

VBTC has sole right to broadcast World Cup: Chairman



Chairman Nimbtki adamant only
VBTC television broadcaster licensed by
FIFA to rebroadcast World Cup

THE CHAIRMAN OF THE VANUATU Broadcasting and Television Corporation (VBTC) Board, Dr. Gregoire Nimbtki, has issued the following statement to clear the air of what he insists is “a colossal

misinformation campaign on social media and private media about television rights in Vanuatu for the 2018 FIFA World Cup”.

- The rights for the 2018 FIFA World Cup are exclusively owned by FIFA and VBTC remains the only broadcast media outlet in Vanuatu that applied and paid for the television broadcast rights and relevant license for the 2018 FIFA World Cup. No other pay television outlet operating in Vanuatu applied to FIFA for the license.

- As the only television broadcaster in Vanuatu licensed by FIFA to rebroadcast the 2018 FIFA World Cup, the terms of the license require VBTC to protect FIFA's rights in this territory including any infringement of the FIFA brand and unauthorised transmission. As part of its obligation, VBTC wrote to all pay television operators in Vanuatu advising them of these rights and informed them of VBTC's intention to take all relevant action to protect those rights.

- Simultaneously, we sought FIFA's approval to allow Vanuatu's pay

television operators to rebroadcast the Television Blong Vanuatu signal on their respective pay television platforms. We await FIFA's response!

- Under no circumstances can VBTC (irrespective of its license to rebroadcast the 2018 FIFA World Cup in Vanuatu) transfer those rights without the explicit approval of FIFA. Neither can VBTC on-sell those rights as those rights are only vested in FIFA. Anyone suggesting otherwise is grossly irresponsible.

- VBTC's decision to apply and pay for the relevant broadcast rights and licenses effectively ends years of unscrupulous practices by some pay operators who continue to operate in Vanuatu without a valid broadcast license. These operators have included some English television channels as part of their ‘pay television package’ which is sold to unsuspecting customers in Vanuatu without the appropriate rights to broadcast licensed content such as the 2018 FIFA World Cup into the Vanuatu territory. A classic case in point is SBS Australia which does not have the rights to transmit the

2018 FIFA World Cup into Vanuatu.

“It's mischievous and highly irresponsible for any pay TV operator to claim that VBTC has the rights to ‘on-sell’ or ‘transfer’ the FIFA television rights to another operator. The question that these operators need to answer is why didn't they apply and pay for the rights. The answer probably lies in the fact that they have cashed in on selling a pay television service without acquiring all the appropriate rights from the respective channels.

“We realise that broadcast regulatory issues remain a contentious issue in Vanuatu because under the Vanuatu Broadcasting & Television Act, VBTC is also the broadcast regulator. The new VBTC Board and Management are fully aware of the perceived conflict of interest of VBTC's dual role but as the Act currently stands, VBTC remains the Regulator and is required to perform its functions as such.

“It should also be noted that work is at an advanced stage to separate out VBTC's regulatory functions and transfer it to another entity.

When this amendment is passed by Parliament, VBTC can focus solely on its functions as Vanuatu's national broadcasting service and leave the regulatory functions to someone else.

“But, until such time the Parliament of Vanuatu amends the Act, my Board of Directors has instructed management to enforce the Act which unfortunately some operators will find unpalatable. That is the law and operators need to respect that.

“VBTC will also continue to work closely with the Telecommunications & Radio communications Regulator (TRR) to ensure compliance with one of the conditions of the license issued by TRR which requires broadcasters to comply with conditions outlined under the Broadcasting & Television Act [Cap 214].

“We will also be announcing a major partnership this week that expands the Television Blong Vanuatu signal along with Radio Vanuatu and Paradise FM nationwide. This will also be a first for Vanuatu and is in line with VBTC's reform program”.