

December 1, 2009



It gives me great pleasure to commend the following daily journal to you as the report of the 2009 RASC Next Generation Understanding and Assistance Mission to PNG.

10 Next Generation representatives from 6 Commonwealth Countries participated in the Mission. Some were entirely self-funded and some were assisted to varying degrees. Each participant took their turn as group leader where amongst other responsibilities they were to write an account of what they had seen, learned and contributed, the result being the pages that follow.

The title of the undertaking “Understanding and Assistance” has been carefully chosen to reflect accurately the RASC objectives in organising it. It is a wonderful opportunity for eager young agricultural minds to gain an unforgettable insight into another country, at the same time making a contribution by offering assistance and sharing their knowledge where it is useful.

The RASC membership network provides a priceless opportunity for interaction between agriculturalists at a grass roots level. The assistance of the Morobe Province Agricultural Society and in particular Mike and Karen Quinn was paramount to the success of the trip and allowed our group to see and experience PNG in a way which would ordinarily never be possible.

A substantial part of the mission involved a close association with PNG’s National Agricultural Research Institute. Next Generation member and NARI Scientist Michael Dom arranged a perfectly planned program of activities that tied in with our objectives. NARI’s enthusiasm for the mission and generous support added significantly to the experience. We look forward to a continued close association between NARI and the RASC as one of the important outcomes of our time in PNG.

It was a great shame, though completely understandable that the 2009 Morobe Show was cancelled two days prior to our departure owing to an outbreak of cholera. Our original itinerary included a substantial amount of time involved with staging the show. It is to the great credit of the NG group that they did not let this last minute disappointment detract from their enthusiasm. With further support from the Show Society who had already moved mountains preparing for our productive involvement at the show, our itinerary was efficiently redesigned and our entire time was worthwhile, productive and rewarding as I think the diary entries show.

This Mission built solidly on what was started with the first RASC NG Mission to Zambia in 2007. I feel more passionately than ever that these missions fit perfectly with the broader RASC objectives and that they will go from strength to strength as the concept gathers further momentum within the RASC membership.

My greatest thanks must go to the group themselves for their eagerness to learn, tremendous effort, untiring team spirit and valued friendship. They were ambassadors of the highest calibre for their Societies and the RASC.

John Bennett  
RASC Honorary Next Generation Facilitator