

HD AUSTRALIA CELEBRATES WORLD HEALTH DAY

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CANBERRA, ACT, April 7 -- Australian Agency for International Development issued the following media release:

April 7 marks World Health Day. This year, World Health Day draws attention to the serious and increasing threat of vector-borne diseases such as malaria, dengue, lyme disease and yellow fever. This year's theme-'Small bite, big threat'-indicates the threats posed by mosquitos, flies, ticks, water snails and other vectors.

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Every year over 1 **billion** people are infected and more than 1 **million** die from vector-borne diseases-more than half the world's population is at risk.

Since October 2013, there have been over 15,446 dengue cases reported across Fiji, resulting in 12 deaths (as of 20 March 2014). The outbreak is stretching hospital capacity and stocks of essential medical supplies.

Australia is providing \$750,000 to support the Fiji Ministry of Health in a rapid response to the outbreak.

Australian assistance will be used to **purchase** medical supplies, such as syringes, paracetamol, intravenous chambers and mosquito repellent, as well as to help fund a public awareness campaign. Australia's support will complement the Fiji Ministry of Health's efforts in health management and prevention, and help maintain patient care and treatment.

Australia is also working with the World Health Organization and partner governments in the Pacific to strengthen health systems against malaria. This includes monitoring emerging strains of the virus and training healthcare workers to treat symptoms.

Australia has invested over \$30 **million** on malaria control and elimination in Vanuatu and Solomon Islands since 2007. The Vanuatu Ministry of Health has achieved impressive results. The number of malaria cases in Vanuatu has dropped dramatically in the last decade-from over 74 cases per 1,000 people in 2003, to only 8 cases per 1,000 people in 2013. The Ministry is working towards malaria-free status in Tafea province by 2016 and achieved one hundred per cent national coverage in bed-net renewal in 2013.

Results in the Solomon Islands are similarly impressive with a three quarter drop in cases over the last decade from 199 per 1,000 people in 2003 to just under 45 cases per 1,000 people in 2012 and the provinces of Temotu and Ysabel are making progress towards malaria free status.

In Papua New Guinea (PNG), Australia has signed a partnership with **China** to strengthen local and national health laboratory and testing systems. Australia is also cooperating with the private sector in PNG (including **energy**, **mining**, and agribusiness) to help the PNG government meet its ambitious target of eliminating malaria in PNG by 2050.

CT For any query with respect to this article or any other content requirement, please contact Editor at htsyndication@hindustantimes.com

CO aaidv : Australian Agency for International Development

NS gmala : Malaria | gmosq : Insect/Parasite Transmitted Diseases | gcat : Political/General News | ghea : Health | gmed : Medical Conditions

RE austr : Australia | auscap : Australian Capital Territory | apacz : Asia Pacific | ausnz : Australia/Oceania

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