



*Poverty reduction through Water, Sanitation  
and Hygiene (WASH) Projects*

## June 2025 Newsletter

**Bondia** everyone (that's G'day in East Timor "Tetun")

I wanted to give you all an update on the projects we are hoping to assist with in and around Balibo in East Timor (or Timor -Leste (T-L)). My Newsletter from May last year contains much detail of what we have planned.

Sadly, progress has been slow in Timor. To achieve progress, it has taken the Chairman of the Balibo House Trust (BHT) MANY emails and phone calls to finally start getting the quotes on materials that we need.

### **What we aim to do:**

Our first projects include:

- Running pipes to and cleansing water for the school at Leohitu (which is about 5km from Balibo),
- Making minor repairs to the toilet block and volunteer's house at the Balibo CLC (Community Learning Centre), as well as providing clean water to the Centre,
- Discussing the high birth death rates at the Balibo Hospital to determine if and how we could assist in any way.

Each water supply system will consist of water brought through pipes from either a local stream or we will tap into an existing pipe. The water will be pumped up to a "dirty water tank" then gravity fed through the ultra filtration system (SkyHydrants) into clean water tanks, and from there to several taps.

The water systems at Leohitu and the CLC will be basically trial builds – with assessment undertaken in probably 12 months to ensure the systems are working and maintained correctly. If the assessment is positive, further systems may be installed in other villages around Balibo.

### **Cultural Issues**

As we will be piping water from a small creek near the Leohitu school, the Balibo team has confirmed that they have completed "Cultura" – the cultural ceremonies and endorsement with the local village people regarding extracting the water from that creek.

## **Designs, Material Lists and Quotes**

I have recently modified the designs of the water towers and shelter houses for the pumps and filtration systems – to take into account steel dimensions which are currently available in T-L.

We are finally getting quotes back from a large supplier in Dili. However, the quotes are not fully complete (i.e. prices not supplied for some items, or incorrect items quoted), so BHT are chasing these up. We are still chasing quotes on plumbing materials. Some plumbing fittings we need may not be available in Dili, so we are reviewing likely sources (including me buying some in Australia to take with me.)

Sand and gravel for concrete is available through a local supplier in Balibo – which makes that easy for us to purchase.

BHT are paying for all materials.

One of our members has donated many plumbing fittings. I will be sending these to Melbourne to be included in a Rotary International shipping container which will be shipped to Dili late June/early July.

## **People**

BHT have identified two local men to help supervise construction. “San” has quite a bit of construction experience, so he will be a definite asset to the project. “Rino” will also be assisting – and he has many contacts in Balibo and Dili.

The local Balibo team have also identified people to assist with the manual work – digging pipe trenches, installing the pipes, mixing and laying concrete, and carrying materials.

BHT will be paying these people.

I plan to head to Dili in late July – hoping to coordinate my arrival with the donated items being shipped to Dili – so I can collect these in Dili and take to Balibo.

Depending on the success of these two initial projects, MiVAC may offer to assist BHT with future installations – and if so, we will be seeking volunteers to head to Balibo for 3-4 weeks.

## **Transport**

BHT have arranged the use of a truck in the President’s fleet to assist transport our materials from Dili to Balibo.

BHT also have a 4WD ute that will be used for all local travel needs.

## **Finances**

BHT will be providing the majority of the funding, with MiVAC funding minor material purchases, as well as some admin costs. All up, MiVAC’s financial contribution is estimated at \$6,000 which will require Board approved prior to any expenditure.

We will be setting up simple yet detailed reconciliation and cash accounting systems to accurately record all cash movement and all expenditure. Monthly reports will be provided to both BHT and MiVAC.

BHT already have a system to transfer funds to T-L, which we will be utilising while we are there.

BHT have advised they will advance me some cash – in order to purchase any additional materials once I arrive in Dili.

### **My Time Commitment**

As mentioned above, my arrival in Dili will be aligned with arrival of the Rotary container. I plan to remain in T-L to complete the projects listed above (see “What we aim to do”), and plan to be in Balibo for about 5 weeks. But I will book flexible air flights, just in case...

### **Accommodation**

Accommodation in Balibo will be at the Balibo Fort Hotel – the manager has kindly advised that we will not be charged for the accommodation, as we are a charity working in Balibo. I will have to pay for consumables.

### **Dangerous School Building**

In my last newsletter, I provided some information on the unsafe school building at Builecon, near Balibo. I am very happy to advise that the detailed report that I provided to BHT was passed on to a charity called “Spend It Well”. Their latest update of 5 June is as follows:

*Leo and Cezary’s bike ride around Australia last year raised the money to build the new school at Builecon. The school is just outside Balibo and is one Brian Boon brought to your attention, and you let us know about because of the structural danger of it.*

*We are building a new 4 classroom building, 5 toilets, a kitchen and a school garden. We’re also providing furniture. The build is well underway and we are going up with the boys and some of their families and supporters for an opening ceremony on Wednesday August 6.*

What a great result!

### **A Little MiVAC Admin**

Our annual subscriptions of \$10 fall due on 1<sup>st</sup> July. The Membership Coordinator has recently emailed everyone advising how your subscription can be renewed and how you could add a donation to provide further financial support to MiVAC. Your support is very important to MiVAC and the schools and village people we hope to help with clean water, so I thank you in advance for it.

That's all from me for the moment. Please stay safe out there. Until next time ...

With kind regards,

*Brian*

Brian Boon, MCS  
Chairman

*"You give but little when you give of your possessions. It is when you give of yourself that we truly give."* Kahlil Gibran