

Website connection rocketed number of visitors to local bungalow

By Thompson Marango

A LOCALLY OWNED BUNGALOW in Vao, Malekula, that normally gets a maximum of 9 tourists per year has experience a tremendous hike in a year now receiving at least 94 guests each year.

Tamtam Bungalow was getting a maximum of 9 guests since its establishment until 2011 when it was introduced to the internet booking by the Tourism Department through the provincial tourism website, the malampa.travel.

One year later in 2012, the number of visiting guests increases to 94 that year and the trend has continued.

According to the Director of the Tourism Department, George Borugu, the rapid increase clearly shows the power of Information and Communication Technology and how is having a very powerful impact on the Vanuatu Tourism Sector.

"Similar (tourism) products in Malekula are also experiencing the same effect," he said.

He added that in the past when many tourists heard about Vanuatu they think Efate is all there is. That explains why they usually book to Port Vila but when they arrive in Vila they realize there is more to Vanuatu but by then their booking has been made.

"But now with the internet and the website, they can have access to every information about every Islands," said the Department of Tourism Director.

He said the websites are the reason why there has been an increase in the number of tourists traveling to areas outside Port Vila and Efate.

With online booking now available, tourists can book directly to calls-centers that have been established in the Provincial Headquarters.

In the case of Tamtam Bungalow, online bookings are received by the call-center in Lakatoro where the bungalow was then informed.