



Dr Pomat giving a presentation during the Pneumonia Colloquium, at the Institute last year.

Congratulations

DR WILLIAM POMAT

After almost a decade of persistence and perseverance, it all paid off for Dr William Pomat, when in February, this year, he was finally awarded his PhD in Immunology from the School of Paediatrics and Child Health, University of Western Australia. He is now the country's first Immunologist and the second national scientist at the Institute of Medical Research to achieve this milestone.

The management and staff of IMR, are proud of his achievement and congratulate Dr Pomat. It is also hoped that his achievement be a model to up-and-coming Papua New Guinean scientists.

Read his story on page. 4

New research scheme for scientists

As a statutory body of the Government of PNG, the Institute receives core funding from the National Government, as well as core support from AusAID. Approximately 70% of the annual budget comes from external research grants and senior management is seeking to maintain or improve upon this ratio in the coming years. In recognition of the important work conducted by PNGIMR, the Government of PNG has provided K1 million to be allocated directly to research funding for the 2011 calendar year.

With this funding, senior management at the Institute has established an Internal, Competitive Research Award Scheme (the PNGIMR ICRAS Program) to provide early, mid-career and senior scientists with an opportunity to design and lead new research in PNG. The ICRAS Scientific Review Committee has been established to oversee this scheme. The primary aim of this new scheme is to enable early and mid-career scientists to gain experience in research project design and leadership. It was launched by the Director, Professor Peter Siba, early this year.

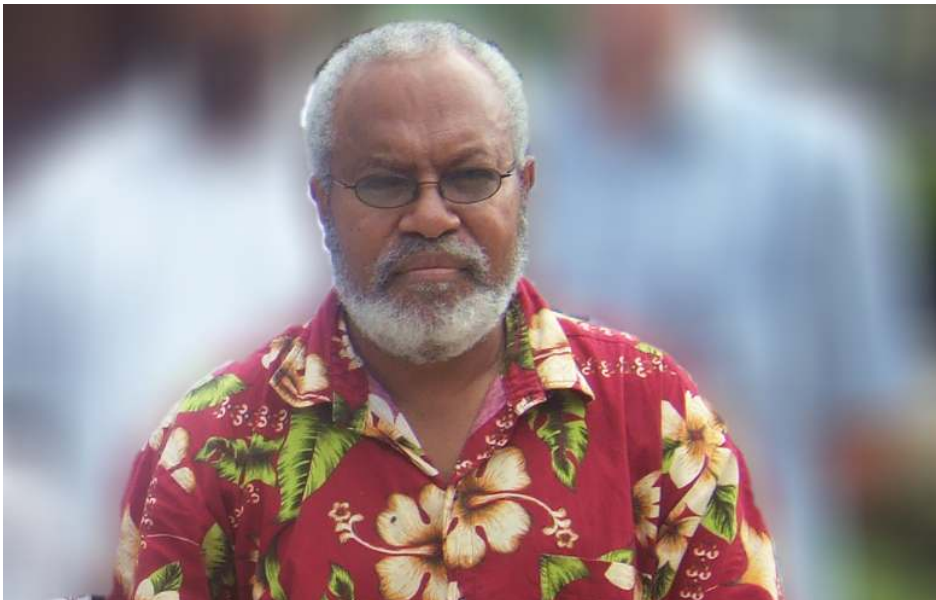
The criterion for applying for research grants under ICRAS is similar to that of any competitive international research grant. "This is because we want the scientists at the Institute to get expose to the competitiveness that surrounds international research grants and gain experience in designing research projects," said Prof Siba.

The scope of research ICRAS will support are: operational,

biomedical, behavioral, field and laboratory-based research projects at all IMR sites. The money has been divided into two funding categories; one will be K300, 000 for small grants targeting early and mid-career researchers and the other will be K700, 000 for larger research grants for mid-career and senior researchers at the Institute. According to Dickson Kuvi, ex officio officer of the committee, a meeting was held recently to select research proposals. Of the 23 applications received, 5 awardees were accepted for the larger grant and 11 for the smaller grant.

The Institute thanked the National Government for its continuous support and recognition of the work the Institute does and the Institute reaffirms its commitment to continue to conduct quality biomedical research in PNG.

For more information on ICRAS, visit www.pngimr.org.pg



From the Director

With the start of another working year upon us, I wish to welcome you all-staff, management and collaborators of the Institute. IMR, this year will see more growth in its research capacity with big new projects coming on board as well as embarking into new research areas.

One such project is the Maternal Health project under the Sexual and Reproductive Health Unit. One aspect of the study will be to investigate the human papilloma virus (HPV) and its relationship to cervical cancer in PNG. This study will set a new benchmark for research work at the Institute. The study will work closely with the HIV/STI Laboratory at the Institute.

Although it will be very challenging, we are focused on ensuring that quality research is conducted and as always in all our research activities, we will continue to ensure that they are aligned with the National Health Plan, the Medium Term Development Goals and the Millineum Development Goals. For this year also, we plan on continuing to develop and build the capacity of our scientists.

Another big research project that has gone into full swing this year is the PNG-LNG/PNGIMR Partnership in Health. The project is on schedule.

Other projects also to start this year are the Pneumonia Vaccine study, investigating suitable vaccine for pneumonia, and the malaria and filarisis studies.

This year, the Institute will also witness a lot of infrastructural developments, with the new office and laboratory complex at our new Madang site to be started and the completion of the office extension at our Goroka headoffice. This will be highlighted in the CASS report further in the newsletter.

All in all, the Institute continues to be at the forefront of research into principal health problems in PNG and the wider developed world and we attribute this success to the overwhelming support that we continue to receive from the PNG National Government, AusAID and our various collaborators and stakeholders. With the start of the New Year, we look forward to a closer collaboration with you all.

Thank you.

Prof. Peter Siba, Director

AusAID's continuous support acknowledged

AusAID's financial support to the Institute over the years has greatly complimented the National Government's support in helping to strengthen and build the Institute's human resource development and as well has increased its research capacities.

The focus of the Institute' research programs has been directed towards problem-driven research, based on the health problems affecting Papua New Guineans, such as malaria, pneumonia, TB, sexual health, infectious diseases and more recently child maternal heath.

Director Peter Siba, said with such support from AusAID, "the research capacity of the Institute continues to bloom." With new research projects coming on board, also blooming is our ability to attract huge research grants, increased human resource development and the overall quality of research work that is being done at the Institute.

He said the financial support given to the Institute by AusAID has greatly complimented the government's support and that "the direct support is a very good approach". "I see it as an advantage, in providing direct funding to state-run institutions, it is money well spent."

Professor Siba made these comments during a visit by an AusAID high powered delegation to the Institute in March, this year.

The delegation comprised of AusAid's Minister Counsellor, Stephanie Copus-Campbell, and included two members of the AusAID independent review panel, Mr Bill Farmer and Ms Margaret Reid, who were in the country conducting an independent review on the effectiveness of Australia's aid program in PNG.

Country-wide malaria survey underway

IMR has recently started possibly the largest malaria survey ever conducted in PNG.

Over the next five months, research teams will be surveying every province in the country. The teams are composed of scientific officers, research assistants and nursing officers.

In each province, a number of villages will randomly be selected for the survey. In each village, the researchers will conduct interviews with members of selected households and collect blood samples on glass slides.

The samples will then be tested for the presence of malaria parasites. The survey is expected to cover over 4,000 households and collect more than 20,000 blood samples from across the country.

This study is part of a five-year evaluation of the National Malaria Control Program. It assesses the malaria interventions supported by the Global Fund to Fight AIDS, tuberculosis and malaria.

These include the free distribution of insecticide-treated mosquito nets, the roll-out of rapid diagnostic tests for malaria and the introduction of artemisinin-based combination treatment.

Findings will assist the National Department of Health in improving malaria control and contribute to decreasing the burden of malaria in PNG.

IMR appreciates the support provided by provincial and district health authorities, village leaders, and all household members participating in this survey.

For more information, contact: malariacontrol@pngimr.org.pg

Microscopy Unit gets new microscopes



Microscopists attached with the Malaria Control Project testing out the new high tech Nikon Multi Teaching Head Microscope. From left to right; Philip Rex, Scholar Hasu, Senior Project Manager Anthony Tandrapah and Enoch Makoni.

The Institute has recently increased its capacity to perform high-quality malaria microscopy for its numerous malaria research activities.

Three new Nikon Eclipse 55i microscopes were purchased, two of which will be based in Goroka and one at the main Microscopy Unit in Madang. Part of this purchase is a high tech Nikon Multi Teaching Head installation which allows five microscopists to simultaneously look at the same microscopy slide.

This teaching microscope is the first of its kind for the Institute and most probably the only one in Papua New Guinea. It was bought by the Malaria Control Program Evaluation (MalCon) project with funds from the Global Fund. The microscopy will be based at the Institute's Madang branch where it will be used for training of the Institute's expert microscopists.

The distinct features of the microscope include four additional viewers connected to the master viewer of a Nikon 55i microscope. This allows five viewers to be able to view a single slide at one given time. Another feature is an in-built pointer which allows

the master viewer to highlight particular objects on a slide, such as a malaria parasite to all other viewers. This makes a perfect teaching tool for new graduate scientists and microscopists as well as experienced microscopists working in the IMR labs.

"It is a very nice piece of equipment as it will really assist us in making quality assurance of blood slides so that proper diagnosis of malarial parasites is performed," said Tony Tandrapah, Senior Project Manager with the MalCon project. The teaching microscope is a contribution of the MalCon project to the main Microscopy Unit in Madang. In 2011 alone, MalCon is expecting to collect over 25,000 malaria slides which will be read by IMR microscopists in Goroka and Madang.

The multi-teaching head, along with the other new microscopes, were assembled at the Institute's headquarters in Goroka, before being transported to the Microscopy Unit in Madang.

The MalCon project is currently responsible for evaluating the Round 8 Global Fund Malaria program in the country.

Head of Immunology receives PhD award



Dr William Pomat started off his career at the Immunology lab in 1987 and worked his way up from being a junior scientist to being the current section head of the Immunology Laboratory at the Institute.

The highlight of his career came in February this year, when he was awarded his PhD from the School of Paediatrics and Child Health at the University of Western Australia. Dr Pomat's achievement was welcomed by the management and staff of the Institute with much celebration as according to Director Peter Siba, it signifies an important milestone for the Institute.

"Dr Pomat is now the second national scientist at the Institute to have a PhD,

and we are really proud of his achievement. Not only that, he is now the country's first Immunologist and for that the Institute is very proud and congratulate him and his family for his success," he said.

Dr Pomat started his PhD program in 2001. The title of his thesis was "*Mucosal immunity to pneumococcal capsular polysaccharide in Australian children and adults*". The thesis looks at immunity that develops at mucosal surface (eg, respiratory tract), using saliva as a proxy, to a germ called *Streptococcus pneumoniae* (or pneumococci) in Australian Aboriginal children. This germ causes meningitis, sepsis, pneumonia and ear infections. These diseases lead to more than a million deaths in children under the age of 5-years. This germ colonises the nasopharynx at a very early

age and from there disperses to the lungs or middle ear to cause pneumonia or middle ear infection. It goes from there to the brain to cause meningitis.

The thesis wanted to find out if children mount protection against this germ at an early age and whether vaccination with pneumococcal vaccine induces immune protection in saliva, therefore protecting kids against ear infection. The study was done using samples from Australian Aboriginal children who are exposed early to this germ, leading to high numbers of ear infections.

Tests that were developed in this thesis are now being used at PNGIMR to investigate the immunogenicity of pneumococcal conjugate

vaccine. This has led to training a number of national scientists on pneumococcal immunology.

"Progressing from being a junior scientific officer to my current position was not easy. There is still a lot to learn and lots to do to improve the health of Papua New Guineans. The most important attributes to being successful, from my experience, are good work ethics, persistence and perseverance - as they say 97% brawn and 3% brain."

BSSS to hosts inaugural meeting in April

Continued collaboration and disseminating of scientific information among research scientists will be high on the agenda at the PNG Biomedical and Social Sciences Society's (BSSS) inaugural external specialty meeting. The meeting is planned for April 14-15 and will be staged at the Adolf Saweri Lecture Theater at the Institute's headquarters in Goroka.

The focus for this meeting is to provide an avenue for both young and established biomedical and social science researchers to disseminate valuable scientific information on research that they are currently, or have been involved in. Also on its agenda is the strengthening of current and fostering future, collaborative work between partnering research groups and institutions both nationally and internationally. A call for abstracts was made prior to the staging of the meeting and up to three travel grants/scholarships will be awarded to the best abstracts submitted, particularly from applicants living outside of the host province. The Society's president, Ms Jacinta Francis, said the travel grants/scholarships are sponsored by the American Society for Microbiology and BD Diagnostics Australia and she is very thankful

for their assistance. "Donations toward the staging of this inaugural meeting have also been coming in from other organizations and companies especially abroad and they will be acknowledged accordingly", said Ms Francis.

She also said that the organizing of this upcoming meeting is driven by the exceptional efforts of the society's fundraising subcommittee comprising Dr Andrew Greenhill, Mrs Pamela Toliman-Kimisopa and Dr Leanne Robinson, and her fellow executives Mr Jonah Iga and Ms Marinjho Hilla. The society would like to extend its gratitude to Prof. Peter Siba (Director, IMR), his management and staff for their continuous support towards the Society's activities. For more information, please email the BSSS at pngbs3@gmail.com

New Staff for Partnership in Health Project

The PNGIMR/PNGLNG Partnership in Health project had an induction meeting for its new staff early this month.

The 40 staff, 25 of whom are new had an induction ceremony which was held at the Institute's Goroka office. The new staff comprised of scientific officers, research assistants and data entry clerks, most of whom will be stationed at the project's office in Goroka.

The two-day event included introducing the new staff to the various sections of the Institute - both research and support services. The event ended with a trip to one of the project's research sites – Asaro Valley where the group was introduced to the community whom they will be working closely with over the next four years. This project is one of the Institute's biggest projects with research work commencing late last year. This project will run for several years and covers research in a number of key public health areas.

Work is progressing well at the Port Moresby site with all the ground work already completed last year. At the Goroka site, recruitment of staff has started with the recruitment of field supervisors and reporters.

According to the project's public relations coordinator, the initial ground work at the Hides site has started with the team's recent trip to SHP where the group met with Provincial Health Authorities and Church-based organizations. The trip was successful with very positive and supportive feedback from the organizations they met with.

New building to house ORU research projects



Dr Clement Malau and Dr Adolf Saweri cutting the ribbon, signifying the opening of the new building.

The IMR has added a new office extension to its Goroka office complex with the building to house some of the research projects under the Operational Research Unit (ORU).

This unit is the biggest at the Institute and focuses on public health, social and behavioural research as well as monitoring, evaluation and health impact assessments closely linked to intervention programs carried out by the National Department of Health (NDoH).

Director, Peter Siba, said the Unit plays an important role in research as it provides the evidence for the policies of the NDoH as well as Vision 2050 and Millennium Development Goals especially in Health. "With new research projects coming on board, the Unit has seen an increase in the number of staff, with current staff totaling above 80 and the need for office space has led to the building of a new office extension," said Professor Siba. The new building will house three projects - Partnership in Health and Sexual Reproductive Health which are new projects and the Malaria Control Project.

Funding for this development was made possible by the National Planning Department through its Development Budget Support arm.

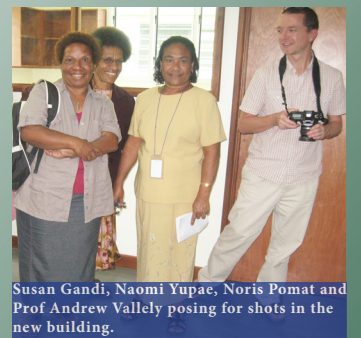
Dr Adolf Saweri, Chairman of the IMR Council, in thanking the National Government said the Institute is delighted by the continued support that it receives from the government of PNG as well as AusAID and the Institute's other collaborators.



IMR staff checking out the new building



Cleaner Helen sorting out the pot plants before the opening



Susan Gandhi, Naomi Yupae, Noris Pomat and Prof Andrew Vally posing for shots in the new building.



Aerial view of the new building



Work on the new building in progress.

The new office extension was opened on the 25th of March, this year and witnessed by the IMR staff, members of the IMR Council and representatives from the Department of National Planning and the Provincial Health Office.

The IMR Nius is a quarterly publication of the Papua New Guinea Institute of Medical Research and is written and edited by Geraldine Vilakiva of the Institute's Informations and Communications Unit. News contributors include PNGIMR management, Research Units and Departments including Madang and Maprik branches. If you would like to make a contribution to the newsletter or be included on our mailing list, please contact us at the following address:

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Report on sex workers in PNG launched

Askim na Save is the first integrated biological, behavioural and qualitative study of people who sell and exchange sex in Port Moresby. In the study 593 men, women and transgender participated as did under age people who sell and exchange sex.

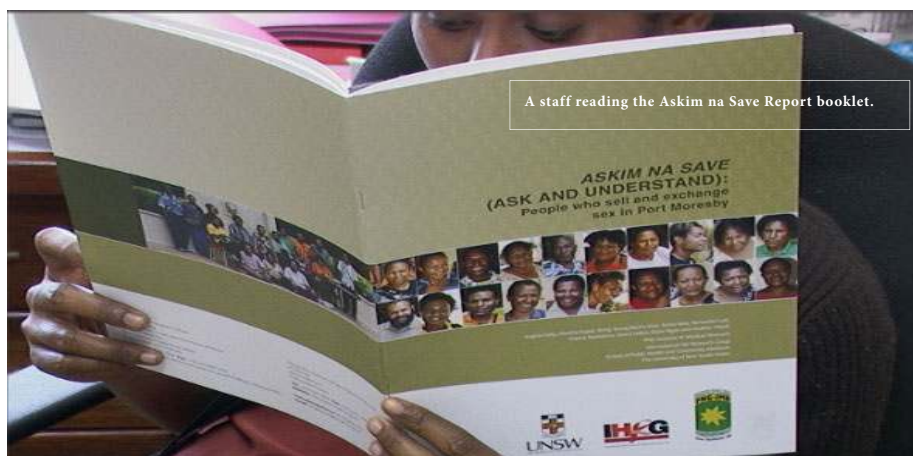
Funded by AusAID, the research was carried about by the long term joint research partnership between the PNG Institute of Medical Research and the International HIV Research Group of the University of New South Wales. The extensive report champions the need to:

1. Continue to provide funding and support to peer lead and other services which champion the needs of people who sell and exchange sex
2. Increase access to condoms for people who sell and exchange sex
3. Provide greater awareness and education of anal sex as a mode of HIV transmission between women and men and not just between men
4. Foster an environment whereby all people who sell and exchange sex can access health care services including HIV testing and prevention services, in particular men
5. Increase policy attention as well as resources for underage youth who are involved in the selling and exchanging of sex
6. Conduct extensive work with clients of people who sell and exchange sex, in particular traditional landowners of natural resources who account for the largest group of clients in Port Moresby

7. Prioritize programs and policies which address the vulnerability and risk to HIV of people who sell and exchange sex
8. Continue and expand current work with police.

Ms Martha Kupul, the Project Coordinator of Askim na Save said that the success of this study lies in the involvement of the Port Moresby sex worker community who assisted the research team in the design of the study, who actively participated in the implementation of the study and who were instrumental in designing the report's recommendations. Along with Ms Kupul, Dr Angela Kelly, the lead author of the report, would like to thank all of the organizations involved in this study in particular Friends Frangipani, Save the Children in PNG's Poro Sapot Project and Hope Worldwide. The report was launched on Thursday 10th March, 2011 in Port Moresby by the Director of the National AIDS Council Web Kanawi, witnessed by the local media, members of the sex worker community and other stakeholders.

For more information on the study please contact Dr Angela Kelly, Senior Research Fellow, PNG IMR
(E) angela.kelly@pngimr.org.pg
(T) + 675 532 2800



A staff reading the Askim na Save Report booklet.

Senior staff undergo TOT workshop

Senior management and staff from various sections within the Institute attended a four day Training for Trainers (TOT) Workshop.

The workshop was designed to allow them to be certified as trainers. The objectives of the workshop as highlighted by the Institute's Training Unit was to enable participants to be able to acquire the skills in training needs analysis, designing a training curriculum and preparation of a lesson plan.

This is so that in the future, they are able to conduct in-house training short courses in line with the National Training Policy. Towards the end of the workshop, participants had to formulate a Training Needs Analysis (TNA) of staff within their sections and submit a report on that.

Based on that, they were required to design a Training Curriculum that could be developed into a lesson plan. This was to assess and determine their ability and skills as to whether or not they could be recognized as certified Trainers.

This training is Phase 1 of the Training of Trainers and was facilitated by a master trainer from the Integrated Development Services Ltd, a recognized NTC training provider.

The workshop was held from March 22-25 at the Institute's headquarters in Goroka.

PNGIMR-UNPNG-PNGLNG GRADUATE PROGRAM Updates

Increasing the research capabilities of our national scientists continues to be one of the focus areas at the Institute. To support this, the Institute has in place a graduate program that specializes in the training of young scientists in various biomedical research areas. This has led to a long-term collaboration with the UPNG where, every year IMR take on board 5 science graduates and two masters students under its graduate program to do their Honours and Masters respectively. Following the success of this program, PNGLNG has come on board to sponsor the next three years of this graduate program. Below is an update on the Graduate Program.

1: Recruitment and Selection

A recruitment drive for the Graduate Program is normally done in June every year at UPNG's School of Science and School of Medicine and Health Sciences. This is done by the training officer at the UPNG campus to explain the program to the students. Application forms are also distributed to the intending students. The application closing date is usually scheduled for mid-August every year, allowing ample time for the students to apply. The quota to recruit every year is: 10 internship students for 6-8 weeks experience, and five honours students for 12-13 months, all from the School of Sciences at UPNG - and 2 Masters students either from the School of Science or School of Medicine and Health Sciences. IMR staff who are interested in doing honours under this program also apply using the same procedure.

Selection is usually done in September by the Technical Advisory Group for the program. This group comprises representatives from the IMR, UPNG and PNGLNG partnership. Selection for the various programs is based on merit and students are considered based on the Grade Point Average (GPA) pass mark of 2.5. After the selection, students are notified of the outcome and arrangements are coordinated through the PNGIMR training office.

2: Interns, Honours and Masters students

For 2010 internship students, the 10 students selected were taken on a six weeks internship program at the Institute's headquarters in Goroka where they were placed in various research units for their intership experience.

The five honours students are currently attached to the various research units at the Institute for the



The summer interns with training officer Dickson Kuvi (far left)

next 12-13 months. Under the Masters program this year, 2 Masters students will be recruited at the end of March or early April.

Students under this year's graduate program were not selected from the LNG impacted areas of SHP, WHP, Gulf and Central Provinces. The reason being that, the information to recruit students from LNG impacted areas reached the Training Office right after the recruitment and selection process was completed. However, this year's recruitment drive for the 2012 intake will consider students from LNG-impacted provinces.

3: Strategies for recruitment in the years to come

In the future, the training office will focus on the UPNG student groups from the LNG impacted areas. Their provincial student group leaders will be contacted to help with a more active and transparent awareness drive to encourage more applications from the impacted areas. There was a concern as to whether there are enough students attending UPNG from the impacted provinces who could apply, so the training office will check with the UPNG student administration for numbers.

4: Program launching

We have yet to set a date for an official launching of the Graduate Program. This has to be agreed on by the LNG, UPNG and IMR staff. The name of the program is tentatively being called the PNGIMR/ PNGLNG Partnership in Health Graduate Program.

Dickson Kuvi- Training officer & PNGIMR, PNGLNG & UPNG Student Program Coordinator



Pamela Toliman-Kimisopa, a Master's student (standing) assisting an intern student at the HIV/STI lab.

Corporate Affairs and Support Services Update

With Samson Akunaii (Deputy Director - Corporate Affairs and Support Services)



Operations of Port Moresby Office

There is an increase in activities at the Port Moresby branch with the full operation of the HDSS activities in the West Hiri District of Central Province. The HDSS work is being headed by one of our senior officers on the ground, Mr Elias Namosha, whilst the clinical aspects is being taken care of by Dr Patricia Rarau. The Gordons office will continue to serve as the administrative office of the Institute whilst the fully fledged operational office located along the Somare Crescent Road at Waigani will serve as the operational base for the PNGIMR Partnership in Health Project. Due to the increase in activities, the role of the former administrative officer of the Gordons office has been elevated to Site Administrator. The incumbent, Ms Mary Aisa, now oversees the operations of the two offices for administrative and support matters. Ms Aisa in turn reports directly to the Deputy Director – Corporate Affairs at Goroka HQ. She has been with the Institute for a long time and we are confident that she will continue to perform the new role with confidence and manage the Port Moresby operations well.

Appointment of HR Manager

The position of HR Manager has now been filled. Mr Denver Kave Ame is the new HR Manager and recently joined the Institute on 21 March 2011, after graduating from Swinburne University, Melbourne, Australia where he completed his Masters in Human Resources Management. Mr Ame is not new to working with semi-government organizations, as his last employment before taking up post graduate studies in Australia was with the University of Goroka, where he was involved in various aspects of human resources work and he possesses a good understanding and grounding on HR principals and practices. He will no doubt contribute something positive to the Institute in his areas of responsibilities. He hails from Kefamo Village in Goroka and will soon be introduced to the other Institute branches in the next few weeks to allow him to meet staff and establish dialogue to enable him to develop HR strategies in liaison with key senior staff over time. During this time, there have been additional recruitments in the HR section. Ms Shirley Kwam has been employed recently as a HR Assistant to fill the vacancy created by the departure of Mr Toby Apa and Mr Kotuwari Onafimo has been recruited as a HR assistant to fill the vacuum that exists in Madang. Currently Shirley and Kotuwari are undergoing on-the-job training. After this, Otto will be relocated to Madang to assist the management team in Madang on all HR matters.

Update on Job Evaluation and Job Reclassification

The outsourced Job Evaluation and Reclassification Exercise is progressing well and a report on it will be released soon. The task has not been an easy one as this is the first time such an important job evaluation and job classification exercise has been undertaken at the Institute since its inception some 43 years ago. This is a significant undertaking initiated by the management and the HR section under the guidance of the Deputy Director – CASS. A lot of time and effort has been put into seeing this initiative progress to its final stages. Once the final report is out, it will have to go through several reviews and approvals before it is implemented and staff will be updated on the progress as we go along. It is hoped that the outcome of this review will set the pace for future reviews.

Infrastructure developments

The Madang infrastructure work has finally been set in motion with the recent tendering of the expressions of interest from architectural firms for architectural services. This process is still in progress with the evaluation of the short-listed bidders to be held this month. Once a successful bidder has been selected, the next stage will be for the actual design of the modern laboratories for the Vector Borne Disease Unit with adequate office space, conference room, a small auditorium, IT and server rooms, with provisions for general storage, freezer rooms, laboratory consumables storage rooms, clinical diagnostics labs and general laboratory areas. This is a massive undertaking and the Institute is grateful to the PNG Sustainable Development Program who is investing in this development to compliment the Development Budget support that is coming from the Department of National Planning & Monitoring. Meanwhile, the duplex residential accommodation that is being built on the new site in Madang is progressing well. According to the Project Architect, work on the buildings should be completed on time as agreed in the contract.

Goroka office extension opening

Friday 25 March, was the official opening of the new wing of offices at the Goroka HQ. This new extension consists of seven new offices and a large conference room to cater for 20 people. Goroka hosted the 66th Institute Council meeting and this provided the ideal opportunity for the Council members to witness this important occasion. The

Corporate Affairs and Support Services Update

With Samson Akunaii (Deputy Director - Corporate Affairs and Support Services)



ribbon cutting to the new wing was done by two senior Council members - Chairman, Dr Adolf Saweri and Dr Clement Malau, who is the Secretary for the Department of Health.

The 15,000 litres Southern Cross Water reservoir work at Goroka HQ has also been completed and the water problems will now be a thing of the past. The water reservoir was filled during the last week of March and is in operational now. These new infrastructure developments in Goroka were achieved through the ongoing development support from the Department of National Planning and Monitoring. Invited guests at the opening spoke very highly on the achievements of the Institute and the excellent strong financial management principals being harnessed and promoted at the Institute translating into an increased scope of research activities and tangible physical infrastructures taking shape at the Institute.

Introduction of accrual accounting in 2011

In mid-April this year trial reports will be generated from the Peachtree accounting software and during this time, corrections will be made to see if the system is producing the desired results. This exercise will be done in close dialogue with the software backup support from Port Moresby and it is anticipated that positive progress and outcomes will be made to allow the full introduction and usage of this software. Once this trial is successfully, the next phase will involve the adoption of the CS Payroll system. A training session will be organized for our payroll officer and the HR section to undergo this training before it is adopted. The management is committed to these improvements and it is likely a resource personal from the software supplier will be on hand when the first pay run is trialed to ensure that the software works well and also to provide the confidence to the Institute staff who are involved with payroll. The CS fixed assets system which can integrate with the Peachtree accounting software is easy to adopt and the current fixed assets data is now being reviewed and updated and once reconciled, it will be easily exported into the new software and integrated into the Peachtree accounting software. This is a major strategic move undertaken by management and the gradual transfer is not an easy task. The understanding and tolerance of staff is required during the

transitional phase which will hopefully be completed by mid-year and once this is completed, the Accounts Unit can continue its normal operations. In the next few weeks, the Accounts Unit will be undertaking general awareness to inform staff of the changes and highlight the formalities and processes in which to follow to get assistance and support from them. After the awareness, the processes will be documented and adopted as policies which have to be observed.

Development of standard operating procedures

The PNGIMR is a growing organization and the Institute must remain focused on the changing trends and economic and business landscapes taking shape around it. Whilst the Institute has operational policies and guidelines to guide the way it conducts its business, there has been some experiences and instances of general slackness and oversights. Some of these weaknesses are generally inexcusable and the management in its efforts to continuously harness good business practices is moving towards developing and adopting Standard Operating Procedures (SOP) for routine chores and tasks to eliminate weaknesses in the way the Institute conducts its businesses. Support is being sourced through the PNGIMR Buttressing Coalition for these efforts and an announcement will be made once all the formalities are in place.

Staff news

1. Departure of ICT Manager

Mr Gordon Warvi, the ICT Manager of Goroka has decided to leave the Institute. Gordon was moved from Madang during the IT upgrade undertaken by the Alpha Nets of Divine Word University. Gordon wishes to pursue other interests and we thank him for his contributions to the work of the Institute and wish him well for the future. The management has made a decision to appoint Mr Thomas Adiguma as the overall ICT Manager for the Institute. Mr Adiguma will oversee and manage all the ICT matters and requirements at all Institute branches and the co-operation and support of all staff is requested to ensure he and his ICT section better serve you.

2. Training Officer off for studies

The Training officer, Mr Dickson Kuvi, has gone to UPNG, School of Business Administration to pursue post graduate studies in strategic management. The

Corporate Affairs and Support Services Update

With Samson Akunaii (Deputy Director - Corporate Affairs and Support Services)

Institute is experiencing strong growth and this trend is set to continue and it is important that the staff training and development officer is adequately trained to manage changes in terms staff training and development in this fast-paced environment. The management is hopeful that the new knowledge and skills acquired by Dickson from this training will be translated into better dialogue between the HR and Training Units so that collectively they can better serve the human resources and staff development needs of the Institute in the long run. Mr John Yogiyo is a new member of staff who has recently joined the Training Office. He has been with us for a period of two months and during this time has undergone a good level of induction and training under the mentorship of Dickson and has confidently taken over the management of the Training Office. John has a degree from the UPNG in Bachelor of Arts - Public Policy and has some good work experience both in the NGO and private sectors.

Summary

2011 is a year full of challenges. It is the year when the

major laboratory works in Madang will begin and it will also see the outcomes of the job evaluation and job reclassification exercise being produced. In order to pursue and translate the outcomes of these major initiatives, it requires understanding and support from key partners and stakeholders at large. The programs and activities of the Institute have and will continue to be aligned to the priorities of the Government through its main policy initiatives such as the Medium Term Development Strategy 2011 -2015, the Medium Term Expenditure Framework, the National Health Plan 2011 -2020 and the overarching PNG Vision 2050. The Institute's relationship with key government departments such as the Department of Health, the National Planning and Monitoring and the Department of Treasury has been cordial and warm and the management of the Institute is keen to cultivate this cordial relationship and engage these key Departments in its efforts to pursue its mandate so that outcomes from the work of the Institute impacts and improves the lives of all Papua New Guineans now and in the future .

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