

# PM wants nationwide broadcast

## Adamant to find VBTC problem

By Thompson Marango

**PRIME MINISTER CHARLOT** Salwai, who is also Minister responsible for media, said it is important for the national broadcaster to cover the whole country.

"VBTC is important to the government, as part of the 100 Days Plan, the Government wants radio coverage to reach the whole country," Prime Minister Salwai told Vanuatu Broadcasting and Television Corporation (VBTC) Board of Directors and staff during his visit to the national broadcaster Thursday this week.

Stressing the importance of media and the role that VBTC is expected to play as the government's mouth piece, Salwai questions why the state-owned institution is not functioning up to



As part of the 100 Days Plan, the Government wants radio coverage to reach the whole country, Prime Minister Salwai told VBTC Board of Directors and staff during his visit to the national broadcaster Thursday this week.

expectations.

"Media is important because information is important so people can be aware of what is happening nationally, regionally and also internationally.

"Unfortunately not

everybody is reached. It is our homework to increase the coverage because it's not only information but also educational for the people."

The Prime Minister recalls having access to radio coverage when growing up

as a kid on his home Island of Pentecost during the colonial era.

"Now there is no coverage, even in rural Efate," stressed Prime Minister Salwai.

"With more facilities in place like the e-govt

network, submarine cable and the establishment of the Office of the Government Chief Information Officer (OGCIO), lack of coverage is a challenging issue.

Meanwhile Salwai is concerned about the status of

the institution and has made it clear that he intends to get to the bottom of the issues that are affecting VBTC.

He calls for more transparency and accountability saying the institution's annual report does not reflect the reality of the situation it is facing.

The Prime Minister pointed out that VBTC has an annual budget very year from the government on top of the fees from other operators.

He said he will get a second opinion in terms of an audit report if needed because he understand the institution has a lot of outstanding which are not included in its annual report.

"I want to find out what needs to be addressed," he said.

Overall he said as Minister responsible he will continue to support the media to work freely in the country.

In response, VBTC General Manager, Fred Vurobaravo thanked the Prime Minister for the challenging words saying it will take time and collective effort to address the issues.