



*Poverty reduction through Water, Sanitation*

*and Hygiene (WASH) Projects*

## May 2024 Newsletter

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

I wanted to give you all a short update on the projects we are hoping to assist with in and around Balibo in East Timor (or Timor -Leste)

Dr Denis Bartrum and I travelled to Balibo last month for a week.

Our aims were to:

1. Review a number of water supply and water cleaning projects in the area, and produce costed bills of materials;
2. Carryout minor repairs to the Community Learning Centre (CLC) at Balibo House;
3. Provide advice and assistance to a small mountain bike hire business in Balibo; and
4. Provide some general medical advice if requested.

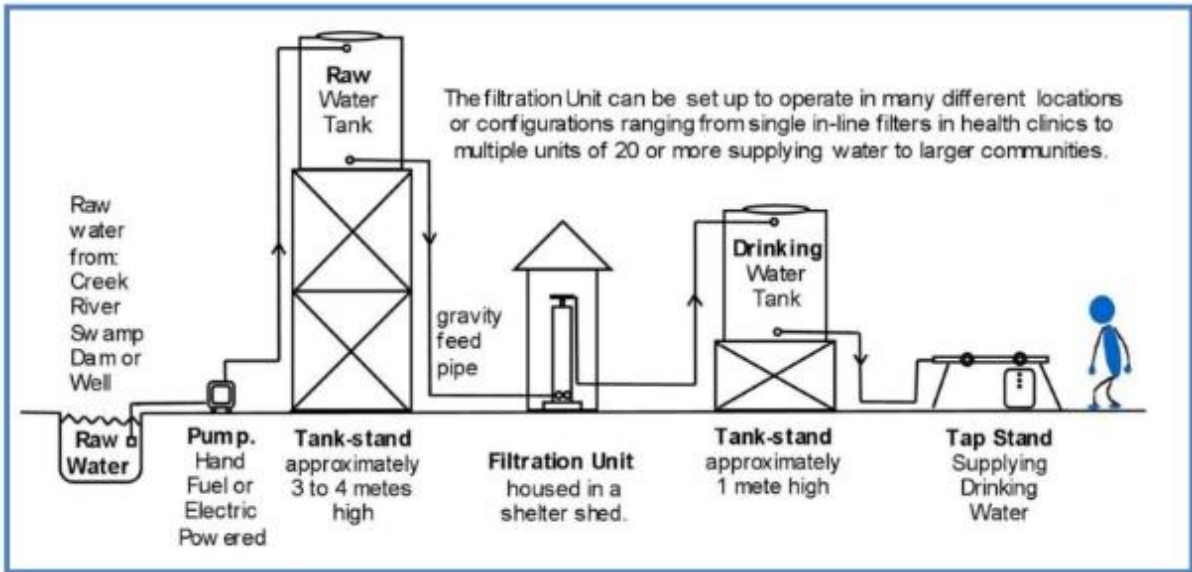
### Water Supply Projects

I looked at a total of 10 sites where there was either no running water, or the only water was not cleansed.

The plan is to install a number of "Sky Hydrant" water filtration systems. These systems have an "ultrafine" filter membrane, and rely simply on gravity-fed water from a "dirty water tank".

**A SkyHydrant filtration unit:**





Schematic layout of the SH system.



Existing layout at Palaka School

Water is pumped up to the “dirty water” tank on the steel tank stand, then gravity-feeds down to the Sky Hydrant (housed in the blue colorbond building), and from there to the clean water tank. From there, the clean water is distributed to community water points,

and/or drinking water stations at schools. These water stations have 12 taps sitting over water troughs – which collect the spare water and direct it to local gardens.

Water is pumped to the dirty water tanks from either a spring or from a well.

I have created a Material List for each village project, and the local Balibo team are checking unit prices for me. I have also re-designed the steel water tower, as the current ones (see photo) are not high enough.

Once we have updated costings for all the projects, we can determine what level of funding that MiVAC might contribute. Other currently agreed funding sources are the Balibo House Trust and the H<sub>2</sub>Osborn Project.

### **Balibo CLC Water Issues**

While we were there, I repaired the water line to the Dental Clinic, and also replaced all the water pipes into and through the volunteers' accommodation (which had been leaking for many months).

### **Bike Maintenance**

We brought over \$1,000 worth of spare parts and tools with us – with the aim of making the bikes better maintained and safer for people to use.

Dr Denis spent most of his time working with two of the men who run the bike shop – inspecting the bikes, and making adjustments or replacement of parts as required. Denis was very mindful of showing the local lads how to undertake the maintenance, and even provided them with a very detailed “how-to-do it” book, which contained lots of photos and valuable advice.



**Bikes serviced, parts replaced – ready to go!**

## Medical

Dr Denis inspected both the Dental Clinic at the CLC, and was invited to inspect the birthing unit at the Balibo Hospital. While the Dental Unit was of a very high standard, the birthing unit was quite the opposite. See the attached photos.



**Birthing unit bed – you can imagine what has seeped through those cracks ...**



**Birthing Unit medicine cabinet – almost empty. State of walls!**



## Dangerous School Building

While **not** a planned part of our program, we did visit a small school outside Balibo – which I have recommended should be condemned and not used, as the roof has partially fallen in and could fall onto the students. I have provided a detailed photographic report to the CEO of the Balibo House Trust – who will take it up with another charity – “Spend It Well” – which provides funding for school infrastructure. Hopefully my report will provide some traction for getting the building replaced.



One of **three** failed “trusses”. On the bottom chord (with ESTRES chalked on it), note:

1. The big sag in the bottom chord (there should be NO sag!).
2. The ineffective join in the bottom chord just to the right of “ESTRES” – where the bottom chord has a significant bend in it. **If/when this join fails, there is a very real risk that the whole roof will collapse.**



Note:

1. The termite damage in the joint in the bottom chord.
2. The far end of the bottom chord (above my head) has dropped about 600mm from on top of the concrete wall. (Compare with the next truss.)



One of the classrooms. Note:

1. The ceiling lining missing and falling down – largely due to termite damage in the ceiling battens.
2. Red lines indicate where the timber framing and timber slats have been eaten away – especially on the left.
3. The black line shows one example of the concrete “cancer” – where the concrete is failing above the window, and down the sides of the window

I have included these photos as examples of the very poor condition of much infrastructure in the Balibo area. Please be aware that MiVAC will **NOT** be contributing any funds to this school, but I will continue to provide advice to the BHT and Spend it Well!

### **Next Stages**

Briefly, some of the next stages we are working on are:

- Finalising the reports and costings of Bills of Materials for each sub-project
- Confirming available budgets with the Balibo House Trust (BHT) and their donors. Our MiVAC Board can then consider how much funding we could provide to assist.
- Gaining BHT Board approval for the sub-projects
- Getting bulk materials ordered, and delivered the 4 hours from Dili to Balibo
- Denis and I will travel to Balibo again in mid-July. I will get the Leohitu school water supply project underway and provide advice on construction methods.
- Denis is going to make a presentation to his Ipswich Rotary Club for funds.
- He has spoken to local obstetricians who are willing to visit Balibo.
- Denis has been interviewed by an Ipswich local paper.
- Denis hopes to take some much-needed medical supplies with him to Balibo.

### **A Little Admin**

The annual subscriptions of \$10 fall due on 1<sup>st</sup> July. The Membership Coordinator will be emailing everyone very soon 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