

Regulator calls on Maewo community to use telemedicine network wisely

By Jonas Cullwick

THE TELECOMMUNICATIONS and Radiocommunications Regulator (TRR), Dalcie Baniala, has appealed to the people of Maewo to use the telemedicine network at Naviso village wisely because it is an asset of the Government of Vanuatu to help improve the lives of the people.

She warned that wrong use of the network would be bad for the system and it would damage the hard work of those who strove to have it installed.

"I call on the community of Maewo as users to own the system, to use it wisely and to look after it as your own property because it is an asset belonging to the Government that has come to you," she said to people gathered for the launching of the network at Naviso village, east Maewo last week.

"The network means that you must use it," she added saying, "two things can happen when you use the facility — you can use it rightly or you can use it wrongly. Using it wrongly cannot be accepted because the Government cannot waste public money supporting such a service."

Regulator Baniala, who herself comes from Maewo encouraged the people to ask and they will be shown how to



Regulator Dalcie Baniala speaking at the launching of the telemedicine facility at Naviso, east Maewo last week

use the system and they will know how to use it rightly.

"The internet broadband network will bring in all sorts of rubbish among the good and it is for you to manage yourselves because the bad choice will spoil the community," she warned. She said that as the regulator appointed by the Prime Minister it was her task to ensure that whatever came into the country in terms of telecommunications and radio

communications was of quality. And that it was everyone's responsibility to ensure that money spent on the project was not wasted.

To get this communication facility to Maewo and especially to one of the remotest in Vanuatu and the region meant a commitment for everyone to work together to ensure the telemedicine facility worked to serve the people.

Baniala particularly paid

tribute to Gerard Metsan the Chief Government Information Officer and his staff and Kacific, the owners of the satellite used by the service, for their contribution.

She urged the people of Naviso and Maewo as a whole not to leave the telemedicine facility idle because other places in the country their people also want to have this sort of system.

"So, we the people of Maewo

are so fortunate because the Prime Minister agreed for us to have the network and the Minister of Health agreed for us to have this system on Maewo.

"And this system will be replicated in other areas of Vanuatu and eventually in the region as well. There are other places that lack communication, even on the eastern part of South Pentecost there is no network.

"So it is important that we on Maewo provide the leadership on how to use the facility in the right way."

She pointed to use of the facility by students in the village to do online studies with the University of the South Pacific Emalus Campus in Port Vila without having to travel to Port Vila to do these courses. They can access course books, do their assignments and send them to Port Vila, New Zealand or wherever.

"If you have a private doctor, you do not need to speak with the nurse you can use the network to speak with your private doctor. This is one good use of the telemedicine system," Ms. Baniala continued.

"Teachers complain about lack of books, now they should not complain because now they can go online using the system and search for information for library, the Bible, how to do business, plant a garden of pineapple and fishing for instance, or find out about the weather condition for the day."

In terms of the TRR's role, the Government's policy requires it to ensure that by January 2018, 98% of the population of Vanuatu must have access to mobile phone and secondly internet services. And this is a huge commitment that can only be achieved with the support of the people.