

AUTUMN 2019

# Thanks to you...



**Professor Mark Stoové  
and the HIV self-testing  
revolution in Australia.**

**DONATE NOW**



**Burnet Institute**  
Medical Research. Practical Action.



*Thanks to you*  
Your generosity affects the lives of so many people.

**Your gift today saves lives tomorrow.**

It's always a great pleasure to write to thank you for your support, acknowledge your generosity, and share with you just a little about what you have helped us achieve.

Towards the end of 2018, I shared with you the very serious problem we have in Australia with undiagnosed HIV. It is estimated that over two-thirds of all HIV transmissions in Australia come from people who are undiagnosed. One of the biggest challenges to addressing undiagnosed HIV is that people at highest risk are, for various reasons, not getting tested regularly.

The HIV self-testing device, just recently approved for sale in Australia, could potentially be the answer we're searching for. And Professor Mark Stoové's implementation research is critical to its success. **I asked for your help supporting his research, and thankfully you did because things are moving very fast in this area.**

I have also included a short update on our Healthy Mothers, Healthy Babies program. Many of you have supported this project over a number of years and feel very connected to the work we are doing to improve the health and well-being of mothers and young children in Papua New Guinea. **Thanks to you, we've reached a very special and important milestone!**

You should be very proud of what your support has helped achieve. Your gift today saves lives tomorrow – the lives of mothers and babies in PNG, the lives of those most at risk of contracting HIV, and so many others.

Thank you once again.

**Professor Brendan Crabb AC**  
Director and CEO

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Cover: Your gifts are helping implement our HIV self-testing strategy.





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In mid-2018 we asked for your support to enable us to undertake the next phase of our research. Your response was incredible, and it is only thanks to you that we have been able to achieve this important milestone.

DR MICHELLE SCOULLAR, A PRINCIPAL INVESTIGATOR FOR HMHB

”

#### YOUR GIFTS IN ACTION

# Healthy Mothers, Healthy Babies (HMHB) achieves important milestone

— *thanks to you*

**We are delighted to announce that enrolment of pregnant women and follow-up of mothers and babies to 12 months is now complete. The final follow-up was completed on December 4, 2018.**

The HMHB program will define the major causes of poor maternal, newborn, and child health, and identify and develop effective interventions and strategies to improve the health of women and their newborns.

Most importantly, we are trying to find out why so many babies are born too small, putting them at serious risk of an early death, or an otherwise poor outcome in life.

Back in June 2017, we achieved our target number of 700 pregnant women enrolled in the HMHB program, from the five busiest healthcare facilities in East New Britain. We have now followed up these mothers and babies at delivery, and the scheduled one-month, six-month and 12-month time-points.

This required hundreds of home visits with study participants. Each visit involved a detailed study

questionnaire, collection of a range of biological specimens and a health check.

Among participating mothers and babies, we have collected thousands of blood samples and swabs to test for important infections, anemia, and nutritional deficiencies.

We are now completing the testing of all these samples for infections and specific nutritional deficiencies that impact on maternal and infant health, growth, and development. We are also analysing data to quantify the importance of different preventable illnesses, and to identify the causes of poor fetal growth, premature delivery, poor infant health, and failure in child growth and development.

**The first and major study within the Healthy Mothers, Healthy Babies program in Papua New Guinea (PNG) is entirely funded by donor contributions. It is thanks to you that we have been able to achieve this important milestone. Thank you once again.**

# Breakthrough in the fight against HIV as *self-testing devices* approved for use in Australia



**HIV SELF-TESTING DEVICE APPROVED FOR SALE IN AUSTRALIA.**



**DONOR SUPPORT MAKES THE IMPLEMENTATION PROGRAM A REALITY.**

**The Federal Minister for Health, the Hon Greg Hunt MP recently announced the approval of an HIV self-testing device for sale in Australia. This is a major step forward in our HIV elimination strategies and one that will enable increased frequency of testing, and lead to earlier diagnosis, treatment and care.**

“We were quietly confident the HIV self-testing device would be approved,” said Burnet Institute’s Head of Public Health, Professor Mark Stoové. “However, until it was actually announced we could not officially go forward with our plans to trial different implementation strategies.”

Largely due to the convenience and confidentiality it affords, HIV self-testing is considered an essential tool to facilitate earlier diagnosis of HIV. This is critical if Australia is to reach its target of eliminating HIV transmission in Australia.

Professor Stoové has always held the view that the introduction of the HIV self-testing device in Australia is an opportunity we can’t afford to waste, and that without a solid implementation strategy there is the danger the tests won’t have the required impact.

“We need to get this right,” Professor Stoové said. “Now, with thanks to the generosity of our donors, we are in a position to do just that – get it right.”

“I would like to personally thank everyone who contributed to the HIV self-test implementation trial appeal. When, in the future, you read about the positive impact these tests are having here in Australia, you can know you were a part of it.”

**This is a revolutionary moment in Australia’s fight against HIV, and it is through the generosity of our donors that we are able to make the most of it.**



“We can’t really understand HIV without understanding pleasure and love and addiction and stigma, the politics of division and the politics of inclusion, and countless other factors that affect HIV vulnerability. We can’t understand HIV without understanding community.”

“The moments I’m most proud of and those I remember most fondly, are those where I am most connected to community. The most impactful research I’ve done is also the research that is most connected to community.”

PROFESSOR MARK STOOVÉ, HEAD OF PUBLIC HEALTH  
KEYNOTE SPEAKER AT THE VICTORIAN WORLD AIDS DAY 2018 LAUNCH







## Professor Mark Stoové's moving World AIDS Day speech



**Professor Mark Stoové was keynote speaker at the Victorian World AIDS Day 2018 Launch.**

He delivered a very personal and touching tribute to his cousin Isaac Stoové, who died of AIDS in Amsterdam in 1996, and explained that Isaac was one of the reasons he pursued a career in HIV research.

Mark got to know Isaac in his early 20s when backpacking across Europe. He spent time with Isaac and his partner Tibor in 1993, a quick stop between a US road-trip and a meandering trek through the Middle East and North Africa. They spent days exploring street markets and cafes, and nights with Isaac's friends listening to dance music and singing old Dutch tunes from decades past.

"They remain days that are vivid to me, and ones I will never forget," Mark said.

Isaac died only three years later. And it was Mark's fond memory of his time with Isaac that encouraged him to change career direction from sport research to HIV.

"Were he alive today Isaac would be 74," Mark said. "How I would love to have shared a beer or a tippie of Dutch gin with him, discussing what amazing changes we'd seen, and what wonderful discoveries we would see in the future."



## Dame Carol Kidu's personal *thank you* to Burnet donors

**Dame Carol Kidu DBE has been the Patron of the Healthy Mothers, Healthy Babies (HMHB) program since March 2015.**

In late 2018, Dame Carol hosted a high tea for a small number of donors who regularly support the HMHB program. She wanted a chance to meet some of the people making our work in Papua New Guinea (PNG) possible, and express her personal gratitude.

Dame Carol shared stories about her time in PNG, the challenges experienced there by mothers and babies, and the enormous difference the HMHB program makes to their lives.



Dame Carol Kidu DBE (centre) speaking with guests.

“

Dame Carol's dedication to helping women, young girls and children in her adopted homeland is unparalleled.

PROFESSOR BRENDAN CRABB AC,  
DIRECTOR AND CEO

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## About

## *Dame Carol*

**Dame Carol has lived in PNG for many years and was a member of the PNG Parliament for 15 years. From 2002 to 2011 she was the Minister for Community Development.**

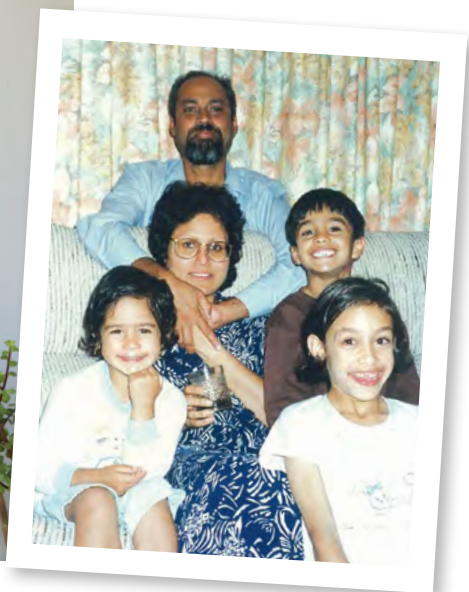
She founded the Safe Motherhood Alliance of PNG with the aim to build sustainable solutions to the problems of child and maternal health.

Dame Carol was made a Dame Commander of the Order of the British Empire in 2005.

Dame Carol has been approached by many worthwhile organisations, but it is Burnet Institute's unique approach of empowering individuals and strengthening communities within Papua New Guinea (PNG) that inspired her to become a Patron.



# Libano Dias and *his family*



Libano, Amanda and Yvonne. Inset: an old photo of the entire family.

## **Giving as a family – a father and his two daughters support Burnet Institute as monthly donors.**

“Philanthropy has always been an incredibly important part of our lives as a family,” Libano Dias said. “My wife Yvonne and I are involved with many charities and we have always instilled the importance of *giving* to our children, Mark, Alison and Amanda – particularly giving to people who are less fortunate than us, both in Australia and around the world.”

While the children were growing up, the whole family participated in fundraising activities at their schools and through their local church. And today, Libano and his two daughters support Burnet Institute with a monthly gift each. Their separate gifts each month add up to a significant amount every year.

Libano was profoundly impressed with Burnet’s aim to achieve better health for poor and vulnerable communities in Australia.

“I have always possessed a keen interest in medical research. It’s one of the reasons why I support Burnet and the important and impressive work they do. Alison and Amanda also share my interest in medical research, and understand its importance in helping the most vulnerable members of our community.”

Giving every month was a strategic decision made by the family.

“I encouraged Alison and Amanda to give an ongoing monthly donation as I believe this is a greater commitment, compared to a single donation,” Libano said. “A regular commitment can better assist Burnet to continue their amazing ongoing work.”

“I have attended various functions at Burnet, have witnessed the scope of the medical research that is undertaken, and truly understand the importance of ongoing financial assistance to sustain that work.”

“Burnet Institute is close to my heart and I will endeavour to assist the amazing staff there to carry on their valuable work.”

“

“I also have a personal wish to eradicate malaria. My wife’s sister tragically died from the disease at the age of 46. Unfortunately, the disease continues to claim lives, and it is my hope that through the ground-breaking research done by organisations like the Burnet Institute, the disease can eventually be eradicated.”

LIBANO DIAS, MONTHLY DONOR

”

RAISING FUNDS AND RAISING AWARENESS

# Cocktails and *Conversation*

A fundraising event supporting Australia's first HIV self-test implementation program.



**Speakers at the event included:**

*Professor Gilda Tachedjian,  
Head of Life Sciences,  
Burnet Institute*

*Burnet Ambassador Deanna  
Blegg, from the Positive  
Speakers Bureau*

*Professor Mark Stoové,  
Head of Public Health,  
Burnet Institute*




**Below: donors at the event:**



This event was very generously supported by a number of sponsors, including: Liquid Infusion, The Cullen and Art Series Hotels, Complete Function Hire and Store 6.

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