

# Gaua tour guides receive national accreditation

By Anita Roberts

## TEN LOCALS ON THE ISLAND

of Gaua have been certified as qualified tour guides and are now ready to meet new people and escort visitors on tours.

These tour guides are the first in Vanuatu to have been accredited under the new Vanuatu Qualification Act (VQA) act. They received Certificate I in tourism after completing trainings run by VQA.

Being accredited means they have met the nationally endorsed Vanuatu Tourism Operators Minimum Standards (VTOMS).

Tour guides are important tools to the tourism industry.

Being at the frontline, they become the face of Vanuatu with their direct contact and influence on visitors.

From now on, these tour guides on Gaua will be guiding visitors on walking tours or by boat around places of interest



Tour guides and local tourism operators posing with their certificates with the First Secretary of the Australian High Commission, Alison George (left), DG of the Ministry of Tourism, Marikon Alilee, GM of Vanuatu Tourism Office, Linda Kalpoi, Leader of TVET Program Arnhambat and other tourism officials

for example, those who want to camp on the volcano (Mt Garet) and spend the night at Lake Letas and the amazing Siri Waterfall as they are now specialized in trekking tours.

Tour guiding needs good communication skills, a good memory of facts and figures including public speaking skills.

To help develop these

skills and knowledge, the Australian Government funded Technical and Vocational Education Training (TVET) program, through its industry experts, has

been facilitating continuing intensive workshops on the island with the tour guides.

With his experience in guiding, TVET Industry Expert, Pascal Guillet, does

not only talk to the guides during workshops but has walked with them, showing what they should do before, during and after a tour. They have also developed Gaua's first volcano trekking route.

As part of the Department of Tourism (DoT's) minimum standards, all tour guides must also receive certificates in First Aid training so they could respond during emergencies.

These same tour guides including the manager of the Torba TVET Centre and the area council secretary, have also received certificates in First Aid issued by the Vanuatu College of Nursing Education.

Apart from tour guiding and first aid, several local tourism operators were issued with business permits.

The Certificate I in Tourism was presented by VQA Chief Executive Officer, David Lambulky and Director of Tertiary and Further Education, George Maeltoka.