

The Friendship Agreement

In the spirit of mutual respect and co-operation between the people of Australia and the Democratic Republic of Timor-Leste, we affirm our Friendship Relationship between the Sub-district of Barique/Natarbora (District Manatuto) in Timor-Leste and the Bega Valley Shire Council (State of New South Wales) in Australia.

The Bega Valley Shire Council recognises the desire of many Australian to contribute to the rebuilding of Timor-Leste and learn more about their neighbouring country. In forming a relationship with the Sub-district of Barique/Natarbora, the Council acknowledges the decentralisation priority of the Timor-Leste Government and the needs of more remote areas of the country.

It is intended that this partnership will be at both the Local Government and community levels and will result in an improved understanding and appreciation of the cultures and experiences of the communities of Barique/Natarbora and the Bega Valley.

It is intended that all initiatives undertaken under the Friendship Relationship will aim to build capacity and advance and promote the self-sufficiency of the people of Barique/Natarbora. All initiatives will be exercised in a manner that is consistent with and actively promotes the principles of cultural and religious diversity, gender equity and ecological sustainability. It is understood that any project will take into account the *National Development Plan* and *District Development Plan* for the Barique/Natarbora District as well as other priorities identified through local decision-making processes. Decision-making under the Friendship Relationship will be open, transparent and accountable.

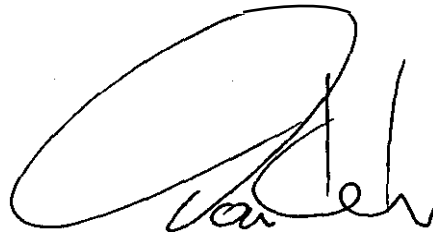
It is acknowledged that the Friendship Relationship between the District of Barique/Natarbora and the Bega Valley Shire Council is long-term, and may be reviewed and reaffirmed by the administrations which follow those currently responsible.

Dated: October 2004

Signed:



Mr Elvino Bonaparte do Rego
District Administrator
Barique/Natarbora



Mr David J Hede
Mayor
Bega Valley Shire Council



Mr Rui Gomes
Sub-District Administrator
Barique/Natarbora