

## Utilities Regulatory Authority URA NEWSLETTER – JULY AUGUST SEPTEMBER

"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."



### NEWS

**URA Will Be without a Commissioner and CEO (28 September 2012).** In a letter dated 20 July 2012, the Honourable Minister of Finance announced to the Utilities Regulatory Authority's Commission that he would not renew the contract of the Chief Executive Officer (CEO) Carmine Piantedosi.

[Read the media release](#)

**URA Clarifies Article on Electricity Subsidy (7 September 2012).** On 14 July 2012, the URA was concerned to read an article entitled "Electricity cost to drop: Kalsakau" even though we, the economic regulator in the electricity and water sectors, had not heard about any cost reduction.

[Read the media release](#) | [Read related letter to the Government of Vanuatu](#)

**URA Releases its Electricity Prepayment Meter Draft Decision for Consultation (31 August 2012).** The Authority's draft decision finds that the proposed prepayment meter system is not in the long term interest of UNELCO's Port Vila customers.

[Read the media release](#)

**Reliability of the Electricity Network in Vanuatu (16 August 2012).** The performance and reliability of Vanuatu's electricity networks have until recently been regulated in accordance with provisions set out in relevant concession contracts. Following a review of the requirements, the Utilities Regulatory Authority (URA) identified some shortfalls in the contracts with respect to reliability, quality of supply and customer service obligations imposed on the utilities.

[Read the feature story](#)

**URA Statement Regarding Misleading Information about Prepayment Meters (3 August 2012).** The Utilities Regulatory Authority was concerned to see prepayment meters mentioned several times in a Daily Post article given that it has not yet approved this type of meters and is conducting a review. The utility assured the Authority that no prepayment meters had been installed.

[Read the media release](#)

**Vanuatu Is more than a Dot on the Map! (25 July 2012).** Vanuatu is the only small island nation in the South Pacific that has an efficient energy regulator and I was proud to represent my country at the 5th World Forum on Energy Regulation in Quebec, Canada (May 2012), among 311 energy regulators.

[Read the feature story](#)

**UNELCO and KUTH Energy Propose to Change Consumer Protection (23 July 2012).**

The Utilities Regulatory Authority (URA) is once again alerting the electricity consumers in Vanuatu that UNELCO is attempting to change the law which created the Authority and protects electricity and water consumers.

[Read the media release](#) | [Read related letter to the Government of Vanuatu](#)

**URA: From the Act of 2007 to Actions (18 July 2012).** The Government and the Parliament of Vanuatu passed the URA Act in 2008 to create the Utilities Regulatory Authority (URA) and in 2010 the country saw its very first electricity tariff reduction.

[Read the feature story](#)

## REPORTS

In August, the Authority published the following report:

### **Electricity Prepayment Meter Draft Decision Paper**

The Authority's draft decision finds that the proposed prepayment meter system is not in the long term interest of UNELCO's Port Vila customers. Reasons thereof are outlined in detail in the draft decision and include major issues the Authority has identified and which have not been addressed by the utility thus far.

[Read the report](#) | [Read the Executive Summary](#)

## CONSULTATIONS

Each year, the Authority hands down a range of decisions, determinations and reports relating to regulated industries in Vanuatu. Each decision is preceded by a program of consultations with major stakeholders. Once a consultation is advertised, stakeholders are encouraged to outline issues to be considered. The Authority relies heavily on the input of all the stakeholder groups for its decisions.

The consultation for the **Electricity Prepayment Meter Draft Decision Paper** closed on 17 September.

**Contact:** Nima Heschmat [nheshmat@ura.gov.vu](mailto:nheshmat@ura.gov.vu) 678 23335

Submissions can be made in person at the office of the Utilities Regulatory Authority on the ground floor of the VNPF Building Port Vila, by regular mail to this address: Utilities Regulatory Authority, PMB 9093, Port Vila VANUATU. Submissions may also be made by calling on (678) 23335 or visiting the office in the ground floor of the VNPF building.

## PUBLIC EDUCATION PROGRAM

The purpose of the Public Education Program (PEP) is to educate and inform the public on matters related to electricity and water supply services in Vanuatu. The program consists of individual sessions addressing specific issues that the Authority considers relevant for public awareness.

After several successful presentations on understanding an electricity bill, the Public Education Program focuses on the next topics: educating people on the various aspects of obtaining and maintaining an electricity customer connection, and reminding customers how they can save money by better managing their electricity consumption.

Associations and communities are welcome to contact us to invite our speakers to make a presentation on any of the PEP topics. **Contact:** Romney Marum [rmarum@ura.gov.vu](mailto:rmarum@ura.gov.vu) 678 23335

## CUSTOMER ENQUIRIES

Contact us if you have any question that the utility was unable to answer.

You may come to our office in the VNPF building or call us at (678) 23335. You may also write us to Utilities Regulatory Authority, PMB 9093, Port Vila VANUATU.

## EVENTS/TRAINING

The local staff attended a leadership workshop in Port Vila to improve their interpersonal skills and increase the team's efficiency.

The URA CEO attended the Renewable Energy and Energy Efficiency Trade and Investment Forum (8 & 9 August 2012) in Fiji and gave the Vanuatu perspective from the regulation angle.