

Sample Letter to Media and Schools

MALARIA AWARENESS DAY 30TH APRIL

Malaria is one of the World's deadliest diseases. Each day it claims at least 3,000 lives, mostly children under 5 years of age and pregnant women. This is the equivalent to the total lives lost in the September 11, 2001 terrorist attack on the World Trade Centre Twin Towers as a daily occurrence.

Perhaps half a billion people will contract malaria each year. Rotary and many other organisations including the World Health Organization (WHO) and the Global Fund are working together in the global "Roll Back Malaria" campaign.

The WHO has recognised 25th April as World Malaria Day. In Australia we have set aside 30th April as "Malaria Awareness Day" so as not to conflict with ANZAC Day on the 25th April.

Rotarians in Australia have been actively working for some years to reduce the incidence of malaria in Papua New Guinea (PNG), the Solomon Islands and to the extent feasible East Timor.

In the absence of any vaccine to prevent the occurrence of malaria it has been found that providing the local peoples the protection of insecticide-treated bed nets is one of the most effective means of reducing the incidence of malaria. The anti-malarial programs may also encompass spraying, education, provision of appropriate chemicals, eradication of breeding sites (when feasible), provision of equipment, infrastructure and transport facilities.

These anti-malaria activities have proven to be effective in saving lives and generally improving the health and well being of the local peoples. In the Western Solomon Islands for instance the Rotary initiated program in late 2001 has steadily reduced the rate of malaria from around 30% to the present 5% level and in some cases even lower.

It should be emphasised that Rotary is working closely with the WHO, AusAid, the relevant governmental agencies in PNG and the Solomon Islands and local Rotarians.

Rotarians and Rotary Clubs throughout Australia have been "Adopting" villages in PNG and the Solomon Islands which essentially means providing the moneys to afford all the people in a village the protection of insecticide-treated bed nets. As a guide \$1,000 will adopt a small village, \$2,000 a medium-sized village and \$3,000 a large village. All personal and corporate donations made to Rotary Australia Overseas Aid Fund (RAM) are tax deductible.

Hence the rationale for a Malaria Awareness Day is Australia on April 30th this year and subsequently each year thereafter.

PRESS:

We would accordingly be most grateful if you could provide coverage of the Malaria Awareness Day in (local paper).

I will be pleased to provide you with any further information you may require in relation to the above (and I will telephone you in a few days).

Name of Contact

SCHOOLS:

We are making you aware of the above as you may consider this is a matter of interest for your students and perhaps an ongoing project in which they may choose to participate.

If each student were to contribute say 50 cents p.a. this would provide considerable funds to purchase bed nets. The contributions will probably save a life and will most certainly improve the general health and well-being of the local peoples.

I will be pleased to provide you with any further information you may require in relation to the above (and I will telephone you in a few days).

Name of Contact