

Note for Editor: Intended for publication in period: 15 to 17 January 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. Photographs of most of the activities mentioned are also available.

MCA Update #3: Efate Ring Road & Santo East Coast Road

Highlights: More Sealing, Contact for Community Concerns and A Big Thanks

We sealed a 1.3 km long length from Ulei Bridge and over the Marona Bridge through the Port Havannah area just before Christmas.

Community Concerns

Chiefs, landowners and communities are reminded that Chief Kalkot Mormor was appointed by the Vaturisu Council of Chiefs as liaison for the MCA - Efate Ring Road Project. This means that any Chiefs, landowners or community members with concerns or questions about the work should contact him and discuss their concerns with him directly and not the contractor's site personnel. Chief Mormor's phone number is 543 5676.

Work Done Last Week

This week we have recommenced operations after the Christmas/New Year break. Our major task has been to clear vegetation and widen the road between Saama and Lakenasua.

Work Planned for This Week

We plan to complete clearing vegetation through Siviri Village, then continue widening the existing road, starting near Saama Village and working back through Lakenasua and Undine Bay to finish at Siviri Village. We will also be preparing another 1 km section of road for sealing. This will join with the seal near Marona Bridge and extend across the Malafau Bridge to finish near the Malafau Village access road. A detour is still in place near the top of Meten Hill to allow coral material to be excavated from the old road.

Note on Programme

We initially started work in the Snake Hill area but persistent wet weather in October and the approaching "wet season" caused us to shift operations into the North Efate rain shadow area where the rainfall is significantly less than at Snake Hill. This means that we could continue to make progress with the work and not have to stop completely due to adverse weather. When we have finished the Ulei to Saama section we will work back through Tanoliu towards Snake Hill.

Malarua Basalt Quarry

Major blasting to provide loose rock to feed the crusher was completed last year. We are now working to develop the quarry site and get it ready for setting up the crushing plant next month. The large 1,100 ton boulder (NB the 500 ton figure published last year was an early estimate of the boulder's weight) that rolled onto the road has been removed and the road is fully open to traffic. The co-operation of the adjacent landowner with operations to remove the rock and allow a temporary stockpile of broken rock is much appreciated.

Santo East Coast Road

The Commissioner of Mines and MCA personnel visited Santo late in December 2008 to advance arrangements for the coral quarries required. Downer EDi Works personnel will be starting work to investigate the existing road pavement and adjacent ground conditions in late January 2009.

General

We have noticed that many pikinini's are taking an interest in the road works during their school holidays, and will often sit and watch the machinery working. While our workers will try to keep them out of the work area, parents should also warn their children to keep clear of worksites and moving machinery. It is OK for them to watch but they should do so from a safe distance and not walk or ride their bicycles through the worksites unless permitted to do so by one of our traffic controllers.

A Big Thanks

Last year we cleared and widened the road from Ulei to Meten Hill and received considerable help from the local people. This year we have been clearing and widening between Siviri and Saama villages and we would like to thank the Chiefs, land owners and villagers who have been extremely helpful and cooperative with these road construction activities. Their assistance with progressing the road works is very much appreciated.

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Next update will be provided on Thursday 22 January 2009