Govt urged to improve health status

By ELIZABETH MIAE

The government has been encouraged to look at innovative ways of improving the current health system to deliver quality health care for all citizens.

A research paper compiled by Dr Katherine Lepani and Julienne McKay detailing how certain mechanisms the Health Department could consider investing in to revitalise the health system was launched at the National Research Institute (NRI) in Port Moresby yesterday.

The research paper titled “Revitalising PNG’s health system: The need for creative approaches” explored how demand responsive mechanisms (vouchers, micro-health insurance, social franchises and social businesses) can be a compelling addition to the strengthening health systems.

Demand responsive mechanisms draw on social and cultural factors to deliver health services that reflect users’ needs and requirements—creating greater incentives both for supplier to provide compatible infrastructure and resources and for users to reveal their preferences and access appropriate prevention, treatment and care services.

It looks at the potential use of these mechanisms with a focus on HIV, maternal health, tuberculosis (TB) and malaria and contains policy recommendations for the government, the private sector and donors.

It was published by the Lowy Institute for International Policy and co-funded by the institute’s Myer Foundation Melanesia Programme and Pacific Friends of the Global Fund.

Lepani and McKay studied project sites in the Southern Highlands, Western Highlands and New Ireland and recommended that the voucher scheme would best suit PNG.

The scheme entitled holders to specified treatment and care from accredited providers.

Providers are trained and supported and must meet specified quality standards.

Cost to patient are subsidised for free and providers must reimburse at the negotiated rate after verification of delivering the contracted services.

NATION