

Tingim Laip Phase 2: Post Talking Points for In-country Industry Briefing on February 11

State of the epidemic

- Papua New Guinea is facing a generalised HIV epidemic with prevalence projected to be 5 per cent of the population by 2012¹. All key HIV and AIDS indicators are rising and PNG is very unlikely to achieve MDG goal 6 of halting the spread of HIV/AIDS by 2015. The socio economic impacts of the epidemic are already evident in many areas. These include a growing burden on health facilities and on communities providing care, and disproportionate numbers of skilled workers becoming infected.
- Our program is a joint program with the Government of Papua New Guinea and uses the latest official estimates of the state of the epidemic – i.e. the published 2007 estimation report on the epidemic co-produced by the NAC Secretariat and the National Department of Health. The limitations of this data in terms of methodology, surveillance and estimation are acknowledged. Our best estimates are that HIV prevalence is now around 2.5%, based on surveillance information. This underscores the importance of ongoing support for quality research to develop the evidence base including through the research component of Tingim Laip 2.
 - Note also that AusAID is supporting an Integrated Bio-Behavioural Survey to be conducted this year under World Bank management which is expected to provide more specific data on regions. The protocols for the survey are still being worked out.
- There is increasing evidence of HIV and AIDS in rural areas which presents a major challenge to developing and sustaining an effective national response especially with weak infrastructure and poor quality of services at district level. Higher rates of HIV infection are evident in all provinces along the Highlands Highway. It is likely that, due to limited testing and access to health services, prevalence in remote provinces such as Southern Highlands is higher than currently reported.
- Transmission of HIV continues to be fuelled by individual behaviour in the context of complex social, cultural, economic and political factors. Key contributing factors include: gender inequality and high rates of sexual violence; various dimensions of sexual partnering including concurrent relationships; high rates of STIs; high unemployment and limited access to income earning opportunities; weak health services and infrastructure to district levels limiting access to testing, treatment and care; corruption and mismanagement within key institutions at all levels, and; lack of consistent messaging due to multiple cultures and languages.

¹ 2007 estimation report on the epidemic in PNG (August 2007) – coproduced by the NAC Secretariat and the National Department of Health

Program Background

- The Australian Government through AusAID is the lead development partner supporting Papua New Guinea's national HIV response – providing over 60% of total resources for the response in 2009.
- The main vehicle for this support is the PNG-Australia HIV and AIDS Program (the Program), but we also support targeted HIV/AIDS interventions through other AusAID sector programs – principally Health, Law and Justice, Education and Infrastructure programs.
- The PNG-Australia HIV and AIDS Program commenced in 2007 as a 5-10 year program to deliver a flexible program of support to support and build the capacity of the Government of PNG and its partners to design, coordinate and implement an effective national HIV response. The Program followed on a predecessor AusAID supported project, the National HIV/AIDS Support Project (NHASP).
- The Program is directly aligned with the GoPNG's National Strategic Plan on HIV/AIDS 2006-2010 and the companion National Gender Policy and Plan on HIV/AIDS covering the same period. It is important that the bids reflect a good understanding of the NSP and ways of working closely and collaboratively with government institutions and policies. It will be important that Tingim Laip is aligned with government and Provincial AIDS Council planning processes.
- The current NSP places priority on seven focus areas:
 1. Treatment, Counselling, Care and Support
 2. Education and Prevention
 3. Epidemiology and Surveillance
 4. Social and Behavioural Change Research
 5. Leadership, Partnership and Coordination
 6. Family and Community
 7. Monitoring and Evaluation
- Work has commenced to develop a new National HIV/AIDS Strategy for the period 2011-2015. The new Strategy will guide Australia's support for HIV/AIDS from 2011.
- The current goal and objectives of the PNG-Australia HIV and AIDS Program are **“to contribute to the achievement of the overall goals of the National Strategic Plan and specifically to:**
 - *to stabilise the spread of HIV and AIDS infections by 2020*
 - *to improve care for those infected*
 - *to minimise the social and economic impact of the epidemic on individuals, families and communities, and*
 - *to strengthen the national capacity to respond to the epidemic’.*

- Australia's support is delivered through technical assistance to strengthen GoPNG HIV policy and programming at national and increasingly at sub-national levels - and through provision of financial and technical assistance to a range of civil society organisations to implement the HIV response and deliver services in partnership with government. These civil society organisations also have an important role in broadening advocacy in relation to the response.
- The Program is currently provides direct funding support to 23 local and international non-governmental partners to deliver HIV services in communities in the 19 provinces of PNG (including Tingim Laip), as well as technical assistance to a range of governmental, civil society and community based organisations contributing to the national HIV response.

Tingim Laip Project Background

- The Tingim Laip project began in 2004 as part of the High Risk Setting Strategy under the national HIV/AIDS Support Project (NHASP), the predecessor of the current Program, focusing on Behaviour Change Communication of youth at risk, female sex workers and men who have sex with men in high risk locations.
- The High Risk Setting Strategy changed its name to ***Tingim Laip – meaning think about or value life*** - to remove stigma attached with the strategy. Tingim Laip is now PNG's largest community-based HIV prevention project targeting vulnerable populations in high risk settings in 37 sites across 13 provinces in PNG.
- The Tingim Laip project is widely recognised an effective intervention in the national HIV response and has built a credible brand in PNG due to the good work of the project and its partners including the National AIDS Council Secretariat, Provincial and District AIDS Committees, Family Health International, Save The Children in PNG, World Vision and the National HIV/AIDS Training Unit. It is essential that Tingim Laip 2 continue to build on this strong base.
- Tingim Laip has been in transition, under the interim management of Burnet Institute since 2007, while design, evaluation and tender processes have been conducted for the new phase of the project. The transition period has been extended to mid 2010 due to delays in procurement processes.
- The 2007 evaluation of Tingim Laip 1 identified particular strengths in terms of the committed volunteers mobilised by the project, strong partnerships established with Provincial AIDS Committees and well targeted capacity building efforts. The evaluation noted the potential for the project to build on these strengths and be a highly effective intervention into the future.
- Key messages on what Post sees as particularly important in Phase 2 are:

- o A strengthened focus on prevention and much closer linking of treatment, care and prevention
- o Strengthened elements of gender and GIPA (greater involvement of people with HIV/AIDS)
- o Need to more strongly align TL with the seven priority provinces that have been agreed between AusAID and NACS – Western, Southern and Eastern Highlands provinces, Western Province, Sandaun, Morobe and the Autonomous Region of Bougainville. Note that over the next year Southern Highlands and Western Highlands Province will each split into two provinces.
- o In practice, this means Tingim Laip should strengthen its work in the priority provinces it is already working in and commence work in priority provinces it is not already working in. In particular, TL needs to intensify efforts down the Highlands corridor – following the Highlands Highway – through to Morobe.
- o The project will also need to be highly strategic and responsive to the impacts of the new LNG project on HIV, especially at community the community level.
- o The project will play a role in AusAIDs’ efforts to effectively mainstream HIV into other sectors programs.
- o Strengthening the partnerships and linkages with key governmental, civil society and private sector stakeholders.

Other Highlights of Tingim Laip 2

The new phase of the project features:

- A period of consolidation and strengthening sites prior to scaling up to meet emerging priorities (i.e. the impacts of the LNG project).
- Improved support systems for volunteers.
- Strategic use of training to meet needs of the project.
- Maintaining a reliable supply of condoms.