



Poverty reduction through Water, Sanitation

and Hygiene (WASH) Projects

MiVAC Chairman's Report – AGM – 5 October 2024

Welcome

Welcome to all those attending, including those members attending via links.

It gives me pleasure to present the Chairman's Report for the 2024 AGM.

TIMOR-LESTE RECONNAISSANCE

Dr Denis Bartrum and I travelled to Balibo in the period 20-25 April 2024.

Our aims were to:

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

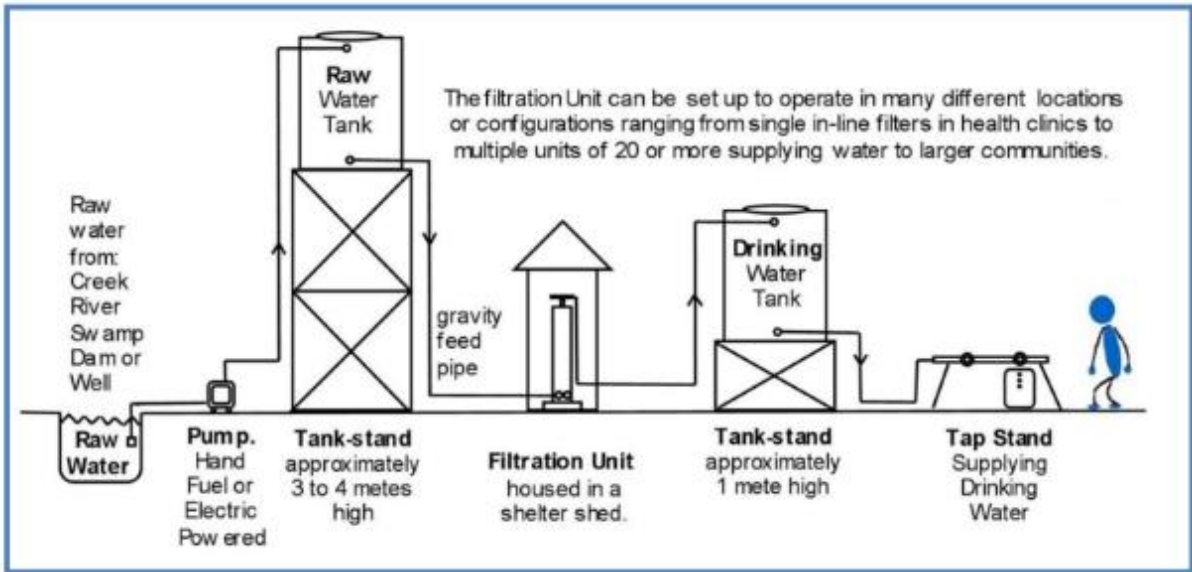
Water Supply Projects

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

The plan was 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" to cleanse the water.

A SkyHydrant filtration unit:





Schematic layout of the SH system.



Existing layout at Palaka School

Water is pumped up to the orange "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 galvanised 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 calculated a Material List for each village project, and the local Balibo team are checking unit prices for me. I also re-designed the steel water tower, as the current ones (see photo) are not high enough, nor were they structurally sound.

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 (the pipes had been leaking for many months). Needless to say, the volunteers were very happy with this work!

Bike Maintenance

We brought over \$A1,000 worth of bike 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 has taken 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, or at least repaired.



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 of the truss.
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 along the wall.)



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!

TIMOR-LESTE CURRENT STATUS

The list of proposed projects, estimated costs, and proposed funding source for each is as follows:

Project	Estimated Cost (\$US)	Source
Leohitu SH complete install	3,296.25	BHT
Belola School water supply Upgrade	152.00	BHT
Balibo Cede Suco SH complete install, incl line to school	3,712.00	BHT
Batugade Cede Suco Bore & SH complete install	5,975.75	BHT

Balibo Volunteer Accom water supply	180.00	Completed
Balibo Dental Clinic water supply		
Balibo CLC Toilets Repair	350.75	H ₂ Osborn
Balibo CLC SH complete install	2200.25	H ₂ Osborn
Leohitu tap repair/connections	972.00	H ₂ Osborn
Palaka School Upgrade/repairs	487.00	H ₂ Osborn

[The H₂Osborn project was implemented to mitigate water issues at a grass roots level.

Initially, 15 classrooms were fitted out with a water filtration package and kindergarten staff were trained on how to maintain the units. Each installation package contained a water filtration unit, drinking cups, tables, tablecloths and cleaning materials.

All products were locally sourced or created by community members and groups, such as the tablecloths which were made by the Balibo Women’s Centre. Approximately 396 kindergarten children between the ages of 3 to 5 years benefitted from this project.

Cherie Osborn has very kindly extended her support to our projects listed above.]

PLANNED WORKS

The current status of planned works is:

- I finalised my written reports on each of the sub-projects listed above, and provided my costings of Bills of Materials for each sub-project in late April and early May.
- The Balibo House Trust (BHT) has confirmed their available funding and have approved the sub-projects.
- Local staff on the ground at Balibo were requested in early May to seek accurate costings and availability for all the construction materials. Sadly, this has not been as straight forward as we might assume. There are no “Bunnings” type stores in T-L, with the range and stocking of materials we see in Australia. Rather, there are a number of smaller shops with limited materials – located in Dili (4 hours from Balibo) and Maliana (about 2 hours from Balibo).
- The Chairman of the BHT has apologised for the delay, and is expediting these costings.

Next Stages

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

- Finalising costings and getting bulk materials ordered, purchased, and delivered to Balibo
- Once the BHT have provided all the costings, I can update our budget estimates for all the sub-projects. Our MiVAC Board can then consider how much funding we may be able provide to assist.
- I had planned to travel to Balibo again in mid-July – to get the Leohitu school water supply project underway and provide advice on construction methods.

To maximise use of my time, I had advised BHT that I would require the following to have been completed **before** my arrival:

1. Initial bulk materials purchase made and transported to shipping containers already stored at Belola school.
2. Any cultural issues with withdrawing water from the creek at Leohitu resolved.

Sadly, for a number of reasons, the Balibo team were not able to gain accurate costings nor purchase the materials in time for my Mid-July visit. I therefore postponed my visit until a date to be agreed. The BHT Chairman understood the issues and supported my decision to postpone.

I will continue to seek updates from the Balibo team.

Other achievements:

- Denis made a successful presentation to his Ipswich Rotary Club on the issues he encountered in Balibo – including especially the medical issues.

- He has spoken to local obstetricians in Ipswich who are willing to visit Balibo.
- Denis has been interviewed by an Ipswich local paper.
- A MiVAC member has been successful in donating some taps and other materials for me to take to T-L. Thank you Chris!

Thank you's

I would like to thank our Board members and Executive Committee members for their contributions and support over the last year, and in particular:

- Lee Uebergang – for his input and counsel on a wide range of issues, and for keeping me on track through the year.
- Morrie Evans – our new Treasurer – welcome, and for producing a new cash book for us to link to our formal financial reports, and for producing those reports.
- Lyn Clark – for her assistance through the year, and for helping make payments as needed.
- Robyn Waters – for her IT support through the year

That concludes my Chairman's Report for 2024. This report also covers the Project Officer's Report.

I wish you all a merry Christmas, and a safe and prosperous 2025.

Brian Boon, MCS

Chairman

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