

https://www.dailypost.vu/news/vila-central-hospital-issued-with-direction-notice/article_a9d786d2-1fbc-11eb-a32b-0f59bfe09302.html

Vila Central Hospital issued with Direction Notice

By Anita Roberts
Nov 6, 2020

1 of 3



The Chlorination Tank. With high turbidity, chlorination is not effective, according to the water quality report. Photos: Do

The Department of Curatives and Hospital Services has been instructed under a Direction Notice to repair and fix the Vila Central Hospital's (VCH) Waste Water Treatment Plant that is discharging sewage water directly into the lagoon by December 4 this year or it will be penalized.

Independent tests from Griffith University has confirmed the Department of Water Resource (DoWR) findings of high contamination on the discharge area.

The treatment plant is not being maintained properly, inspections revealed.

Under the Direction Notice, VCH must put up notices to inform the public of the situation and advise them not to use the lagoon for any recreational activities and take necessary measures to assess and fix the issues.

Temporary measures must also be explored. Coastal monitoring is required before and after the repairs have been completed.

It is an offence for the Department of Curatives and Hospital Services not to comply with the Direction Notice.

Direct effluent discharge of sewage water into the lagoon is a breach of the Water Resources Management Act, said the DoWR.

The act states “a person who without authorization pollutes any water, is guilty of an offence punishable on conviction for a penalty of Vt5,000,000”.

Acting Director of the Department of Curative and Hospital Services, Johnson Wabaiat, confirmed the cause of the hospital waste into the lagoon as no proper maintenance of the treatment plant.

According to the DoWR, currently there is no qualified person managing the system,.

Acting Director Wabaiat conveyed yesterday that works to implement the conditions of the directive notice are underway at the executive level.

An expert will be engaged to conduct an assessment for the existing system and provide recommendation for improvement, he said.

It would cost over Vt1 million to conduct the assessment, he added.

Residents of Erakor and along the Seaside area have been voicing concerns about the waste water treatment plant issue for some time, said the DoWR.

“These issues of pollution pose threats to their health and livelihoods.”

The DoWR is taking action on the issue based on substantial data obtained for more than decade through monitoring, said Director Erickson Sammy.

Consultation is underway between relevant authorities and Erakor Community to issue a ban on areas at the lagoon that are highly polluted, said DoWR.