



## PRESS STATEMENT

27<sup>th</sup> March, 2020

### **Papua New Guinea Institute of Medical Research establishes COVID19 testing in Port Moresby**

The Papua New Guinea Institute of Medical Research (PNGIMR) has established an additional site for COVID19 laboratory testing in Papua New Guinea. Laboratory testing for COVID19 will now be undertaken at the Molecular Hub, located at the University of Papua New Guinea (UPNG) School of Medicine and Health Sciences, Port Moresby. The Molecular Hub is a laboratory facility that is shared between the PNGIMR, Central Public Health Laboratory and UPNG School of Medicine and Health Sciences for the Trilateral Malaria Project.

PNGIMR uses a World Health Organization recommended laboratory testing protocol for COVID19 detection. The same testing protocol and standard operating procedures will be adopted at the Molecular Hub. In anticipation of the establishment of this additional testing site, orientation for PNGIMR's Port Moresby based laboratory personnel took place in Goroka last week.

When fully operational, laboratory testing at the Molecular Hub will meet the anticipated increase in samples requiring testing for COVID19. To date, PNGIMR has tested a total of 72 samples. The public is strongly advised to practice social distancing, regular handwashing, disinfection of commonly touched surfaces, and self-isolation if symptomatic.

Persons who display appropriate symptoms (cough, fever and/or shortness of breath) AND who have recently travelled overseas or been in contact with overseas travellers should contact the Government hotline number on (+675) 7196 0813.

Save Tambuim Sik