

# Northwest Malekula wants better Telecommunication service

By Harrison Selmen

## THE PEOPLE ON NORTHWEST

(A) Malekula are appealing to the Government to help them sort out the issue of poor telecommunication in their area.

Poor telecommunication services in Northwest (A) Malekula is forcing villagers to flock to hot spot areas where network is available to make phone calls.

The situation often forces villagers to climb tall trees, go to the hill tops or even go out to the end of the reef to find and connect to a network in order to make a phone call. "These are our hot spot areas which are sometimes risky especially climbing a tall tree or going out to the end of the reef which can be dangerous if there is a tsunami but these are the risks we must take if we must make phone calls," says

Jackson Yanhambath a villager in North West Malekula.

Yanhambath told Daily Post that the villages affected and in dire need of good telecommunication services are Espigles Bay, Metgun, Wormul, Malua Bay, Lekan, Penenavet, Tanmaru, Rambak and Weluck.

Some of the villages include part of Northwest (B) area on the island.

■ CONTINUE ON PAGE 5

## Provincial Weather Forecast

Weather Information provided by the Vanuatu Meteorology & Geo-Hazard Department.

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### El-Niño

'El Nino i stap finis long Vanuatu: Yumi mas sevem wota, mani mo kala

#### Provincial Weather Forecast

	TORBA			SANMA
	Today	Tomorrow	Today	
FORECAST OUTLOOK	Max 32°C Min 25°C 	Max 32 Min 25°C 	Max 32°C Min 23°C 	Partly cloudy. Light to moderate SE winds.
COASTAL MARINE FORECAST	 SE winds 12/17 knots. Light to moderate seas to 1.0 metre.	 SE winds 12/17 knots. Light to moderate seas to 1.0 metre.	 SE winds 12/17 knots. Light to moderate seas to 1.0 metre.	SE winds 12/17 knots. Light to moderate seas to 1.0 metre.

#### TODAY

#### TOMOR

SUNRISE	SUNSET	SUNRISE
0511	1750	0511

	TIME	HEIGHT (m)	TIME
PORT VILA	0507	1.47	0031
	1103	0.42	0651
	1714	1.62	1235
	2215	0.24	1838
LUGANVILLE	0411	1.72	0551
	1015	0.33	1142
	1622	1.90	1745

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■ FROM PAGE 2

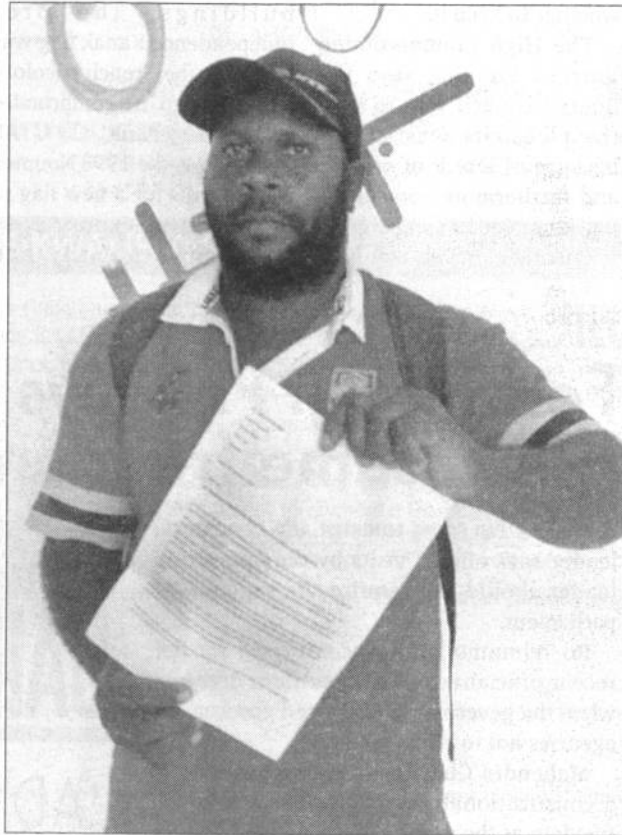
In a letter signed by six chiefs from Northwest Malekula the people from the named villages described the service as unreliable and inaccessible. They said the dilemma has become expensive because many of the people must pay extra on transport to travel to other areas or to Lakatoro just to make calls.

The letter was addressed to the Digicel Company and copied to other stakeholders such as the Telecommunication Radio-communications Regulator (TRR), Malampa Provincial Government and the Prime Minister's Office.

He said they believed the network they get is from the Digicel towers on Malo and Araki Island, an offshore island on South Santo.

The poor coverage in these areas raises questions as to why the telecommunication companies continue to sell mobile phones to these areas when telecommunication network and reception in these places are very poor and need upgrading to a better standard. The disadvantaged people in these remote and isolated places feel that they are still victims of poor telecommunication infrastructures and are calling on authorities to recognize their plight and to take steps in improving their situation.

"Our mobile phones are becoming useless back in our



Yanhambath with a copy of a letter signed by 6 chiefs

village," said Yanhambath.

Yanhambath said the affected Villages of Northwest (A) and (B) make up a total of approximately 5,000 people.

The Northwest part of Malekula contributes immensely to the economy of Vanuatu in terms of kava and copra. This lack of essential telecommunication service is a huge setback for these communities and their inhabitants, as they must pay additional costs to generate income for them, which can

be very demoralizing.

The villagers are waiting in anticipation to see a tower either from the Digicel or TVL installed on their area to help solve the communication issue and in fact help them with marketing and selling their products since in this day and age telecommunication is now a very important tool in business promotion and growth.

Yanhambath is the area secretary for the Northwest council of chiefs.



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