

Business/Local News

Ambrym cultural skills revived through TVET

By Anita Roberts

A VARIETY OF CULTURAL SKILLS from West Ambrym, especially those practiced at the village of Loliri, have been revived through the TVET (Vanuatu Technical and Vocational Education and Training) program, after a lapse of many years.

The Australian government-funded TVET sector strengthening program aims to support provincial economic development through targeted training in Sanma and Malampa provinces. The program encourages a responsive and better quality training system, able to meet the skill demands of the tourism sector.

The revived skills include carving, magic, sand drawing and custom dances and songs. President of the Ambrym Council of Chiefs and chief of the Awor Samsam tribe, Luis Melip, stressed the point that for many years it had been as if his village had been 'sleeping': the practical existence of these traditional skills had been absent, until the village's involvement with the tourism department and TVET centre.

Chief Melip spoke in an interview during the launch of the Loliri village 'Sam-Sam Cultural Tour' at West Ambrym. The nasara cultural tour was established by the community as part of the



feedback from TVET tourism business workshops and tourism coaching and training on the island.

The Daily Post witnessed a large crowd of villagers from around west Ambrym gathered for the inaugural event. The newspaper was told that many of those people had shown up on the day purely to see the powerful and dignified 'Rom Dance', and, for some of them, it was the

first time they would be seeing it.

The dance was performed in a special clearing where a dozen men, clad mainly in small nambas (penis wrapper), wearing fantastic masks and dressed with traditional hats and leaves, chanted and pounded the earth with their feet.

The clearing was surrounded with tamtam carvings. Other revived skills that

were presented to the invited guest and visitors that day were magic, carving, sand drawing and rope drawing.

Chief Melip acknowledged the work of Malampa TVET Center and the Tourism Department for piloting the project at Malampa and said the community would make sure they would uphold their cultural skills by teaching custom dances and language songs to their youth.