



NEWSLETTER  
Blue Mountains East Timor  
Sisters



CONCERT FOR TIMOR-LESTE A RESOUNDING SUCCESS



A full house of over 320 revelled in the entertainment on offer on Saturday 23 May in the Blackheath Community Centre, with captivating performances from the Spooky Men’s Chorale, Margaret and Bob Fagan and our own BM Bearded Ladies.

We are so grateful for the generosity of the performers who donated their skills and talents, everyone who contributed to the delicious afternoon tea, and the attendees, who entered into the spirit of the event with such enthusiasm.

The BMETS team were delighted with the seamless and coordinated way the event came together, and the opportunity it provided to interest the local community in the work we do in Timor-Leste. That we raised more than \$12,000 towards our continuing mission was a thrilling bonus.

SAVE THE DATE

BMETS is planning a showing of the newly released documentary film Bukae: Sobrevivente La’o ba Justisa (A Survivor Walking towards Justice) on Sunday 9 August in the Upper Mountains. Bukae tells the stories of women survivors of rape during the Indonesian occupation of Timor-Leste from 1975-1999. So many women were sexually assaulted and live with the ongoing impact. The film is made by AJAR (Asia Justice and Rights) and AcBIT (Associacaon Chega Ba Ita), and features the women from Mauchiga, with whom BMETS has worked for many years. One of the forces behind the work, Galuh Wandita from AJaR (Asia Justice and Rights) will be our guest speaker at the event.



Blue Mountains East Timor Sisters

**GARAGE SALE**

Plants, clothes, books, household goods, toys etc  
NO TEXT BOOKS OR MAGAZINES  
Saturday 12<sup>th</sup> Sept  
9-2pm  
Blackheath RSL  
2 Bundarra st Blackheath

Donations drop off deliver to RSL  
Friday 3-6pm

Proceeds go to scholarships for young women in Timor Leste  
Enquiries: Gill 0416 170 850

**PLEASE NO LARGE FURNITURE ITEMS**

## LEADER OF WOMEN'S GROUP SUPPORTED TO CONTINUE UNIVERSITY STUDIES

Mana Isaura Cardoso is the volunteer co-ordinator of the Haut-Ai women's group. She is currently supported by BMETS to study a master's degree in sociology at university in Dili. During the week, she teaches at the local Hauteo primary school and assists the women's group to develop but Friday afternoon sees her gearing up for a long, cold trip by motor bike from her home in the mountains of Hatobuilico for a solid weekend of study in Dili. BMETS' vision is for educated women to take on leadership roles within their local community and mana Isaura will join other graduates who have gone on to take up senior roles in their communities and in government.



## BAKSO TEAM HIT THE STREETS

As a dominantly patriarchal culture, Timor-Leste still struggles with finding a place for the LGBT community. Movimento Diversidade Aitanan is a small community-based organisation in Dili run by transmen who find community and support together as well as hold a dream for a more inclusive and just future.



They desperately need to earn income to keep rice on the table. In recent weeks, BMETS has seen this enthusiastic group take to the streets with their food cart called "Rainbow Bakso". They are selling delicious street food on the busy main road in Becora. BMETS provided a very small infrastructure grant to assist the set up.

## AKREMA WOMEN PLAN FOR THEIR NEW VENTURE



How to turn an idea into a firm plan? The Akrema women now have a strong business harvesting seaweed and selling freshly caught fish but the competition is fierce and the weather and heavy seas can be major obstacles. Realising that diversifying sources of income is vital, these gutsy women are now well advanced in planning for their small restaurant.

Land is secured thanks to the generosity of a local leader / landowner, a budget has been prepared and they are poised to start work. BMETS is assisting with funds for the purchase of materials so a traditional building can be constructed. Meanwhile the seaweed harvesting continues.