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Port Vila Market upgrade promises no pollution

By Len Garae
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Representatives of stakeholders checking renovation in Restaurant Wing

As part of the Cyclone Pam rehabilitation project, the upgrade works at the Port Vila Central Market are now well underway.

The Head of the Construction Project wishes to assure Port Vila Municipality and the Central Government that despite its proximity to the sea wall, the newly installed sewage system has specifically designed and built to ensure there won't be any leakage of pollution into the harbour.

In addition to the comfort of the cooks in the restaurant wing, two cooks will be entitled to one concrete sink which is a huge advantage to the current sink arrangement which caters for all cooks.

The Project involves improving the market's sanitation facilities to make them more safe and inclusive to occupants and visitors, while helping to promote hygiene, food safety, disability inclusion and gender equality.

The new facilities will provide improved toilets and washing facilities, improved drainage and food safety, increased useable area and other means to improve the market house.

The project will also improve the environmental impact of the market on the surrounding environment through the removal of the existing leaking septic tanks with a state-of-the-art waste water treatment plant.

The first project deliverable, valued at Vt10 million, to construct a central roof structure which was completed on October 17 2019. The roof will provide the market with additional undercover space for vendors, as well as additional rainwater capture and storage through the installation of gutters and four 6,000-litre rainwater storage tanks.

The central roof structure is constructed from reinforced concrete footings, columns and ring beam. The frame is a combination of galvanised steel and timber trusses, while the cladding consists of Colourbond with sections of Laserlite (polycarbonate roof sheets) to allow light access. This part of the works also includes reinforced concrete water tank stands and poly tanks, metal guttering, downpipes and storm water drainage.

The central area of the market house was handed back to the Port Vila Municipal Council and market vendors on October 18 2019 and once again accessible to the public thereafter. Works will next be concentrated in the restaurant and seafront areas of the market.

Restaurant vendors will be temporarily relocated under the new central roofed area, while new workbenches are constructed.

The Central Market handicraft vendors are scheduled to remain at their temporary location in the Port Vila Convention Centre until mid-December, when they will move back to the market house permanently.

The project has experienced some delays and as such is now expected to be completed late February 2020.

The Port Vila Central Market Hygiene, Sanitation and Amenity Facilities Improvement Project is a project under the Australian Government-funded Tropical Cyclone Pam Recovery Program.

The project has received some additional funding from UN Women Fiji Multi-Country office through its Markets for Change (M4C) Project. UN Women M4C project is principally funded by the Australian Government with recent support from the Government of Canada. UNDP is an implementing partner of M4C Project.

In their final inspection of the renovation works, Handicraft Vendors' Association President

Rebecca thanked the Australian Government and UN Women M4C Project and all partners for their cooperation towards working to achieve the vision of the vendors.