

Friends of Suai news



Monday 25 August 2025

Message from the Chair

We hope you enjoy reading this quarterly newsletter with updates on our friendship activities in Port Phillip and Covalima, especially the news on upcoming events here in October.

We remain committed to supporting our friends in Suai and funding initiatives that benefit the people of Covalima. Funds raised by Friends of Suai support the Covalima Community Centre so that it can maintain its crucial services, including the successful scholarship program. The CCC implements a strong focus on education, health, gender equality, livelihoods and sustainability.

Donating to Friends of Suai is a powerful way to contribute to Timor Leste's development, promote equality and help build a brighter future for its people.

[Donate to Friends of Suai via Give Now](#)

Upcoming events

XX

25 years of Friendship

This year we celebrate the 25th anniversary of the first Friendship Agreement signed between the City of Port Phillip Council and Suai, Covalima in May 2000, the formal start of the friendship relationship between our two communities here in Port Phillip and in Covalima Municipality Timor-Leste. To mark this significant milestone, Alberto Barros Director, and Amelia Amaral President, are visiting us from the Covalima Community Centre in the week commencing 4 October 2025. They will take part in planned events and visit other organisations connected with their work. We hope you can come along to meet them and hear about the positive outcomes of this friendship.

YOU'RE INVITED TO
THE FRIENDS OF SUAI

Celebration 2025

25 YEAR FRIENDSHIP DINNER
WITH SPECIAL GUESTS



EMERALD HOTEL
415 CLARENDON ST SOUTH MELBOURNE
FRIDAY 10 OCT 6 PM FOR 6:30

Join us to hear Alberto Barros and Amelia Amaral from Suai, East Timor, Hon Julian Hill MP, Mayor, Port Phillip 2000 and former CEO, Anne Dunn along with all our old and new friends.
A time to reflect and celebrate the impact of this great connection.

TICKETS \$85
Bookings essential

<https://events.humanitix.com/friends-of-suai-25-year-fundraising-dinner-with-alberto-and-amelia>

Buy your ticket [here](#).

XX



Register for the Emerald Hill Library event [here](https://www.trybooking.com/1455947).

The Exhibition will be on display at Emerald Hill Library for the month of October.

Port Phillip News

Dili Friendship Conference

Megs Alston and Ann Wigglesworth represented Friends of Suai Covalima at the Australian East Timor Friendship Conference held in Dili on July 10 and 11, together with Alberto Barros and 3 other staff from the CCC. Several staff from the Municipal Administration office in Suai were also there. Long time Friends of Suai supporter and local resident Jean McLean AO, vice president of the Australian East Timor Association also joined the Covalima group.

There were 80 Australian friendship members who attended and over 200 East Timorese.

Highlights included a reception held at the Australian Ambassador's residence, and conference addresses by President Jose Ramos-Horta who reflected on his long connection with Australia, Minister Agio Pereira who lived in Australia for 20 years prior to independence and the Australian Ambassador Caitlin Wilson. It was a great opportunity to hear about developments in East Timor, catch up with other friendship groups, hear presentations about their work and connect with old friends.



Timor-Leste Awards

On Tuesday 12 August the President of Timor-Leste, Jose Ramos-Horta, presented the Order of Timor-Leste Medal in Melbourne to 26 Australian Friendship Groups, including Friends of Suai/Covalima, a program of the City of Port Phillip. Our award was accepted by Megs Alston, Chair of the FoSC Community Reference Committee, on behalf of our friendship group and Council.



The award is in recognition of 25 years of ongoing support from Council and the community of the City of Port Phillip for developments in the municipality of Covalima, Timor-Leste. The support has enabled scholarships, community development, forestry, solar power, women's training, and entrepreneurial programs in Suai and the Municipality.

We are delighted to receive this prestigious award. Council has just committed to support the

program for another 5 years and our Friendship Group will continue to raise funds within the Port Phillip community to support the program.

News from Suai, Timor-Leste

XX

In Dili we met with Community Development scholarship students from the University of Timor-Leste, Aniceta and Martinha who graduate later this year, seen here with Dino from the CCC.

X



The Women's Leadership Training for women in Local Government in Covalima, funded through Friends of Suai and conducted recently was well received. The CCC trainers used local language and context which was appreciated by attendees.

XX



XX

The Rai Matak reforestation program continues to expand and thrive. Last financial year farmers were paid to maintain almost 48,000 trees and the program hopes this will increase to 70,000 trees by December 2025.

XX





X

Other upcoming events

XX

Balibo (2009) – Special Screening + In-Conversation

RMIT is holding a special screening of Balibo (2009), as part of the 14th Australian Media Traditions Conference.

When: Wednesday 3 September at 6.30 pm

Where: The Capitol, 113 Swanston Street, Melbourne

Tickets: \$5 tickets are available via using the code **RMIT2025** at checkout:
<https://www.rmit.edu.au/events/2025/september/balibo>

Timorese Association in Victoria presents

Honouring the Past, Shaping the Future: A 50 Year Journey

Join the Timorese Association in Victoria in honouring the past, shaping the future: commemorating 50 years of the Timorese community in Melbourne through music, dance, food and photographic exhibition: 'LA'O RAI – walk the land' - in the spirit of unity.

LA'O RAI: we invite you to walk with us, with our ancestors, honouring the past, shaping the future, together.

When: Saturday 30 August from 6 pm

Where: Collingwood Town Hall, 140 Hoddle St, Abbotsford

Tickets: There are limited tickets for purchase (includes Timorese-buffet style dinner) via trybooking.com/ddeci

XX

Donate to Friends of Suai via Give Now

Stay connected

The friendship between the Port Phillip and Covalima communities is a relationship that goes beyond the usual concept of financial aid. It connects the community in the City of Port Phillip with the community of Suai/Covalima in order to enrich and enhance the lives of all involved. The participation of the community is key to the success of the friendship.

Get involved by volunteering your time, making a donation or attending our events. All are welcome.



Making donations

All funds raised will ensure the Covalima Community Centre in Suai can continue to implement community development programs. Donations can be made via the following methods:

Direct deposit (preferred method)

Commonwealth Bank account
 Acct Name: Friends of Suai Donations
 BSB: 063 243
 Acct: 1034 3552

Online via the Friends of Suai Covalima

🔗 givenow.com.au/cause1266
 (fees apply)

Bequests

You can make a bequest in your will to the Covalima Community Centre in Suai as it is an incorporated body (unlike Friends of Suai). This is a wonderful way to make a lasting impact to benefit future generations. You can obtain advice from your legal adviser about doing this, and for general information please email friendsofsuai@portphillip.vic.gov.au

