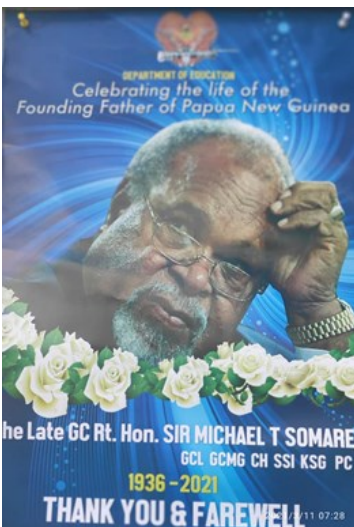


## Asaroka Happenings March 2021



The 4 in 1 classroom so far. They are now awaiting more funds to complete the building. The chapel with new pews and floor, is in use, but needs more funds to complete the renovations.



Asaroka Lutheran Highschool, Asaroka Lutheran Primary School and Elementary School remember the death and work of Sir Michael Somare the founding father of PNG



We have had some news from both Dan & Jacob in regards of COVID19 in PNG, particularly Asaroka.

- the principal has been in isolation due to contracting covid. There appears to be another covid case as well. (They were unsure of details)
- the highschool will close early for holidays and will be closed for a total of 4 weeks. The government has closed all schools for the 4 weeks.

Please keep Asaroka in your prayers during this difficult time.

"Greetings Golden Grove Lutheran Community.

In a moment I want to tell you about Sister Joan and how brave women like her on the front-line of Lutheran Health Services to the PNG community can inspire you and me, as we respond to the emerging COVID-19 crisis.

### **PNG COVID CRISIS**

So far, 1,400 active cases have been officially reported, but there are fears the real number is much higher. (Testing rates are very low.)

News reports suggest HALF of pregnant women coming to hospitals have COVID-19.

That's why ALWS welcomes the Australian Government directing 8,000 doses of the AstraZeneca vaccine for front-line health-workers. We also support the Australian Government seeking a further one million more doses for across PNG.

### **YOUR ALWS ACTION**

Your ALWS work in PNG happens through a Church Partnership Program, commenced in 2004. The Partnership brings together:

- Anglican
- Baptist Union
- Evangelical Lutheran Church of PNG
- Roman Catholic Church
- Seventh Day Adventist
- The Salvation Army
- United Church

Churches provide 50% of Health Services in PNG, and the Australian Government knows the effectiveness of churches working together in PNG to reach the most remote regions, and the fact that church leaders are a respected and trusted source of information.

Therefore, our prayer is the Australian Government will support the efforts of churches in this COVID-19 response. In particular, supporting churches to:

- Refer patients for COVID testing
- Conduct rapid COVID tests
- Treat COVID patients
- Where necessary identify 'overflow' and isolation spaces
- Administer vaccines
- Deliver key health messages via radio, TV and social media
- Provide rural and remote communities with items like soap so they can practice COVID-safe behaviour
- Provide health staff with PPE and training in infection control
- Coordinate churches' response

This church partnership work against COVID-19 in PNG is supported by churches of different denominations in Australia, including coming together through CAN-DO (Church Agencies Network – Disaster Operations), of which ALWS is a founding member.

### **SISTER JOAN**

One in every six people in PNG identifies as a Lutheran – around 1.5 million people ...

... and Sister Joan is one of them. She studied at the Lutheran School of Nursing in Madang.

When I met Sister Joan, she worked at the Tent City Clinic in Lae, and I remain inspired by her example of living her values in everyday life. I thought you might be too:

"When I was small, I was a sick child. My parents must often take me to clinics, so my parents told me I should become a nurse so I could look after myself.

In this clinic we see outpatients with respiratory infections, skin disease, fever and malaria.

We also care for pregnant mothers, and babies come for immunisation. We also do family planning.

There around 18,000 people in our catchment area. In one day we may see more than 100 out-patients, and more than 50 babies.

People pay 2 Kina (\$1 AUD) to come here, children 1 Kina. There are still some who cannot come because they cannot afford this. When they do later find the money to come, they will be much sicker.

**"If I was in charge, I would tell people  
if you don't have money, still come.  
We will help you."**

We do not have time for morning devotions because people are already here waiting. If they have money, or no money, we just help them. We give our hearts.

I am sometimes challenged by the work when we are overloaded, but I chose to serve. That is my calling."

### **YOU**

What I see in Sister Joan, I see in people like you too.

You don't make a fuss, you just get on with helping people. Even when you feel challenged, or overloaded.

That's why, as I report to you today about your ALWS PNG COVID-19 action, I also just wanted to say thank you for being a Sister Joan in your own way.

*ALWS*