

**Interview with Gou Raka, National Agriculture Research Institute, 8 September 2014**

**MA, Plant protection, UQ, 2000 cohort.**



[00:00:13]	Scholarship 2007-2008, ACIAR John Allwright Fellowship. MA in Plant protection, UQ. 18 months. BA at UNPNG. Worked at Ramu Sugar company when she applied for the scholarship.	
[00:02:09]	Motivation to apply for scholarship for further study. Interest in research. Her company and ACIAR had a collaborative project on sugarcane diseases. Studied for MA under that project.	
[00:03:49]	ACIAR and Ramu Sugar were partners. Her supervisor recommended her for nomination for the fellowship. Selected UQ.	Choice of course.
[00:05:18]	Previous travels outside PNG. First for study but 3-4 times before to Northern Australia. Traveled alone to Australia. Arriving in Australia was exciting but she was also nervous. Did not know anyone there. Joined with fellow international students and Australian colleagues after a few weeks.	
[00:07:04]	Rented accommodation with housemates. AusAid liaison and supervisors good support.	Living in Brisbane.
[00:08:57]	Other PNG students scattered around different campuses. 3	Living in Australia. Friendships.

	PNG students on St Lucia campus were senior students, so good mentoring. Some challenges in settling in, some anxiety but overcame this and found it surprisingly relaxing and made friends with her housemate.	
[00:11:35]	Sharon was the AusAid liaison and her husband had a previous connection with Ramu Sugar.	
[00:12:40]	Principal supervisor, Dr Atkins, very supportive and gave good guidance. Field project for 7 months with a sugar research institute in Brisbane. Supervisor there was Cathy Braithwaite, also became a good friend and mentor.	Studying in Australia; challenges.
[00:14:50]	Lecturers approachable and asked for help when it was needed. Ongoing contact with both supervisors. Great skills learnt in lab techniques but could not use this knowledge when she first returned to Ramu Sugar. But now at NARI has a new biotechnology lab she is often consulting them for advice.	
[00:16:41]	Rugby. Socialising and meeting people changes your views. Little difference between Australia and PNG in terms of social and informal meetings with people. Good group of colleagues and friends. Betel nut chewing was one challenge in Old. Used social circle to source it!	Australian culture
[00:20:10]	Attended local church services	Community groups
[00:20:59]	Personal impact of the experience. International exposure was invaluable. Learnt skills she would not have learnt in PNG. In setting up her new lab she is still in contact with her supervisors in Brisbane.	

[00:22:42]	Advice to others aspiring to apply for overseas study. Needed mentor to push her. Fear of failure. Don't be afraid. Once you get there, if you are determined then you can do it.	
[00:24:03]	END	