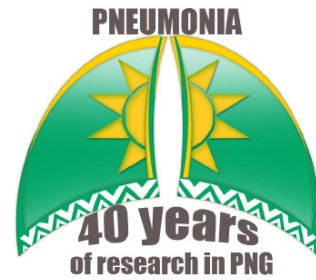




# IMR Nius

Newsletter of the PNG Institute of Medical Research



July - September, 2010

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Staff receive top awards at the Medical Symposium.

Pneumonia research gets funding boost.

IMR signs 5-year contract with PNG LNG.

# New Corporate & Strategic Plans



Minister for Health and HIV/AIDS, Sasa Zibe officially launching the new Corporate Plan 2010-2015 and Strategic Plan 2011-2020 at the Adolf Saweri Auditorium.

its goals. "I'm very excited at launching the Institute's Corporate and Strategic plans as it's a first for a health institution in the country," he said. He also challenged every other health and training institution in PNG to do likewise. Zibe added that although PNG has one of the lowest health indicators in the world, health institutions, including the IMR, should not dwell on that but find ways on how to make a difference. He indicated that having a corporate and strategic plan is a way that can direct health institutions to make a difference. Therefore, Zibe urged PNGIMR to continue to strive for good quality research that reflects the aims of the National Health Plan as well as a total commitment from the staff to ensure the Corporate Plan 2010-2015 and Strategic Plan 2010-2020 are successful.

Both plans aim to identify better approaches that the Institute can take to work in partnership with the National Government and the National Department of Health to improve the health and wellbeing of Papua New Guineans. The plans have been developed from the policies and functions of the PNGIMR Annual Activity Plan (2007-2011), National Health Plan (2011-2020), Medium Term Development Strategies (2010-2050) and the National Strategic Plan. According to the Chairman of the IMR Council, Dr Adolf Saweri, the plans were diligently formulated with due consideration to the draft National Health Plan, PNG Vision 2050 and the MTDS 2010-2015. "This plan enables the Institute to promote and market its research activities, and to attract potential collaborators and funds to support its mission to improve the health lifestyle of the people of Papua New Guinea," said Dr Saweri. The Director for PNGIMR, Professor Peter Siba, further supported this saying, "PNGIMR remains committed to nation-building and will continue to maintain its status as the leading biomedical and social research institution in PNG and the Western South Pacific through relevance and excellence, to improving the lifestyle and health of all Papua New Guinean.

The Papua New Guinea Institute of Medical Research (PNGIMR) has launched its first Corporate Plan 2010-2015 and Strategic Plan 2010-2020.

The launching of the plans took place at the Institute's headquarters in Goroka during the official opening of the Pneumonia Colloquium on the 24<sup>th</sup> of August. Minister for Health and HIV/AIDS, Sasa Zibe, launched the plans and was very happy with the Institute for having such plans in place and encouraged the Institute to achieve



**The 40th Anniversary Pneumonia Colloquium Organizing Committee would like to thank the following sponsors for helping to making the colloquium a huge success:**

- GlaxoSmithKline Biologicals (Australia and Singapore)
- Merck Vaccines
- Esso Highlands PNG LNG
- PNG Institute of Medical Research
- Department of Treasury
- World Health Organization
- Staff of PNG Institute of Medical Research
- Papua New Guinea National Gaming Board
- OK Tedi Mining Limited
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- Michael Alpers and Deborah Lehmann
- Robert and Marie Ginbey
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- Alan Cripps
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- Charles Watson
- Fiona Stanley'
- Ian Riley
- James Kazura
- Swiss Tropical & Public Health Institute

## Summary of 40th Anniversary Pneumonia Colloquium

The Papua New Guinea Institute of Medical Research (PNGIMR) recently hosted a 40th Anniversary Pneumonia Colloquium with support from co-hosts the National Department of Health and the World Health Organization.

The colloquium, held from 23–26 August 2010 was held to celebrate 40 years of research on pneumonia and to forge the way forward to further reduce deaths from pneumonia. "The importance of pneumonia is often overlooked by many health professionals, health administrators, policy makers and the general public. But it causes more deaths in children in PNG than any other disease." stated Mr Willie Pomat, the co-chairman of the organizing committee. "World-class research on pneumonia has been conducted in PNG over the past 40 years, but much remains to be done. We wanted to host a colloquium that would address both these issues. As such we celebrated the achievements of the past, but while reflecting on the past we had one eye on the future. We now need to plan more research that can help us reduce the burden of pneumonia in PNG."

The colloquium was hailed a success by all in attendance, including prominent world scientists like Australian of the year (2003) Prof Fiona Stanley, Prof Kim Mullholland, Prof Bob Douglas and Prof Ian Riley. Senior academic staff from the University of Papua New Guinea, and senior policy makers from the National Department of Health were also present. The participation of these prominent scientists along with village researchers from Tari and Asaro Valley made the occasion one to behold. In opening the colloquium, Minister of Health, Sasa Zibe, stated that he was proud that IMR could attract world leaders to the colloquium and challenged IMR to assist the health sector with accurate data for informed decisions to be made to improve the health status of the people of PNG. He congratulated IMR on aligning its Corporate and Strategic Plans with the National Health Plan 2011-2020.

In reminiscing on his first encounter with pneumonia in Lae in the 1960's, Prof Bob Douglas said that much has been achieved through the work done in PNG on the diagnosis, treatment and management of pneumonia but more needs to be done to lower the deaths in young children, especially in PNG. "Despite the enormous contributions research here have added to knowledge on pneumonia, pneumonia still remains the main reason children are hospitalized or die" said Prof Douglas.

The colloquium concluded with discussions on future research. Attendees believe future efforts need to focus on a holistic approach. "Our recent research has focused on vaccine research, in an attempt to get additional vaccines introduced in PNG" said Mr Pomat. "Vaccines remain a key to reducing the burden of pneumonia, but we would also like to focus on other areas such as improving hygiene practices, reducing indoor air pollution and educating mothers on the signs and symptoms of pneumonia. In closing the colloquium the Minister for Education, Hon James Marape, called for the Tari branch of the IMR to be reestablished. Mr Marape noted that the high burden of pneumonia needs to be reduced to enable PNG to meet the fourth Millennium Development Goal of reducing childhood mortality. The success of the colloquium was attributed in part to generous support from major sponsors GlaxoSmithKline, Merck Vaccines, Esso Highlands PNG LNG, National Gaming and Control Board and Ok Tedi Mining Ltd, along with numerous minor sponsors.

# Trio receive top awards at the Medical Symposium

By Joel Kosinto

Three IMR presenters, Gibson Gideon, Samuel Urim and Dr Moses Laman received awards for outstanding presentations at the 46<sup>th</sup> Medical Symposium held at the Kaindi Teachers College in Wewak.

The trio were part of 19 IMR staff that presented papers on various research studies conducted at the Institute.

Gideon and Urim, both from the Malaria Control Project, received the Deborah Lehmann award for best research papers leading to implementation.

Gideon presented a paper on "Treatment seeking behavior for fever patients and the availability of malaria diagnostic tools and treatment in health facilities" and stressed on the importance of aidposts in rural areas and the use of rapid tests before treatment. Urim's presentation was on "Chloroquin-resistance and change to Arthemeter Lumophaltrium and how it will help lessen malaria burden in the country". He hoped his presentation provided some insight to clinicians when treating malaria patients with the new drug.

Both were surprised when they received their awards during the presentation of awards. "We want to thank our supervisors, Dr Manuel Hetzel and Dr Justin Pulford, for their assistance and professional guidance towards us carrying out the study as well as their inputs that really helped refine our presentations," said Mr

Gideon.

"It was my first time to attend a symposium and I did learn a lot from presentations done by others," stated Mr Hurim.

"But I wasn't expecting an award or present of some sort but really I am grateful for my achievement."

Both also thanked the staff at the Bednet Project as well as the IMR management for giving them the opportunity to present at the symposium.

Dr Laman received the overall President's award for the best symposium paper.

His presentation was entitled "Subacute sclerosing panencephalitis in Papua New Guinea".

The presentation of the awards took place on the third day of the symposium.

Others that also presented at the main symposium included Rebecca Emori, Serey Ley, Paul Harino, Dr Leanne Robinson, Heather Huaupe, Gibson Gideon, Dr Andrew Greenhill, Marinjoh Jonduo, Dr Claire Ryan, Pamela Toliman, Jonah Iga, Barne Willie, Dr Patricia Rarau, Valentine Siba, Sauli Bebes and Wendy Kirarock.

The theme for this year's Medical Symposium was "Lifestyle diseases and Cancers and was co-hosted by the Wewak General Hospital and Kaindi DWU campus.

Next year's symposium will be hosted by Kimbe General Hospital in West New Britain Province.



Dr Moses Laman (right) receiving his award from the new President of the Medical Society Professor Nakapi Tefuarani.



(R-L) Dr Paul Harino, Rebecca Emori, Serey Ley and Dr Suparat Phuanookoonum. They were the first from IMR to present at the symposium. Each presented papers on various TB related studies.



Wendy Kirarock giving her presentation on the last day of the main symposium. The title of her presentation was 'Oxidative stress and inflammation in PNG newborns exposed prenatally to high levels of indoor air pollution.'

# “More applied-based research”, says Zibe

“PNGIMR needs to play a more vigilant role now in the light of the launching of the new Health Plan and must serve the interests of the National Health Department.”

Minister for Health and HIV/AIDS Sasa Zibe made this comment during his recent visit to the Institute on the 24<sup>th</sup> of August, this year. Although it was his first time to visit the IMR, he said he was aware of what the Institute is doing in terms of research.

“As the Minister responsible for Health and HIV/AIDS in PNG, I have a lot of things to do but that does not mean I don’t know what IMR is doing,” he said. He said he is kept well abreast with what the Institute is doing in terms of medical research and he is happy with the Institute.

Having said that, Zibe challenged IMR to maintain the quality and high standard of research it does to reflect the new National Health Plan. “Being a government institution, I’d like



*Health Minister Sasa Zibe in talks with the senior management of the Institute during his visit.*

to see the Institute play a more vigilant role now in light of the launching of the new Health Plan and must serve the National Department of Health,” he said. He said, IMR needs to continue to carry out more applied research that is based on issues and

challenges in our health system. He assured the Institute that his department will provide the support to ensure the results from the research are implemented through sound policies to address the health issues.

## Workplace safety highlighted at meeting

*By Joel Kosinto*

The recently held safety awareness presentation highlighted many important things on the safety of employees in the workplace and their responsibilities in cases of emergencies, however, the turnout of staff for this awareness presentation was very poor.

The awareness presentation was carried out on the 11<sup>th</sup> of August, in the Adolf Saweri Lecture Theater. According to the safety committee chairperson, Matthew Omena, the event was not as well attended as expected. “I am not happy with the turn out today,” Mr Omena said. “Safety is number one priority in the workplace and in cases of emergencies, who will you turn to

or how will you get help and where should you go to, having not attending this important session.”

The awareness presentation was on emergency evacuation procedures on how staff would be evacuated from the building during an emergency, especially in the case of fire. According to Mr Omena, fire is the most common cause of an emergency in this part of the country. The awareness included identifying the designation and location of the fire exits and safety equipment in the IMR building. Currently the IMR building is divided into five designated areas: Area 1 - covers reception and finance, Area 2 - covers tearoom, library, computer lab and lecture theatre, Area 3 - covers Kuru to procurement, Area 4 - cov-

ers Virology, Area 5 - Malaria Control and the Operational Research Unit. These five areas have fire exits.

According to Mr Omena, there are safety officers in each of the areas, who are tasked with the responsibility of raising the alarm or using the fire extinguishers in an emergency. “They are specially trained safety wardens and safety staff to handle situations like this without fear even under intense pressure,” he explained. A small information sheet will be available electronically and as a hard copy for all staff in the near future. The safety committee plans to carry out the actual evacuation drills later and urges all staff to attend the drills.

## BRIEFS

### US Embassy visit

A delegate from the United States Embassy in Port Moresby made a surprise visit to the Institute on Wednesday, 22<sup>nd</sup> September. Among the delegates was Brian Asmus, Political, Economic and Public Diplomacy officer at the Embassy. The purpose of their visit was basically to get first-hand information of what IMR does and how USAID could collaborate with the Institute in the future. They visited most of the labs and offices at the Institute and were very impressed with the various research activities that the Institute does.

### Book Donation

A book entitled "The Secret: Love, Marriage and HIV" has been donated to the Michael Alpers Library by Holly Wardlow, Associate Professor of Anthropology at the University of Toronto. As the co-author of the book, Professor Wardlow described the book as a comparative, ethnographic study of married women's vulnerability to HIV infections. It discusses issues relating to married men and women and their experiences with courtship, marriage, the marital division of labour, the marital sexual relationship, extramarital sexual experiences and relationships, experiences with condoms and knowledge about HIV/AIDS. The book is based on research conducted in 2004 in several countries including PNG particularly in Tari.

### US Marines visit IMR

Two US marines attached with the Pacific Fleet Surgeon General's Office based in Hawaii visited the Institution. The marines include Captain Bruce Gillingham and Master Chief Robert Codrington.

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## IMR and PNG LNG launches Partnership for Health Sponsorship Agreement



*Mr Peter Graham (Managing Director of Esso Highlands Limited) and Professor Peter Siba (PNGIMR) officially signing the Health Sponsorship Agreement.*

The Partnership for Health Sponsorship Agreement, formalizing the relationship between the PNG LNG Project and Papua New Guinea Institute of Medical Research was launched on Wednesday, August 18, 2010. The agreement will run for several years and covers research in a number of key public health areas, including:

- options for decreasing the burden of respiratory diseases in children and adults
- sexually transmitted infections including HIV and an evaluation of related research strategies
- tuberculosis research, including drug resistance patterns and national diagnostic capabilities
- development of a surveillance system for relevant vector-borne diseases and an extension of a formal Health and Demographic Surveillance System (HDSS) including expansion and support of existing IMR DSS sites in Mad-

ang and Asaro.

Training of Papua New Guinean scientists in epidemiology, diagnostic capability, epidemiology and demography are built into the various components of the agreement, reflecting a commitment to build national capacity in these important areas. Some of the earliest work of the partnership occurred two weeks ago in Goroka at the Pneumonia Colloquium hosted by IMR together with the National Department of

Health and World Health Organization. The colloquium, sponsored in part by PNG LNG, celebrated 40 years of pneumonia research in Papua New Guinea and laid a path forward to continue combating the impacts of this disease. At the colloquium, Director Peter Siba announced that PNGIMR will undertake a research program to identify the right vaccine against pneumonia for PNG.

\$US 188, 000 has been allocated by PNG LNG towards the project. The project is scheduled to begin later this year. Professor Siba thanked the PNG LNG "...for recognizing the Institute as an important partner in addressing health issues through medical research" and is "very pleased that the Institute will be working with the LNG project to develop health programs that will benefit the people in the project areas as well as in PNG".

# PNGIMR signs MoU with James Cook University

By Geraldine Vilakiva

A Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) was signed between the PNG Institute of Medical Research (PNGIMR) and James Cook University (JCU) at the Institute's headquarters in Goroka.

The signing of the MoA was done by Professor Andrew Vann, Senior Deputy Vice-Chancellor of JCU and Director of PNGIMR, Professor Peter Siba, on the 30th of September. JCU headquarters are in Townsville, Northern Queensland, and it also has a large campus in Cairns. The signing of this MoU formally provides the framework for the two institutions to work in partnership allowing for further training and educational opportunities for the staff of the two institutions and closer and more productive research collaborations.

Speaking on behalf of JCU, Dr Jeffery Warner, Senior Lecturer at the University's School of Veterinary and Biomedical Science said the timing for this was very good and on behalf of the University thanked PNGIMR for agreeing to the MoU. "JCU is the largest tropical training institution



Dr Jeffery Warner from James Cook University and Professor Peter Siba, Director of PNGIMR, showing the signed MoU.

in Australia and over the years has contributed significantly towards educating and training many Papua New Guineans," he said.

"We are very interested in issues pertaining to PNG and so are very keen to continue collaborating with PNGIMR, the leading research institution in the country," Dr Warner added. JCU conducts a variety of research in close collaboration with institutions in PNG. One of the most recent projects is a National Aids Council Secretariat (NACS) funded

collaborative study on HIV co-infections titled "An investigation into the cause of concurrent infections in HIV-positive people in PNG: a greater knowledge will improve diagnosis and treatment".

The study will be led by researchers at PNGIMR but with important input from JCU.

The Director of PNGIMR, Professor Peter Siba was also very pleased with the signing of the MoU and said both institutions share common interests and hopes for positive outcomes following the signing of the MoU. "IMR has a long standing relationship with JCU, 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.

## OPEN DAY HAILED A SUCCESS

The recent Open Day held at the Institute was hailed a success by the general public as well as the senior management of IMR. The Open Day was held on the 26<sup>th</sup> of August at the Institute's headquarters in Goroka.

With the theme 'Community involvement in Medical Research' the event attracted a lot of interests from schools, tertiary institutions as well as the general public in Goroka, however, due to limited space, only educational institutions were allowed in. A total of eight schools attended the day's event, with some coming from as

far as Asaroka Lutheran Secondary and Kabiufa Adventist Secondary School.

The three main research units - Infections and Immunity, Operational Research and Vector Borne had various stalls set up with staff on hand to assist with the disseminating of information on what each of their projects under these units does. On display were also recent projects, some of its highlights and outcomes. Brochures and posters were made available for students to collect as they visited each stall. The support services of the Institution were also on hand to describe

what the library does and to inform the students about the training program. The Madang branch of the PNGIMR was represented by Mak David.

"We are so happy to be given this privilege to attend this PNGIMR Open Day," said Ms Debritto, a senior lecturer at the Department of Science Faculty at the University of Goroka. Co-coordinator for the Open Day, Joel Kosinto, was very pleased with the overall outcome of the event and thanked the committee and staff of the Institute for making the event a success.

## New executives for Biomed Society

Increasing the membership of the Biomedical Society is one of the tasks that the new executive of the society is trying to address.

The other tasks include looking into increasing the funding capacity of the society, staging meetings outside of the annual medical symposium and improving the publicity of the society. This is according to the new president of the society, Ms Jacinta Francis. In an introductory letter to members of the society, she stated that they are embarking on a recruitment drive to encourage more local and international professionals in the medical and social science research fields to become members.

The new executives of the society include Jacinta Francis as the new president, Marinjho Emely Hilla secretary and Jonah Iga as the treasurer. Other members of the executive include a social science representative, Rebecca Emori, a rep for clinicians, Dr Regina Wangnapi, and a fundraising sub-committee. Their appointments followed the annual meeting of the society held at the annual Medical Symposium in Wewak early this month. Speaking on behalf of the new executive, Ms Francis thanked the outgoing executive particularly the outgoing president for the leadership and the initial work he and his executives have put into establishing the society. "We would also like to extend our gratitude to the current members of the society who have placed their confidence in us to take the society forward and expand on its activities," she said.

Also present at the meeting was Professor Douglas Hilton, Director of the Walter and Eliza Hall Institute of Medical Research in Melbourne.

## IMR staff supports cholera work in NCD and Central Province

By Elias Namosha

Cholera is a diarrheal disease caused by infection of the intestine with the bacterium *Vibrio cholera*, type 01 or 0139, and is usually transmitted through faecally contaminated water or food or contact with infectious cholera patients. Both children and adults can be infected. About 20 per cent of those who are infected develop acute, watery diarrhea. Untreated cases may have a 30-50% case fatality rate (CFR). However, treatment is straightforward (basically rehydration) and if applied appropriately, CFR should be below 1%. People are infectious from the onset of illness until a few days after recovery. During this period, they excrete *Vibrio cholerae* in the stool. The incubation period is very short (2 hours to five days) therefore the number of cases might rise extremely quickly.

Poor hygiene practices, poverty and precarious living conditions are triggering cholera outbreaks all over PNG, including the National Capital District (NCD) and Central Province. In NCD the first case of cholera was reported on 29th April 2010. As of 3<sup>rd</sup> June 2010, a total of 835 cases and 6 deaths have been reported for NCD and Central Province. 616 of these cases were reported in NCD, with the majority of cases originating from Elevela and Hanuabada. In Central Province, 219 cases have been reported with the majority of cases originating from Papa and Lealea villages (Kairuku-Hiri District). Safe drinking water, sanitation and basic health care seem to be



Elias Namosha (R), and Dr. Frédérique Marodon (L), a Senior Epidemiologist and Cholera Expert (WHO Consultant), at a cholera treatment centre (CTC) at Waijori Village (Abau District), Central Province.

lacking mostly among the villages in Central Province and in NCD, thus more public health awareness is required to look at areas that need urgent prioritizing to help control and minimize the burden and threat caused by cholera.

An agreement was reached between PNGIMR and WHO to engage PNGIMR personnel to support cholera work in the country. NCD and Central Province were the two sites where I was deployed to work from May-June, and teamed up with the NCD and Central Province cholera surveillance team. Cholera outbreaks provide opportunities to use epidemiological methods to gain practical and useful information about agents of disease, the source of disease, risk factors and conditions in the environment conducive to outbreak. Properly planned outbreak investigations includes a systematic series of steps relating to data collection, analysis and dissemination of results. The technical supports provided during the period of my attachment in response to the cholera epidemic in NCD and Central Province mainly

Story continue on pg. 8

## Sample Collection and Diagnostic Microbiology Short Course

Correct sample collection procedures are just as important as laboratory procedures for the diagnosis of disease, but the importance of sample collection is often overlooked. This is according to Dr Jeffery Warner, from James Cook University in Queensland. Dr Warner facilitated a Sample Collection and Diagnostic Microbiology short course held at the PNG Institute of Medical Research (PNGIMR) in Goroka from the 27-30 of September. The successful four day workshop covered two main topics: specimen collection and transportation, and diagnostic microbiology. It involved a series of lecturers and practical sessions while further on-the-job training will be provided in the future to enable participants to consolidate what they learnt during the workshop. "The specimen collection and transportation section of the course was to train the participants on how to collect biological specimens and under which conditions they should be transported and stored prior to laboratory analysis. The



Participants doing practical lab work in the Bacteriology Lab.

diagnostic microbiology section of the workshop concentrated on the isolation and identification of bacterial pathogens and enteric parasites," said Dr Warner.

The workshop was organized by Dr Andrew Greenhill from PNGIMR, as part of a study funded by the National AIDS Council Secretariat to investigate the causes of opportunistic infections in HIV positive people. "The patients in our upcoming study will all have reduced immune function and have an infection making them quite sick. It is important our clinical

staff know how best to collect samples to ensure the safety of the patient and themselves. As such, the sample collection section of the course covered topics including blood collection and the importance of clinical staff washing their hands between patients," said Dr Greenhill. The course also provided participants with an opportunity to learn more about the diagnosis of infectious diseases. Dr Warner has worked in hospital laboratories in PNG in the past, and has many years experience in Australia. In PNG the resources are often lacking to enable laboratory diagnosis of diseases, and as such laboratory diagnosis will be conducted we provided the workshop participants with the opportunity to learn about the important pathogens we expect to see in the study. A total of 12 people participated in the course, 10 PNGIMR staff, one from Goroka General Hospital Pathology Laboratory and one from Central Public Health Laboratories in Port Moresby.

## IMR supports cholera work in NCD and Central

*Story continue from pg. 7*

involve:

- Strengthen surveillance data management for cholera (and other outbreak diseases) in NCD and Central Province, this include - (1) daily collection of surveillance data (2) data entry, (3) data cleaning, (4) data analysis and interpretation, and (5) providing reports on daily and weekly basis to NCD and Central Province health authorities
- Create maps using GIS to monitor the spread of cholera over time and space
- Investigate cholera outbreak

in NCD and Central Province with assistance from Dr. Marodon (WHO consultant-Senior Epidemiologist) - this includes several field visits to cholera affected sites.

The experience was a most rewarding one for me, as this was my first field involvement in outbreak investigation. However, only through the process of conducting investigation over an entire career will public health professionals truly learn the methods of outbreak investigation. It was also a wonderful opportunity working along side Dr Marodon, I have learnt a great deal from her and also with - NCD, NDOH and Central Province Cholera Surveillance Team. I see this

collaboration between IMR and WHO as a right step in the right direction and I recommend that such short term engagement should continue in future. It will greatly help us to learn from each other and provide expertise in areas that is lacking in our efforts to control and minimize any public health problems and threats caused by new and emerging diseases in the country.

Special thank you to WHO (PNG office) for providing the funds for this work, and PNGIMR Director Prof. Peter Siba, for the approval to be deployed to Port Moresby for this particular work. Thanks also to NCD, Central Province and NDOH Cholera Surveillance Team members for the wonderful working experience.

# This Quarter in Pictures



*Peter Momo, President of the Network of People Living with HIV/AIDS (PLHIV) speaking to IMR staff about the importance of research on HIV in PNG.*



*Vero Simon, Sasah Tanabo and Mitton Yoaness enjoying their cakes during Celestine Aho's farewell party.*



*Feeling sleepy after having lunch at the Medical Symposium.*



*Ladies enjoying the music during the welcome dinner for the Pneumonia Colloquium.*



*Drs Celin, Clare and Leanne posing for a photo during the Symposium.*



*Some of the staff helping out with the registration of guests at the Colloquium.*



*Apart from presentations during the Pneumonia Colloquium, there were also traditional singsings and dances to entice the guests and visitors. These IMR ladies are taking time out to watch some of the dances.*



*The IMR delegate to the 46th Medical Symposium in Wewak.*

# Corporate Affairs and Support Services Update with Samson Akunaii



## INFRASTRUCTURE DEVELOPMENT

### Goroka Office Extension

The PNGIMR Tenders & Supply Board has finally made a decision to let out the Goroka office extension work. Out of four bidders, the contract was awarded to Gold Bell Construction of Goroka. The office extension work is going to cost approximately K988,509.00 and the contractor has taken possession of the site and has already begun the ground work. The building work is expected to take approximately 22 weeks to complete. The final Certificate of Occupancy should be issued around January 2011. The funding for this development work is coming from the Development Budget Support from the Department of National Planning. An addition to this extension will also see the erection of a 15,000 litre Southern Cross water reservoir which will be raised off the ground. This work has been assigned to Southern Cross Machinery and the work should begin soon. The reservoir will greatly relieve the pressure and provide a consistent water supply for the normal functions of the Institute, especially during long dry spells, as the main town water supply is often unreliable. This reservoir will also serve the Institute well if there is a fire. The funding for this work is also coming from the Development Budget Support from the Department of National Planning.

### New ID System

The Institute has taken delivery of an ID making machine from G4S Security Solutions and will produce its own ID system for staff in Goroka initially and later for the branches. The new ID card system will be in hard cover, similar to the bank cards and will have all details including a portrait of individuals. The cards will be bar-coded and this will also be integrated into the library system so that with one card, staff in Goroka will gain entry through the main front and rear doors as well as for the library. With the introduction of the new ID card system, it will now become necessary for all staff to display the cards at all times during work. Due to the increase in activities at all Institute locations which has translated into an increase in staff numbers, the management is mindful of security concerns and would expect staff to display their ID cards at all times at the work place. Additionally, as part of the security upgrade, CCTV cameras will be installed at the front main door and the rear door to monitor and coordinate the movement of people after hours and over the weekends.

## Madang Infrastructural Development

There was a ground breaking ceremony hosted by the Madang branch of the Institute to mark the beginning of the development work on the new site in Madang. The ceremony was held on the 16<sup>th</sup> July 2010. Important dignitaries and stakeholders who attended included Director Prof. Peter Siba, Provincial Health Officials, DWU Vice President, Brother Andrew Simpson, prominent Madang citizens Sir Peter Barter and Mr Stanley Pil, Institute staff from Madang, Goroka and the general public. The contract work for the perimeter fencing of the new town land has been awarded to Gold Bell Construction of Madang and work has already commenced. The other major work in progress on the site is the construction of the residential accommodation which will consist of a 3-bedroom duplex and 12 self-contained studios for students or visiting scientists. Once the architectural plan for the studio accommodation is completed, expressions of interests will be called for. The funding for the projects comes from the Development Budget Support from the Department of National Planning. A full project proposal has already been submitted to the PNG Sustainable Development Program for the major works, which will include the modern laboratory, a small conference room and office space. The proposal will be deliberated by the Board of PNGSDP and an outcome is expected soon.

### PNG LNG Partnership in Health

The Director, Professor Peter Siba and the Managing Director of Esso Highlands, the operators of the PNG LNG, Peter Graham, signed the Partnership in Health PNG Limited Agreement on the 17<sup>th</sup> August in Port Moresby. This event was witnessed by the Deputy Directors – Dr Ivo Mueller and Mr Samson Akunaii, Dr Andrew Greenhill, Dr Clare Ryan, Dr Suparat Phuanukoonnon as well as Mr Wep Kanawi of the National AIDS Council, and other PNG LNG officials. This agreement formalises the relationship with the two organizations and paves the way to move forward with the work plan, which is being developed in close consultation between the parties. The following programs will be supported through this partnership: Training, Demographic Surveillance System (DSS) as the project impacts on communities, TB, HIV/AIDS and pneumonia research. The PNG LNG Partnership in Health now has established a separate office of its own in North Waigani. The facility has two separate units and a main building which will be well suited for the kind of work that will be undertaken in Port Moresby and the Hides area in the Hela Region. Reassignment of staff

## **Corporate Affairs & Support Services Update with Samson Akunaii**

from within the organization has already begun and vacancies will be advertised shortly in the newspapers. It is also important to note that formal dialogue has already been established with the Central Provincial Administration and they are quiet happy to work with PNGIMR. In the meantime, based on the discussions in progress, the Provincial Health Advisor, Abraham Apisai, has already given verbal approval for ground work to begin and three senior officers - Elias Namosha, John Taime and Lawrence Rare - are already on the ground to do awareness and to identify potential reporters to work with the DSS team.

### **ADMINISTRATIVE OVER VIEW**

#### **In-house policy review**

The in-house policy review was undertaken for Goroka in July and the Madang review took place from the 8-10 September at the Jais Aben Resort. Once the Madang policy review is completed comments generated from both reviews will be contrasted and changes adopted where necessary and a draft report will be presented to management for their review and comments. Mr. Lawrence Rare from Maprik represented the East Sepik branch during the review.

#### **Staff Seminars**

The Corporate Affairs and Support Services ran a full induction for both new and old staff in Madang between the 6-7 September to better inform staff generally on the roles and responsibilities of the Division. The full induction undertaken in Goroka by the Corporate Affairs & Support Services Division for the MalCon recruits was successful and also the induction in Madang was well attended and the overall outcome assessment has been overwhelming. It is hoped that such inductions would be held bi-annually for the good of the staff and organization as a whole. The Madang induction greatly assisted the staff to better understand the role of CASS and also raised issues on problem areas so that through this forum, many of the misunderstanding and general lack of knowledge was cleared.

#### **Formalisation of DWU Partnership**

The PNGIMR and the Divine Word University established a formal dialogue through a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) to provide post graduate training for social scientists and nursing officers. The Agreement was signed last Friday 24 September between Prof Peter Siba and Fr Jan Czuba, President of the DWU.

The Chairman of the PNGIMR council Dr Adolf Saweri and Dr Inoni Betuela were on hand to witness on behalf of the Institute. This agreement is similar to the MOU the PNGIMR has with the UPNG and will provide opportunities for social scientists and promising nursing officers employed at the Institute to pursue post graduate training at DWU whilst still being employed by the Institute. The details of this program are still being worked out and will be widely publicised once finalised by the Divine Word University.

#### **Post-Pneumonia Colloquium Party**

The Pneumonia Colloquium which was held in the last week of August was a big success. The Colloquium brought a good number of respected scientists from far and wide and was full of professional and social interactions with many of the former reporters of the Asaro and Tari pneumonia research programs in attendance. The Colloquium was opened by the Minister for Health and HIV/AIDS, Hon Sasa Zibe, and was well attended by key people from PNG - Dr Clement Malau, Secretary for Health, Prof Sir Isi Kevau, Executive Dean of the School of Medicine and Health Sciences, Dr Adolf Saweri, Chair of PNGIMR Council. The organizing committee hosted a big BBQ on Sunday 19<sup>th</sup> September to thank the staff of Goroka for their assistance in the fundraising and support during the actual week of the colloquium. The committee also extended their thank you to our colleagues in Madang. A party for the Madang staff was organized on Friday the 24<sup>th</sup> September. The Madang party was witnessed by the Chair of the Council, Dr Adolf Saweri, and Council member, Ms Naomi Yupae who were there for the 64<sup>th</sup> Council meeting.

#### **Administrative Staffing Matters**

Ms Roslyn Maiya who is a long time Madang staff has resigned to concentrate on family matters. She was a dedicated long-time staff member and we wish her well for the future. Mr Mark Buka the senior project management staff based in Madang has also resigned to pursue a career in the private sector. Mark was the senior project manager attached to the IPTi and more recently was reassigned to build the project management capacity of the Institute. We wish Mark well in his endeavour. Mr Norman Taru from the accounts office in Goroka has absconded and has not communicated with the head of the unit Mr Ulo Jasipa. It is assumed that he may have found a new job in Wabag, Enga Province and we wish him well for the future.

# BRIEFS

Briefs continued from pg.6

According to Anthony Polum, Security Cooperation Program attached with the US Embassy in Port Moresby, the visit was actually a survey by the navy to see if it can establish a research unit. He said the US navy once had a research institute established in Indonesia however, it has since closed and they are looking at the possibility of establishing one in PNG and also how it can collaborate with existing ones such as IMR.

## Molecular Biology workshop

The recent molecular workshop training, the first to be conducted in PNG, was hailed a success after 20 participants, mostly scientists, graduated with certificates in molecular biology. The workshop was conducted at the PNG Institute of Medical Research headquarters in Goroka from the 12-16 July and was centered on molecular biology. The training covered major aspects of molecular biology such as basic biology, troubleshooting laboratory experiments, cloning and bio-informatics. It also included doing malaria diagnosis, studies on HIV and malaria drug resistance, HIV mapping and entomology studies among others. The facilitators of the workshop were from the Burnet Institute in Australia.

## Medical Society appoints new executives

The Medical Society of PNG has appointed its new executives following its annual general meeting held at the recent Medical Symposium in Wewak. The new president of the Society is Professor Nakapi Tefuarani.

# The Way of the Shepherd MANAGEMENT SERIES *with Matthew Waram*

## Principle 2: Discover the SHAPE of Your Employees

Hello readers and welcome to our second article in this management series. In this article we delve into the importance of "discovering the SHAPE of your employees". This is crucial in building and leading a good productive team.

As a manager, your choice of an employee can make the team easier or harder. If you don't recruit well – you'll inherit someone else's problems. It's like getting players for a soccer team. Coaches are particular about the players they choose because they know that whoever fields the best team, usually wins. It is no different with choosing members for your work team. It begins with diligently ensuring that anyone you interview is a good fit both for the IMR and for the position. You need to ensure that your existing employees fit their positions well too.

You might be asking; "How do I do this?" Well, you need to understand that every person has his/her own particular shape or make up. So it's vitally important to examine carefully their shape to make sure they're a good fit. Here are the five things to look for to make sure you are not trying to fit a square peg into a round hole.

### S – is for strengths

Foremost, you want to make sure each person has the skill set needed to do the job. Sometimes they can learn it on the job. Sometimes they have to have it on the day they arrive depending on the position. The point is, always try to place people where they can operate out of their strengths and not their weakness.

### H – is for heart

While the strengths reflect the abilities, the heart reflects the passion. There's nothing more common than an Institution full of bright talented people who are completely unmotivated to do their work. It doesn't matter how strong an employee is. Because, if he/she is not passionate about the job, then they will not be motivated to exercise their

strengths. So as a manager, it is important to understand your employees' heart, so you can put them in areas that reflect their passions.

### A – is for attitude

This has become a very critical issue. You want positive can-do people because people with good attitude are usually team players who usually have a teachable spirit. People with negative attitudes tend to be lone-rangers. You can't teach them a thing. The antidote is simple – get rid of them immediately. This is because of two reasons. Firstly, people with a negative attitude don't have a learner's heart. Dumping such people off your team will hurt in the short term, but not in the long run. The second reason is they are poor examples for the rest of your people. If you compromise with negative people for the sake of their abilities, your other people will learn their bad habits. So act decisively with bad attitude, and productivity, trust, and respect will prevail.

### P – is for personality

All in supervisory or managerial roles should be aware that; each one of us has been hardwired with a distinct personality. Some of us are wired to be extroverts, others introverts. Some people love repetition. They love knowing that they're going to do the same thing in their job tomorrow that they can't have some variety. Some people strive on structure. Some thrive on change. The point is to put a person in a position that reflects his/her personality.

### E – is for experiences

Often the key to understanding an individual and knowing where to place him or her on your team is to learn something about the person's various experiences. Don't make the mistake of thinking that what's been said so far is just for you to use with other people. It's for you too. If you want to find your calling in life, if at the very least, you want to make sure you're working in an area where you have the greatest potential for success, then take a look at your SHAPE and make sure you're a good fit for your job.

# Training

## Mathias Ulka (Mechanic)

Mr Ulka attended a week-long technical training course at the Ela Motors Training Center in Port Moresby from the 23–27 August 2010. The training was conducted by Volker Weltz, TMC Training Manager from Sydney and it was titled 'Fleet Owner Course in PNG (Diesel Engine)'. The training included describing the basic principles of a four-cycle diesel engine and its combustion process, competently identify and selecting correct bearings, pistons, rings and gaskets during engine repair/overhaul, carrying out thorough maintenance and servicing techniques and over view of common rail diesel engine. Mr Ulka described his training as really helpful in increasing his knowledge and skills. "Upon completion of the weeklong course I learnt many new things that will help me improve my work personally and IMR," he said. "One week was not enough to cover everything but with the relevant skills knowledge gained from this training, I hope to contribute more to IMR," he added. A total of six participants mostly mechanics from other institutions; NARI, Port Moresby International Airport (DCA), Ramu Sugar and a transport officer from RAMSI Law and Justice Sector all the way from Samoa attended this short training. Mr Ulka thanked the management of IMR for allowing him to attend this training; Joe Siva from IMR Madang also attended a similar training course last year.



Mathias Ulka servicing one of the IMR vehicles.

## Celestine Aho (Graduate Scientific Officer – Bacteriology Lab)

Celestine Aho has been accepted by the Swiss Tropical Institute of Public Health (STIPH) to complete her master degree in Science. She will join Sarah Javati who was accepted last year. Sarah will be returning in February 2011 whilst Celestine will stay for another 18 months to complete her studies before rejoining the IMR team. It is a big challenge for our students when taking on further studies and research work in another country but it will broaden their sphere of scientific knowledge.



Celestine Aho at the Bacteriology Lab

Celestine has been attached to the Bacteriology lab at the PNGIMR in Goroka. She completed her Honours degree, funded under the Fogarty International Global Infectious Disease Research Training Program through the University of PNG last year.

## Five staff accepted for 2011 AusAID scholarships

Congratulations to the five IMR staff who have been awarded AusAID scholarships for next year. They include, Matthew Omane who will do his Masters in Science, Rebecca Emori, Masters in Public Health, Dr Moses Laman, PhD, Janet Gare, PhD and Dulcie Lautu, Masters in Science. According to the training officer Dickson Kuvi, the five are just waiting for institutions in Australia to confirm their acceptance.

## WHO Malaria Microscopy External Competency Assessment training

PNGIMR malaria microscopists have undergone a one week microscopy assessment training at the Modilon hospital conducted by Ken Lilley – WHO Malaria Microscopy Consultant for Western Pacific. This training was conducted from 6-9 September 2010. IMR malaria microscopists have had on-the-job training only with no ongoing training or assessment of their skills. This course aimed to assess their competency and refresh their skills. This course has allowed the IMR microscopists to fulfill their current responsibilities with more confidence.

Both the Institute and the wider community rely upon the IMR malaria microscopists to provide an accurate malaria diagnosis by light microscopy. Assessing the skills of our microscopists will allow us to identify strengths and weaknesses and specifically target future training needs.

# Melbourne experience

*By Lincoln Timinao*

On first impressions, let me begin by saying that Melbourne is a highly metropolitan city. Of the four seasons experienced I arrived during winter to be greeted by the wrath of its cold first-hand which was further reinforced by the strong gusty winds. I spent three weeks in Melbourne (15<sup>th</sup> of August – 4<sup>th</sup> of September). During the first week I attended the XIIth International Congress of Parasitology (ICOPA) together with the team from PNGIMR. In the team we had Dr Ivo Mueller, Dr Celine Barandas, Dr Inoni Betuela, Dr Leanne Robinson, Dr Anna Rosanas Urgell and Livingstone Tavul. Dr Mueller, Dr Barnadas and I gave oral presentations while the others, except Dr Inoni, gave poster presentations. It was my first experience to be presenting in an international conference let alone first trip out of PNG. I was nervous but was reassured when I saw that Team IMR was right behind supporting me. I survived the ordeal and got positive feedback from those who attended the session. During the week we were invited by ABC Tok Pisin broadcasting service for an interview. Led by Dr Mueller, Dr Inoni, Livingstone and I were interviewed about what we were doing in Melbourne and what we were involved with at PNGIMR. It was really exciting to be able to be disseminating information about what we were involved with. The others returned after the conference and I spent the next two weeks at



*Dr. Mueller and I being interviewed by a staff of ABC Tok Pisin broad casting service \_ Melbourne, Australia*

the Burnet Institute doing data analysis with Dr Alyssa Barry. I was also able to have a look around their lab and observe how things were organized. It was a great experience to be able to relate to similarities and differences observed in their instrumentations and techniques.

Apart from work I was able to attend an AFL game at the Etihad Stadium (formerly Telstra Dome). I had no clue about

the game itself but couldn't help basking in the thrill and excitement as the cheering of thousands crescendoed. Although there are many things to share I will say this, I really had a great Melbourne experience.

I would like to thank PNGIMR under the leadership of Professor Peter Siba for allowing me this opportunity. Also I would like to thank and acknowledge the Burnet Institute for allowing me to do data analysis with them and also for financially supporting my travel, attendance of ICOPA and stay in Melbourne. I would also like to acknowledge my supervisor Dr Barnadas, Dr Mueller and the malaria team for their support that enabled me to put together a good presentation.

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