

## **Launching of first Sanma Information Centre**

The Australian High Commissioner, Jeremy Bruer, and the Minister for Tourism, Willie Jimmy, will be officially launching the Sanma Information Centre (SIC) on Tuesday 4 March 2014.

The SIC is established under the Department of Tourism (DoT) and the Vanuatu Tourism Office (VTO), with financial backing from the Australian Government; it is an initiative to help build the Tourism sector in Sanma province.

Once launched, SIC which is located in the heart of Luganville town, will enable all quality tourism operators – no matter how big or small – market their products internationally and take on-line bookings. It will help promote and provide information about all the quality local tourism activities and products which the Australian Government funded Sanma TVET Centre has been working tirelessly to improve through training and coaching services.

The Australian High Commissioner, Jeremy Bruer, says that the information centre is another plus for the tourism industry of Vanuatu in the northern part of Vanuatu.

“Tourism is currently a main driver of the country’s economy, and the Sanma Information Centre will enable Ni-Vanuatu operators participate in this key growth sector.

“In 2015, the centre will also start marketing Torba tourism products, thanks to the Australian Government funded TVET Centre that is to be opened in that province, so with that, the tourism industry in the northern part of the Vanuatu is in for a big boost” says the High Commissioner for Australia, Jeremy Bruer.

During the launch also, the Chairman of the SIC management board, Dave Cross, CEO of Telecom Vanuatu Limited (TVL), Prakash Bheekhoo, and the Director of DoT, George Borugu will sign a Partnership Agreement for TVL to be the key sponsor of SIC by providing communication services for a three-year period at a current annual cost of over 1 million vatu.

“With this sponsorship in place it will not only ensure the effective operations of the Centre, but also help us to focus our resources in some other areas where we need to improve; thank you TVL and thank you to the Government of Australia” said George Borugu, the Director of DoT.

A similar information centre was established in Malekula in June of 2011 through the combined support of the Australian Government funded TVET Program and the New Zealand Aid Programme. It has made a significant impact in boosting the local tourism industry in Malampa province.

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