

Local News



Some trainees of the Master 20 GT training course at the Vanuatu Maritime College, with trainer, Alick Jonaru (third from left).

Master 20 GT training underway in Luganville

By Anita Roberts

SEVENTEEN TRAINEES ARE currently undertaking a six-week 'Master 20 Gross Tonne' (GT) training at the Vanuatu Maritime College in Santo.

'20 GT' refers to a ship's overall internal volume, or the measurement of the size or carrying capacity of a ship.

The Vanuatu Maritime College (VMC) regularly offers training and assessment programs for seafarers seeking certification, as the Master 20 GT entitles the holder to take charge of a commercial vessel of less than 20 GT operating within 200 nautical miles of the coast.

Put simply, participants attending the course are trained to be future captains of vessels up to the capacity of a 20 GT ship.

Examples of ships coming under the 20 GT category are small cargo ships serving the islands of Vanuatu such as MV Brooklyn, H-Tino and

Island Clause.

VMC nautical marine instructor, Alick Jonaru, explained to the Daily Post that the lack of understanding and failure to apply national legislation relating to the safe operation of vessels, such as the overloading ships and the prevention of pollution, was one reason why vessels were detained.

This week, the Ports and Harbor Department has warned all masters, operators and owners of all vessels against overloading ships as doing so is a breach of the country's Shipping Act.

The department of Ports and Harbor made it clear that masters and captains have been suspended for the offence.

According to Jonaru, an important session for the trainees undertaking the Master 20 GT course is marine legislation, the rules of which all captains must understand and abide by.

When the Daily Post visited

the trainees they were going through their second week of class sessions. They are expected to be starting the hands-on practical aspect of the course in the coming week.

Their sea service assessment includes navigation skills, such as applying techniques to ensure the safe operation of vessels near coastal waters, the use of charts, how to measure distances and using compasses for bearings and steering.

They will also study electronic navigation aids; weather watch keeping; watch keeping; vessel structure; rope-working; vessel manoeuvring and handling; emergency procedures and, of course, the skills of cargo handling and storage.

Participants are from Port Vila, Sanma and Malampa. The Australian-government funded TVET (Technical Vocational Education Training) Program funded the training for participants from Sanma and Malampa.