

Rotarians Against Malaria

National Manager's Newsletter

February 2018

RAM - A volunteer-run organisation working to eliminate malaria

HEADLINE NEWS!!

Gates proposes closer deadline for malaria elimination in our region:

Bill Gates, the head of the world's largest private charitable foundation, has called on Australia to become the regional champion of a historic drive to eradicate malaria from Asia within 10 years and Australia's Foreign Minister Julie Bishop has joined a key global body, the End Malaria Council, co-chaired by Mr Gates. Mr Gates, the founder of Microsoft and the world's second richest man, said he believed that if Australia led a concerted regional drive against malaria, the disease could be eradicated from Southeast Asia as early as 2025.



(Read more at: www.theaustralian.com.au/news/health-science/bill-gates-asks-for-australias-help-in-ridding-asia-of-malaria/news-story/474ade9f0e0f8c84d4033b6b5953476b)

Progress toward malaria elimination in Timor:

Thanks to tremendous support from Rotary Districts all over Australia we are close to submitting a Rotary Foundation Grant application for a total budget of USD\$240,000 to support Timor Leste's drive for Malaria free Certification. The Global Grant has been supported by contributions of District Designated Funds from 15 Districts and is proposed to provide 40,000 LLINs and 80 IRS sprayers to protect vulnerable populations in the border areas assisting with a funding shortfall created by reallocated priorities by the Global Fund to fight AIDS, TB & malaria.



Tafea province of Vanuatu recognized for achieving malaria-free status:

The province of Tafea in southern Vanuatu has been recognized for its achievement of eliminating malaria in an award ceremony organized by the Government of Vanuatu.

The elimination of malaria incidence in Tafea marks a great success of the malaria programme of the Ministry of Health, accomplished in collaboration with donors and development partners including the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) and the Global Fund. Interestingly RAM's first field project in 1993/4 was supporting malaria control in Vanuatu.



RAM PNG

RAM bed net distribution funded by the Global Fund:

Project Manager Tim Freeman has reported that 450,000 LLINs were distributed to PNG households in Oct-Dec 2017 giving a total of 1.5 million LLINs to household level in 2017; which is the most nets RAM PNG have ever distributed in one year. In addition 27,300 LLINs distributed to vulnerable groups giving a total of 146,000 LLINs to vulnerable groups in 2017.

The biggest task of 2017, particularly the last quarter, was preparing for the new LLIN distribution programme as RAM becomes the sole Global Fund Principal Recipient for malaria in PNG. Preparations have included moving into a larger office, taking over the salaries and work of the National Malaria Control staff and preparing for distributions of Rapid Diagnostic Tests (RDTs) and ACTs (malaria treatment drugs) which will be procured by the Global Fund to supplement government stocks which have been in short supply. RAM PNG has also recently signed a new agreement with Against Malaria Foundation who will supply all the LLINs for the 2018 to 2020 household distribution.

Tim travelled to Geneva, in February, to attend the annual WHO malaria Technical Working Group meeting where he presented the RAM programme which has been seen as an international bench mark by this Group.

Chasing Malaria Pilot Project:

As reported in the last newsletter the Chasing Malaria team and local volunteers have been busy at the village of Kivori Poe 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 two kilometre fence has been erected between the village and a tidal swamp to act as a screen and the village is now being closely monitored to see if there is a significant impact on rates of malaria infection.



The house in Kivori Poe shown here is typical, it has very tidy surrounds but is located close to the swamp.

RAM Solomon Islands

Edgar Pollard (RAM Sponsored PhD student from Solomon Islands) reports that he has completed all the fieldwork now and is getting stuck in to writing-up his research which is not as much fun. He is still aiming for an end of year completion if everything goes to plan. Edgar is also planning to attend and present at the Malaria Congress in July speaking on using his research findings to better understand where people are specifically located relative to sources of infected mosquitos and how that links to malaria transmission and opportunities for vector control.

RAM Timor Leste

Over the years Rotary programs to support the Timor Leste National Malaria Program have included projects of individual Australian Rotary Clubs, Rotary Districts and the Rotary Foundation, coordinated by RAM. Also, RAM Volunteer teams have travelled to Timor Leste in 2012, 2014 and 2017. Significant contributions to the National Malaria Program have included:-

- 2004 30,000 LLINs from the Rotary Club of Warringah and The Rotary Foundation.
- 2012 20,000 LLINs for Manatuto and Balibo from RAM.
- 2013 20,000 LLINs for expectant mothers and 1000 conical LLINs from RAM.
- 2014 7,500 LLINs for Maubara from RAM.
- 2015 22,700 LLINs for expectant mothers from RAM and The Rotary Foundation.
- 2016 \$20,000 logistics support for the Oecusse LLIN distribution from RAM.

The current Global Grant application is a partnership between the Rotary Club of Hobart North (President Jenny Kerrison), the Rotary Club of Dili Lafaek (President 'Aku' Amaral) and the National Malaria Program. As part of this partnership the Rotary Club of Dili Lafaek will extend and develop the Healthy Village program to include malaria education and community engagement in coordination with the National Malaria Program in critical border communities. The Grant application is all ready to submit but cannot be forwarded until the Memorandum of Understanding has been signed by all three partners,



RAM Scientific Committee Coordinator

Dr Bruce Anderson, RAM Scientific Committee Coordinator, has developed a briefing paper explaining the current state of malaria vaccine research programs around the world and where Australian research projects fit in. Bruce has consulted widely in drafting the briefing paper and it will soon be circulated to all RAM Coordinators and District Chairs providing timely context for RAM's support for the Griffith University vaccine candidate PlasProtecT® and interest in other research projects.

Malaria Vaccine Development

The goal of the Rotary District 9640 Malaria Vaccine Project Committee is to fund the next stage human clinical trials of the **PlasProtecT®** vaccine being developed at the Institute for Glycomics at Griffith University by raising \$500,000. Fund raising has now reached \$320,000 following the official launch of the Project by his Excellency the Governor General, Sir Peter Cosgrove on 27 March 2017.

Raising the first half of the target amount had enabled planning for this clinical trial to begin in late 2017. The balance of the target amount will enable the clinical trial to be continued in 2018 and the research team is currently recruiting volunteer patients.

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/>. RAM D9640 Chair Steve Carroll has offered to match donations to the Vaccine project with donations to RAM; contact Steve at stedor98@bigpond.com.

Annual RAM Conference

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.

First Malaria World Congress



As mentioned at the RAM Conference, the First Malaria World Congress will be held in Melbourne from the 1st to 5th July and it is shaping up to be a potentially very important and timely meeting in terms of influencing policy and support for malaria elimination. The Australian Government will be represented as well speakers and delegates from the malaria researchers, policy makers, global health organisations, NGOs and front line workers. The organisers hope that the Congress will: *"bring the broad spectrum of the malaria world together for the first time, to further galvanise the effort for the eradication of malaria."*

Minister for Foreign Affairs, Julie Bishop's support statement reads: "The Australian Government is pleased to support the inaugural Malaria World Congress. We are committed to the goal of achieving the elimination of malaria in our region by 2030. The Malaria World Congress will bring together the global malaria community for the first time to share ideas, innovate and agree on global action to achieve this goal."

RAM and RAWCS are represented on the International Advisory Board for the Congress and our Committee has decided to prepare a display booth, as a point of contact at the Congress, with support from RAM-PNG and The Rotary Malaria Vaccine Committee and to encourage as many RAM representatives and other Rotarians as possible to attend. Details of the Congress can be found at: www.worldmalariacongress.org.

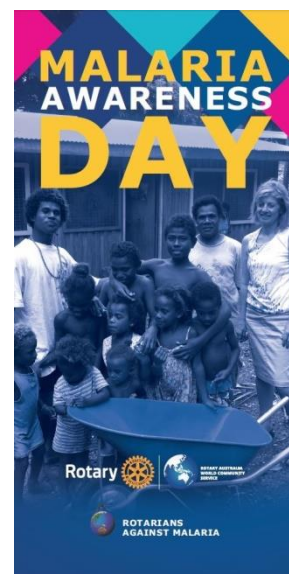
Opportunities for RAM People to attend:

We are now calling on expressions of interest from RAM representatives (Regional Coordinators and District Chairs) who would like to attend some or all of the Congress. Please contact RAM National Manager David Pearson. We hope to be able to offer some financial assistance to help with registration costs but the amount will be dependent on numbers. If you are located in Melbourne, we are also seeking expressions of interest in joining a roster to man (or woman) the RAM display booth as this comes with two full registrations which we can split up on our roster. If you are interested in being included please contact RAM National Secretary Virginia Turner.

RAM Web site and Media

After wide consultation we have completed a redesign of our Malaria Awareness Day leaflet to make it more recognisably different from the RAM tri-fold leaflet which has also received a significant up-date. Both new leaflets are now being printed and will be distributed to Regional Coordinators to pass on to the District Chairs in their Regions, hopefully in time for use at most District Conferences.

RAM's Facebook page has also been getting regular postings and is easily accessible from



the website www.ram.rawcs.com.au and www.facebook.com/ram.australia/ .

We are preparing to launch the RAM Newsletter on the MailChimp emailing service to provide for wider distribution in the future as well as building a more reliable mailing list. So you might receive this Newsletter in the MailChimp format as well as we develop this system.

RAM Schools Video Competition 2018

This year the schools video competition has been planned to run in Term two so that videos will be available for judging at the RAM Conference in August. So now is the time to approach your local Primary schools with the idea of students producing a five minute video on the Prevention of Malaria in developing countries. The students should be in years 3 to 5. Themes could include use of LLINs and RAM's Healthy Villages program.

Once the school has been chosen and the program explained to the Principal it is important to follow procedures, such as obtaining parent permission for the chosen students to be involved in the production, and providing props to be used such as bed net, spades, brooms, wheelbarrows etc. RAM Brochures, our colouring books and web site could be helpful for ideas.

The first prize of \$1000 to the successful Team is to be spent on the improvement of school equipment. National Secretary Virginia Turner will be forwarding guidelines in readiness for the production at the start of the 2nd Term. Please register your interest in the program with her.

RAM Position vacant

The position of Deputy National Manager remains vacant. To take RAM forward it would be preferable that the next National Manager 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



David Pearson :
National Manager RAM, 26th February 2018.