

NEWSLETTER

OCTOBER 2024

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TOP NEWS

Mental Health Week



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Vanuatu Mental Health celebrated World Mental Health week on October 2nd, starting that week with information sessions at various organizations and government Sectors. The team managed to visit The Prime Minister's Office for an insightful awareness program to the staff of PMO.

This year's theme is "Mental Health in the Work place" Let us work together to create work environments that are mentally healthy!



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Welcoming Air Caledonie to Vanuatu



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The Vanuatu Tourism Office (VTO) celebrated the return of Air Calédonie to Vanuatu, marking the arrival of the airline's first flight in several years.

This significant development is expected to boost tourism and enhance connections between Vanuatu and New Caledonia, promoting greater travel opportunities for visitors and strengthening the region's tourism economy.



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The welcome ceremony saw the presence of Minister of Finance Hon. Johny Koanapo, members of the diplomatic core, Vanuatu airport CEO and staffs, Director General of Prime Minister's Office, DG foreign affairs and Vanuatu tourism office CEO and staffs.

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Community Consultation on Domestic Air Travel Across Vanuatu.



Consultation at Sola Provincial HQ in Banks

The Government of Vanuatu is leading community consultations to better understand your needs for domestic air travel. We want to hear about when, where, and how you travel so we can improve air services, especially for remote and rural communities.

We'll be asking:

- How often you travel and where
- Improvements you'd like at airports or transport services
- Sending packages and cargo
- Seasonal travel for holidays, work, study, or other purposes.

The Vanuatu Government-led team will be visiting communities over the next two weeks.

This Government of Vanuatu initiative is supported by the Australian Government's Australia-Pacific Partnerships for Aviation program #P4A.

Domestic Air Travel Consultation - Penama Province



Stakeholder Meeting in Lonorore, Pentecost



Stakeholder meeting in Longana, Ambae

Director General Cherol Ala from the Prime Minister's Office, with support from the Australian Government's P4A program, visited Penama Province to explore and understand aviation challenges.

In meetings with community and government leaders in Longana and Lonorore, the need for more reliable air services was emphasised, particularly for boosting trade, tourism, and family connections.

Aviation's vital role in improving healthcare, education, and banking access was also discussed. The team will continue visiting other provinces next week to collect community feedback and assess regional flight needs and opportunities.



Longana, Ambae

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Domestic Air Travel Consultation - Shefa Province



The Community Service Obligation team, led by Director General of the Prime Minister's Office Cheral Ala, visited Lamén Bay, Epi, for a consultation with local leaders and the community.

Women leaders highlighted the challenges caused by infrequent flights, such as limited access to healthcare and medicines, school absences for both students and teachers, and the high cost of transporting fresh produce to Port Vila, with only one weekly ship available.



The community also expressed concerns about the uncertainty of flights and frequent overbooking, which placed financial strain on families. In partnership with the Australian-Pacific Partnerships for Aviation, this ongoing study aims to ensure future aviation investments address these challenges and bring lasting change to Vanuatu's rural communities.

Consultation visits to more communities are planned in the coming weeks to gather further insights.

Domestic Air Travel Consultation - Tafea Province



CSO study consultation in Tanna, October 2024



CSO Consultation in Aniwa, October 2024

The Community Service Obligation (CSO) team visited Tanna, Aniwa, and Ipota in Tafea Province to meet with provincial officials, local leaders and community members. The goal of these meetings is to understand the region's aviation needs and make sure future investments in aviation meet the needs of the whole community.

During the discussions, the team learned that while the resumption of air service from Tanna to Port Vila is welcomed, the outer islands still lack regular flights. This limits access to essential services such as healthcare, markets for fish, produce, handmade goods, banking, and more.

Women leaders from the remote islands stressed the difficulties caused by the lack of flights. They shared stories of pregnant women, children, and the elderly having to travel long distances in banana boats—often in dangerous conditions—to get medical care.

A key message from the talks was that although the lack of domestic flights creates challenges, the communities are hopeful that the government is committed to finding solutions and ensuring they are not left behind. In partnership with the Australian-Pacific Partnerships for Aviation, this ongoing study aims to address these challenges and bring lasting benefits to Vanuatu's remote areas.

More consultations are planned in the coming weeks to gather further insights and continue shaping aviation solutions that meet the needs of local communities.



CSO Consultation in Ipota, Erromango, October 2024

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Domestic Air Travel Consultation- Malampa Province



CSO Consultation in Norsup, Malekula

The Community Service Obligation (CSO) team visited Norsup in Malampa Province to seek the views of provincial officials and local representatives to get a clear picture of the region's aviation needs and ensure future investments benefit the entire community.

During these discussions, the team learned about the struggles in providing essential services, especially when certain airports in the province don't have regular flights. "Our people deserve to be our top priority," one official emphasized.

The conversations were highly productive, with all parties actively engaged and motivated to collaborate on finding solutions. There was a strong sense of commitment to working together to improve air connectivity and ensure the needs of the region are met.

Access to healthcare, education, and tourism was also highlighted as key areas that suffer without reliable air travel. A recurring theme in the talks was the urgent need for sustainable, long-term aviation connections to these remote areas.

In collaboration with the Australian-Pacific Partnerships for Aviation, this study aims to tackle these issues and bring lasting improvements to ni-Vanuatu in remote provinces.

More consultations will follow, gathering insights to shape effective aviation solutions for the future.

Domestic Air Travel Consultation - Sanma Province



CSO Consultation in Santo

On October 17, the Community Service Obligation (CSO) team completed its journey through Vanuatu's remote provinces, wrapping up in Santo, Sanma Province.

The team has been meeting with government officials and local representatives across several regions to hear directly from the communities about their aviation needs.

The goal of these consultations has been simple: to ensure future aviation investments are tailored to the needs of each region.

In every province, from the most remote areas to larger hubs, the message has been clear—better air connectivity is key to unlocking opportunities in commerce, tourism, health, education, and trade.

In Sanma Province, the discussions centered around the potential of Pekoa Airport as a major gateway for

international visitors and a hub for the northern provinces. This vision was shared by all parties involved, demonstrating a strong desire for collaborative solutions.

Through its partnership with the Australian-Pacific Partnerships for Aviation, this ongoing study is one of many positive steps towards meeting the connectivity needs of Vanuatu's remote areas and creating long-term, mutually beneficial outcomes.

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Over 5,000 People gain access to Clean Water - Melsisi, Pentecost



The Melsisi water supply system on Pentecost Island was officially opened yesterday by the Prime Minister Hon Charlot Salwai Tabimasma, alongside, Minister for Land and Natural Resources, Hon Rick Tchamako Mahe, Australia's Head of the Office of the Pacific, Elizabeth Peak, Australia's High Commissioner to Vanuatu, H.E. Max Willis with Vice President of Penama Province, Hon Davidson Nakou and Chief Olivier Virekokon.

Speaking at the event, Prime Minister Salwai thanked Australia for the ongoing development support to Vanuatu to recover from recent cyclones. "It reflects the core concept of the government's national recovery framework of building back better to ensure sustainable and resilient infrastructure across the country."

Ms Peak also addressed the community and congratulated all those involved. "The project embodies so many of the good practices that characterise the Vanuatu-Australia development partnership, including delivering high quality infrastructure."

The system was built by a local company, employing local community members and will be maintained by members of the community who are successfully accredited with their Certificate 2 in Plumbing. This ensures the availability of skilled technicians to repair and maintain the system when needed.

The new water supply system was also built to be climate-resilient. The water tanks are secured with metal frames and the distribution lines are buried under the ground to protect them from extreme weather events and to keep the water cool and hygienic



Prime Minister Hon. Charlot Salwai Tabimasma pictured meeting His Majesty King Charles III and UK Prime Minister Sir Keir Starmer in Samoa