

A VACCINE FOR MALARIA: CELEBRATIONS AND NEW CHALLENGES

Dear District Governor [2019-20]

I wish to congratulate each of you on becoming Governor of your District for 2019-20. It is a great honour and privilege and I extend warm wishes to all of you for a great year.

I am grateful to PRID Noel Trevaskis for supporting me over the past three years in contacting you about the Malaria Vaccine Project. While the Project was initiated by several Clubs in District 9640, it has become a project of Rotarians throughout Australia and we hope in the near future New Zealand as well. As a result of this support, Phase 1 clinical trials have started in the development of PlasProtect[®], a promising malaria vaccine created by Professor Michael Good AO at the Institute for Glycomics at Griffith University. Professor Good's vaccine has shown excellent results in animal studies and pilot studies have shown it is safe and strongly activates the immune system. As an indicator of Professor Good's prestige as a world-renown scientist, the Heart Foundation announced in 2018 that he would be one of two Australian scientists to share in a \$5 million grant to do ground-breaking research on a stroke-prevention vaccine.

There is no effective vaccine for malaria and although wonderful preventive work (long-lasting insecticidal nets, spraying, education) has been done by the International Global Fund and Rotary groups like RAM & REMaRAG (Action Group), 435,000 people mostly children under 5 and pregnant mothers die of malaria every year. In addition, it is estimated that there are 219 million cases of malaria worldwide. The latest report of the World Health Organisation (WHO) says it even more poignantly, "Over the last three years there has been no significant progress in controlling this terrible disease and an effective vaccine is urgently needed".

That is what the Malaria Vaccine Project is all about: bringing that sorely needed vaccine to places like Africa, the Pacific and South America. If we can raise the funds to enable Professor Good to complete the Phase 1 clinical trials (humans in a non-endemic country are given the vaccine and subsequently challenged with a malaria parasite), then the vaccine will be ready to go to Phase 2 trials in endemic countries like Kenya, Uganda, PNG, and Indonesia. The early Phase 1 trials with a small sample have gone well but he must work with a much larger sample and also test out an artificial carrier for the vaccine called a liposome. This liposome can be freeze dried and hence can be sent anywhere in the world- great breakthrough.

As a result of all of your Districts, Clubs and Rotarians across Australia we have been able to raise nearly \$580,000 for the vaccine trials at the Gold Coast and in Brisbane. Federal Minister Greg Hunt has matched that incredible Rotary drive with a further \$500,000. This means that a total \$1.08 million has gone forward for the Phase 1 clinical trials to test the efficacy of PlasProtect[®] in Australia. While it is difficult to estimate the cost of these Phase 1 trials we expect that the target will be at least \$2.5 million.

We are having further talks with Governments, Corporates and Big Business and we are hoping that they will join us in this humanitarian project that could rid the world of this terrible disease. Zarraffas Coffee has already joined us as a sponsor and we hope there will soon be others.

I wish to say a BIG THANK YOU to all the Districts, Clubs, Rotarians and Friends of Rotary who have served us over the past two years since our project was launched by the then Governor General, Sir Peter Cosgrove. Please continue to support us through your District in the coming year and help us to make connections with Corporates, Foundations and Individual Donors.

I am indebted to my own District Governor Harry Bolton and his wife Shauna. Shauna has made the Malaria Vaccine Project her partner project and as they visit clubs she talks about the Malaria Vaccine and asks clubs to support it. She has already raised \$3,000. We would welcome any other creative endeavours like this that you might like to initiate and share.

Your sincerely

PDG Graham Jones AM, Chair of the Malaria Vaccine Project Committee

For more information: GOOGLE malariavaccineproject.com

Also attached a flyer on the Malaria Vaccine Project