

Note for Editor: Intended for publication in period: 8 to 9 April 2009

This is a regular update on progress with the Millennium Challenge Corporation Vanuatu Project compiled by the Design and Build Contractor – Downer EDI Works Vanuatu Ltd on behalf of the Project Team.

MCA Update #15: Efate Ring Road & Santo East Coast Road

Highlights:

Due to it being Easter this weekend this Update is provided earlier than usual, since the last Update we have again focused on constructing pavement.

Efate Work Done Last Week

The pavement team has been working in the vicinity of Meten Hill preparing the pavement for its final basecourse layer. We constructed two more culverts between Saama and Laonkarai. Paonangisu villagers continued relocating fences in their area. Further maintenance work was done on the existing road between Klem's Hill and Tanoliu. Wan Smolbag Theatre visited Epau village on Monday 6 April and held a well attended STI/HIV/AIDS Awareness session.

Efate Work Planned for This Week

The basecourse overlay and final pavement shaping will continue from Siviri and move towards Emua. The section will take several weeks to complete. This work will be preceded by final excavation and cutting to grade of the side drains throughout the length from Siviri to Emua.

Culvert construction will progress beyond Emua, including building a triple barrel structure near Laonkarai. The PWD and Paonangisu villagers will continue their fence relocation work.

Quarries

The sealing chip plant at Malarua is being test run to verify that each of the components is working properly and that the plant overall can produce sealing chips of the required size. A small celebration will be held at the quarry once a stockpile of conforming chip has been produced. The Meten Hill operation has been working extended hours to keep up with demand from the pavement team. We expect to commence development of the Tanoliu Quarry on 15 April.

Laboratory – What Do They Do?

As part of their Project organisation Downer EDI Works have bought laboratory test equipment and trained laboratory personnel to Vanuatu. Much of the equipment bought from New Zealand has been set up in the PWD laboratory in Port Vila where it has two main functions. Firstly to investigate whether materials intended to be used on the Project are suitable for use. Secondly to verify that the materials that have actually been used conform to the required standard. PWD Materials Testing Laboratory personnel are being trained to use the equipment which will be left behind for ongoing PWD use when the Project has been completed. The Downer EDI Works laboratory technicians are Renee Shipton and Lawrence Leong.

The main tests carried out in the laboratory are particle size distribution (PSD) to check coral aggregate grading (ie what size the stones are) and California Bearing Ratio (CBR) to check coral aggregate strength. Sample moisture contents and Plasticity Index are also determined. Laboratory personnel also undertake testing of the finished work, the main tests being using a Nuclear Densometer (NDM) to check pavement density and a Benkelman Beam to measure how much the road deflects when a vehicle is driven on it. In a nutshell; the denser the pavement and the smaller the deflection the better the finished pavement is.

Safety Message

A feature of road use in Vanuatu, in both urban and rural areas, is the number of pedestrians that walk on the road, this is especially so in the evening. To be safe pedestrians either need to walk where vehicles don't drive or need to make themselves visible so that drivers can see them and avoid them. In areas where there are no footpaths the safety options are limited. Making yourself visible when walking on the road is the key thing for pedestrians to do to make themselves safer. The improvement in visibility that wearing light coloured clothing at night achieves is remarkable. Pedestrians, whether in town or in the country, are urged to "wear something white at night".

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Next update will be provided on Thursday 16 April 2009

