

Annual Report 2019-2020

Malaria is preventable and curable. However, globally, in 2018, an estimated 228 million people were infected with malaria and 405,000 deaths occurred of which 67% were in children under age 5 (WHO, 2019). Progress in malaria elimination is at a standstill.

RAM has had a busy, productive year. Thank you to immediate Past National Manager, Dave Pearson, who provided leadership for to RAM for four (4) years. In July 2019, Dr. Jenny Kerrison RC North Hobart D9830 took over management of RAM. Despite the COVID 19 pandemic, RAM made progress in the implementation of its strategic plan. Unfortunately, our 18th Annual National RAM Conference scheduled for 5 – 6 September 2020 was cancelled. This report details our steady performance in three of four strategic goals.

GOAL # 1: A STRONG RAM NATIONAL COMMITTEE

Aided by RAM National Secretary (Gloria Hargreaves), several outputs were achieved, these were:

- Development of a three-year National RAM strategic plan 2019 – 2023
- RAM Terms of Reference and the Procedures Manual were updated and aligned with our RAWCS Ltd Constitution (May 2019)
- A MOU with partner countries was introduced for the governance of funds
- Several key RAM National, Regional and District positions were filled, including a new position of National Treasurer. The RAM Deputy National Manager was recruited in May 2020. The RAM Scientific Committee was strengthened with increased membership.
- Regular communications continued via quarterly Zoom meetings and newsletters. Also, RAM hosted Zoom meetings with the government in three countries.
- A successful “Zero Malaria Starts with Me” campaign on Malaria Awareness Day was conducted in April by our RAM PR & Social Media coordinator.

Internationally RAM has representation on the RAM-Global Rotary Action Group Board, to help shape a global agenda for malaria elimination.

GOAL # 2: STRONG SUPPORT FOR MALARIA ELIMINATION IN OUR PARTNER COUNTRIES

The principal activity for RAM is malaria elimination. This year a major achievement for RAM is the submission of four Rotary Global Grant applications through Rotary districts and clubs. This section presents details of our work in five countries: Papua New Guinea (PNG), Solomon Islands, Vanuatu, Timor Leste and West Timor (Indonesia).

Papua New Guinea (PNG) has the highest malaria incidence in all of our five (5) partner countries. A gradual increase in malaria was noted between 2014 and 2019. Nationally, PNG is transitioning from malaria control to malaria elimination in some of it's provinces. RAM PNG is a highly successful Principal Recipient for the Global

Fund to Fight Against AIDS, TB and Malaria. Since 2010 RAM PNG has delivered around 12 million bed nets for the PNG Government. The Chasing Malaria Program is a pilot project run by RAM PNG. It is a community-based project that provides twice-yearly malaria surveys in schools in the Gulf, Central and National Capital District Provinces. Since 2015 RAM has provided funding in most years for the 'Chasing Malaria' project. A recent project review by RAM Australia revealed that an important achievement was that the project provided access to basic malaria services to school children and communities.

However, the lack of funding and staffing are major barriers to successful project implementation. In the new Rotary year, RAM Australia will donate funds to support the project in several schools in the Central Province.

This year RAM has supported a new project in New Ireland Province (NIP), PNG. The province has one of the highest malaria incidences in PNG. The NIP malaria elimination project was developed from the Definitive Feasibility Study conducted in NIP in 2018 and 2019 by the New Ireland Province Malaria Alliance (NIPMA). Our support is a matched Rotary Global Grant application to develop an outreach response team model for access to blood testing for an enzyme deficiency (G6PD) and drug treatment with Primaquine. The Grant was submitted by D9600 RC Kippa Ring-North Lakes and RC Kimbe, New Britain, with support from RAM.

In the Solomon Islands the gains in malaria elimination have proven difficult to sustain. Malaria is on the increase. In 2019 RAM's application for a \$1 Million three-year project for collaborative funding with DFAT was unsuccessful. In May 2020 RAM Australia hosted a Zoom meeting with the Solomon Islands malaria program, to receive updates. The meeting was facilitated by our RAM Solomon Islands Country Coordinator. RAM is waiting for information on possible areas it may support in the near future.

Vanuatu has made good progress in malaria elimination. The country aims to achieve zero indigenous malaria by the end of 2023. In 2020 RAM signed an MOU with the Vanuatu malaria program to fund several key activities in 2020. Unfortunately, activities were delayed due to COVID 19 and the severe tropical cyclone "Harold". Coordinated by RAM, a Rotary Global Grant was submitted in June 2020 by New Zealand D9910 with RC Waverley D9810, to train and equip a national indoor residual spraying team.

Timor Leste aims to achieve WHO malaria elimination certification in 2021/22. It has a new five-year National Strategic Plan to prevent the re-establishment of malaria. The USD251,334 Rotary Global Grant for Timor Leste, managed by RC North Hobart D9830 and RC Dili Lafaek with support from RAM, will close in September 2020. As noted in an external review of the Timor Leste malaria program, RAM has a potential role in facilitating cross-border collaboration for malaria elimination between Timor Leste and West Timor. In June 2020, guided by RAM, D9550 RC Darwin and RC Dili submitted a Rotary Global Grant for Timor Leste to provide bed nets, training, and malaria education materials.



West Timor in Nusa Tenggara Timor (NTT) Province, Indonesia, has a target of zero indigenous malaria by 2026. RAM's support for West Timor is strategic and will contribute to preventing malaria across the Timor island. In February 2020 a RAM team of self-funded volunteers conducted a community assessment in West Timor. Data collection was funded by RC North Hobart D9830 Rotary District Grant and RAM. A Rotary Global Grant for West Timor was submitted in June 2020. It received support with donations from Rotary D3420 and 18 D3420 Rotary clubs. The Grant will be led by RC Hillarys D9455 and RC Kupang Central D3420 with support from RAM.

GOAL # 3: POSITIONING RAM AS A FOCAL POINT FOR COORDINATION AND ADVICE

Participation and ownership of malaria elimination projects by Rotary districts and clubs is fundamental to continue our fight against malaria. This year RAM promoted the successful "Adopt-A-Project" approach, to improve engagement with Rotarians. Four Rotary Global Grant applications were submitted in June 2020 by four RAM Regions, including NZ9910. With this shift in direction, RAM has become a focal point to 'broker' for malaria elimination projects in our partner countries. This role will be further strengthened this year.

Related malaria news

Vaccines are critical for the eradication of diseases. There is no commercially available malaria vaccine. The only advanced malaria vaccine is Mosquirix (RTS,S) which is being piloted in three (3) countries in sub-Saharan Africa. In Australia, the PlasProtect® malaria vaccine project, established in 2017 by D9640 and Griffith University Institute of Glycomics, made good progress but had to suspend Phase 1

clinical trials due to COVID 19. With a target of \$2 Million, the project is short of \$500,000 to complete the trials in Melbourne.

This year, initiated by the Global Fund (GF), the RAWCSRAM & GF partnership was established to provide an important opportunity to raise a significant amount of funds through large corporations for malaria elimination in four of our partner countries. The partnership is led by PDG Dai Mason D9640 with assistance from the Global Fund.

Challenges

A major challenge to RAM is to secure adequate funding for its humanitarian work. RAM's revenue comes entirely from Rotarians. This year, with the recent local economic crises, our revenue has reduced by an estimated 43% in contrast to last year. Due to the financial uncertainty, our National RAM Committee has deferred offering a second 4-year RAM PhD scholarship until 2021. A further threat to our revenue that RAM is likely to experience difficulty in accessing Rotarians in larger amalgamated districts in the RAM Central, Eastern and Northern Regions in Australia. The threat to our revenue highlights the need to grow our income in other ways such as targeting Grant applications. The financial downturn also highlights the important role and responsibility for RAM regions and districts, to increase activities for awareness raising and support to end malaria.

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