

Safer roads, better drainage in Port Vila soon

By Anita Roberts

RESIDENTS AND VISITORS WILL NO longer be walking or driving on poor road conditions or flooded roadways around Port Vila town as safer roads and drainages are promised to improve safety and prevent flooding.

The launching of the first phase of the Port Vila Urban Development Project happened in front of the main market this week marked the second major road development in Port Vila since the development of the one-way street in the CBD.

Today, roads in Port Vila are deteriorating, providing an environment prone to accidents.

Since Port Vila is the gateway to the country's economy, it is essential that the roads are well laid out to connect people to the market, goods and services within the country and internationally, the Minister of Infrastructure and Public Utilities (MIPU), Jotham Napat said when addressing the launching event.

He said phase I of the project has already begun with the Australian RMS Engineering Construction Company seen bursting the main street at SMET area and will continue to the wharf road.

It involves road improvements, drainage and signage. Resurfacing will commence from Kumul Highway to Lini Highway at Au Bon Marche No. 2, from there to USP Roundabout at Tassirik, reaching Euro Corner.

Minister Napat said drainage improvement include the two "hots spots of flooding" at Seven Star and Manples area.

Residents of Ohlen and Manples are always frustrated during heavy rainfall and vehicles are at risk of crossing.

Having bad drainage systems makes flooding problems worse and increases health risks within the urban environment, stressed the minister.

The ground breaking



The launching of the first phase of the Port Vila Urban Development Project happened this week

ceremony also covers the project's sub-components as the rehabilitation of the George Kalsakau Drive in the CBD; the installation of a septage treatment facility at Bouffa Landfill; Public toilets for the Port Vila Market House, Fatumaru Park, Vila Central Hospital and Independence Park; and Community Sanitation Facilities for the areas of Blacksands, Seaside Tongoa, Seaside Paama and Futuna.

The overall cost of the project is around Vt4 billion.

According to the minister of infrastructure, the Australian Government provided a grant of US\$24.7million, the Asian Development Bank gave USD\$4.5 million and Vanuatu Government gave USD\$3.1million.

Mr Napat took the opportunity at the event to acknowledged the donors for answering the cry of the people of Vanuatu.

The Australian High Commissioner, Jeremy Bruer, said this major road and drainage package will improve



Minister Napat was given the honor to facilitate the groundbreaking as he climbed onto the machine and watched from the front seat a short demonstration of how the RMS engineers will be stabilizing deteriorated roads.

the lives of everyone that live and work in Port Vila who are accessing the road into town including visitors.

All construction works will be completed by end of 2017.

The inauguration was witnessed by the Minister of

Climate Change, Ham Lini, as the acting Prime Minister, Ministers of Justice Ronald Warsal and Lands Ralph Regenvanu, New

Zealand and Australian High Commissioners, Mayor of Port Vila, MPs, councilors and other government officials.