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## Pink Support for Breast Cancer Awareness



Staff wore pink to show their support of Breast Cancer Awareness Month. Some finger food and a cake was cut to also mark the day. Pictured above is Cynthia Leahy cutting the cake at the Institute's tea room.

Recently IMR staff in Goroka enthusiastically wore pink to show their support for breast cancer awareness. Over K300.00 was raised from the sale of pink ribbons and food at a Pink Morning Tea held on October 29<sup>th</sup> in the IMR tearoom. The event was hosted by Healthy Women Healthy PNG, a health awareness group formed by IMR female staff in 2005.

The funds raised will go towards supporting the Well Women's Clinic at Goroka General Hospital. Healthy Women Healthy PNG is committed to supporting the Well Women's Clinic which provides services such as pap smears and breast examinations.

Worldwide, October, is designated Breast Cancer Awareness Month and the Pink Ribbon is an international symbol for breast cancer awareness. In PNG breast cancer is the second leading cause of cancer death among women.

## Institute gets a nod from NTC for its training facilities

The IMR's training facilities have met all the criteria of the National Training Council (NTC) and can be registered as an institution to run in-house training.

This is according to an assessment carried out by a representative of NTC, Edward Haung, recently on the Institute's training facilities.

However, Mr Huang, said even though the Institute's facilities are relevant to conduct trainings, staff must still apply for a formal approval, to be recognized as certified trainers from NTC before they can conduct in-house training.

While assessing the Institute's facilities, he also gave a brief seminar on the Implementation of the National Qualification Framework

(NQF) policy-compliance standards and registration at IMR Goroka, on the 1<sup>st</sup> of November.

The seminar was well attended by IMR staff and was held at the Institute's headquarters in Goroka.

The aim of the seminar was to inform IMR staff members, particularly section heads, on the process involved in registering themselves as certified trainers to conduct in-house workshops, how to register a particular course that can be conducted in-house and registering PNGIMR as an institution that can conduct and facilitate in-house courses and give out valid certificates.

The Institute's training officer Dickson Kuvi

said this was a one-off seminar to inform training institutions in the country, who are capable of running their own in-house short courses, on how to register themselves as certified trainers with the NTC.

Mr Kuvi said that so far, the IMR has applied for registration with the NTC, but the process would take more than three months.

He said in the meantime, the Institute could carry out its normal in-house trainings while waiting for the formal registration by NTC.

## Christmas Message from the Director

**2010 has been a very successful year for the Institute in terms of research and I attribute this success to the hard working staff of the Institute. Thank you very much for your tireless hard work and commitment to the Institute this year.**

As I've stated, this year has been a very successful year for research at the Institute. We have a good number of new research projects coming on board. The Institute has also been very successfully in securing several big research grants such as the NIH US\$7million for seven years and the PNGLNG, just to name a few.

As for the PNGLNG Partnership in Health project, I am really happy that the Institute will undertake this project as it projects a private-government partnership, which goes on to compliment the work of the National Department of Health. PNGLNG has also come on board to assist in the training of young PNG scientists by making funding available for a three-year training program 2011-2013. The PNGLNG funding will compliment the National Government's contribution to this training. A total of five honors students will be the first under this training program starting next year whilst 10 intern students have already completed seven weeks of internship training under this training program. It is a really good scheme and I'm happy that the PNG LNG has come on board to contribute to the PNG's national building.

The Institute has also seen drastic changes this year with a lot of new infrastructural developments - the new Madang branch office and the extension of the Goroka office. It is hoped that the new buildings will ease the problem of space since we are recruiting more staff at all our branches.

With new staff coming on board, the Institute is seeing long serving staff members retiring as well. A total of five long serving staff members of the Institute will be retiring at the end of this year. As the Director, I would like to thank these five staff for their service to the Institute over the years and I wish them all the best.

The Institute has also been very successful in getting most of our staff into trainings and scholarships to help improve their knowledge capacities. We had a 100 per cent success rate with AusAID and other scholarships as you will see in the CASS report (pg. 4) which has seen a lot of our staff going for further trainings next year. All these things that I've mentioned would not have been possible without firstly and foremost the help and guidance for our good Lord and secondly from the tireless effort and sheer commitment from all the staff at the Institute and thirdly from our collaborators.

So on behalf - of my family and I, I would like to thank each and every one of you staff and collaborators of PNGIMR - for a very good and successful year 2010. Thank you, and may you all have a very Merry Christmas and Prosperous 2011 and I hope we will continue to support each other to maintain the status of PNGIMR as the premium medical research institution in the Pacific and that we continue to work towards producing quality results that will continue to provide valuable information that can lead to good health policies that will improve the health of Papua New Guineans as well as contribute to global knowledge.

## PNGIMR Signs MoU with Queensland University



**Above:** Director, Professor Peter Siba, (right) signing the MoU between IMR and University of Queensland while the representative from UQ Maxine Whittaker, looks on.

A Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) was signed between the PNG Institute of Medical Research (PNGIMR) and Queensland University recently at the Institute's headquarters in Goroka. Institute Director Professor Pete Siba who was at hand to sign the documents said he was very pleased with the MoU as it will pave way for more formal collaboration between UQ and IMR. He said both institutions share common interests and he hopes for positive outcomes following the signing of the MoU.

"IMR has a long standing relationship with UQ, in terms of collaborating in research studies as well as training of staff from the two institutions and I am happy that this event will form foundations for the two institutions to further strengthen this relationship," he said. Professor Siba added that this MoU will not only cover the scientific research aspect, but also covers other areas as well such as information technology, business and others. The ceremony was witnessed by the senior management and staff of PNGIMR.

### New Appointment

The Operational Research Unit, one of the three main research arms of the Institute has a new Unit head. Associate Professor Andrew Vallely has been appointed head of Unit. He started at the Institute in November, this year. He is also joined by his wife Lisa who is also working in the ORU as a Senior Research Fellow in Maternal and Child Health.

### Retired in 2010

The Management and Staff of the Institute would like to sincerely thank the following staff for their long service to the Institute over the years. They will retire from duties at the end of this year. They are Carolyne Goroba, Johannes Haay, Philip Ove and James Keono. We wish you all the very best.

### Resigned

Dr Ivo Mueller - Deputy Director Research and Unit Head for Vector Borne

Toby Apa - HR Officer

# Maprik gets funding of K30 000

**An early Christmas gift of K20,000 was recently presented to the Maprik branch of the Institute to maintain its existing office and laboratory facilities.**

The donation was given by the Minister for Commerce, Trade and Industry, Gabriel Kapris, who is also the local Member for the area. The funds were part of the member's Rural Development Roll-out Program. During the presentation, the Minister acknowledged the Institute as "an important national asset" and that the government must continue to ensure that the Institute is financially supported.

"The Institute is an important national asset and brings in both national and international



Maprik staff receiving the cheque from Minister Gabriel Kapris.

researchers to carry out research work, that would assist in improving the health of Papua New Guineans and we must continue to support the Institute," he said.

In addition, the Minister also pledged to assist in completing one of the Maprik staff

houses as a show of his continued support to the Institute.

An excited site manager, Lawrence Rare, said this was the first of its kind for the Maprik branch and thanked the Minister for his timely donation which will immediately be used to carry out much needed maintenance work at the site.

He said the funds will be used to carry out repair work at the site as well as purchase a new lawn mower and carry out maintenance work to the satellite TV, "which is one of the means of entertainment for the site".

He also thanked the management of the Institute for their understanding and for allowing the funds to be used on-site.

## Celebrating World Pneumonia Day

The availability of vaccines and improved access to antibiotics can greatly reduce the spread of pneumonia in PNG.

This is the message echoed during the World Pneumonia Day celebrations at the Institute, which fell on the 12<sup>th</sup> of November this year. The event was organized by the Immunity Laboratory. The day was celebrated well with staff wearing blue jeans and white shirts/tops and blue ribbons to mark the day.

"By wearing blue (and white) on World Pneumonia Day, we are demonstrating our advocacy for the fight against pneumonia," said Jacinta Francis, from the Immunity Laboratory.

"We also join the *Global Coalition against Child Pneumonia* to establish our role in the global advocacy efforts."

Blue was chosen as the theme color for World Pneumonia Day because young children who suffer from severe pneumonia turn blue in appearance due to breathing difficulties (cyanosis).

As part of the day's celebrations, three large cakes along with a scrumptious array

of finger foods and fruits were bought with funds left over from the Pneumonia Colloquium to share between the IMR staff and the staff of the Eastern Highlands Provincial Health Office. The staff later paid a surprise visit to the Pediatric Children's Ward at Goroka General Hospital where presents such as biscuits and toiletries were distributed to patients and the remaining cake was then shared among the medical staff and patients at the ward.

In PNG, pneumonia is the number one killer of young children in PNG. It is the leading cause of death in children under 12-months of age. Therefore, marking this day is one way to bring the attention of people around the world to focus on the overwhelming impact that this disease has caused and still is causing on the lives of many children particularly in developing countries like PNG. It also reminds us all that we can win this fight because pneumonia is a solvable global health problem and that we have the ability to help prevent children from acquiring this terrible disease by investing in prevention and treatment.



Staff serving food and drinks to be given to patients and their guardians at the Children's Ward.



Staff members in their blue and white dressings to mark the day.

# Corporate Affairs and Support Services Update

## With Samson Akunaii



Mr Akunaii, Deputy Director - Corporate Affairs and Support Services

### 2011 Budget

PNGIMR has fared well in the 2011 National Government's budget allocation, which was handed down during the November Parliament sitting. The Institute was allocated a total sum of K 5.5 million for 2011. This is an increase of K700, 000 compared to K4.8 million for 2010. This small marginal increase was welcomed by the management of the Institute with optimism that the Government, through the Department of Treasury, is beginning to recognize the important role of the Institute in producing independent medical research outcomes which has and will continue to influence government policies and interventions through the Department of Health.

The Institute over the last five years has also seen a steady increase in core budgetary support from the Department of Treasury and this is attributed to a better understanding of the role of the Institute as well as increased dialogue and personnel contacts between the management of PNGIMR and Treasury. This relationship will continue to be harnessed and further developed.

The Public Investment Program [PIP] support from the Department of National Planning will also continue next year with K4 million as opposed to K 5 million in 2010. Out of the K 4 million earmarked for 2011, K 3 million will go towards the on-going infrastructural development projects that are currently taking shape in Madang and Goroka branches whilst K1 million is a direct support from the Government of PNG (GoPNG) and will go towards the health research activities of the Institute. Altogether, the total funding from the GoPNG to the Institute in 2011 stands at an estimated K 9.5 million.

### PNGIMR-PNG LNG Partnership in Health Project

The much awaited project has finally rolled out in the West Hiri district of the Central Province last month. The advanced team, consisting of Program Coordinator, Dr Suparat Phuanokonnon, John Taime, Lawrence Rare and Elias Namosha have already undertaken awareness in the impacted villages and communities as well as recruitment of field supervisors and reporters. The enrollment of study participants has also started. This initial ground work was undertaken with minimum set backs and the study is now ready to actually commence in the new year.

On the administrative front, the Waigani office has been fully established and is operational with the acquisition of four new Toyota land cruiser troop carriers. Two of these vehicles are stationed in Port Moresby whilst the other two are held in Goroka. Later in 2011, one of the Goroka vehicles will be relocated to Hides in the Hela Region. The study coordinator Dr Suparat has also visited the study area in the Hela Region and has established some formal contacts with NGO's and relevant government agencies on the ground to find common ground to allow the Institute to work with them. PNG LNG is also trying its utmost to ensure that the Institute gets its basic

infrastructure established on the ground before the actual activities are rolled out. This dialogue is continuing to achieve positive outcomes.

On the establishment of the laboratory set up in Port Moresby, all the architectural plans have been developed by an architect in close dialogue with scientists from the Institute and work is expected to commence early in the new year after building approval is obtained. Regular dialogue is continuing with the UPNG- SMHS to establish a working committee to oversee the running of this laboratory and this matter will be addressed in the New Year.

The function of procurement of major items for this project has reverted back to the Institute and the procurement officer including key staff are now reviewing the requisitions to ensure it fully complies with the Institute's procurement guidelines before the items are actually purchased. This process is being assisted with direct input from the procurement committee of the Institute and all orders should be released before the end of the year.

### Infrastructure developments

The Madang-based infrastructure works received a major funding boost from the PNG Sustainable Development Program (PNGSDP) recently K11.5 million. These PNGSDP funds will go towards the construction of a modern laboratory and office facility at the new Madang site. Apart from the laboratories and office, this new exciting development will include provisions for a cafeteria, a mini lecture theater and a small conference room. The ongoing PIP support from GoPNG is an important component of these works and the PNGSDP funding will greatly compliment the financial support from GoPNG to meet shortfalls. The Institute is now working closely with the PNGSDP to finalize plans to tender out the works and it is hoped this will happen in early January 2011.

The perimeter fencing for the new Madang branch complex has been completed and the PNGIMR Supply and Tenders Board in its November meeting approved and let out the contract for the building of the on-site duplex accommodation to Lae Builders and Contractors. The building works should begin soon.

The new Goroka office extension is progressing very well and it is hoped that the contractor will complete the office on the 10<sup>th</sup> of January 2011 as originally planned. Final allocation of office spaces will be decided in the New Year. This office will provide much relief to the acute office space problems we currently experience.



The new office extension building construction

## Corporate Affairs and Support Services Update

With Samson Akunai

### Security upgrade in Goroka

Head office facilities have had a major upgrade with a CCTV system being established and it will be linked to the new plastic coated ID cards. Under these new arrangements, the main exit doors will be opened through the swiping of bar coded ID card system. The movement of staff will be monitored through the CCTV network and this is a way of monitoring people who comes in and out of the main IMR buildings and a way to generally improve the security of the premises. It is hoped that all Goroka staff will be issued with the new plastic ID cards by January, next year.

The normal static guards will be empowered to request individuals to produce their ID's and if they fail to display them it will result in eviction from Institutional premises. The new ID system will gradually rollover to the other branches of the Institute in 2011. Staff who misplace their new ID cards, will pay K30 for a replacement card. Therefore, it is important for all to take good care of their ID cards.

### Strategic Reference Group Meeting

The important Strategic Reference Group (SRG) which oversees the operations of the AusAID Core Support to the Institute met recently in Madang on the 3<sup>rd</sup> December 2010. The group consists of key important stakeholders like the National Department of Health, Department of National Planning & Monitoring, Department of Treasury, WHO, UPNG, NACS, and AusAID. The meeting was important as it reviewed the work of the Institute and also commented on the proposed work for the succeeding year. During the meeting, representative from the Department of National Planning Ms Rose Koyama, who is the Assistant Secretary for the Social Sector, said that the government recognizes the important role IMR plays and in doing so is making available K1 million in the 2011 budget under PIP. This is separate from the ongoing PIP funding towards the infrastructure works of PNGIMR.

AusAID representative Katherine Yuave, also clarified at the meeting that AUSAID under its Core Support Program has agreed to extend its service which was to come to an end in June 2011 to December 2011.

### Introduction of accrual accounting

The management of the Institute realizes the important role of the support services and has given approval to the Corporate Affairs and Support Division to adopt a new financial management system which is comparable and can serve the requirement of the Institute as a growing organization alot better. After reviewing several options, the division has settled for the Peachtree accounting system which will link up the procurement, the accounts payable, receivable and the data input and processing aspects. The ideal feature about this software is the user friendliness of the system and the immediate availability of support, which is something that has been lacking for a long time under the current Accpacc system.

Two advantages to this popular software is the CS Fixed Assets management system and the CS payroll which will link up to this Peachtree Accounting system and upon adoption, the HR records

will be integrated with the payroll thus cutting out all the laborious tasks that is currently being performed manually.

A one week training was conducted from the 13-17 December 2010 to prepare key personnel from accounts, procurement and project management

to convert to this new system in 2011. The training was conducted by John Zickrow from John Allan & Associates based in Port Moresby. The company will also provide on-going support for this software.



Peachtree training underway in the computer lab.

### UPDATE ON PNGIMR TRAINING PROGRAM FOR 2010.

#### Summary

2010 year brought so many changes in training and development of our young scientists and support staff. There has been several Memorandum of Understand (MoU) signings with overseas as well as national institutions to expand the professional development of our staff. This has made it possible for job attachments and on-the-job training with other sister institutions. Indeed, the Fogarty program which came to an end in May 2010 was very successful with the last batch to graduate in 2011. Under this five-year program, a total of five masters, 23 honors' and 50 internship students were taken on board. This very successful program will now be supported by the PNGLNG partnership in Health for the next three years (2010-2012).

Successful staff were also seconded for international presentation in conferences and seminars.

PNGIMR under the Directorship of Prof Peter Siba, had its own budget to support staff for more technical and generic course including professional courses. This will greatly improved the status of IMR to be one of the post graduate research centers in the years to come.



2010 internship students taking a tour through the various sections of the Institute.

## Corporate Affairs and Support Services Update

With Samson Akunai

### 1. Professional Individual Courses & Scholarship Awards

Name	Year	Degree	Institution	Funding Agency
Dagwin Suarkia	2010-2013	PhD (Sci)	Uni of Western Australia	AusAID Scholarship
Dr Moses Laman	2011-2014	PhD (MedSci)	Uni of Western Australia	current AusAID Scholarship
Janet Gare	2011-2014	PhD (MedSci)	Monarsh Uni. Australia	current AusAID Scholarship
Dr Inoni Betuela	2011-2014	PhD (MedSci)	Uni of Barsel	CRESIB
Dr Maria Ome	2010-2012	MMedSci	Uni of Papua New Guinea	PNGIMR
Dr Regina Wagnapi	2010-2012	MMedSci	Uni of Papua New Guinea	PNGIMR
Celestine Aho	2011-2013	MSci	Swiss Tropical Inst. Basel	Swiss Scholarship
Mathew Omena	2011-2013	MSci	James Cook Uni	current AusAID Scholarship
Rebecca Emori	2011-2013	MA	Sydney Uni	current AusAID Scholarship
Dulcie Lautu	2011-2013	MSci	awaits AusAID to allocate Uni in Australia	current AusAID Scholarship
Pioto Namuigi	2011-2013	MPH	Uni of Papua New Guinea	PNGIMR
Mak David	2011-2013	MSci	Uni of Papua New Guinea	PNGIMR
Bangan John	2010-2012	MSci	Case Western Reserve Uni. USA	Fulbright Scholarship
Christine Mark Opa	2011-2013	PG Diploma in Community Medicine	Uni of Papua New Guinea	PNGIMR
Dickson Kuvi	2011-2013	Post Craduate Studies Strategic Mgnt (Hons)	Uni of Papua New Guinea	PNGIMR
Sauli Bebes	2010	Higher School Cert. GR 11 & 12	Distant Education	PNGIMR

### 2. PNGIMR - UPNG Students Program (2010)

#### a) Masters

Name	Year	Degree	Institution	Funding Agency
Dr Patricia Rarau	2009-2010	MMedSci	UPNG-SMHS/PNGIMR	Fogarty/ PNGIMR
Dr Paul Harino	2009-2010	MMedSci	UPNG-SMHS/PNGIMR	Fogarty/ PNGIMR
Dr John Benjamin	2009-2010	MMedSci	UPNG-SMHS/PNGIMR	Fogarty/ PNGIMR
Pamela Toliman	2010-2011	MSci	UPNG-SMHS/ PNGIMR	Fogarty/ PNGIMR

#### b) Honours 2010 (5 Students per Year)

Name	Year	Degree	Institution	Funding Agency
Barne Willie	2010	Biological Sciences	UPNG-SNPS/ PNGIMR	Fogarty/ PNGIMR
Samuel Hurim	2010	Biological Sciences	UPNG-SNPS/ PNGIMR	Fogarty/ PNGIMR
Valentine Siba	2010	Biological Sciences	UPNG-SNPS/ PNGIMR	Fogarty/ PNGIMR
Wendy Kirarock	2010	Biological Sciences	UPNG-SNPS/ PNGIMR	Fogarty/ PNGIMR
Heather Huaupe	2010	Biological Sciences	UPNG-SNPS/ PNGIMR	Fogarty/ PNGIMR

**c) Honours 2011 Intakes (5 Students per Year)**

Name	Year	Degree	Institute	Funding Agency
Cassey Simbiken	2010-2011	Biological Sciences	UPNG-SNPS/ PNGIMR	PNGLNG Partnership in Health/ PNGIMR
Grace Bande	2010-2011	Biological Sciences	UPNG-SNPS/ PNGIMR	PNGLNG Partnership in Health/ PNGIMR
Monalisa Kas	2010-2011	Biological Sciences	UPNG-SNPS/ PNGIMR	PNGLNG Partnership in Health/ PNGIMR
Danga Mark	2010-2011	Biological Sciences	UPNG-SNPS/ PNGIMR	PNGLNG Partnership in Health/ PNGIMR
Gussy Koimbu	2010-2011	Biological Sciences	UPNG-SNPS/ PNGIMR	PNGLNG Partnership in Health/ PNGIMR

**d) Internship Students 2010 (10 Students every Year)**

Name	Year	Degree	Institute	Funding Agency
Warren Paul	2010	MBBS (yr 3)	UPNG-SMHS	PNGLNG/ PNGIMR
Willie Toua	2010	MBBS (yr 3)	UPNG-SMHS	PNGLNG/ PNGIMR
Owen Botty	2010	MBBS (yr 3)	UPNG-SMHS	PNGLNG/ PNGIMR
Lilly Gandi	2010	MBBS (yr 3)	UPNG-SMHS	PNGLNG/ PNGIMR
Ayove Teleck	2010	MBBS (yr 3)	UPNG-SMHS	PNGLNG/ PNGIMR
Ivan Silas	2010	MBBS (yr 3)	UPNG-SMHS	PNGLNG/ PNGIMR
Steven Igofumi	2010	MBBS (yr 3)	UPNG-SMHS	PNGLNG/ PNGIMR
Mathew Pok	2010	BioChem (yr 3)	UPNG-SNPS	PNGLNG/ PNGIMR
Michelle Kajoka	2010	BioChem (yr 3)	UPNG-SNPS	PNGLNG/ PNGIMR
Jacquiline Aupae	2010	Biological Science (yr 3)	UPNG-SNPS	PNGLNG/ PNGIMR

**3. PNGIMR Short (Technical/ Professional) Courses**

Name	Year	Course Title	Institute	Funding Agency
Jack Tairaka	2010	Dangerous Goods Handling Refresher	Air Niugini	PNGIMR
Absalom Mai	2010	Dangerous Goods Handling Refresher	Air Niugini	PNGIMR
Benson Kinimboro	2010	Diploma in Mgmt	Divine Word Uni	PNGIMR
Deborah Bob	2010	Accounting for Non Accountants	UPNG Open Campus Madang	PNGIMR
Mathias Ulka	2010	Latest Fleet Mechanical Training	Ela Motors Training Center	PNGIMR
Joe Siva	2010	Mechanical Training (Trades Man)	National Trade and Testing Board	PNGIMR

**4. PNGIMR in-house courses/generic training 2010**

- a) Archives & Records Management Course
- b) Molecular Biology Workshop
- c) Epidemiology & Biostatistics Workshop
- d) Good Clinical Practice & Human Ethics Self Directed Training for New Students and Staff
- e) WHO Malaria Microscopy External Competency Assessment Training
- f) Staff Induction Program

**5. PNGIMR/Divine Word University Student Program**

A Memorandum of Understanding has been signed with the Divine Word University regarding training of IMR staff. One of the areas of this agreement will look into the training and development of our social scientists, nursing officers, Health Extension Officers and others who may not go through the already established network with the University of Papua New Guinea.

# This Quarter in Pictures



Toby Apa, an HR officer, during his farewell party at the Institute.



The accounts, IT, procurements and project accounts staff attending a week-long training on the use of the new Peachtree accounting software. The training was conducted by John Alan & Associates accounting firm.



The Institute continues to receive very important persons, who are always very interested in the research work that the Institute does. Pictured above is the British High Commissioner to PNG Jackie Barson (left) being introduced to the research work that is being carried out at Bacteriology lab in Goroko by Scientific Officer Audrey Michael.



Professor Siba taking time out of his busy schedules to attend to some manual chores at the Institute.



Communication officers Joel Kosinto and Douglas Diave out and about to capture the World Aids Day celebrations in Goroka town.



Female staff surrounded by lots of garden food that will go into the big mumu for the Christmas party. The food was bought all the way from Lae's main market.



The 2010 summer intern students posing for a photo shoot with IMR's Training Office Dickson Kuvi (first from left). The interns were stationed at various labs in Goroka and Madang branches. Their internship training of seven weeks ended on the 17th of December.



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 Department. 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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