

## Vanuatu Short Term Mission Report

Three of us from St Stephan's Presbyterian Church in Dunedin: John Speirs; Richard Dawson and myself (Simon Niblock), went on a short term mission trip to Port Villa in Vanuatu in August 2017. Our project was to repair two flats within Jensen House, which is owned by the Presbyterian Church of Vanuatu. Each team member funded their own travel and accommodation, while the cost of the repairs to Jensen House were jointly funded by the PCANZ and our men's breakfast group cutting and selling firewood.

The flats needed to have internal repairs and modifications made and then be painted. This included installing a bench top, repairing and replacing louver windows and mosquito screens over windows, replacing a ceiling panel, installing a toilet, and the installation of a porch over an external doorway. The three of us teamed-up with four local men: Freddy; Yowell; Noel; and Patterson, who had various building, plumbing and electrical skills, all in all, we made for a competent team!

John, Richard and I departed Dunedin on Friday the 11<sup>th</sup> of August and after an overnight stay in Auckland, arrived in Port Villa on Saturday the 12<sup>th</sup>. We were warmly welcomed at the airport by fellow kiwis: Neville and Gloria Jones (from Blenheim) and Martyn and Annette Vincent (from Hamilton). We had a couple of days of orientation around Port Villa and met many local people at the main Presbyterian Church in Port Villa on Sunday morning. Work began in earnest on Monday morning after Neville transported us to Jensen House where we met the other four Vanuatu members of our team. We worked well together as a team, partnering-up to nail, clean and paint as we went along. After four-and-a-half days we completed the work and we stood back and admired the improvements we'd made.



**Black Sands villagers proudly showing us their village water tap**



**Simon building a veranda over the door**

We made sure we had some rest and recreation days scheduled into our programme too. One evening we went along to a men's discussion group and on another evening we ate out at a Chinese restaurant. In our free time we also swam at a local resort, saw an amazing fire acrobatics/dance show, went to the local museum, and saw lots of amazing scenery. Our big sight-seeing day was when Martyn and Annette took us around Efate Island showing us a number of sites, including: a turtle sanctuary, a very large and impressive banyan tree, lovely swimming beaches, a World War 2 museum, and a Presbyterian College.

Both of our kiwi host couples (the Jones and Vincent's) were fantastic, making sure we were comfortable, informed and transported to where we needed to be. I came away from this short term mission feeling really encouraged and enriched from the experience.



Meeting with the President of Vanuatu, Tallis Obed Moses

I really admire the work of the Presbyterian Church of Vanuatu. There were so many examples of how local people have been significantly helped by the church following cyclone Pam in 2015. I encourage anyone to consider a short-term mission trip to Vanuatu. There are many ways to help and you will benefit from the experience as much, if not more than the people of Vanuatu.



The team in action

Richard cleaning tiles with Hydrochloric acid



The team on completion of the work

*Written by Simon Niblock*