

# **Rotarians Against Malaria**

## **Annual Report 2004-2005**

Rotarians Against Malaria, especially the Adopt-a-Village programs in Papua New Guinea and Guadalcanal Province in the Solomons continues to excite the imagination of Rotarians across Australia.

A strengthening of Regional RAM structures, and in many instances formalising District representatives has increased awareness and resulted in growing financial contributions from Rotary Clubs and individuals.

The RAM program in Western and Choiseul Provinces of the Solomon Islands is almost complete. PDG John Reddish will undertake the final inspection and report on the 3H and Matching Grants in the near future. Western and Choiseul Provinces have adequate stocks of bed nets and chemicals thanks to the 3H and Matching Grants. Western Province has been well covered by the bed net distribution program, and distribution across Choiseul is well under way. Funds for fuel and manpower are adequate to continue this phase of the work. These nets require retreatment dipping in the appropriate chemical every year to ensure maximum effectiveness. Malaria workers are carrying out this process most efficiently.

The housing component of the project is basically complete. Five houses have been constructed on Choiseul, two at Sasamunga, two at Panggoe, and one at the Provincial headquarters of Taro. These dwellings are arguably the best accommodation on the island. The repair and renovation of the five houses occupied by malaria workers at Munda on New Georgia Island is almost complete. Ten teams of Rotary Volunteers have been involved in this work, a tremendous effort under very difficult and trying conditions. The standard of workmanship has been excellent, and the work completed without accident or incident. The whole project has been a credit to the volunteers concerned and the spirit of Rotary comradeship. The first house constructed at Tetere, east of Honiara in Guadalcanal Province in 1998 before the ethnic unrest, is in excellent condition.

It should be noted that this project has been largely funded by donations from Australian Rotary Clubs. The Rotary Foundation provided assistance for the repairs to the houses at Munda through a Matching Grant, with additional monies coming from the National RAM account. The six houses constructed at Tetere and on Choiseul Island have been totally paid for by Australian Rotary Clubs. This included substantial freight costs, part of which was the chartering of a barge to get the building materials from ports at Honiara and Noro to the isolated communities at Sasamunga and Panggoe, locations without wharf facilities. These costs were never considered when the initial planning for the RAM project was undertaken. Relocation to Western and Choiseul Provinces following the unrest caused more than a few logistical and financial headaches, but the end result has been worth all the effort.

At the most recent Conference of Provincial Malaria supervisors (held in Honiara during February 2005), statistical information from Western and Choiseul Provinces showed dramatic declines in the incidence of malaria in the last twelve months. Other Provinces showed static, or even increases in, incidence rates. From 300 plus per 1000 prior to RAM to less than 20 per 1000 now. Some areas indicated incidence rates of 4 per 1000.

World Health Organization representatives at the conference were amazed at these outstanding results. The gathering concluded that the provision of chemicals and bed nets, assistance in infrastructure (boats and motors, vehicle, spray equipment), and housing for workers at a time when social and ethnic problems prevented activities in other Provinces was the direct reason for this dramatic difference. **Rotary Foundation funds and RAM at work.**

The Adopt-a-Village program in Papua New Guinea continues to draw the most generous support of Rotary Clubs across Australia. Donations for the supply of 'Long Life Nets' (chemical impregnated nets with a five year life) are channelled through PDG Richmond Manyweathers to the Rotary Club of Port Moresby where PP Ron Seddon and his small committee arrange for supply and distribution of nets. RAM has been responsible for the netting of villages in some of the most inhospitable areas of the country.

Without doubt, the outstanding success of the program is due to PP Ron's dedication, enthusiasm, and administrative ability.

Continuing RAM activities in the Solomon Islands will replicate the A-a-V of PNG, with the challenge of providing LLNets to everyone on Guadalcanal Island. Guadalcanal Province has the worst malaria statistics of any Province in the Solomons, with infrastructure almost non-existent. The task is huge, but then Rotarians thrive on such challenges.

Further information is available on the websites; [www.ram.com.pg](http://www.ram.com.pg) and [www.ramguadalcanal.com.sb](http://www.ramguadalcanal.com.sb)

A most generous donation of \$30000 from D9650 has allowed RAM to join forces with ARHRF in providing a \$70000 research grant, details of which are now being finalized. Our Scientific committee continues to provide a strong link with the research and scientific community.

In early June, 35 Rotarians and guests attended (at their own expense) a two-day gathering at Burpengary Queensland, to review RAM activities and plan for the future. Major presentations were made by PP Ron Seddon from Port Moresby, PP Dr. Nathan Kere from Honiara, and Major Ken Lilley of the Australian Army Malaria Institute. A most successful and rewarding conference. Plans are in place to hold a similar gathering next June.

We continue to liaise closely with our Rotary counterparts in America, New Zealand, and the United Kingdom.

Rotarians Against Malaria provides the opportunity for Rotarians to make a huge difference in the lives of people requiring assistance, and see a direct result for their input.

Peter Thomas  
Chairman  
17<sup>th</sup> August 2005