



MINISTRY OF INTERNAL AFFAIRS
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Steel Rising: Emergency Shelters take shape in Port Vila

Port Vila, Vanuatu - The Greater Port Vila Urban Resilience Project (GPVURP), implemented under the leadership of the Department of Urban Affairs and Planning (DUAP) under the Ministry of Internal Affairs, has marked a significant step forward with the arrival and erection of steel portal frames for three Multi-purpose Gender Responsive Emergency Shelters (MGRES) at Freshwater Stadium, Seaside Showgrounds, and Korman.



Figure 1: Erection of steel frames and roofing of the Korman shelter – an early glimpse of the new facility taking shape.



Figure 2 The Korman shelter site – a glimpse of the new facility taking shape.

Delivered by China Civil Engineering and Construction Corporation (CCECC), these shelters are being constructed as part of efforts to strengthen disaster resilience and support inclusive urban infrastructure in Vanuatu's capital. The steel frames, now being assembled, give the public a first look at the full scale and design of the MGRES model.

To ensure high construction standards, the project's engineering firm Groupe Huit employed rigorous third-party certification of materials at Vate Industries' facility in China. Through remote video inspection and photographic documentation of component testing, the team confirmed that all steel elements met required specifications prior to shipment. As a result, only ten days after the materials arrived at the wharf, the steel structure at the Korman site was already rising.

Construction at Freshwater and Seaside also continue.

A New Standard for Emergency Shelters in Vanuatu



The Vanuatu Standard Emergency Shelter Model – designed for multiple uses and enhanced disaster resilience.

These shelters are designed to serve multiple purposes — including as market halls, school facilities, concert venues, places of worship, indoor sports areas, and first aid and police posts. Importantly, they will also function as certified emergency shelters during and after disasters.

Recently endorsed by the Council of Ministers, the MGRES reflects a new Vanuatu Standard Emergency Shelter Model. Key features include: A mezzanine with 20,000-litre water storage, offices for the Port Vila City Council (PVCC), the community, and police beat operations. Facilities include showers, toilets, a mezzanine floor, and an electrical room.

As its name suggests, the MGRES model is gender-responsive – meaning that the design, location, and use of the shelters intentionally account for the different needs of women, men, girls and boys, and people with disability. It prioritises equal access, safety, and dignity for vulnerable groups during disaster situations, while addressing existing gender inequalities that could be worsened by an emergency.

Next Steps: Shelters Beyond Port Vila

This model will soon be replicated across Vanuatu. Under the *Luganville Urban Water Supply and Sanitation Project*, two additional shelters will be constructed in Luganville, with designs for three more under GPVURP in progress for Agathis Stadium, Ohlen Freshwind, and Nambatri.

These developments are made possible through the valuable support of the Asian Development Bank (ADB) and the Irish Trust Fund and the Global Environment Fund, are part of a broader commitment to improving resilience, inclusivity, and safety for Vanuatu’s urban populations.

The GPVURP also includes a nature-based coastal protection pilot, including the planting of mangroves; and climate change modelling to guide the development and updating of key urban planning documents. The GPVURP is guided by the Greater Port Vila Resilient Urban Development

Strategy and Action Plan (GPV RUDSAP), which envisions that by 2030, Port Vila will be safe, inclusive, resilient, and a vibrant economic hub based on sustainable development.

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