

GOUVERNEMENT DE LA REPUBLIQUE DU VANUATU

Autorité de Régulation des Services Publics
Ministère des Finances et de la Gestion Economique

B.P. 9093
Port Vila
VANUATU

Téléphone : (678) 29795 / 23335 / 23521
Télécopie : (678) 27426



GOVERNMENT OF THE REPUBLIC OF VANUATU

Utilities Regulatory Authority
Ministry of Finance and Economic Management

PMB 9093
Port Vila
VANUATU

Tel: (678) 29795 / 23335 / 23521
Fax: (678) 27426

Website: www.ura.gov.vu

Press release: 9 February 2012

A URA Staff on Three-Month Secondment with Australian Energy Regulator

Every January, people make resolutions to try new things and move to new places. Ms. Maureen Malas, Project Manager at the Utilities Regulatory Authority of Vanuatu (URA), will achieve both in February when she goes to Australia for a three-month secondment with the Australian Energy Regulatory Office (AER) which is part of the Australian Competition and Consumer Commission (ACCC).

Ms. Malas will be spending a week in Canberra for the theoretical part of the AER's Graduate Program and continue on to Melbourne to be involved in practical issues. The AER conducts electricity tariff reviews and she will be part of the team setting tariffs for all distribution companies across Australia's states. The Graduate Program will include specific focus areas and projects that Ms. Malas will be able to complete during her term.

This secondment is part of the Authority's training plan for its staff with the view to achieving its 2012 Work Plan and promoting capacity building within the URA and the country.

The Authority's Chairperson Johnson Naviti commented: "This arrangement allows the URA to share experiences and knowledge with the Australian Energy Regulator. Ms. Malas has the opportunity to increase her expertise in energy regulation and sector efficiency, which will help her personal development and in turn benefit Vanuatu. Training local staff is one of our main objectives so that we may provide the best possible skills and services to our stakeholders in Vanuatu."

Ms. Malas, born in Mele Village and a graduate of BComm – Accounting and minor in Economics – from the University of the South Pacific, has been with the URA for over a year as Project Manager. She has been nominated for this assignment with the AER because she has proven herself to be a dedicated employee.

Some of the operational projects she has completed include: issuing the URA's 2010 Annual and Audit Report as well as the URA's 2010 and 2011 Work Programs; facilitating knowledge sharing sessions; and establishing a finance and accounting system for the Authority.

Ms. Malas assisted in regulatory projects such as tariff monitoring, outage reporting and utility performance reviews.

The Authority's Manager Regulation Ms. Lizzie Taura said: "It is rare to see women in regulatory roles as this is a new field of in the Pacific. Ms. Malas will contribute to the Authority and our nation in several ways. In the future, we hope to welcome experts from the AER or other Pacific regulators who wish to exchange knowledge and are interested in staff development between organisations."

###

About the Utilities Regulatory Authority

The URA was set up under the *Utilities Regulatory Authority Act No. 11 of 2007*. The Authority acts independently of the Government and its primary purpose is to increase access to safe, reliable and affordable electricity and water services, and to protect the long-term interests of consumers throughout Vanuatu. In the electricity sector, the Authority monitors the concessions operated by UNELCO in Malekula, Port Vila and Tanna; and Vanuatu Utilities and Infrastructure Ltd (VUI) in Luganville. In addition, the Authority manages consumer disputes and advises the Government on matters related to electricity and water. It also reviews tariffs under the rules of the Concessions Agreements and relevant legislation.

Contact Information

Website: www.ura.gov.vu

Phone: (678) 23335 Fax: (678) 23087

Address: Vanuatu National Provident Fund Building, Ground Floor

Postal address: PMB 9093 Port Vila VANUATU