

VARs NEWSLETTER

Ministry of Lands & Natural Resources – Vanuatu Affordable and Resilient Settlements Project Weekly Newsletter



THE WORLD BANK



COMMUNITY CONSULTATION - OHLEN MATASO

PROJECT SPOTLIGHT: BRIGHTER, SAFER SETTLEMENTS

The VARs Project continues to transform informal settlements across Port Vila with a strong focus on safety, accessibility and resilience. Each intervention is designed not only to improve infrastructure, but also to build a sense of pride, belonging and preparedness within the community.

Recent Achievements:

Solid Waste Platforms

- Sixty durable steel waste collection platforms have been installed. These platforms are already making a significant difference by improving community hygiene, preventing indiscriminate dumping and reducing blockages in drainage systems, which often cause flooding during heavy rain.

Community Lighting

- Plans are underway to install 90 pathway lights and 50 streetlights. Beyond improving visibility at night, these lights will create safer spaces for women, children and young people. They will also extend opportunities for evening markets, social activities and safer commuting after dark.

Accessibility & Mobility

- Drainage works, new footpaths and disability access ramps are being rolled out in Ohlen Mataso, Anamburu, Seaside and Tokyo Le Lagon. These enhancements ensure that older residents, women with children and people living with disability can move around more safely and independently.

Collectively, these upgrades represent more than infrastructure — they symbolise healthier, safer and more resilient communities.

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COMMUNITY CONSULTATION - TOKYO BUNINGA



TOKYO RUBBISH COLLECTION

COMMUNITY VOICES: WHAT RESIDENTS SAY

Numerous Focus Group Discussions (FGDs) continued to give residents the opportunity to share both their challenges and aspirations. The voices captured continue to guide VARS interventions and ensure that projects respond directly to community needs.

Top Challenges Identified

- **Drainage:** Frequent flooding affects homes, businesses, and schools.
- **Roads & Walkways:** Poor road conditions and the absence of proper pavements make daily movement unsafe.
- **Street Lighting:** Dark, unlit pathways reduce safety and hinder evening economic activity.
- **Sanitation:** Overburdened shared facilities urgently require upgrading to meet growing population demands.

How VARS Will Add Value

- **Drainage upgrades:** Healthier environments and reduced flooding incidents.
- **Street lighting:** Safer neighborhoods, reduced crime, and improved evening commerce.
- **Sanitation & ramps:** More inclusive access, especially for women, elderly, and people with disabilities.
- **Road improvements:** Safer transport and enhanced opportunities for trade, work, and mobility.

“With proper drainage and lighting, we can open new businesses and feel safer walking at night.”

– Community Member, Seaside

COMMUNITY READINESS & GOVERNANCE

One of the strongest indicators of success is the commitment of local communities to sustain and own the upgrades.

Community Liaison Committees (CLCs)

- Active across the four settlements, CLCs ensure representation of men, women, and youth, giving all groups a voice in the decision-making process.

Local Governance

- Collaboration with Councils of Chiefs, youth groups, and women's committees provides an inclusive platform where traditional and modern governance structures come together to support project outcomes.

Ownership & Sustainability

- Communities are forming ad-hoc maintenance committees to care for new facilities, recognizing that sustainability depends not only on external support but also on local stewardship. This spirit of ownership ensures that benefits will extend far beyond the project cycle.

Together with our community partners, we continue to demonstrate that building brighter, safer settlements is not just about infrastructure, but about dignity, opportunity, and resilience for all.



SEASIDE RUBBISH REMOVAL



TRASH RACKS

FEEDBACK & CONTRIBUTIONS:

We want your input!

Send your updates, suggestions, or stories to de@vars.vu by Thursday 3 PM for inclusion in next week's issue.