



Rotarians Against Malaria

National Manager's Newsletter

October 2017

RAM - A volunteer-run organisation working to eliminate malaria

HEADLINE NEWS!!

Progress toward malaria elimination in Timor:

As reported in my last Newsletter and at the RAM Conference, RAM is excited by the prospect of achieving malaria elimination in Timor Leste in the next five years. The incidence of local transmission is very low now but there is still the risk of cross border infections and the Global Fund (to fight AIDS, TB & malaria) is significantly reducing their funding at this crucial time, ironically because the disease is so well controlled. To achieve malaria free certification from the WHO there must be no local transmission for three consecutive years so we have two years to achieve zero and keep it there.

RAM D9830 Chair Dr Jenny Kerrison , RAM's Timor Coordinator PDG Phil Dempster and I have been working to gain support for a multi-district Global Grant from TRF to assist. To this end we have been contacting all current District Governors in Australia seeking support by way of an allocation of their District Designated (TRF) Funds. The proposed Grant will provide for treated bed nets to maintain malaria control in the border populations and to replace old Indoor Residual Spraying (IRS) equipment to assist the National Malaria Control Program keep the pressure on and achieve total elimination. If this occurs all of us in Australian Rotary Clubs and RAM will be able to take great pride in our long standing contributions to having malaria eliminated in Timor Leste.

(RAM's 2017 Timor Team: Andrea, David, Jenny, Chris, Shirley, and John; flanked by Dr Merita: MoH and Dr Manel: WHO)



New WHO strategy on Vector Control:

The new WHO Integrated Vector Control Strategy has been adopted at the 2017 World Health Assembly. The strategy recognises that, whilst malaria is the most significant vector borne disease contributing to poverty, it is not the only one and by strengthening response to all vector borne disease, greater impact will be achieved sooner. The strategy aims to strengthen programs to address multiple vectors and enhance collaboration, to engage and mobilise responses from affected communities, to enhance surveillance and monitoring and to scale up integrated management approaches and fast track new innovations. This Global strategy is adopting many of the principals that are already in action in RAM's Healthy Villages and Chasing malaria programs. Find more details at: [Global Vector Control Response 2017-2030](#) .

RAM PNG

RAM bed net distribution funded by the Global Fund:

It's been another busy quarter for the RAM PNG team, rolling out bed nets to households in eight Districts in Chimbu and Eastern Highlands Provinces. A total of 298,983 LLINs have been distributed since the start of July bringing the total so far this year to 1,031,310 LLINs to households plus another 116,048 to vulnerable groups including expectant mums (80%), boarding schools (17%) and others such as prisons (3%).

Project Manager Tim Freeman and his team are also busy preparing to take over the whole PNG national malaria bed net program as of the start of 2018 as the sole 'Principal Recipients' for the Global Fund Grant. From next year the Global Fund will pay for the distribution logistics and the Against Malaria Foundation will provide the LLINs to maintain the three year replacement cycle for household bed nets with RAM as the on-ground partner delivering the program.

Chasing Malaria Pilot Project:

The Chasing Malaria project is continuing in Central province with an experiment in screening a particularly malaria prone village from the extensive adjacent tidal swamp. At the village of Kivori Poe the team and local volunteers have been busy making a mosquito fence from old mosquito nets and some nets whose packaging had deteriorated and so could not be used in regular distributions. The fence has been put between the village and the swamp to act as a screen which is a concept of vector control that RAM's PhD student Edgar Pollard has also been researching. If this concept shows positive results it will be a significant breakthrough for this type of difficult to control environment.



The tidal swamp in the photo above is 20m behind the house in Kivori Poe shown here with old nets drying on a rack.

RAM Solomon Islands

RAM's Solomons Coordinator PDG Wayne Morris recently reported that to date a total of 160 villages had been supplied with tools under the RAM 'Healthy Villages' program at a cost of AUD\$200,000. The RAM program in the Solomons has benefited from regular transfers of funds from RAM in Australia, direct contributions, e.g. a grant from RC Benalla of AUD\$8,500; as well as local corporate funding.

Solomon Islands Director of Health Promotions, Mr Ben Rickie Kiokimo, oversees the implementation of the Healthy Villages program. Ben recently sent us the following up-date:

"We are now in the last quarter of the year. Our Health Promotion Officers in all the provinces will be working on their reports on healthy village settings and update their status of Malaria incidences rates in order to see the progress of their activities in those settings. Observing physical changes and best practices in the communities is important



especially the setting standards and criteria's of clean & tidy villages in our country needs to be revisited purposely to verify improve in the future . For Rotary tools against Malaria our National Coordinator visit the established villages and conducted training workshops for all the teachers of established health promoting schools in Western Province. Handing over ceremonies were also done in two urban setting in Honiara communities as well, example: Feraladoa SSEC & Anglican Church Community Setting. Also JICA*Support Healthy Village project is progressing on its activities and also geared towards conducting the Training of Trainers on the health promoting village project approach in the selected communities.” [*JICA - Japan International Cooperation Agency.]

At the RAM Conference Ben presented an excellent summary of the state of Health Services in the Solomons highlighting the context of RAM's on-going program. Ben also indicated that he was open to RAM Volunteer teams assisting in the future.

RAM Timor Leste

The National Malaria Control Program staff are progressing the Oecusse LLIN distribution with logistics and support funded by RAM. Distributions are now commencing in Oesilo and Passabe sub-districts to complete the current program. In all 40,000 Olyset LLINs will be distributed in Oecusse in this round.

The RC Dili Lafaek Healthy Villages program is currently under review following the very successful start –up where the program extended to 12 villages. The program has been innovative in its approach and has been carried out with great enthusiasm by the Rotarians at RC Dili Lafaek and their student friends. The review will focus on developing guidelines to improve the sustainability of the program and to more closely integrate it with the goals and activities of the NMCP.



RAM Scientific Committee Coordinator

This position on the RAM Executive Committee has been vacant for some time so I am pleased to report that, at the latest RAM AGM, Dr Bruce Anderson was appointed to take it on. Bruce will have the freedom to shape this role and to form his committee and so I asked him to share his thoughts on this task:-

“The primary task will be to establish regular communication channels with the key research groups and organisations interested in malaria elimination so that RAM can be kept abreast of the latest developments, and that the key organisations understand RAM and the activities of RAM in those countries within which we operate. There is a need within Rotary to increase awareness of RAM across clubs and districts and we will need to work on revamping the presentations offered to clubs and update them as new developments and information come to hand from the key research groups and organisations of relevance to malaria elimination. Based on the recent establishment of a Centre of Research Excellence in Malaria elimination, to be led by the University of Melbourne, it will be important that we establish and maintain good communications with the new Centre and each of the key

partners in the Centre whilst maintaining good dialogue with those organisations with which RAM already has established relationships.” Thanks Bruce.

Malaria Vaccine Development

For more information about this project please contact Project Manager PDG Graham Jones on 0406 040 038 or graham.a.g.jones@gmail.com or visit the project web site <http://rotary9640.org/page/malaria-vaccine-project/>

Annual RAM Conference

The annual RAM Conference was held at Rowers on Cook’s River adjacent to Sydney International airport over the weekend of 19th and 20th August and was attended by 71 delegates representing 16 Districts. It was the biggest staged to date and the first to be held in Sydney, following the policy of rotating the Conference venue through the major eastern seaboard cities to make it easier for more Rotarians to attend and be inspired by RAM’s programs and mission. We were fortunate to have eight distinguished invited speakers including Dr Merita Monteiro, Head of the Communicable Diseases Dept of the Timor Leste MoH (who supervises the National Malaria Control Program) as well as Mr Ben Rickie, Director of the Health Promotions Dept. Solomon Islands MoH, who has been supervising the RAM supported Healthy Villages program, and two delegates from PNG. A report on the Conference proceedings has been posted on the RAM web site and all Conference presentations are also available on the site to download. Look under ‘Galleries’ > Media Resources.

Next year’s Conference will be held on the beautiful Queensland Gold Coast at the Institute for Glycomics at Griffith University where the Malaria Vaccine is being developed. The Conference will be over the weekend of 25th and 26th August 2018 so please put this in your Diary now. You can lodge an expression of interest in attending at: <http://ram.rawcs.com.au/ram-national-conference/> or by contacting RAM National Secretary Virginia.

RAM Schools Video Competition.

The two school student’s videos resulting from the RAM pilot video competition were screened at the RAM Conference and judged by the audience. The winning team was from Brighton North Primary School and the runner up was the team from Emerald Primary school. These impressive short videos can be launched from the RAM web site home page or viewed on U Tube via these links:

Winner: <https://youtu.be/CGfwZnjIURs>

Runner Up: <https://youtu.be/LMJSI2vIxEA>

Brighton School Teacher, Marg Quinn, described the competition thus:-

“Brighton Primary School’s years five and six Media Team participated in a short film contest organized by Rotarians Against Malaria. The film had to show how using Malaria nets in poor countries helped to stop the spread of the Malaria. The Media Team’s film highlighted how villagers could help themselves by using the mosquito nets and clearing over grown vegetation from around their villages. The Prize money is to support the school in purchasing Media Resources and the Team leaders, Ava and Alali, have some great ideas on how to best use the money for future filmmaking. Brighton Primary School would like to thank National RAM Rotary Australia and Virginia, from Brighton North Rotary, for asking us to participate .”

RAM National Secretary Virginia is now working on an expanded competition for this current year so if you would like schools in your area to be included please contact her.

The picture shows Virginia handing over the prize cheque to the winning team.



RAM Web site and Media.

Congratulations to all who contributed to the great four page special highlighting RAM in the October edition of RDU Magazine. As a bonus I have been informed that this edition will also be widely distributed in the USA.

The RAM website is a great resource thanks to RAM PR and Media Coordinator Holstein Wong. Latest information, previous reports and newsletters, Conference summaries and presentations, photos and videos can all be accessed there. Check it out at www.ramaustralia.org or www.ram.rawcs.com.au. If you would like to publicise RAM activities in your District please send information and photos to Holstein or National Secretary Virginia. Rotaractor and RAM friend Ben Hill has volunteered to assist Holstein in maintaining our web site.

RAM's Facebook page has also been getting regular postings and is easily accessible from the website and www.facebook.com/ram.australia/.

Australian Rotaract Conference 2017: 21st & 22nd October : Sydney.

I was invited to attend the ARC '17 to represent RAM on a Q & A panel session alongside PDG Jennifer Scott, representing the Rotary Foundation and Lein Trinh representing End Trachoma 2020. I spent the day meeting Rotaractors (about 200 attended from all over Australia), talking with them about RAM and listening to a series of really inspiring presentations. It was a great experience and further opened my eyes to the wonderful group of future Rotary Leaders that we have in Rotaract.

We need to further engage Rotaract Clubs in all Districts to participate in RAM activities whilst RAM continues to be a Rotaract National Project. I encourage all RAM District Chairs to make contact with Rotaract Clubs in their Districts, speak at their meetings and plan joint activities. They are a powerhouse of energy, great ideas and enthusiasm.

RAM Appointments.

I am pleased to report that RAM Executive Committee positions of Funding Coordinator and Scientific Committee Coordinator have been filled. D9800 RAM Chair Bill Oakley has taken over as RAM Funding Coordinator following the sad loss of our friend Richmond and Dr Bruce Anderson has taken the Scientific Committee Coordinator role which has not been occupied for some time (see Bruce's article above).

The position of Deputy National Manager remains vacant. This is of considerable concern as my term as National Manager will end on 31st July 2018 and it would be preferable that the next incumbent has the chance to 'learn the ropes' as Deputy before taking over. I will be happy to receive expressions of interest and discuss the role with anyone from our RAM Community at any time so if interested please contact me (the sooner the better).

For any RAM related enquiries please contact:

Dave Pearson: dave@sugarloafne.com or Virginia Turner: vm.turner@bigpond.com

Contacts for the RAM Executive Committee and all RAM District Chairs can be found on the RAM web site
under About Us / Contact Us.

RAM is a National Activity of RAWCS



RAM friends at the 2017 RAM Conference.

David Pearson :
National Manager RAM, 20th October 2017.