

November 2007  
Issue 2

# R.A.M. Newsletter



## Chairman's Message

My Rotary friends and friends of Rotary,

"Raging Malaria - The rapidly spreading disease affects more people than ever before. But until recently, the outcry has been muted." (National Geographic July 2007)

The fight against malaria is occurring in many parts of the world. Rotarians are at the forefront of the activity to significantly reduce the incidence and deaths due to this disease through activity such as their direct financial assistance or through the provision of funding support of Matching Grants or Health, Hunger and Humanity Grants by The Rotary Foundation of Rotary International.

Significant funding is also provided by the Gates Foundation and the Global Fund. In addition, research is being carried out in many establishments throughout the world including the Queensland Institute of Medical Research and the Australian Army Malaria Institute, both located in

Brisbane, Australia.

The May 2007 National RAM Conference agreed we should explore the introduction of a **World Malaria Day** and suggested the UK already had a day in place. Past RIBI President Brian Stoyel who is also Chairman of Rotarians Eliminating Malaria – a Rotarian Action Group advises there is an Africa Malaria Day (AMD) rather than a **World Malaria Day** with this day now observed on 25 April. He has assured me that, given this date is of special significance in both Australia and New Zealand, a date close to 25 April or even another suitable date would be acceptable.

I suggest it is fitting a day be set aside as a major step forward in communicating to the world the effect of this deadliest of diseases and to make known the activity that is taking place to improve the lives of literally hundreds of millions of people who are affected by it.

It is probable the World Health Organisation is the appropriate body to make the decision on an actual date to observe **World Malaria Day**. However, I do suggest that Rotary, given its ongoing and well-respected relationship with WHO, is in a position to influence the selection of a suitable date.

I am, therefore, seeking your suggestions regarding a suitable date. A short explanation for suggesting a particular date, although not necessary, would be appreciated and should be sent to me at [dethlefs@hotmail.net.au](mailto:dethlefs@hotmail.net.au)

The February 2008 issue of our newsletter will include a summary of responses received. This subject will be included in the Agenda for discussion during the May 2008 National RAM Conference.

*Bill Dethlefs  
National Chairman*

### OUR OBJECTIVE

***"The prevention of mortality, and a reduction in morbidity and social and economic loss caused by malaria through a progressive improvement and strengthening of local and national capabilities in malaria control."***

## District 9910 - Malaria in Vanuatu

The islands of Vanuatu are an integral part of Rotary International's District 9910, and Rotarians from the District have always been involved in fighting Malaria and the other vector borne diseases of Dengue Fever and Filiariasis.



*Typical Aid Post*

20% of the population was contracting malaria in the 1990's when a US\$20,000 grant from the Rotary Foundation enabled a survey of the major islands to be carried out by a team of Rotarians led by Rod Dennis of the Rotary Club of Orewa. The survey resulted in establishing what was to be a 4-year 3H Grant project financed with US\$300,000 from the Rotary Foundation and US\$200,000 from the Gates Foundation plus US\$25,000 from funds held in District Reserves. The project began in June 2002 and the winding up started in June 2006.

The main purpose of the project was to give the necessary skills to the local ni Vanuatu people to enable by themselves to manage a sustainable prevention program against these diseases.

A District committee was formed comprising Rotarians from New Zealand and Vanuatu, representatives of the Public Health Sector of Vanuatu and the World Health Organisation. A Project Team leader and two Field Officers plus a secretary, each of whom were ni Vanuatu persons, were appointed and intensive training and education of the village populace, their local Village Committees and Aid Post workers continued throughout the project. 50 local Village Aid Posts spread throughout the Islands of Santo and Malakula were chosen for the project.

The crux of the project is to provide bed nets, at no cost to the Aid Posts; they then sell them to local villagers who are educated in bed net use and re-impregnation which is also a source of revenue to the Aid Post. (The introduction of the long life bed net meant some changes had to be made to the original concept). The Aid Post Committees control the finances arising from these transactions, and after paying the Aid Post Worker and expenses, the profits are used to improve the health of the villagers and the environment around the villages.

This Rotary project is a real success for those villages that have embraced the scheme, and significant inroads have been made in reducing the incidence of mosquito borne diseases, to the extent that the Health Department in Vanuatu wants to continue this concept.

*PDG Ken Linkhorn*

### **USEFUL WEBSITES**

*PNG* – [www.ram.com.pg](http://www.ram.com.pg)  
*SI* - [www.ramguadalcanal.com.sb](http://www.ramguadalcanal.com.sb)  
[www.map.ox.ac.uk](http://www.map.ox.ac.uk)  
[www.remarag.org](http://www.remarag.org)  
[www.rollbackmalaria.org](http://www.rollbackmalaria.org)  
[www.defence.gov.au/dpe/dhs/ami/index.htm](http://www.defence.gov.au/dpe/dhs/ami/index.htm)  
[www.pacelf.org](http://www.pacelf.org)

### **DATE CLAIMER**

**NATIONAL RAM CONFERENCE**

**17 & 18 MAY, 2008**

**Shaftesbury Citizenship Campus,  
Burpengary, Qld  
(on the Northern outskirts of Brisbane)**

## **RAWCS Volunteers assisting RAM in the Solomons**

Five teams of Australian Rotary volunteers have just completed six projects in Guadalcanal Province, Solomon Islands as part of the RAM program.

Despite very difficult weather conditions and difficult terrain, teams from RC of Barossa Valley (D9500), RC of Pascoe Vale (D9790), RC of Launceston Central (D9830), RC of Horsham (D9780) and RC of Adelaide Light (D9500) erected four steel storage sheds, each 6m x 9m, and built laboratory extensions at two rural health clinics for microscopists.

The Global Fund provided all materials and the teams funded their own travel expenses. The sheds will be used to store bed nets, insecticide spray material and medications used in the anti-malarial campaign.

***“No accidents, no incidents, a great sense of achievement, and everyone had a wonderful time”*** echoed through each team leader’s report.

The Ministry of Health has requested that we undertake the construction of six steel clad sheds and microscopists facilities next year.

RAM will facilitate this work and details of locations and facilities available for volunteer teams is being finalised now.

Details will be circulated to RAWCS Volunteer Coordinators in all regions early in the New Year. A team of four or five, with one member having a building background, is ideal to undertake a project of two weeks duration between April and November.

*Source: PDG Peter Thomas  
RAM Solomon Islands  
Coordinator.*



## Adopt A Village

The generosity of individual clubs across Australia (AUD\$500,000) in support of RAM's treated bed net program has been further enhanced by support from the Rotary Foundation.

The summary which follows shows the high level of commitment by the Foundation to the fight against the ravages of malaria. This will be further developed in a later RAM Report when the impact of Foundation 3-H programs is outlined.

All grant figures are in US dollars.

Recognition is due to **Ron Seddon** in PNG, **Wayne Morris** in the Solomons, PDG **Bill Waterfield** in D.9600 and the individual clubs in both countries for much of the management of the Grants 'on the ground' and to all clubs and Districts which have sponsored the Grants in the first place.

Early support (2001 to 2003) commenced within D.9600, which includes both PNG and Solomon Islands clubs within the District. Three Matching Grants totalled US\$20,000, whilst from late 2003 a further eight

Grants saw US\$178,000 directed to the PNG netting program.

The story is a proud record of achievement, supported by the significant reduction in the rate of infection in all areas once treated bed nets are in use.

From beyond D.9600 early support saw six Grants worth US\$36,000+ directed to both PNG and the Solomons, whilst after September 2003 a further US\$255,000+ flowed from 11 more Matching Grants to PNG.

These were sponsored by Districts and clubs from across Australia. Three club-sponsored Grants provided US\$56,000+ for the Solomons, together with the two Grants for US\$100,000 each for Choisel and Western Provinces in the Solomons. They were actioned in conjunction with the 3-H program there.

In total, Rotary Foundation Matching Grants have supported the fight against malaria to the magnificent sum of US\$746,500. This represents a substantial 'return' of Australian club

contributions to 'our' projects.

In addition, a number of Matching Grants in excess of US\$300,000 have been initiated by The Rotary Club of Warringah (D.9680) in support of Timor Leste's battle against malaria and RAM has played a part in this initiative.

Further Matching Grant applications are in the pipeline. In particular District-sponsored Grants enable significant numbers of villages to be included in the netting program, further reducing the potential pool of people infected with the malaria parasite and acting as a reservoir for the spread of further infection.

Nets make a difference. Nets save lives and reduce suffering. Thank you to the clubs and Districts which have supported this initiative.

RAM's 'Adopt A Village' program shows Rotary Shares and that Rotary cares.

*PDG Richmond  
Manyweathers  
AAV Coordinator*

---

### *DID YOU KNOW*

*In 323BC, Alexander the Great, King of Macedonia, died of malaria at the age of 33.*

## Malaria experts cite progress at Seattle Forum

More than 300 scientists, physicians, public health leaders and top government officials from all corners of the planet have gathered in Seattle this week (week commencing 15 October 2007), by invitation of the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation, to discuss how best to combine forces and beat malaria.

Though many came to celebrate progress being made against this deadly disease, some questioned the ability to measure that progress because of the lack of reliable information in the developing world – even as to whether malaria rates are going up or down.

Still, progress against this once-neglected disease has been extraordinary in the past few years, experts agree.

“There’s a new momentum in the fight against malaria,” said Dr.

Regina Rabinovich, director of the infectious disease program at the Gates Foundation.

Malaria has long been one of the world’s leading killers, Rabinovich said, and today takes a life – usually the life of a young child in Africa – every 30 seconds.

More than \$3.6 billion has been committed to controlling malaria in the developing world using insecticide, bed nets and drug therapy, she said. “The research pipeline,” Rabinovich added, coming up with new drugs and vaccines, is bigger than it’s ever been.

Much of the new money is the many hundreds of millions donated by the Seattle philanthropy to fight malaria – most of it focused on finding a malaria vaccine. But the momentum is not just because of the Gates Foundation. The

Global Fund for AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria, the President’s Malaria Initiative and the United Nation’s Roll Back Malaria partnership are also major players.

A report was released during the conference which documented massive increases in the use of treated bed nets and anti-malarial insecticides in many parts of sub-Saharan Africa.

Ethiopia set out in 2005 to distribute 20 million treated mosquito nets by 2010. Given how poor the country is ... many (had) criticised the goal as “crazy.” But as of August, working with Roll Back Malaria and others, they had distributed more than 18 million.

*The information used in this article was extracted from an article in the Seattle Post-Intelligencer written by Tom Paulson.*

## Malaria vaccine research given a booster

The Rotary Club of Hamilton, District 9600, QLD hosted a presentation night on the 5<sup>th</sup> June 2007, to present malaria researchers with a cheque for \$54,000.

The Queensland Institute of Medical Research team led by Prof. Michael Good has made recent breakthroughs in the challenge to develop a vaccine that recognises all strains of the malarial parasite, and helps limit the spread of drug-resistant malaria.

The money had been raised by the Club over three Rotary years, and was matched through a grant from the Australian Rotary Health

Research Fund (ARHRF).

The night was organised by International Service Director Dr. Greg Harper, and presentations made by Past President of Rotary International Glen Kinross, and PDG Mel Langley representing the ARHRF.

Mr. Glen Kinross noted the long-term commitment made by RI to the control and eventual eradication of this insatiable killer, and the range of methods being used in the battle.

Research presentations were made by Prof Good, Assoc Prof James McCarthy and Dr Alberto Pinzon-Charry. Assoc Prof McCarthy wowed the audience of

70 Rotarians and guests by extolling the impact of Rotary’s National R.A.M. Malaria Control Programme in the Solomon Islands before continuing with his own research presentation.

The informative night indoors was topped however by the opening of the heavens, as Brisbane skies finally produced long-awaited and heavy rains. This did little to dampen the spirits of the Rotarians who spontaneously organised a carpool to get members and guests to a nearby restaurant for the dinner. A great night, a very worthwhile project and some very smart Australian scientists.

*Dr Greg Harper, President-elect, Rotary Club of Hamilton*



## CAN THE ARHRF BE OF SERVICE TO RAM?

### Uganda

RI President Wilf Wilkinson's club, Rotary Club of Trenton, Ontario, Canada, during the past year, worked on a Matching Grant project with a Rotary club in Uganda that provided US\$25,000 worth of mosquito nets for Ugandan children.

About 80,000 people die of malaria every year in Uganda with the majority being children.

Source: *Rotarian Magazine* July 2007.

### ***Sure can!***

The Australian Rotary Health Research Fund (ARHRF) is in the business of researching medical problems that are common to us humans.

The jigsaw puzzle that we know as medical research is a complex one indeed. Who knows what might come out of any research program? What we do know is that if we don't do the research we will not find the cure or learn the prevention methods needed for any of the diseases that bug the modern world.

The ARHRF has a unique opportunity for Districts, Clubs or individuals to sponsor a research program into malaria.

There are two programs available through the ARHRF, a 3-Year PhD program or a shorter and more flexible one.

The 3-year program will take your \$10,000 per year and add \$6,000 from the ARHRF as well as a further \$9,000 from the designated research establishment i.e., a 250% increase on your funds.

The other is a smaller commitment and will double your contribution over a 1, 2 or 3 year period of research.

If the malaria jigsaw puzzle is to be solved then all the pieces will need to be found and suitable research is the

key to that objective.

As you read this article, be aware that we can do more with the money we all work so hard to gather for the RAM program. Please consider using some of it as part payment of a research program. Clubs and/or Districts can join together to reduce the financial burden.

Please look into this opportunity at [www.arhrf.org.au](http://www.arhrf.org.au) or talk with Anthony Scarman, Research Manager at ARHRF (02) 8837 1900.

*Chris Ellis*  
D9600 ARHRF  
Committee  
(07) 3289 3475

### The Australian Rotary Foundation Trust

At times Rotarians ask how and where their tax deductible donation to The Australian Rotary Foundation Trust (TARFT) is used.

A recent Matching Grant in the amount of A\$56,792.63 (US\$47,791.00) was paid from TARFT funds to help provide diagnosis and treatment of malaria as well as impregnated mosquito nets for Lamboya Villages on Sumba Island, Indonesia.

*PDG Bill Dethlefs*  
Trustee, The Australian Rotary Foundation Trust

*This newsletter has been produced by PDG Bill Dethlefs, Chairman RAM Committee (Australia), Email: [dethlefs@hotkey.net.au](mailto:dethlefs@hotkey.net.au) in association with PP Leo Smith, Newsletter Editor, Email: [orgsys@bigpond.net.au](mailto:orgsys@bigpond.net.au)*

*Contributions and comments are welcome.*