY POINTS/ISSUES

- 4.1 The agreements governing the work of Friends of Suai - Covalima (FoS/C) are based on friendship and mutual respect.
- 4.2 A ten-year friendship agreement with the coastal town of Suai, Timor Leste was signed by Xanana Gusmao (former Prime Minister) and Council in 2000 in response to the violence following the independence vote in 1999.
- 4.3 Further Memorandums of Understanding with the Covalima District Administration were signed in 2005 and renewed for a further ten years at a celebration at St Kilda Town Hall in 2010. (Attachment 2)
- 4.4 The Mayor and CEO, City of Port Phillip signed a Municipal Cooperation Agreement with the Government of Timor Leste in April 2016 . The agreement provides a support framework for building local government in Timor Leste.
- 4.5 The work of Friends of Suai/Covalima (FoS/C), guided by the FoS/C joint strategic plan 2010-2020, has set a solid base for ongoing community development through 18 years of our community-to-community partnership.
- 4.6 FoS/C work in partnership with the Covalima Community Centre (CCC) in Suai. In 2016 the CCC developed a four-year strategic plan to further articulate the priorities of the FoS/C joint strategic plan and consolidate the role of the CCC as a key education and development organisation for the community of Covalima.
- 4.7 The vision of the CCC Strategic Plan (2016-2020) is to 'build a community in which everyone has the opportunity to develop their capacity and contribute to the social and economic development to the district of Covalima'.
- 4.8 The CCC has established partnerships over recent years with local and international development organisations which will assist the CCC to achieve sustainability in the future.
- 4.9 In setting out the achievements of FoS/C over the last 12 months, the Annual Report recognises the increased capacity of the CCC in Suai and the contribution by the Director, Vice Director and the leadership team.

5. CONSULTATION AND STAKEHOLDERS

- 5.1 The 2017-18 Friends of Suai/Covalima Annual Report has been prepared in consultation with Friends of Suai/Covalima Community Reference Committee Chairperson Megs Alston, Treasurer Tony Phillips, Director of the Covalima Community Centre, Alberto Barros and Coordinator Community Strengthening, Leo Kelly

6. LEGAL AND RISK IMPLICATIONS

- 6.1 There are no legal and risk implications.



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7. FINANCIAL IMPACT

- 7.1 Resourcing of activities and projects for the FoS/C program is currently based in the Diversity and Inclusion budget with a \$81,900 program budget for 2016-17. Additional to this is funding for a 0.6 FTE for a Program Coordinator.
- 7.2 The program's fundraising activities and community donors contributed over \$40,000 to support project outcomes. Donations provided funds for the scholarship program and support for the Suai Secondary School library.
- 7.3 In addition, local traders and FoS/C supporters provided \$5,000 in contributions of art, vouchers and merchandise as silent auction items and prizes at the Trivia night fundraiser in April 2018.
- 7.4 Program supporters provide goods and services at a reduced cost or voluntarily. The commercial value of these donations exceeds the City of Port Phillip budget allocation for the program.

8. ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT

- 8.1 The installation of solar lighting in 40 households in a remote off-grid village in Covalima has provided social, economic and health benefits to families.
- 8.2 The FoS/C water and sanitation project at Suai Secondary School is providing a sustainable water supply for over 1800 students and local families are now connected to the community water tank.
- 8.3 The CCC are working with rural communities to increase food security and to develop resilience to the changing climate by encouraging land conservation and reforestation.
- 8.4 Support for science and maths teachers is equipping teachers and students in Covalima with valuable skills and understanding of the natural world.

9. COMMUNITY IMPACT

- 9.1 Since 2012, community donations have provided over 120 scholarships to students to further their education at a senior secondary, vocational and tertiary level. Covalima district is one of the poorest in Timor-Leste and the scholarship programs is providing access to education and preparing students for future employment.
- 9.2 Over 50 students have now found employment after receiving a FoS/C scholarship to undertake vocational or tertiary education in Timor-Leste. This accounts for 40% of scholarship recipients which is significant given the constraints on employment in Timor Leste.
- 9.3 Donations of second-hand computers by City of Port Phillip ensure the continuing operation of the IT social enterprise at the CCC. Income is generated through the delivery of training programs and computers are sold at moderate prices to students and families.



- 9.4 The program aims to assist in enhancing economic development outcomes of the Covalima community including the Rural Women's Development Program which supports income generating activities for 130 women.
- 9.5 The FoS/C Community Reference Committee (CRC) is an advisory group to Council and has eight elected members. The committee is supported and resourced by the FoS/C Coordinator.
- 9.6 The FoS/C working groups which focus on education, community development and community engagement, include over 20 local residents who regularly attend meetings and organise events in City of Port Phillip. The Community Development working group assesses project initiatives to ensure best practice in international development in the friendship.
- 9.7 Fundraising events and public meetings have ensured participation and engagement in the community, attracting local residents, City of Port Phillip staff and the Timor-Leste network in Victoria.

10. ALIGNMENT TO COUNCIL PLAN AND COUNCIL POLICY

- 10.1 Since 2000, the Friends of Suai/Covalima Friendship Agreement and program have been guided by Council values and align with the strategic goals of relevant Council Plans. This report aligns with the 2017-2027 Council Plan and Strategic Direction 1: We embrace difference and people belong.
- 10.2 The Suai Covalima Timor Leste partnership is an engagement and partnership priority that supports this direction.
- 10.3 The Friends of Suai Strategic Plan 2010-2020 is a planning instrument for this direction.
- 10.4 The annual contribution of \$48,000 to the CCC in Suai is a major financial investment by Council to support its Council Plan direction and the long term friendship with Covalima district.

11. IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGY

11.1 TIMELINE

- 11.1.1 The Annual Report will be presented at the FoSC Annual General Meeting to be held in December 2018.

11.2 COMMUNICATION

- 11.2.1 The Annual Report will be distributed to FoS/C members, donors, partners and supporters.
- 11.2.2 The Annual Report will be accessible from the City of Port Phillip website.



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12. OFFICER DIRECT OR INDIRECT INTEREST

12.1 No officers involved in the preparation of this report have any direct or indirect interest in the matter.

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ATTACHMENTS

1. Friends of Suai/Covalima Annual Report 2017-18
2. Friends of Suai MOU 2010-2020 English Version