



MEDIA RELEASE

20th March, 2019

WORLD TUBERCULOSIS DAY – 24 MARCH 2019

World TB Day is on 24 March 2019 will shine a spotlight on tuberculosis (TB). This date marks the day in 1882 when Dr Robert Koch, the founder of modern bacteriology, declared that he had discovered the bacterium that causes TB. His discovery paved the way to diagnosing and curing the disease.

Often recognised as a disease of the past, TB continues to be a significant health issue. Globally, each year around 10 million people are diagnosed with TB with 1 million children affected by the disease. TB is the leading cause of death from an infectious disease. In 2017, TB caused the death of 1.6 million people, including 230,000 children. It is estimated that there are 10 million children worldwide who have been orphaned because a parent has died of TB. TB affects vulnerable people and communities.

Approximately, 60 per cent of the global burden of disease affects people living close to home, in the Asia Pacific Region. Countries within the region that have the highest burden of disease include; Indonesia, Vietnam, Papua New Guinea, China, Cambodia and the Philippines. Australia has a role to play in supporting and working within the region to end the TB epidemic.

Each year in Australia we have around 1400 people who are diagnosed with TB. Many people in our community think that TB is no longer an issue within Australia, this is not the case. With global connectivity and movement, TB anywhere means that TB can occur everywhere.

It is estimated that a third of the world's population are infected with TB (2.4 billion people), these people have the potential to develop disease at some stage during their lives. Urgent action is needed to end the devastating health, social and economic suffering associated with TB.

More alarming is the growing epidemic of Multi-Drug Resistant TB (MDR TB). This variant of the disease requires intensive, toxic and long term treatment for up to 2 years to cure the disease. Unfortunately, not everyone who has MDR TB gets diagnosed or receives treatment, only 25 per cent of the 558,000 people suffering from drug-resistant TB in 2017 received treatment ([WHO Global Tuberculosis Report 2018](#)).

The Australian Respiratory Council (ARC) has a longstanding involvement and commitment to eliminating TB and is identified as the leading TB NGO in Australia. For more than 100 years ARC has been working in marginalised communities in Australia and the Asia Pacific Region, funding research and project activities, providing technical support and delivering educational programs aimed at reducing the incidence of TB. Raising awareness about TB within the community is important.

Amanda Christensen, ARC's Executive Director reports that ARC is working collaboratively within the region to build technical skills and knowledge to enable health care workers to effectively diagnose, manage and treat people affected by TB. This year, ARC's Nurse Consultant Group will travel to Palau and Guam to undertake vital and needed training for nurses and community workers from the Pacific island TB Programmes.

World TB Day allows us to reflect on past achievements and acknowledge the urgent need for better diagnostic tools to identify people with TB, vaccines to prevent the disease and safe, fast acting medications to cure people effectively. Now is the time to commit to ending the global TB epidemic.

<END>

UNITE TO  **END
TB**

LINKS

ARC Resources

<https://www.thearc.org.au/about-arc/overview>

<https://www.thearc.org.au/resources/resources-overview>

Global Resources from Stop TB:

http://stoptb.org/events/world_tb_day/2019/materials.asp

<https://mailchi.mp/stoptb.org/world-tb-day-2019?e=68df633e77>

http://stoptb.org/events/world_tb_day/2019/materials.asp

WHO Resources:

https://www.who.int/tb/publications/factsheet_global.pdf?ua=1

<https://www.who.int/campaigns/world-tb-day/world-tb-day-2019>

IMAGES



For more information contact:

Amanda Christensen

Executive Director

Australia Respiratory Council

Mobile: 0400 936 393

Email: amandachristensen@thearc.org.au

Website: www.thearc.org.au