

Friendship Agreement (Merri-bek - Hume - Aileu) 2025-2030

An in-good-faith, non-binding agreement between the Merri-bek and Hume City Councils, Victoria, Australia, the Municipal Authority of Aileu, and the Government of the Democratic Republic of Timor-Leste

On 4 May 2000, in recognition of the aspirations of the people of East Timor and Aileu to take control of their future, the then Moreland City Council (now Merri-bek City Council) and Hume City Council committed to a friendship relationship with the then District of Aileu (now Municipality of Aileu).

That commitment was made by signing a *Memorandum of Understanding* with Xanana Gusmão, then President of the National Council of Timorese Resistance (CNRT), representing East Timor and Aileu, on the occasion of Mr. Xanana delivering the 13th *Blackburn Oration* on '*The Importance of Community Alliances in the Re-building of East Timor.*'

Also on that day, Xanana Gusmão, the Victorian Minister for Local Government, the President of the Victorian Local Governance Association (VLGA) and the President of the Municipal Association of Victoria (MAV) signed the overarching *Statement of Principles For Victorian Local Governments Working in East Timor* as a guide for such friendship relationships.

The *Friends of Aileu Community Committee*, which was established in April 2000, continues to operate as a means for the Merri-bek and Hume City Councils, their staff and members of their communities and partner organisations to collaborate to realise the mutual benefits of the friendship relationship.

The friendship relationship has been periodically renewed, most recently in 2020, with the signing of the *Friendship Agreement (2020)* between the then Moreland City Council, Hume City Council, the Timor-Leste Government Ministry of State Administration and the then Aileu Municipal Administration.

In recognition of the continuing value of this relationship to our communities, we the signatories to this *Friendship Agreement (Merri-bek – Hume – Aileu) 2025-2030*, reaffirm our organisation's commitment:

- To continue the *friendship relationship* in accordance with the principles and values of mutual respect, ongoing learning, sustainability and locally led decision making, on which our relationship is based
- To support the development of local government in Aileu, including as outlined in the *Municipal Cooperation Agreements (2016)* between the Timor-Leste Government Ministry of State Administration, and Hume City Council and the then Moreland City Council.

We agree that we will continue to work together in friendship to:

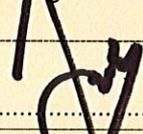
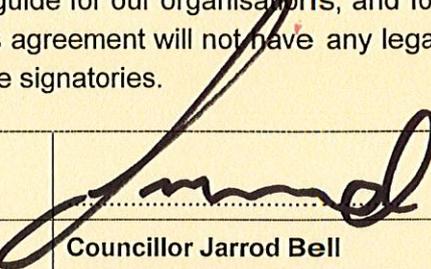
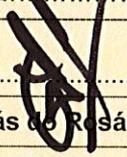
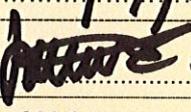
- Help develop and maintain strong communities in Aileu and in Merri-bek and Hume
- Share our stories, cultures, perspectives, skills and resources, and improve mutual understanding
- Respond to the aspirations of the people of Aileu as they build their local democracy and governance, and work towards a healthier and more inclusive, prosperous and sustainable future
- Engage with the people of Aileu in ways that respect their strengths and complement their efforts to achieve the goals that they have developed for themselves

- Ensure that any activities that we undertake or support:
 - Respect the policies, programs and priorities of the **Government of the Democratic Republic of Timor-Leste** and of the **Aileu Municipal Authority**, and address complementary priorities identified in consultation with the **Aileu Municipal Authority**, the **Aileu Friendship Commission** and our Aileu and Timor-Leste partner organisations and their communities
 - Note the special place of traditional and religious relationships and authority in community life in Timor-Leste
 - Recognise the capacity of our organisations, partners, supporters and communities to resource and sustain them
- Engage with women and vulnerable people including people living with a disability as they strive to participate more fully in community, economic and political life, and with young people as they strive to take on their responsibilities for the future.

We acknowledge the independence, wisdom, knowledge and skills of the people of Aileu and their government, non-government and community organisations.

We also acknowledge the complementary roles and contributions of Merri-bek and Hume City Councils, the Friends of Aileu Community Committee and community members, Australian partner organisations and other community groups and organisations, engaging with Aileu in the spirit of friendship.

This **Friendship Agreement 2025-2030** is intended to be a guide for our organisations, and for the communities we represent for the coming five years. This agreement will not have any legal effect and may be terminated or varied as agreed between the signatories.

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| Councillor Helen Davidson | Mr João Bosco dos Santos | Councillor Jarrod Bell |
| Mayor Merri-bek City Council | President Municipal Authority of Aileu | Mayor Hume City Council and Co-Chair of Friends of Aileu Community Committee |
| Date: 23.06/2025 | Date: 08/07/25 | Date: 08/07/25 |
|  |  |  |
| Mr Tomás do Resário Cabral | Mr José Valente | Councillor Adam Pulford |
| Minister of State Administration Government of the Democratic Republic of Timor-Leste | Secretary Aileu Friendship Commission | Merri-bek City Council, Co-Chair of Friends of Aileu Community Committee |
| Date: 11/07/2025 | Date: 08/07/25 | Date: 23/06/2025 |



ADMINISTRAÇÃO MUNICIPAL DE AILEU



Merri-bek
City Council

**Friends
of Aileu**

Linking Merri-bek and Hume communities with Aileu, Timor-Leste.

