

Rotarians Against Malaria

National Manager's Newsletter

July 2018

RAM - A volunteer-run organisation working to eliminate malaria

HEADLINE NEWS!!

Paraguay declared malaria free:

The latest national domino to fall on the road to a malaria free world is Paraguay which was given Malaria Free certification by the WHO on 11th June. China and El Salvador have also recorded zero locally transmitted malaria last year and are on track for Malaria Free Certification in 2022. Not far behind is Timor Leste! Despite setbacks significant progress has been made since Australia was declared Malaria Free in 1975.

The First Malaria World Congress hailed as a great success:



"This congress was a significant global moment in the fight against malaria - it brought together the two streams of high burden and elimination that had been largely operating separately, and put the spotlight on the central importance and role of civil society in this fight."

Dr Winnie Mpanju Shumbusho, Chair of the RBM Partnership to End Malaria Board.

RAM contributed to establishing a new global partnership of Civil Society Organisations focused on Malaria Elimination to be known as CS4ME.

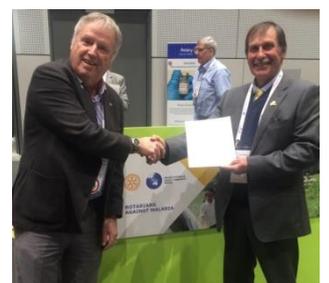
Setbacks in PNG:

Despite the great success of RAM PNG's bed net distribution, some areas of PNG have seen an increase in malaria over the last two years. This has resulted in a 40% increase in the disease incidence and an increase in malaria related deaths from 187 to 300 per annum. This reversal highlights how vulnerable communities are to malaria resurgence if malaria elimination campaigns are left incomplete. See further discussion under RAM PNG.

RAM Awarded Malaria Maniacs of the year by REMaRAG:

At the RI Convention in Toronto, RAM was presented with the Malaria Maniacs of the Year Award on behalf of REMaRAG via Drake Zimmerman (RC Normal, Illinois.). The citation states "RAM Australia's efforts merit this award in part because you provide models for the rest of the world to follow, to emulate and use."

The award includes a certificate and Superman cape which must be displayed to advantage, in this case at the Malaria World Congress RAM Booth (see page 6).



RAM PNG

RAM bed net distribution funded by the Global Fund:

In PNG, RAM has distributed 12 million Long Lasting Insecticidal bed nets (LLINs) since 2009 and by the end of 2018 this universal access program will have provided households with three replacement allocations. Despite this great achievement, reduced Government budgets for the National Dept. of Health (NDoH) has led to consistent stock-outs of vital Rapid Diagnostic Test kits (RDTs) and malaria treatment drugs (ACTs) so malaria diagnosis has been inconsistent and patient treatment out-comes variable. The WHO PNG Country profile indicated that there has been a 40% increase in confirmed cases and a similar increase in malaria deaths from 2014 to 2016 (300 deaths in 2016).

As a result during the current Global Fund Grant period RAM PNG is now also working closely with the PNG Dept. of Health and the Institute of Medical Research to manage timely re-stocking of all clinics and hospitals with diagnostic kits and malaria treatment drugs and to monitor and improve case management. To achieve this RAM is collaborating with the Global Fund, the Against Malaria Foundation and Population Services International.



Chasing Malaria Pilot Project:

RAM funds raised in Australia support the Chasing Malaria Project (PNG) which is a pilot malaria elimination project being tested in Central Province and NCD where malaria incidence is relatively low. RAM has improved diagnostic and reporting practices so that disease incidence can be accurately mapped. Areas with case clusters are visited by RAM teams and local health volunteers are recruited to work with village schools improving disease awareness and tracking down mosquito breeding sites which are then destroyed.



So far 47 villages have been assessed and commenced mosquito larvae management programs. In the village of Kivori Poe the team has built a 1.7km fence of used LLINs as an experiment to intercept mosquitoes from an adjacent extensive swamp. The village is now being closely monitored to see if there is a significant impact on rates of malaria infection but progress is frustrating as local pigs do not respect the fence.

RAM PNG Project manager Tim Freeman will speak at the **RAM Conference**.

The RAM Executive is currently considering an opportunity to contribute to a new public-private partnership that has been established to test the feasibility of extending a malaria elimination project, being undertaken by Newcrest Mining Ltd on Lihir Island, to the rest of New Ireland Province.

RAM Solomon Islands

In the Solomon Islands, RAM has continued to support the Healthy Village program run by the Health Promotions Dept. of the Ministry of Health, by providing sets of tools to enable villages, with approved plans, to carry out local earth works and cleaning programs to reduce the incidence of mosquitoes around the village. To date 160 villages have been supported and this year RAM has forwarded AUD\$60,000 to PDG Wayne Morris to help meet the cost of supplying tools for a further 35 qualified villages located in Malaita, Western Province and Temotu that have been approved by the Health Promotions Dept.

The **latest exciting news** is that RAM has been asked by DFAT to prepare a detailed proposal for a joint project aimed at conducting malaria elimination programs in Western Province. This project, if approved, will be a partnership between DFAT, RAM and the Solomon Islands MoH&MS and work has commenced in both Honiara and Australia to compile the proposal. In Honiara Albi Bobogare (Director National vector Borne Disease Program) and Ben Ricki (Director Health Promotions Dept. MoH&MS) are preparing baseline data and logistics



information and it is hoped that an advanced draft of the proposal can be refined by face to face meetings at the **RAM Conference**.

This project will be an opportunity for RAM to bring to bear all the various approaches and experience that we have developed over the past 25 years as a holistic village based program that should not only deal with malaria but also contribute to strengthening local health services and raising village health standards.

RAM PhD candidate progress.

Edgar Pollard (RAM Sponsored PhD student from Solomon Islands) is now in the data analysis and writing up stage of his research and presented some of his findings at the Malaria Congress. He reports that he has completed his 'barrier-screen' experiments to optimize this mosquito collection technique by determining best colour, thickness and design, principles that should be transferable to insecticide barrier-screens. Using these barrier screens to collect mosquitoes in the Solomons has given us a better idea of where they should be placed in villages to maximize contact between mosquitos and insecticidal barrier screens.

Edgar will attend and present at the annual **RAM Conference**, 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

To assist the Timor Leste National Malaria Program (NMP) to achieve WHO malaria free certification, RAM has coordinated a Rotary Foundation Global Grant application supported by District Designated Funds from 15 different Australian Rotary Districts, some individual Rotary Clubs and sponsored by RC Hobart Nth partnering with RC Dili Lafaek. The Grant has a budget of AUD\$251,000 to be directed to providing bed nets and indoor residual spraying equipment to protect vulnerable populations living adjacent to the border areas.

RAM's application has been submitted to the Rotary Foundation and will be determined by a meeting of the full board of the Foundation Trustees in August. In the meantime we are facilitating an on-site review by TRF cadre member, Dr Alidio from the Philippines, whose report to TRF will be crucial to the Trustees determination. RAM Interim Deputy National Manager Dr Jenny Kerrison, seen here distributing LLINs, will travel to Dili to liaise with all parties and coordinate Dr Alidio's visit.



The RAM Executive Committee is concerned that the extended time required to fulfil all the requirements of the Grant application process has caused an hiatus in our support to the NMP and so the Committee has determined to immediately make AUD\$50,000 available from RAM funds to maintain our support by providing additional bed nets. We have also again invited Timor Leste's Head of Communicable Diseases Dept. Dr Merita Monteiro to speak at the **RAM Conference**.

Malaria Vaccine Development

Rotary District 9640 project to support the next stage of human Trials of Malaria Vaccine candidate PlasProtect® has now reached \$468,000 toward the goal of \$500,000. More than 50% of these funds raised to date have come from Rotarians and Rotary Clubs. Following the receipt of regulatory and ethical committee approvals the research team under Professor Michael Good have been screening and recruiting 36 volunteers and are now ready to commence the next phase of trials.

RAM's annual Conference will showcase the ground breaking work going on at the Institute for Glycomics where the PlasProtect® research team is based.

RAM and the Rotary Action Group.

In the lead-up to the RI Convention and as a result of RAM's raised profile ahead of the MWC and Malaria Summit at CHOGM, there has been a flurry of activity around the REMaRAG Rotary Action Group on malaria. This has put us in direct contact with several other Rotary malaria projects and RI Director Brian Stoyel, former Chair of REMaRAG. I expect that the result will be re-energised and better coordinated lobbying for a Rotary global malaria program, to follow PolioPlus, as well as an increased dialogue and information sharing between the various Rotary malaria programs around the world.

Annual RAM Conference

Our Conference this year 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 run over the weekend of 25th and 26th August .

Invited Speakers include Mr Tim Freeman RAM PNG Project Manager, Mr Albino Bobogare Director NVBDCP. Solomon Islands MoH, Prof. Denis Shanks (AAMI), Prof Michael Good (Glycomics), Prof Tom Burkot (AITHM), Assoc Prof Helen Evans (Convener MWC.) Assoc. Prof Harin Karunajeewa (WEHI) and more. RAM projects in our three focus countries will be featured as well as proposals for collaborative new projects in Solomon Islands and PNG. RAM sponsored PhD student Edgar Pollard is in the writing up phase of his research and will present his last report prior to completing his study at the end of the year.

The Institute for Glycomics, in conjunction with the Australian Army Malaria Institute, has agreed to host an interactive malaria lab experience for limited numbers of participants, in two sessions, from 9:30am and 11:00am Saturday 25th as a pre-Conference complimentary option.

Register for the Conference now at: <http://ram.rawcs.com.au/ram-national-conference/>

There are two pages to complete and submit, one with your registration requirements and one with payment details. Submit registration details by clicking "Send Registration" then access payment page by clicking "click here to Pay Now".

First Malaria World Congress



Rotary was seen and referenced everywhere at the First Malaria World Congress in Melbourne. RAM was represented by a well presented stand, in the "Global Village Exhibition" of the Congress, manned by RAM delegates and local RAM volunteers. Rotary had about 20 delegates of the 1000 delegates from 64 nations who attended. In addition to our stand, we were represented on a plenary panel by PDG Bob Aitken (END OF POLIO Coordinator in Rotary Zone 7B and part of Zone 8 in 2017/18) who did an excellent job of describing Rotary's experience on Polio eradication and reinforcing our strong interest in malaria eradication. In a different session RAM Project Manager for PNG, Tim Freeman, gave a very well received talk on RAM's role and experience in fighting malaria in PNG.

As a direct outcome of our presence at the Congress we are now actively engaged in assessing the two potential new malaria elimination program collaborations in the east PNG islands and in the Solomon Islands.

The mission of the Congress was : *"To bring the broad spectrum of the malaria world together for the first time, to further galvanise the effort for the eradication of malaria."* and this was achieved spectacularly well across all sessions.



Many speakers referenced the UN Sustainable Development Goal **SDG No. 3 Good Health and Well Being and 3.3 to end the malaria epidemic by 2030** in the context of Universal health Coverage, UHC. There was broad agreement that malaria elimination was best achieved with strong community participation as part of a holistic approach to strengthening local health systems lifting health and wellbeing outcomes. This is the so called 'horizontal' approach to malaria elimination rather than the singular focus on malaria or 'vertical' approach'.

On funding, speakers commented that malaria eradication could be achieved efficiently by lifting the current global spend of about USD\$2.5 B to \$7B in the short term, the annual equivalent of the money that the US spends in a day on 4th July celebrations! Early investment would see a rapid decline in funding required into the future as malaria incidence was significantly reduced and isolated and would have the advantage of protecting the gains made by past investments rather than risking rapid resurgence. Needless to say the removal of malaria will have enormous positive effects on global prosperity, in the order of \$90 B, as well as contributing to regional security.

Another strong theme was 'Commitment over Certainty' in commencing elimination programs or, as Prof Sir Richard Feachem (University of California) put it: "don't wait to get all your ducks in a row...get on with it and they will line up!". The broader context of this was that globally there should be two simultaneous approaches or streams of work, namely "Doing the hardest first", that is, a global focus on reducing malaria incidence in the worst endemic areas whilst elsewhere "Going the final mile" to complete elimination programs and not leaving before the job is done. This is clearly a strength that Rotary brings to the table and is why our support for the NMP in Timor Leste could be crucial!

Details of the Congress and abstracts of presentations can be found at: www.worldmalariacongress.org .

Co-Convenor of the Congress, Assoc. Prof. Helen Evans AO, will present a review of the Congress outcomes at the **RAM Conference**.

CS4ME Declaration

During the few days prior to the Congress, RAM Funding Coordinator Bill Oakley, represented RAM in a working group of Civil Society Organisations held at the Burnet Institute. As a result of this meeting a new global partnership of CSOs was instigated to be known as CS4ME (Civil Society for Malaria Elimination). This new body also received acclamation at the Congress and RAM, and hence Rotary, are recognised as a founding member. CS4ME was a key action point from the Congress communiqué representing the acceptance by all sectors that "malaria elimination cannot be achieved without genuine engagement of community and civil society."

The CS4ME Declaration reads:-

"Firm in the belief that empowered community and civil society are game-changers in health responses, we, representatives of national, regional and global malaria communities and civil society attending the First Malaria World Congress, have come together and formed the Global Civil Society for Malaria Elimination (CS4ME)^{4,5} as part of our commitment to joint advocacy for more effective, sustainable, people-centred, rights-based, equitable, and inclusive malaria programmes and interventions. CS4ME makes the following calls to implementing and donor governments and other duty bearers:

1. Frame malaria responses in the context of social justice and human rights, and within equitable universal health coverage systems.
2. Make malaria decision-making spaces more inclusive and support malaria civil society mobilisation.
3. Fully meet the funding needs for the malaria response and for health and community systems strengthening.
4. Partner with civil society and community actors for effective malaria surveillance and response systems."

RAM Web site and Media

See RAM at www.ram.rawcs.com.au and www.facebook.com/ram.australia/ .

Thanks to some great work by our Media and PR Coordinator Holstein Wong, we are now routinely posting via the MailChimp emailing service. This provides for wider distribution in the future as well as building a more reliable mailing list.

RAM Schools Video Competition 2018

RAM National Secretary Virginia Turner is assembling entries for this year's RAM School Video Competition so if any schools in your area are participating please encourage them to send their videos to Virginia as soon as possible. The videos will be screened and judged at the **RAM Conference**. The first prize of \$1000 is intended to be spent on the improvement of school videoing equipment. Last year's winner and runner-up can be viewed via a link on the RAM website.

RAM Positions vacant

The positions of RAM National Secretary and RAM Media and PR Coordinator will become vacant at the AGM so I would be interested to hear from any Rotarians or Rotaractors who would like to nominate for these positions. Current RAM National Manager Dave Pearson has agreed to continue in this role until the end of the 2018/2019 Rotary year and Dr Jenny Kerrison has accepted appointment as Interim Deputy National Manager to be confirmed at the AGM.

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, 14th July 2018.

