

## Port vila grid stabilization

Port Vila is located within the South Pacific Convergence Zone, within the cyclone belt and approximately 50km east of the New Hebrides Trench, an active source of tectonic events that continue to trigger major earthquakes and tsunamis. Port Vila and its surrounding area possesses a diverse geological composition and wealth of exploitable natural resources. The shallow coastal areas abutting Port Vila provide access to marine materials, food products, and natural assets generating tourism-driven economic activity.

Port Vila is characterised by a two-season tropical climate, experiencing relatively mild annual average temperatures year-round. During the dry season (May-October) minimum and maximum temperatures average 20.1°C and 26.8°C respectively, while during wet season months (November-April) temperatures are slightly higher and average 22.7°C and 29.7°C, respectively. Port Vila's climate is classified as tropical rainforest or equatorial (Köppen climate classification: Af).

The city experiences heavy rainfall and high humidity throughout the year, though inter-annual rainfall exhibits significant variability. Historically, roughly two thirds of Port Vila's approximately 1500-4000mm of annual rainfall has fallen within the Wet Season with rainfall usually peaking in March (average precipitation of 321mm/month) and reaching its nadir in September (87mm/month average).

Port Vila is located on the south-west coast of the island of Efate, one of approximately 82 islands that comprise the Y-shaped archipelago in the South Pacific. Given the coastal location of the city, it is situated within both marine and coastal ecosystems. Within the land boundaries of Port Vila, the ecosystems have been altered significantly since the area was originally settled due to fairly intensive agricultural production.

The water catchment is located north of the city centre and east of the airport, where land use is intended to be restricted to non-intensive agricultural uses. However, enforcement has been inconsistent leading to sporadic housing development in recent years.

The coastal marine ecosystem surrounding the city includes extensive reef fisheries, providing an important local food source, feature for tourism, and location for resident recreation. The coastal marine ecosystem also supports the primary inter-island trade and transportation routes.

The provision of drinking water to Port Vila is the responsibility of the private firm UNELCO, which relies primarily on surface source collected from nearby catchments. Contamination by human and animal excrement remains an issue due to the lack of source protection as well as from waste water runoff during floods or heavy rainfall. The Ministry of Health (MoH) is responsible for water quality surveillance of all water supply systems.

The city of Port Vila currently relies on a septic system for solid waste treatment. Services and associated

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sanitation were greatly improved with the construction of a sewage treatment facility in 2017. In comparison to rural areas, the proportion of households in urban areas with access to improved toilet facilities is much higher.

Surrounding Vila Harbour and set around a series of natural lagoons, beaches, and a series of islands, Port Vila continues to expand beyond its municipal boundaries, mainly to the north and east of the city centre.

All land rights within the Port Vila municipality were acquired from customary ownership by the State following Vanuatu's Independence in 1980. Therefore all land within Port Vila continues to be owned by the State and leased to private entities and individuals through long-term land leases, a process which is overseen by the Department of Lands. Outside of the municipal boundaries, wherein the majority of the rapidly-growing peri-urban informal settlement is located, land remains under customary ownership.

While Port Vila is the largest city in Vanuatu and serves as its administrative and commercial centre, it remains relatively small in terms of population, scale of urban area, and corresponding infrastructure. Despite its size, Port Vila possesses a number of important physical assets including the Bauerfield International Airport, Central Hospital, a campus of the University of the South Pacific, the National Vanuatu Museum, and the port of Port Vila which processes nearly 70 percent of the country's imports.

Port Vila retains its historic commercial centre, along with a few scattered historic residential neighbourhoods. The urban area is connected by a number of primary and secondary roads as well as water transportation utilised for commerce, tourism, and daily life. Due to tourism in Port Vila, the city and surrounding area is home to numerous hotels, and resorts.

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