



Newsletter KARAI BILONG SOLWARA

DEC 2018 – APRIL 2019

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USAIDPACAM GRANT

The USAID funded project "Youth as Agents of Change: Marine Environmental Awareness in Kimbe Bay", undertaken by Mahonia Na Dari 01 Oct. 2017 was successfully completed on 28 March, 2019.

MILESTONES

1. The USAID project implementing agent PACAM sent an advisory support team to MND 14 -16 Feb. for a final project review. MND is much stronger as a result of this capacity building support enjoyed over the duration of the project. The achievement of all 11 project Milestones and 19 extra activities (outside project objectives) is due to the on-going administrative supportive guidance of PACAM and the generosity of the American people through the USAID grant. The project success is also thanks to the hard work of MND staff and support of several volunteers including VSA NZ's Bruce McPherson and visiting researchers.

2. A **Final Event** was held 22 Feb. to celebrate the success of the USAID project and to launch the newly produced Primary Teachers MEEP Guide. The Final Event was attended by 34 people including USAID and PACAM representatives as well teachers who contributed to drafting the Guide and students who graduated MEEP

3. The USAID project produced **Primary Teachers MEEP Guide** and 6 resource posters were introduced to 20 teachers at a live-in training workshop held at MND 08-09 March. The Guide's 5 learning modules for grades 3 to 7 are easily matched to general learning objectives in the National Science Curriculum. DOE have approved the Guide for distribution as a teaching resource to WNB schools. Each Guide module explores a specific marine ecosystem: Shorelines, Seagrasses, Mangroves, Coral Reefs and Open Ocean. A locally illustrative poster supports each module. MND will introduce the Guide to WNB schools and train teachers to use it in 2019 through MEEP Outreach.

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CALLING ALL MEEP GRADUATES 1997 - 2015.

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Photo: Attendees after the Final Event and Primary Teachers MEEP Guide launch 22 Feb. 2019.



Keynote speaker at the USAID project **FINAL EVENT** on 22 Feb. was Mr Robert Pierce of the US Environment Office (centre above). Other USAID representatives included Mr Chad Morris from the US Embassy (far left) and Ms Julie Hulama of the USAID Regional Office Pacific Islands. Participants viewed a retrospective presentation of the project and summary of the Primary Teachers MEEP Guide.

The **PRIMARY SCHOOL TEACHERS MEEP GUIDE** produced by MND under the USAID project featured in a full-page photo-article in the Post Courier Weekender 01 March, 2019.



Photo: Primary Teachers MEEP Guide training workshop group at MND 09 March 2019



CHINA NAVIGATION



4. The China Navigation Company /Swire Shipping generous 3-year sponsorship grant for maintenance of WNC/MND infrastructure provided for 6 roof replacement projects to be completed between Aug. – Dec. 2018. The first project for 2019 is the urgent replacement of the saksak roof on the Laundry & Equipment Storage building. Work started 11th March and was hampered due to delays caused by the continuing wet season. This project proved quite a challenge for carpenters Peter Waka and Stanis Eki who found many support posts were rotten at the base and required new footings. The separate three storage sections are for research equipment, MND snorkel equipment and MND boat equipment. This 7th roof replacement project is only possible thanks to the continuing sponsorship grant made available by the good people at **China Navigation Co/ Swire Shipping**. The sponsorship agreement was brokered by Swire Commercial Manager, Neil Carraher (now based in Canada) and MND's volunteer Program Director, Peter Miller.

In April work will start on the Vehicle Storage Shed roof and after that the main MND administrative building which includes the resource library and classroom.



Photo: Roof replacement Project 14 the Laundry & Storage Shed completed on 22 March, 2019

Photo: Walindi Dive Manager Wontae Chung supervises Liz Metta during Advanced Diver training.



Photo: WDHO awardee Liz follows instructor Wontae during Advanced Diver training Jan. 2019



5. In June 2018, the **WOMEN DIVERS HALL OF FAME** presented a training scholarship sponsorship award to **Liz Metta** in recognition of her on-going volunteer efforts in support of MND. Liz has regularly volunteered to assist MEEP activities since graduating herself in 2015. Under the watchful eye of Walindi Dive instructor, Wontae Chung, Liz first completed Open-water Diver training and then successfully undertook the tough Advanced Diver training course. MND Education Officer, Somei Jonda also completed the Advanced Diver training at the same time. In her report Liz described the training and wrote: *“The Open-water and Advanced Diver training made possible by the WDHO award will help me to continue to do my part and work confidently for the conservation of our amazing and thrilling underwater environment. I am going to continue as a volunteer with Mahonia Na Dari (Guardian of The Sea) to help others understand the need for conservation through the MEEP marine environment education program.”* Walindi Resort generously discounted the cost of the training courses which enabled Liz to use the scholarship award to purchase personal equipment and complete both the Open-water then Advanced courses. Between the two training courses Liz travelled to Milne Bay and volunteered in a turtle tagging conservation project in the Conflict Islands.



Photo: Liz Metta (right) with teacher Flora Sauba (both MEEP graduates) at USAID-MND project Final Event on 22 Feb. 2019

Photo: from left- Liz Metta (MEEP volunteer), Jess Dizol (PACAM) & Naomi Longa (intern) at USAID -MND Final Event 22 Feb. 2019



Photo: JCU researcher Ben Cresswell based at MND March-June

6. VISITORS:

USAIDPACAM final review support team visit 14 -16 Feb. included **William Jatulan, Artika Kumar and Jess Dizon.**

UPNG Biology graduate **Naomi Longa** spent 2 months Jan-Feb with MND as a volunteer intern. Walindi Resort took Naomi scuba diving regularly to develop experience prior to undertaking Advanced Diver training in Australia. Naomi has joined the Coral Sea Foundation and will be doing environmental work in Milne Bay.

Madagascar based community aquaculture project coordinator **Ben Parker** visited late Feb. and discussed an interesting proposal for farming local sea cucumber.

James Cook University researchers **Gemma Cresswell** (resident researcher) & support researcher, **Ben Cresswell** returned to MND 09 March for another 3-month data collection session. These two are enthusiastic, active supporters of MND and MEEP activities.

For a rainy week in March, **JCU** coral genetics researchers **Prof. Andrew Baird, Prof. Tom Bridge, Dr James Tan** from the University of Malaysia, Kuala Terengganu and **Dr Fred Sinniger** from the University of the Ryukyus, Japan collected coral data despite the wet season adverse conditions.

CSIRO scientists **Dan Gorman, Joey Crosswell** and **Jeffrey Carlin** inspected sea grass beds and mangroves with MND's Somei Jonda for possible future studies.

VSA NZ's PNG co-ordinator **Johannes Gambo** visited and arranged accommodation in March at MND for two new volunteers working in Kimbe; Karl Reller and Nimal Siripala.

In April from **King Abdulla University** of Science and Technology in Saudi Arabia **John Majoris, Morgan Bennet-Smith, Lucy Fitzgerald, JCU's Hugo Harrison** and **Lisa Bostrom** stayed at MND and conducted research in Kimbe Bay from live-aboard dive vessel MV Febrina.

7. MND NEWS

Elizabeth Marisa who fills two roles for MND; Finance & Administration Manager and Education Officer will be taking maternity leave in June. Good Luck!



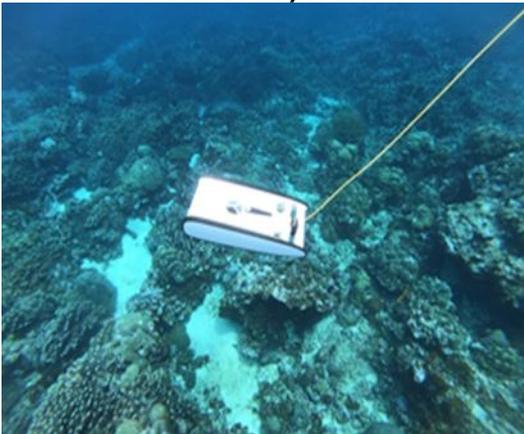
High profile Education Officer, **Somei Jonda** featured in a 2-page Post Courier Weekender photo-article "Mahonia Mangrove Man" on 08 March, 2019.

MANGROVE PROJECT –The Numundo shoreline mangrove rehabilitation joint project between NBPOL and MND continues with input from students and youth groups undertaking conservation awareness activities. Plantings by students total 2235 to date. Two youth groups, then Kimbe International School day-visit classes and two school camps (Grades 5-6-7) kicked off 2019 contributions by finding and bagging seedlings for the depleted MND nursery.



Photo: EO Somei Jonda teaching mangrove seedling care to a youth group on 02 March, 2019

Photo: ROV in Kimbe Bay



PROGRAM DIRECTOR'S MESSAGE:

The successful USAID grant funded project concluded 28 March, 2019. MND has reason to be very proud of results. Not only were all project milestones achieved but MND implemented 19 additional activities outside of project obligations. The extraordinary efforts of loyal staff and volunteers are much appreciated. MND is now stronger but **grant funding has NOT been sourced to consolidate project gains and continue environmental education programs in 2019.**

8. UNDERWATER ROBOTS IN KIMBE BAY - JCU researchers **Gemma** and **Ben Cresswell** returned to their MND base in March for their latest fieldwork on offshore seamount reefs. They brought some exciting new equipment in the form of a **Remotely Operated Vehicle (ROV)** – an underwater robot! The researchers won a grant from the National Geographic Open Explorer Project which provided an ROV capable of diving to 100m for use exploring the depths of Kimbe Bay. The "Trident" ROV robot is equipped with a high definition video camera and lights that will record Kimbe Bay marine life living deep below the limit of scuba divers. Gemma explained, *"Using the ROV we can now look in more detail at the fish communities on the seamounts of Kimbe Bay, much deeper than we thought we would be able to on this project"*. Powered by a rechargeable battery and controlled by a hot-spot wifi station, the ROV will be taken to Kimbe Bommie in April to find what lives deep down in the middle of the bay.

Although ROVs have been around for the last 20 years, never before has the technology been so accessible to researchers. Grants like the National Geographic Open Explorer scheme are now making it possible for early career and student researchers to access and explore deep marine biology like never before. *"We are hugely grateful to the Open Explorer Project and looking forward to sharing our first voyage using the Trident"*, said Gemma.

You can follow the progress of the Kimbe Bay ROV by signing up to "like" the expedition at:

<https://openexplorer.nationalgeographic.com/expedition/pinnaclesoflife>

Find out more about the ROV at: www.openrov.com