



Friends of Venilale e-Newsletter November 2021

<http://venilale.com>
<facebook.com/groups/friendsofvenilale>



Update

Still no trips to Venilale this year but lots going on. A special welcome was extended to Venilale's new Administrator, Senyor Miguel Guterres Mendes. Venilale also saw the hand over of the position of Chief of Venilale Medical Centre to Amandio Ximenes Guterres. The Ridgeline Walk involving only Timbertop students was a great success and enabled our scholarship programme to continue. We continued to meet Seasonal Workers and Timorese students from Melbourne. Joni supplied lots of photos which kept us up to date on improvements to roads and the destruction caused by intense wet weather. Nothing could stop the vigorous FoV committee so the celebration of our 15th anniversary was finally celebrated in style despite being a year late. The three friendship groups in the Indi electorate were featured in the North East Living magazine. We also offer our warm congratulations to Boss and Isabel on their engagement and thank Boss for sharing with us cultural dowry practices.

Buy your coffee at
'Oakbank
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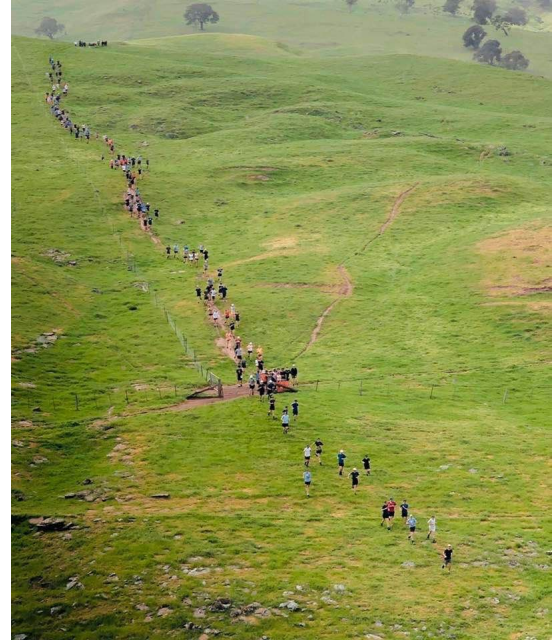
Wild Timor Coffee is a coffee importing company founded by four Australian Peacekeepers after returning from service in East Timor. FOV supports 'Wild Timor' because it is a new business and they pay their farmers even better than fair trade companies.



<http://www.wildtimorcoffee.com/>



The Ridgeline Walk held in November was a fabulous day. Because of Covid only Geelong Grammar Timbertop was involved. They are very keen participants, raising \$1250 for scholarships for Venilale students. This was particularly important this year because our usual sources of funding were unavailable. Special thanks to Andrew and Helen Crockett and the Twycross family for their efforts to make this such a successful event.



Some Scholarship Recipients



Benigna Ana Ximenes from Fatulia received a scholarship in 2019. She graduated from Dili Institute of Technology on November 29 2021, having studied tourism and travel.

These students from Uai Bua Junior High are deserving recipients of scholarships this year. They are selected by their school based on academic talent and the need for financial assistance.

Twenty-two scholarships are awarded each year - 4 Senior High, 12 Junior High, 4 University and 2 Health/University.

It has been a difficult year for us to raise funds and also difficult for the students to receive the money as Joni could not travel to the bank in Dili because of Covid.

15th Anniversary of Friends of Venilale



Four members of the 2005 Mansfield Shire delegation to Venilale—former Mayor Tom Ingpen, David Foster, Mansfield Shire CEO Kaylene Conrick and former councillor Dr Will Twycross



In Venilale Friends of Mansfield chairperson Sr Manuel Castro and community centre manager Joni Sarmento

The guest of honour was Timor-Leste Honorary Consul in Victoria Peter McMullin. He commented that FoV is well regarded as being one of the most active and successful of the twenty friendship groups in Victoria.

Some 80 Mansfield people, including many students from Mansfield Secondary have taken the adventurous trip to Venilale and many have maintained their involvement in the friendship. Guests at the celebration were entertained by the laid back Timorese sounds of Mystic Trio, the Steiner School chamber music ensemble and Hilary Murakami from Mansfield Secondary College on keyboard.

The Partnership Programme and supportive groups were recognised by the distribution of Certificates of Appreciation to all local schools, Central General Practice, Mansfield District Hospital, St John's Anglican Church, St Francis Xavier Catholic Church, Beolite Ladies, the Scouts and the Deckhands mah-jong group, Rural Australians for Refugees, Apex and Rotary.



Friends of Venilale Chairperson Julie Aldous with Toni Appleby representing the Lauriston Girls' School partnership with Uai Bua Junior High



FoV held the celebration at the Delatite Hotel where Dean and his staff provided delicious food, great service and technical help for our slide show



Mansfield Shire mayor Mark Holcombe observed that the Mansfield community has been most supportive of the friendship relationship

North East Living Magazine



SNAPSHOTS / Friends of Venilale received a warm welcome when arriving there for the first time in 2005 (top left). Volunteer John Bossell (top right) stayed in Venilale for a year and helped repaint the kindergarten. The local women of Timore Leste weave taia with incredible talent (bottom left). Friends of Lacluta's Elizabeth Walpole (bottom right) enjoyed time with children in the new Friends of Lacluta supported playground in Dilor Lacluta.

"It didn't matter that they weren't from Venilale as they clearly needed support," David said.
"Friends of Venilale provided food, clothing, footwear and bedding and we arranged for advice from a union in regards to their work arrangements and put them in touch with Tetun speakers. Mansfield Council provided food vouchers and local opportunity shops. Food Bank and Rural Australians for Refugees were also generous. Two of the five workers are still in

with six Mansfield schools and two churches interacting with and supporting five primary schools, four junior high schools and one senior high school in Venilale. Medical equipment and supplies have been provided following liaison with and requests from the Venilale Health Centre and in 2020. US\$1000 was sent to help the health centre boost its battle against COVID-19. At the Venilale kindergarten, refurbishment has taken place, while solar panels have been installed, with the help of the

The North East Living magazine featured an excellent article on the three Friendship Groups in Indi. Friends of Venilale started in 2004, Friends of Lacluta in Wangaratta started in 2005 and Friends of Atauro in 2008.

The great successes of the three Friendship groups include the development of enduring bonds of friendship and support.

FoV Committee for 2022



Enormous thanks to the committee of 2021.
The new position holders are:
President—Julie Aldous
Vice President—Rachel Meadows
Secretary—David Foster
Treasurer—Karen Lewis
Committee Members—Ann Eldred, Ken Hall, Lynn Elder, Andy Barltrop, Andrew and Helen Crockett, Michelle Harmer, Margie and Will Twycross, Lise Andreasen, Anne Foster, Joni, Boss

WHAT'S HAPPENING IN 2022?

Find out about our projects on the 4th Wednesday of each month, 6 pm

WANT TO BE INVOLVED?

Here's your opportunity to contribute. Everyone welcome.

Seasonal Workers



Finally the seasonal workers in Mansfield, Savio and Ade-rito were able to explore the local area. When Febby d'Sousa made a return visit with some Timorese students from Melbourne, Filipe and Miguel, they walked from Sheeppard Flat to Fry's Hut, visited the Mansfield Zoo and The Gough's Bay Maze. The Melbourne visitors stayed with Rachel Meadows and were also able to fit in a visit to Lynn and Andy's beautiful rural property. They finished the weekend with a typical Aussie barbecue at the Fosters before catching the V/Line bus back to Melbourne. Febby returned to Timor-Leste two weeks later having completed her Masters degree in Applied Economics at Monash University. She is now working at the Department of Finance.

All the seasonal workers including those from Vanuatu and Tonga have been taken under the wings of Michelle Harmer and Ann Eldred. Michelle organised vaccinations as well as creating MyGov accounts and immunisation certificates while Ann prepared a picnic at Gough's Bay where the workers were given the opportunity to talk about their homelands and families.



Venilale News



FoV extends a warm welcome to Senyor Miguel Guterres Mendes, the newly appointed Administrator of the Venilale Posto Administrativo. Joni and Mestri Pedro had very positive meetings with him in September and November and passed on a letter of welcome from FoV.

Co-incidentally those from Mansfield who visited Venilale in 2017 met Senyor Mendes when he was the principal of Uato Hato Catholic Primary School.

In April, Venilale suffered very heavy and consistent rain caused by a cyclone. This caused the wall between the Community Centre and Uato Haco Primary School to collapse.



By October after a large number of workers including teachers from Uato Haco and tradesmen from Uailaha and Uato Haco villages pitched in to help, the wall was rebuilt and looks quite impressive.



Road Works are transforming infrastructure which will lead to increases in communication and tourism

Above—many of those who have travelled to Venilale will remember this nasty section of the Baucau—Viqueque road between Bercoli and Venilale

Right— the transformation of the Venilale intersection near the Senior Secondary College



How beautiful is the Dili—Baucau road



Valeriano da Silva and Isabel dos Santos

All who know ‘Boss’ (Valeriano) are thrilled to hear that he and Isabel are engaged to be married in January 2022.

Boss has very kindly shared with us a description of an important cultural practice—the dowry.

On November 6th both families met to accept the dowry. The groom’s family offer the dowry then both families discuss the wedding and agree on the date. Normally each clan has a set dowry. In this case Boss and Isabel speak different local languages so some things that are required by the bride’s family (e.g. a sword) are culturally inappropriate for the groom’s family. In this case the sword will be replaced by ponies, buffalo or money.

The main objective of the dowry is to connect both families culturally so that they will come together and help each other.

The wedding will be held on 28 January 2022, coincidentally on Boss’ birthday.



Venilale Views



Harvesting the rice



Sowing the rice for the next crop



Preparing the rice field

The wet season



Venilale Health



Mana Candida bravely sets an example



The new chief of the Venilale Health Centre, Senyor Amandio Ximenes Guterres (on the right) being welcomed by the outgoing chief, Senyor Domingos



The staff at the Venilale Health Centre proudly display their vaccination certificates

Friends of Venilale

MEMBERSHIP –If you are new or your membership details have changed please print this form, fill it in with your updated contact details and mail it to the address below. You may pay by cheque or direct deposit.

Bearing in mind that FOV is a purely voluntary organisation which is trying to make a difference, your annual membership of \$20 helps keep it viable.

NAME:

PHONE:

ADDRESS:

.....

EMAIL:



**Please post to—
Friends of Venilale
P.O. Box 204
Mansfield Vic 3724**



If paying by direct deposit

ANZ

Account Name: Friends of Venilale Incorporated

BSB: 013714

Account number: 269147371

Use your name as reference

If you want to know more about FoV or Venilale check out these websites:

<http://venilale.com>

[facebook.com/groups/friendsofvenilale/](https://www.facebook.com/groups/friendsofvenilale/)

If you do not wish to receive emails from FoV in future, please email anne_foster28@hotmail.com

SCHOLARSHIP FUND DETAILS

How much does education cost in Venilale?

For one year:

Junior High School
Grades 7-9 = US\$80

Senior High School
Grades 10-12 = US\$120

University—US\$240

Technical College - US\$240

To study to be a nurse or
midwife - US\$530



Venilale Scholarship Fund

Hunger for Education

Timor Leste has had a tumultuous history over the past twenty years. Forced occupation, a war of independence and civil unrest have ruptured many families and deprived children of opportunity.

But the hunger for education is strong. One of the 2012 scholarship winners is Adriana da Costa, who walks two hours each way each day to attend Year 11 classes at Luga Oli Senior High School. After Adriana's mother died in 2001 her father remarried and is no longer in contact with her.



If you would like to contribute to this fund use the same direct deposit details as for membership