

PRESS RELEASE

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Timor-Leste Declared Malaria-Free: A Historic Milestone in Global Health

Sydney, Australia — The World Health Organization (WHO) has officially certified Timor-Leste as malaria-free, marking a monumental achievement in global health and a powerful testament to decades of collaborative effort. Australian Rotarians Against Malaria (ARAM), a program of Rotary Australia World Community Service (RAWCS), proudly joins the Timor-Leste government and international partners in celebrating this victory.

Malaria, one of the world's oldest and deadliest diseases, has long plagued tropical nations. In 2023 alone, nearly 600,000 lives were lost globally to this preventable illness. Yet, Timor-Leste has defied the odds. From a peak of over 223,000 cases in 2006, the country has recorded zero indigenous cases since 2021.

"This victory belongs to our fearless health workers and every household that chose prevention," said Timor-Leste Prime Minister Mr. Kay Rala Xanana Gusmão. "It proves that even the deadliest diseases cannot withstand the resolve of the Timorese people."

ARAM has been a steadfast partner in this journey. For over 30 years, ARAM has worked with governments and Rotarians across the Asia-Pacific region to combat malaria. More recently, ARAM has intensified interventions in Timor-Leste and West Timor (Indonesia) with more work in our sights for Vanuatu, Solomon Islands and Papua New Guinea.

ARAM's support to the Timor-Leste National Malaria Program includes:

Supply of 50,000 long-lasting insecticidal nets (LLINs) for pregnant women and other vulnerable people. LLINs are highly effective in protecting families and reducing the mosquito population:

Diagnostics and Treatment: Supplying rapid diagnostic test kits, microscopes and blood slides testing commodities, and indoor residual spraying machines. ARAM has also funded the development of procedure manuals for parasitological surveillance and entomology for the National Malaria Program.

Community Education: Training health workers and raising awareness about prevention and early treatment, including the printing of malaria prevention promotion materials and banners for use at land, sea and airport terminals.

Dr. Élia António de Araújo dos Reis Amaral, Timor-Leste's Minister of Health, acknowledged ARAM's contributions during the 10th National Health Day celebrations:

"We express our gratitude to the World Health Organization, the Global Fund, Rotarians Against Malaria, HealthNet Timor-Leste, and all development and implementation partners who supported this elimination."

ARAM National Manager Andrea Grosvenor said “This is a proud moment not only for Timor-Leste but for all of us who believe in the power of partnership and persistence. The certification is a testament to what can be achieved when communities, governments, and global networks such as Rotary unite with a shared purpose. ARAM remains committed to supporting our neighbours in the region until malaria is eliminated everywhere.”

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