

Bendigo-Maubisse Friendship Committee Strategy: 2020-2024





A Message from the Mayor

I am pleased to present the Bendigo Maubisse Friendship Committee Strategy 2020-2024.

The Committee looks forward to this strategy guiding its continued work, particularly as it adjusts to the long-term impacts of COVID-19.

How Greater Bendigo supports the Maubisse community will change in the immediate future. Ordinarily the committee prepares for at least one project team to visit the region each year to continue its important work in person, however it is not known when this will be able to happen again.

Despite this, the committee remains dedicated to the friendship that has developed between the people of

Maubisse and Greater Bendigo and wants to ensure a strong future for the Timorese community.

Over many years strong relationships have been formed between the two communities, which has built a great foundation of trust for future cooperation.

This strategy outlines an action plan that will guide the work of the committee over the next four years. Successful implementation of the action plan will see the Maubisse community further develop its own Local Government decision making skills, delivery of programs and projects in Maubisse, and continued engagement with the Greater Bendigo community.

The committee welcomes your support to ensure it can develop the capabilities and resources of Maubisse and its people into the future.

**Mayor Cr
Margaret
O'Rourke**



Acknowledgment of Country

The City of Greater Bendigo is on Dja Dja Wurrung and Taungurung Country and acknowledges the Traditional Owners of the land. We pay our respects to leaders and Elders past, present and emerging for they hold the memories, the traditions, the culture and the hopes of the Dja Dja Wurrung and Taungurung people. We express our gratitude in the sharing of this land, our sorrow for the personal, spiritual and cultural costs of that sharing, and our hope that we may walk forward together in harmony and in the spirit of healing.

Introduction and background

ABOUT THIS STRATEGY

The *Bendigo-Maubisse Friendship Committee Strategy: 2020 – 2024* (the strategy) has been developed to enable ongoing sustainability of important work carried out by the Bendigo-Maubisse Friendship Committee (BMFC) for Maubisse, a Timorese community still very much in need.

It draws from survey data gathered from committee members as well as best practice examples from the Australia Timor-Leste Friendship Network. It also reflects on the committee's recent annual reports and takes into account needs identified by Maubisse community members during recent biennial friendship consultations.

It has been developed for the BMFC, its partners, volunteers and donors, and the City of Greater Bendigo (the City).

The strategy aligns with the City's *Community Volunteering Strategy 2019-2023*, particularly supporting Goal 1 - Develop a culture of volunteerism in the community and Goal 4 - Improved and increased capability of volunteer leaders, community organisations and groups. More broadly, it aligns with the City's:

- *Community Plan 2017-2021*: Strategic Goal 2 of Wellbeing and Fairness
- *Health and Wellbeing Plan 2017-2021* objectives to 'Strengthen community participation and belonging' and 'Increase social connection and reduce loneliness'
- International Relations Policy
- 2016 Municipal Cooperation Agreement with the Municipality of Ainaro in Timor-Leste

Beyond the City's plans and policy, the strategy aligns with:

- State Government Victoria Policy: *Partners in Government: Victoria and Timor-Leste*
- The United Nation's Sustainable Development Goals as outlined in *The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development*



BACKGROUND

Maubisse

Maubisse is located in the central highlands district of Timor-Leste in the Ainaro district. It is located 73 kilometres south of the capital, Dili, and is 1,400 metres above sea level. Maubisse subdistrict has a population in excess of 20,000 and is the main coffee growing area of the country. Similar to most parts of Timor-Leste, the Maubisse community faces many barriers such as unemployment, limited health and education services, and incomplete transport and communication infrastructure. The typical Maubisse resident is a member of a subsistence farming family with limited income and accommodation. There have been improvements in recent years; however there is still limited access to electricity, running water and transport.

BMFC members

All members of the BMFC are volunteers. Those that travel to Maubisse to work as part of project teams or to attend the biennial friendship consultations do so at their own expense by paying for their own airfares and associated travel costs. An enormous contribution has been made

from both the committee and the Bendigo community; over 50 project teams equates to many volunteers who have paid their way and contributed their own time as volunteers.

Municipal Cooperation Agreement: BMFC's role

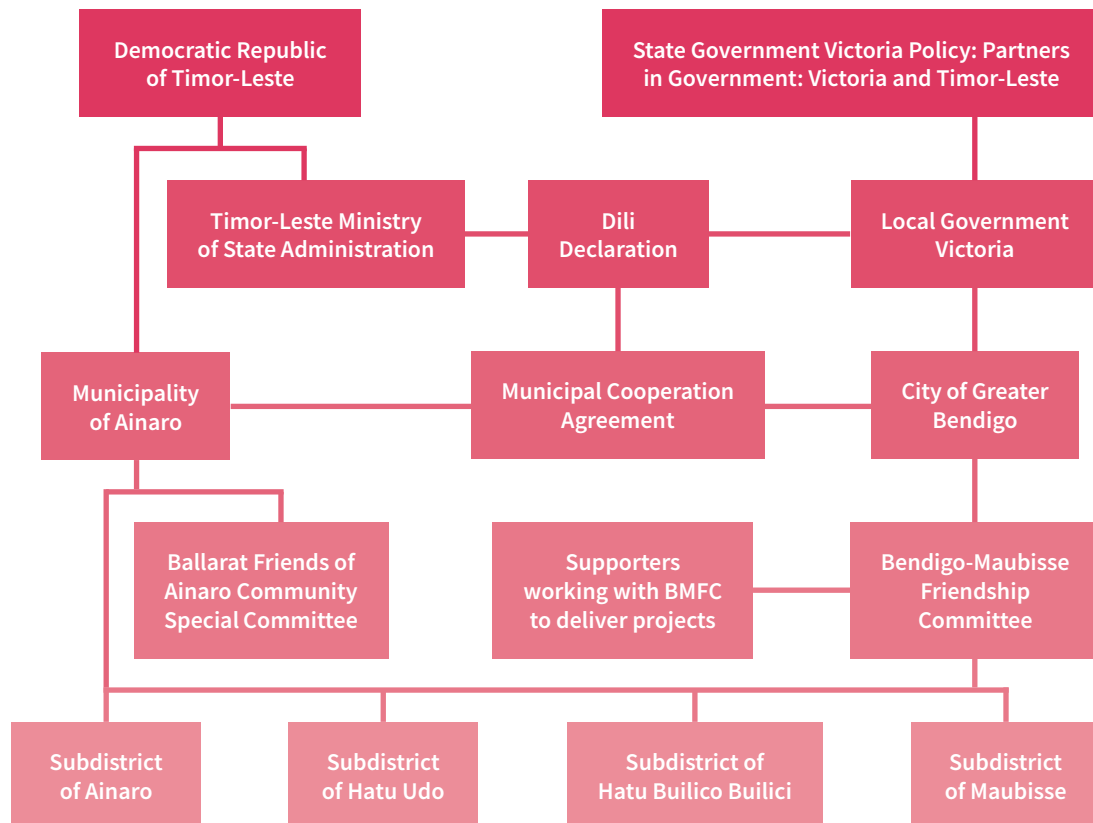
Government has driven the development of formalised municipal partnerships between Local Governments in Victoria and in Timor-Leste, with the aim of supporting decentralisation of government services in Timor-Leste and strengthening public sector skills. The City of Greater Bendigo and the City of Ballarat each hold a municipal cooperation agreement (MCA) with the Municipality of Ainaro, with Bendigo signing its agreement in 2016. Partnerships are built on the foundation of relationships forged by friendship groups and are aimed at complementing these by forming another at municipal level. Partners agree to cooperate on initiatives to strengthen professional knowledge and skills of municipal officers, which can include study or working visits, providing technical advice, and related networking, collaboration and exchange.

In addition to supporting the MCA with the foundation of a strong, long-standing friendship relationship, the role of the BMFC is of conduit - to listen to the needs of Maubisse's government organisations, and of Ainaro's government organisations, and discuss how their counterparts at the City of Greater Bendigo may be able to support them.

City of Greater Bendigo: BMFC legal status

The BMFC was first appointed in 2006 as a Section 86 Committee under the *Local Government Act 1989* by the City of Greater Bendigo and has operated in accordance with delegated authority. The committee has always understood the responsibilities associated with this status and has carried out its duties with the knowledge that it has been a representative of the City of Greater Bendigo. The *Local Government Bill 2020* decrees that committees can no longer operate under the terms of Section 86, therefore the BMFC must comply with a new model of governance in 2020.

BMFC relationships and context: (pictured below)





KEY FOCUS AREAS

Operationally, the BMFC directs its focus to the areas of **education, health, arts and culture, public infrastructure and schools** and **local community and lifestyle**. Maubisse's community members have final approval of all projects and programs, which are designed for meeting the needs and priorities identified during the biennial friendship consultation and review held in Maubisse by representatives of the community and the BMFC.

Education

The BMFC's scholarship program was established in 2015 at the request of administrators in Maubisse. The intent was to encourage more students to complete their high school diploma (especially girls), and build the capacity of the Maubisse community. Students are funded independently to undertake their studies with the support of donations from Victorian businesses, Rotary clubs, companies, families and individual sponsors. For university students the scholarship program also provides a laptop and funding for thesis studies and fieldwork. University students are studying a range of courses including medicine, nutrition, midwifery, civil engineering, political science, secondary teaching and computer technology. Whilst not all scholarship students take up university study, the program has enabled others to find employment or undertake an apprenticeship.

The program, which is delivered in partnership with the Fundasaun Alola Education Consultancy team, is highly valued by the Maubisse community. Discussions at the July 2019 biennial

friendship consultation in Maubisse confirmed support from all nine chefes (chiefs) from each of the sucos (villages), with indications that the way families are viewing education is rapidly changing. Where once there was a widespread practice of keeping students at home to assist with household chores and support for the family, the scholarship program has driven an understanding that gaining an education is important for changing the future of the community. Families are now making huge sacrifices accordingly.

Health

The BMFC provides support for Maubisse Hospital with medical and dentistry training and equipment, together with assisting in the delivery of dental services. The BMFC also provides assistance and support for programs related to nutrition, malnutrition and hygiene – in particular, a program for young girls. The scarcity of dental health services and oral hygiene education is a major health issue in Timor-Leste, and the number of dentists and/or dental therapists is very low. Many of the Timorese population do not access dental services, mainly due to the shortage of services and affordability. Therefore, the Maubisse and District Dental Project is a priority. The program is making strong progress based on three key strategies:

1. Improve the standard of dental care at the Maubisse Hospital Dental Clinic and the health outposts
2. Support oral health education in the Maubisse and District Schools
3. Support the professional development of Maubisse dental personnel

Maubisse and infectious diseases

Using data from the INFORM Global Risk Index 2020, CARE International undertook analysis offering a glimpse into which countries will struggle the most health-wise and economically in the long term.

The analysis identified Timor-Leste as the second most at-risk country in Southeast Asia and the Pacific, following Papua New Guinea. By comparison, Australia and Singapore were identified as being equal second-least at risk out of the 28 countries in the region, following New Zealand.

CARE's analysis has found that the world's highest-risk countries have three-times higher exposure to epidemics such as COVID-19, but also have a six-times higher risk in terms of their access to healthcare compared to the world's lower risk countries. In Timor-Leste people are doing what they can to prevent the spread of infectious disease but this can be challenging for those people living in remote areas, such as Maubisse, where at least one-in-five households don't have access to safe water and adequate hygiene is difficult to achieve.

In light of the threats posed by global pandemics such as COVID-19, the support provided by the BMFC is more important than ever to Maubisse's vulnerable community.

Arts and culture

Programs that develop and nurture local skills and talent are continually run by the BMFC, particularly in schools. Through the work of a number of project teams, it has become clear that the children of Maubisse have embraced art. Timor-Leste's education system does not include visual arts in the curriculum, and consequently this initiative fills an educational gap while providing children with valuable opportunities to express themselves. The arts program has provided materials and educational opportunities for students attending Maubisse schools from years 2-12 and began in 2015. Following consultation with the subdistrict and the local schools, the BMFC now aims to hand over the continuation of the program to the Maubisse community. This would necessitate the nomination of a local teacher to care for the materials, initiate and conduct the classes.

Over the years the art program has been extended to engage with local women and men in the conduct of sewing classes, including donation of materials and equipment to provide incentive for ongoing projects. It is likely that a small sewing business involving local women will eventuate.

Public infrastructure and schools

With Timor-Leste's government and subdistrict administration having built capacity to deliver infrastructure projects on their own using local resources, the BMFC no longer sees the need to send work teams to construct and/or refurbish public infrastructure. If it is an agreed priority with the subdistrict administration of Maubisse, the BMFC will consider financial contributions to assist in delivering projects that involve the application of local labour and materials.

The committee's container shipping program continues to provide donated materials, goods and equipment needed to improve the quality of life for the local

Maubisse community, particularly for schools throughout the subdistrict. The average cost of sending a container to Maubisse from Bendigo is in the order of \$6,500. With more than 40 containers sent thus far, a substantial commitment and outlay has been made. Taking into account team participation, human resources needed to load a container, committee time and fundraising, it is estimated that the Bendigo community has to date provided in excess of 650 volunteer hours.

Local community and lifestyle

The BMFC continues to support the provision of knitted clothing in partnership with the Rotary Club of Bendigo Sandhurst. Whilst governance of this project is the responsibility of the Rotary Club, the BMFC ensures transport and provision of containers, and negotiates with the Maubisse Administration regarding the ongoing need and distribution of clothing throughout the nine Maubisse sucos.



A dedicated team in excess of 500 knitters throughout Victoria knit clothing that is distributed to the hospital, the pre-birth mothers' clinic and across the many remote villages of the Maubisse subdistrict. Whilst the cost of containers is provided through the BMFC's budget, the Rotary Club contributes to the financial cost of transporting these materials to Timor-Leste. Feedback is sought annually from the Maubisse community, who continue to provide positive feedback about the importance of this project, and adjustments to the project are made as these are identified.

In consultation with the BMFC, Maubisse's community has expressed a wish to develop regional tourism, a wish that has been echoed by municipal officers of the broader Ainaro region. Where government-to-government assistance is appropriate, the BMFC will refer to City of Greater Bendigo (the City) staff as per the Municipal Cooperation Agreement. There may also be opportunities for the

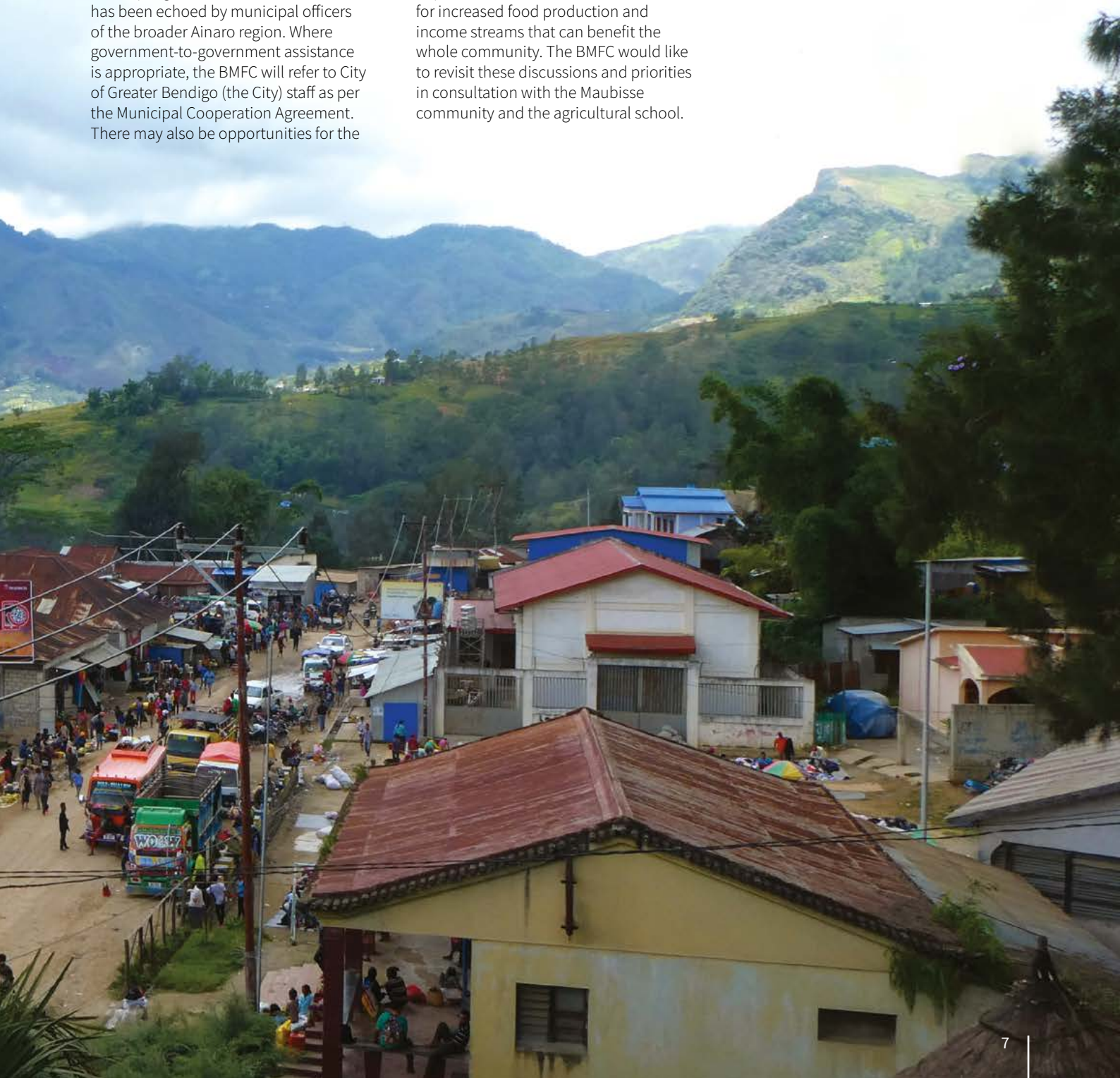
BMFC and the City to collaborate with the Ballarat Friends of Ainaro Community Committee (BFACC) and the City of Ballarat on joint tourism projects, such as a walking trail similar to the Camino de Santiago walking tour. This was a potential initiative discussed at February 2020's joint committee meeting.

The implications of food security and agriculture for nutrition, wellbeing and economic prosperity, and Maubisse's reputation as the 'food bowl' of Timor-Leste offer opportunities for further exploration. Previous project teams have consulted with the agricultural school located in nearby Horaiquic, with discussions identifying priorities to improve the school and create avenues for increased food production and income streams that can benefit the whole community. The BMFC would like to revisit these discussions and priorities in consultation with the Maubisse community and the agricultural school.

Strategic focus

To ensure the continued delivery of programs and projects in the key areas described, the strategic focus of the BMFC emphasises:

- Strengthening our communities – both Maubisse and the City of Greater Bendigo
- Capacity building for the people of Maubisse and their Local Government and community organisations
- Delivering programs and projects in agreement with Maubisse's community
- Ensuring ongoing capabilities and resources required for the BMFC's continued operation



Vision

An enduring friendship between the people of the municipal subdistrict of Maubisse and the City of Greater Bendigo that ensures a strong future for the people of Maubisse.

Mission

To realise our Vision we will work with our Local Government and other partners to help build Maubisse's capacity to achieve economic, social and environmental sustainability.

Values

Our Mission is based on values of mutual respect, cooperation and local decision-making, and involves sharing stories, culture, insights, expertise and resources.

Goals

GOAL 1 – COMMUNITIES AND FRIENDSHIP

Strengthen the communities of the City of Greater Bendigo and Maubisse by contributing to the development of the friendship relationship at multiple levels.

GOAL 2 – PEOPLE AND ORGANISATIONS

Support the people of Maubisse in their own development and that of their local government and community organisations.

GOAL 3 – PROJECTS AND PARTNERSHIPS

Support community development programs and projects in Maubisse as identified in agreement with our Maubisse friends and in collaboration with our partners.

GOAL 4 – CAPABILITIES AND RESOURCES

Maintain and develop the capabilities and resources of the BMFC and individual members and supporters to achieve Goals 1 to 3.





Action plan

GOAL 1 – COMMUNITIES AND FRIENDSHIP

Strengthen the communities of the City of Greater Bendigo and Maubisse by contributing to the development of the friendship relationship at multiple levels.

Objective	Action	What success looks like
1.1 Develop the existing relationship at government level: between the Democratic Republic of Timor-Leste and Local Government Victoria	1.1.1 Collaborate with other community groups and local governments on Timor-Leste friendship relationships and cooperation activities, including through the Australia Timor-Leste Friendship Network	At minimum, one BMFC representative attends the network forums held in Victoria
	1.1.2 Support cultural exchanges and visits between Timor-Leste and Australia	Where possible and agreed to, the BMFC supports any delegations between the district of Ainaro and Bendigo
1.2 Develop the existing relationships at municipal level: between the Municipality of Ainaro, the City of Ballarat and the City of Greater Bendigo	1.2.1 Collaborate with the Ballarat Friends of Ainaro Community Committee (BFACC) to develop mutual support mechanisms and to provide advice and assistance to the City of Greater Bendigo and City of Ballarat to meet their obligations under the Municipal Cooperation Agreement	BMFC and BFACC meet at minimum once per year. Communication is facilitated by a joint digital media portal. There is a sharing of expertise and resources, and joint initiatives have increased
	1.2.2 Work with the City of Greater Bendigo Council to maintain the Timor-Leste partnership, including operating appropriate governance and reporting mechanisms	The BMFC maintains a close relationship with the City of Greater Bendigo. The BMFC continues to assist the City in meeting its obligations under the Municipal Cooperation Agreement, and in accordance with the Memorandum of Understanding between the City and the BMFC under the new governance arrangements
1.3 Develop the existing relationships at local level: between the Maubisse community, the Bendigo community, and the BMFC	1.3.1 BMFC members actively engage with City staff and community members through information sessions, fundraising activities and guest speakers to increase participation and knowledge of the purpose of BMFC	Increased participation in and knowledge of BMFC's meetings and activities by City staff and community members
	1.3.2 Collaborate with other community organisations working with the people of Maubisse	The BMFC continues to work closely with local Rotary Clubs, knitters groups, and other community groups as appropriate

GOAL 2 – PEOPLE AND ORGANISATIONS

Support the people of Maubisse in their own development and that of their local government and community organisations.

Objective	Action	What success looks like
2.1 Capacity build at municipal level	2.1.1 Assist the City of Greater Bendigo by advising on priorities and communication mechanisms to enable council to provide targeted professional development support for Ainaro’s municipal administration as it moves towards responsible local government	The BMFC provides clear advice to relevant City of Greater Bendigo staff in a timely manner
	2.1.2 Assist the City of Greater Bendigo by advising on priorities and communication mechanisms to enable council to provide targeted professional development support for the subdistrict of Maubisse’s government organisations as they move towards responsible local government	The BMFC provides clear advice to relevant City of Greater Bendigo staff in a timely manner
2.2 Capacity build at local level	2.2.1 Provide organisational and professional development support for Maubisse’s non-government and community organisations to assist them to operate more sustainably	The BMFC shares learning and experience and/or provides links to appropriate support provision where possible and where agreed to
2.3 Capacity build at individual level	2.3.1 Support education and training initiatives of benefit for the people of Maubisse	BMFC’s scholarship program continues to provide opportunities for Maubisse’s young people. Additional opportunities are identified during biennial consultation when these can be held

GOAL 3 – PROJECTS AND PARTNERSHIPS

Support community development programs and projects in Maubisse as identified in agreement with our Maubisse friends and in collaboration with our partners.

Objective	Action	What success looks like
3.1 Identify community priorities for projects and activities	3.1.1 The BMFC carries out biennial consultations with the community of Maubisse, Ainaro’s Municipal Administration and other non-government partner organisations to identify community priorities that the BMFC has the capacity to support	The Maubisse community continues to identify and endorse projects that the BMFC could work on

Objective	Action	What success looks like
<p>3.2 Support projects and activities in the areas identified as priorities</p>	<p>3.2.1 Support programs and projects in Education</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The BMFC scholarship team collaborates annually with the Maubisse Selection Committee and Maubisse Sub-District Administration to identify potential scholarship recipients • The BMFC scholarship project is widely promoted to establish a broad donor base • Scholarship donations and timely transfers of funds are managed in consultation with BMFC Treasurer • The BMFC scholarship team collaborates with Fundasaun Alola Scholarship Team Dili to provide ‘in country’ oversight and semester payments to all scholarship recipients • Communication channels with all parties for regular monitoring of academic progress of scholarship students are actively cultivated • Scholarship students are interviewed annually to ascertain academic progress, satisfactory accommodation and financial circumstances • Scholarship donors are informed of student progress and provided with academic reports annually • Scholarship project updates are reported at each BMFC meeting
	<p>3.2.2 Support programs and projects in Health</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The BMFC sources supplies of available dental equipment and materials for the Maubisse Referral Hospital Dental Clinic and health outposts • The BMFC accepts donations of toothbrushes and toothpaste to support the School Oral Health Program to reduce the incidence of tooth decay • The BMFC identifies and supports professional development opportunities for the Maubisse Dental Clinic personnel • The BMFC collaborates with the Maubisse Hospital, Timor Leste Dental Program and other key allied health partners to identify oral health needs in the Maubisse district • The BMFC continues to provide ‘Days for Girls’ kits to the girls and women of Maubisse. These are distributed with the appropriate education by a local Days for Girls facilitator
	<p>3.2.3 Support programs and projects in Arts and Culture</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The BMFC hands over the continuation of the arts program to the Maubisse community. A local teacher is nominated to care for the materials, initiate and conduct the classes • The BMFC provides some arts materials but they are purchased locally where possible • The arts curriculum is translated into Tetum • The BMFC continues to source sewing machines for local women and men, along with fabrics, equipment, and when possible provides classes to continue learning the basics in textiles • A basic business course is provided to enable the women and men to move towards being able to develop small business for the economic benefit of their families and the community

Objective	Action	What success looks like
	3.2.4 Support programs and projects in Public Infrastructure and Schools	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • While the BMFC no longer constructs and/or refurbishes public infrastructure due to increased capacity of the Timor-Leste government and subdistrict administration, where appropriate it continues to source and supply donated furniture for fitting out buildings • The BMFC considers financial contributions to assist in delivering projects that involve the application of local labour and materials
	3.2.5 Support programs and projects in Local Community and Lifestyle	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The BMFC collaborates annually with Maubisse Subdistrict Administration to identify the ongoing need for knitting provision • The BMFC liaises with the Rotary Club of Bendigo Sandhurst to establish quantities required and shipping arrangements • The BMFC budgets for container costs • The BMFC collaborates with Knitting Project Director to establish quantities, items required and Maubisse community destinations • Communication channels with all parties are actively cultivated • Project updates are reported at BMFC meetings as required
	3.2.6 Revisit discussions with the subdistrict administration and the community of Maubisse for improving tourism. Explore opportunities to assist with the identification of local sites, requirements to establish successful tourist venues and build the capacity of the Maubisse community to create greater economic prosperity	The BMFC collaborates annually with Maubisse Subdistrict Administration to identify the ongoing need for tourism support
	3.2.7 Revisit discussions with the agricultural school in Horaiquic and the community of Maubisse for improving Food Security, nutrition and economic prosperity through sustainable agriculture	The BMFC understands the current locally identified priorities and how it may assist
	3.2.8 Work with Maubisse's government and non-government organisations to help them design, deliver and evaluate programs, projects and activities that address other identified and agreed priorities and that contribute to building community capacity and sustainability	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Additional opportunities to support organisations and their projects are identified during biennial consultation, and are supported where possible and where agreed to • Where government-to-government assistance is appropriate, such as in recent request for tourism resources and/or training, the BMFC follows procedure and refers to City of Greater Bendigo staff as per the Municipal Cooperation Agreement

GOAL 4 – CAPABILITIES AND RESOURCES

Maintain and develop the capabilities and resources of the BMFC and individual members and supporters to achieve Goals 1 to 3.

Objective	Action	What success looks like
4.1 Respond to changes affecting Section 86 Committees introduced by Local Government Act 2020	1.1.1 Collaborate with other community groups and local governments on Timor-Leste friendship relationships and cooperation activities, including through the Australia Timor-Leste Friendship Network	At minimum, one BMFC representative attends the network forums held in Victoria
4.2 Develop a strategic framework	4.2.1 Develop a succession plan	A succession plan inclusive of skills assessment, procedures for recruitment of new members and induction pack is implemented
	4.2.2 Implement the Strategic Plan	Over a three year period, implementation of the Strategic Plan is regularly recorded, monitored and evaluated
	4.2.3 Identify and develop appropriate policies and procedures	Clearly written policies and procedures are accessible from a central document repository
4.3 Improve community engagement	4.3.1 Develop the BMFC's communications capacity and effectiveness	A communications plan is implemented and/or a BMFC member is appointed to the position of Communications Officer
	4.3.2 Assist community members and staff of City of Greater Bendigo to develop their understanding of Timor-Leste and Maubisse, and their capacity to contribute to the activities of the BMFC	The BMFC participates in activities to promote itself. Reports on the BMFC's activities are targeted to recipients' needs and preferences
4.4 Improve financial sustainability	4.4.1 Develop a Financial Plan	Financial Plan is implemented
	4.4.2 Develop and diversify BMFC's fundraising activities	A Fundraising Plan is implemented and financial capacity has increased
	4.4.3 Advocate for funding to assist with fulfilling Municipal Cooperation Agreement (MCA) as described in Action 1.2.2	The BMFC secures contributions from the Victorian State Government who are the champions of the MCA and/or the City of Greater Bendigo who are the holders of the MCA
	4.4.4 Develop philanthropic partnerships	The BMFC identifies and develops ongoing partnerships with benefactors who have capacity to provide significant financial support
4.5 Provide clarification on BMFC's role in the City's Municipal Cooperation Agreement (MCA) with the district of Ainaro	4.5.1 Develop a procedure and line of contact for referring requests under the MCA to relevant staff at the City of Greater Bendigo (the City)	All BMFC members understand which requests constitute those under the MCA, how to refer them to relevant City staff and how the BMFC provides further support

Evaluation framework

Our evaluation framework is critical for demonstrating the breadth of achievements and the importance of work carried out by the BMFC to secure ongoing support from Council, donors and volunteers. It will also inform decision-making and drive improvement of operations.

Implementation of this strategy: Implementation of the strategy will be carried out by the BMFC and staged over three years.

Monitoring of this strategy: Monitoring and evaluation will consist of three key elements;

1. Regular monitoring and recording of the implementation of the Action Plan.
2. Impact evaluation with a focus on changes in Maubisse and in BMFC operations; what is working or not working, unintended consequences, and the appropriateness of the strategy.
3. Outcome evaluation for each goal with a focus on the long term change in:
 - opportunities for the people of Bendigo and Maubisse to strengthen their communities by contributing to the development of the friendship relationship
 - support for the people of Maubisse in their own development and that of their local government and community organisations
 - support of community development programs and projects in Maubisse identified in agreement with Maubisse friends and partners
 - maintenance and development of the capabilities and resources of the BMFC and individual members and supporters to achieve Goals 1 to 3



ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

The Bendigo-Maubisse Friendship Committee acknowledges with great appreciation the support provided by the City of Greater Bendigo over many years.

The Committee also acknowledges with great appreciation the many generous donations of time and/or funds from dedicated volunteers and benefactors for improving the lives of our vulnerable friends in Timor Leste.

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