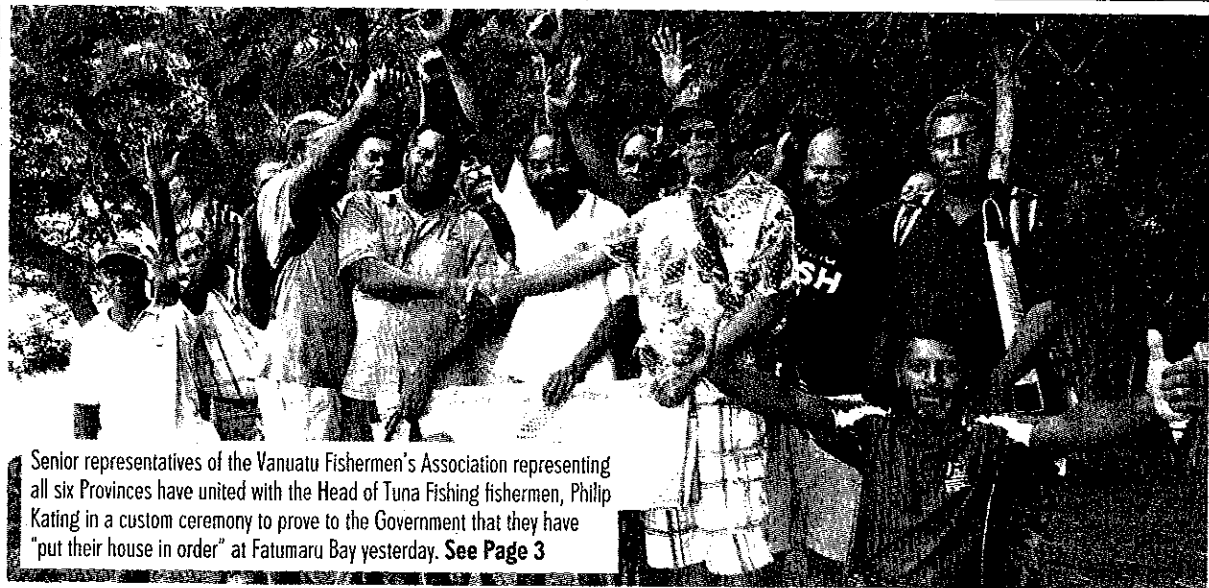


VBTC kick-starts work on national Digital Terrestrial TV project

VANUATU BROADCASTING AND Television Corporation (VBTC) Board Chairlady Jennifer Kausei and VBTC Acting General Manager Fred Vurobaravu yesterday facilitated the official appointment of the 8 member VBTC Task Force team by Prime Minister Joe Natuman, who are now tasked with the responsibility of advising

the Board and Government on the implementation of the national Digital Terrestrial TV project. With the support of the incumbent government, VBTC intends to roll out the project in three phases beginning mid 2015 over three years.

□ Story continues on page 3



Senior representatives of the Vanuatu Fishermen's Association representing all six Provinces have united with the Head of Tuna Fishing fishermen, Philip Kating in a custom ceremony to prove to the Government that they have "put their house in order" at Fatumaru Bay yesterday. See Page 3

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□ From Front Page

Headed by Government Public Relations Officer Kiery Manasseh, Task Force members are Jackson Mlake from the Office of the Government Chief Information Officer, Noel Mariasua from VBTC, Louise Nassak from TRR, Ephraim Songi from EDS Consultancy and a Legal Representative.

The establishment of the Task Force follows the decision taken by the Government through its Council of Ministers (COM) meeting on October 22nd 2014 to approve the concept of the national Digital Terrestrial TV project (DTTV) with 2 outstanding resolutions:

1. The separation of the functions of radio and TV broadcasting, and the regulation of broadcasting licenses (Resolution 2); and
2. Work with the Office of the Government Chief Information Officer (OGCIO) on options to move the DTTV project forward (Resolution 3).

The proposed National Digital TV project will carry essential Radio and TV services which are crucial to the development and livelihood of the people of this country.

The Task Force will collect information through the project's consultation process and related discussions with relevant stakeholders over the two resolutions including final draft of the new Broadcast Regulator Law and the subsequent amendments to the principal VBTC Act with the suppression of Part 3 of the VBTC Act which carries the Licensing responsibilities.

An Expression of Interest (EOI) notice is put out on public media outlets and public forums this week, and after Expressions of Interests to attract genuine interested partners and specify how their interests and potential investments can be carried in a form of a JV arrangement with the Government's national TV project.

The Board of Directors of VBTC is determined that

these development initiatives and the legislative changes that run in parallel and once completed, will boost the national media organization chances of becoming self-reliant financially and will deliver essential services of radio and television to the people of Vanuatu wherever they are, nationally or internationally.

By separating the dual functions held by VBTC until now, there is hope that the broadcast industry will be managed more professionally and impartially in light of more players coming into the market.

It was on November 14, 2014 that the VBTC Board of Directors, on behalf of the Office of the Prime Minister decided to establish a Task Force committee pursuant to Part 2, Section 42 of the VBTC on the 'Establishment of Advisory Committee'.

The 8-member Task Force were appointed by Prime Minister Joe Natuman in November 2014 but received their letter of appointment yesterday.