



Damascus College

Strategic Planning Area: Catholic School Culture



Timor-Leste Immersion June 2020

Prospectus

VISION

Damascus College is a dynamic Christ-centred learning community that values each member, and is committed to inspiring and challenging students to reach their potential and contribute confidently to the global community.



ASPIRING TO

A shared vision and values inspired by biblical and Damascus College traditions, demonstrated by -

- personal and community responses to God's call in today's world expressed as social justice.

A community where the contribution of all to the College and broader society is optimised, demonstrated by -

- engaged parents who contribute to the growth of students, the College and broader community; and
- strong links to the global community.

From the Strategic Directions 2016-2020

Tony Haintz – Assistant Principal for Catholic School Culture

I. Executive Summary

Damascus College has a sister school relationship with Santa Maria Catholic High school in Ainaro in Timor Leste. In 2011 the first Damascus College Timor Leste Immersion took place as the culmination of a long story of support of Timor Leste.

The success of the first Immersion and the genuine pleas of the people of Ainaro for a continuation of the relationship led Damascus College to send groups in subsequent years. In 2013 some students from the first immersion returned to Timor Leste as part of a gap year before commencing tertiary studies. In 2014 the Timor Leste permanent display was opened in the Bishop Connors wing and more past student returned to Ainaro. In 2015 we welcomed visitors from Ainaro to Damascus College. In 2016 we welcomed another visitor from Ainaro and the sixth immersion group discovered the joys and challenges faced by our near neighbour. 2018 saw the largest group (fifteen students and four staff) head to Timor. 2019 saw thirteen students and four staff in Timor Leste. In 2019 the College hopes to further the relationship with the tenth immersion group. While the Timor Leste security situation is now very stable, Australian Government travel advisories concerning Timor Leste will determine whether the immersion goes ahead.

The experience is offered in the middle of the academic year in Victoria in 2020. This coincides with the middle term of the academic year in Timor Leste in 2020, the dry season. It would be offered in the period following the VCE GAT and Damascus College examination period and may lead onto the semester break in Victoria.

Students in Year 11, 2020 would make up the bulk of the immersion party with staff members in support.

The goals of the Immersion consider principles of Catholic Social Teaching, UN Sustainability goals, cultural experience and cultural exchange, fundraising and gifting, and the development of communication skills.

The project can be seen in four phases: preparation of a list of participants; preparation work with the participants including cultural training, fundraising and lesson planning; the immersion experience; the debriefing and reporting.

The schedule for the immersion of approximately 11 days includes transport from Ballarat to Timor-Leste via Darwin. In Timor-Leste, there will be significant time in with our sister school in Ainaro as well as time in and around Dili where we have a strong connections.

The cost of the immersion will be about \$3000 per participant. The final payment will be determined by the movements in the Australian Dollar.

The key personnel are the teachers with connections and experience in Timor-Leste.

As part of the immersion, all participants will be involved in a mutually agreed upon evaluation process covering all aspects of the experience.

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II. Introduction

Damascus College has a long association with the support of East Timorese. The sister school relationship was formed as part of the Ballarat Friendship Schools organisation, which is itself an initiative of the Ballarat Friends of Ainaro Community Committee (BFoACC).

<http://www.ballarat.vic.gov.au/ab/international-relations/east-timor.aspx>

In 2009 the strategic planning committee of the College considered the possibilities of furthering our sister school relationship with Santa Maria Catholic High school in Ainaro in Timor-Leste in a more systematic way.

All this culminated with the first Damascus College Timor-Leste Immersion taking place in 2011. It was a life changing experience for all concerned – students, their families, the teaching staff and the broader College Community. The immersion teams that have been to Ainaro have generally reported to BFoACC on their return. The story of immersion program and the history of the relationship can be found on the College website and in the permanent display in the Bishop Connors wing.

<http://www.damascus.vic.edu.au/life-damascus-catholic-school-culture-timor-leste-immersion-program>

All applicants should be very familiar with the story.

We have good friends in the community at Ainaro. These include the Director (Principal) of Santa Maria, Padre Armindo e Brito; Celestino Antonio (a worker in the Education Department) and Aguida Mendonca (Senior Officer in Regional Administration). We also have close links with many Australians who were in Ainaro or have had experience of Ainaro. This has proved invaluable and beneficial to the growing relationship. The *Ballarat Teachers For Timor Group* has been great support offering connections otherwise not possible.

<https://www.facebook.com/T4TAinaro?fref=ts>

The success of the Immersion and the genuine pleas of the people of Ainaro for a continuation of the relationship lead Damascus College to its ninth immersion in 2019. We have facebook pages for each Immersion Team. The 2019 team page is at

<https://www.facebook.com/Damascus-College-Ballararat-Timor-Leste-Immersion-2019-2090668430967547>

Timor Leste
Immersion



III. Timing

The time is now right to plan for a ninth student immersion program to visit our sister school as a cultural exchange and as a way of offering hope to the people of Ainaro in a relationship of mutual benefit.

- The energy for the developing relationship is very high on both sides of the Timor Sea.
- While the Timor-Leste security situation is very stable, Australian Government travel advisories concerning Timor-Leste will determine whether the immersion goes ahead.
- Our model for a school immersion has proved to be very successful.
- The experience is to be offered in the middle of the academic year in Victoria in 2020. This coincides with the middle term of the academic year in Timor-Leste in 2020, the dry season. It would be offered in the period following the VCE examination period and may lead onto the semester break in Victoria.

IV. Participants

Students in Year 11 would make up the bulk of the immersion party with up to four staff members. The current Year 10 students will be approached first about the immersion and others may be approached if there are still places available. Our base model is 10 - 12 students who will be in Year 11 in 2020 and 3 staff members.

V. Goals/Objectives

The goals of the immersion consider principles of Catholic Social Teaching, UN Sustainability goals, cultural experience and cultural exchange, fundraising and gifting, and the development of communication skills.

- Goal 1: To engage in an understanding and application of the principles of Catholic Social Teaching and UN Sustainability goals
- Goal 2: To discover the situation of senior secondary students in Ainaro by experiencing their culture for a brief time.
- Goal 3: To exchange language and ideas and enjoy time together
- Goal 4: To reflect on the principals of Catholic Social Teaching in light of the experience of the immersion.
- Goal 5: To provide for some basic projects identified by significant contacts by raising and distributing funds in Timor-Leste.
- Goal 6: To develop communication skills for public presentation in both cultures.
- Goal 7: To experience a neighbouring country and learn more about working together at all levels

VI. Scope of Work

The project can be seen in four phases: preparation of a list of participants; preparation work with the participants including cultural training and fundraising and lesson planning; the immersion experience; the debriefing and reporting.

Phase	Description of Work	When
1	Preparation of a list of participants including a thorough application process and short listing of applicants and announcement of the immersion team	Term 3 2019
2	<p>Payment of deposit and making bookings</p> <p>Preparation work with the participants on details of the trip and immersions plans including compulsory cultural training, fundraising processes and lesson planning.</p> <p>Attending meetings of immersion students and staff and support meetings for families as they emerge to discuss cultural training, fundraising and lesson planning is crucial to the process. Immersion student and staff meetings will occur weekly at lunchtimes and sometimes in the evening or on weekends. Family support meetings will occur in the evening or on weekends.</p> <p>Taking responsibility for fundraising initiatives and liaising with community resources is integral to the process of the immersion. Families will be leading the organization of fundraising events using their family connections and community links. Also families will be participating in fundraising events organized by other Immersion team families.</p> <p>Attending public meetings associated with immersion (for example, Ballarat East Timor Association; Ballarat Friends of East Timor Community Committee; Meetings of Fundraising Groups) is a part of the commitment for immersion team members. Families may need to facilitate this.</p> <p>Supporting initiatives of other groups who are involved in supporting Timor Leste.</p> <p>Keeping College community informed of the progress of the immersion planning.</p>	Term 4 2019 Term 1 & 2 2020
3	The Immersion Experience	End of Term 2 2020
4	<p>The Debriefing and Reporting</p> <p>Preparations for the next Immersion Group</p> <p>Promoting the Damascus College Immersion in the college and broader community</p> <p>Developing a sustainable project in Timor-Leste</p>	Term 3 2020

VII. Immersion Timetable

The schedule for the immersion of 11 days includes transport from Ballarat to Timor-Leste via Darwin. In Timor-Leste, there will be significant time in with our sister school in Ainaro as well as a time in and around Dili. Dare and Aileu and are on the south road between Dili and Ainaro and the immersion will pass through these places stopping for short visits, if possible. The dates are still to be confirmed but are likely to be 18 June – 29 June 2020. The following has been the type of schedule that has been followed. We may be adapting this in 2020 depending on numbers of students.

Day	Date	Itinerary
1		Ballarat - Tullamarine Tullamarine - Darwin
2		Darwin – Dili Dilli – Dare - Remexio
3		Remexio - Aileu (Lunch) Aileu - Ainaro
4		Ainaro - Sleep In - Town Walking Tour - Meeting the Locals
5		Ainaro - Eschola Sao Maria Secundarta - Other Visits
6		Ainaro - Eschola Sao Maria Secundarta - Other Visits
7		Ainaro - Eschola Sao Maria Secundarta - Other Visits
8		Ainaro - Eschola Sao Maria Secundarta - Other Visits
9		Ainaro – Farewell & Return to Dili
10		Dili and surrounds
11		Dili - Ballarat

VIII. Budget

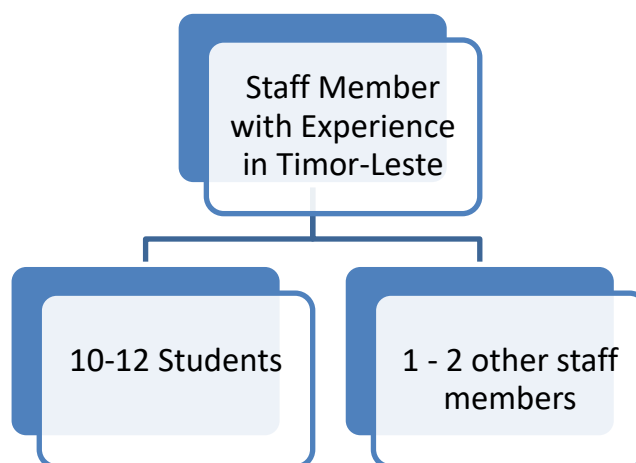
The cost of the immersion will about \$3000 per participant.

Plus Pass Port Cost
Plus Spending Money
Plus Medicals
Plus Toiletries

Phase	Description of Work	When	Anticipated Costs For Students
1	Preparation of the list of participants	Term 3 2019	NIL
2	Preparation work with the participants	Term 4 2019	Air Fares and Insurance (early October) – Approx. \$1600
		Term 1 & 2 2020	Balance Payment for other aspects of the immersion (Early May) Approx. \$1400
3	The Immersion Experience	End of Term 2 2020	Preparation of Spending money \$100 USD \$50 AUD
4	The Debriefing and Reporting	Term 3 2020	NIL

IX. Key Personnel

The key personal are the teachers with connections and experience in Timor-Leste. A comprehensive Risk Assessment is undertaken in the lead up to the event.



X. Evaluation

As part of the immersion, all participants will be involved in a mutually agreed upon evaluation process covering all aspects of the experience.

This will include a journaling process from early stages of the immersion plan.

XI. Next Steps

Dates	Happenings
Tuesday, 30 July 2019	Information Night Process
Thursday, 1 August 2019	2nd Email to Students 2020: Parent Handbook / Family Expectations
Monday, 5 August 2019	Public Meeting: Timor Leste Immersion - Information Night: 5:30 – 6:30 PM
Thursday, 15 August 2019	Applications Due
Friday, 16 August 2019 - Monday, 19 August 2019	Review of Applications
Wednesday, 21 August 2019	Publication of Interview Schedule
Thursday, 22 August 2019 - Wednesday, 28 August 2019	Interviews
Monday, 2 September 2019	Announcement of the Immersion Team
Tuesday, 3 September 2019	Letter concerning deposit / First Immersion Team Meeting: 1:05 - 1:30 R 7208
Tuesday, 10 September 2019	Second 2020 Immersion Team Meeting: 1:05 - 1:30 R 7208
Tuesday, 17 September 2019	Damascus Day Mass Rehearsal
Wednesday, 18 September 2019	Public Recognition at Damascus Day Mass