



Prime Minister Sato Kilman thanked outgoing TRR Ron Box for his hard work, and welcomed newly-appointed Dalsie Baniala at a ceremony Friday evening. She is the first Ni-Vanuatu, and the first woman, to hold the position.

First Ni-Vanuatu Telecoms Regulator

By Dan McGarry

ON NOVEMBER 20, 2015, Prime Minister Sato Kilman signed a letter of appointment for Ms Dalsie Baniala.

She is the first Ni Vanuatu Telecommunications and Radiocommunications Regulator, or TRR.

Ron Box, the incumbent, formally handed over to Ms Baniala in a formal ceremony on Friday evening.

The gala also provided occasion to celebrate the role the private sector has played in helping Vanuatu achieve its status as a regional ICT leader, and indeed a global example. The country was recently honoured at the UN with a world ICT achievement award.

Ms Baniala was the first hire after interim Telecommunications Regulator, John Crook, was appointed in early 2008.

Prior to that she had worked for nearly a decade at the University of the South Pacific's Emalus campus.

She held the position of Manager for Consumer Relations and Corporate Affairs at the time of her appointment.

She is the fourth TRR, and the first Ni-Vanuatu to hold the position. She is also the first woman to be appointed.

The selection process for a new regulator is defined in the Telecommunications and Radiocommunications Act of 2009. A panel, chaired by the Governor of the Reserve Bank, makes the selection and passes on their recommendation to the minister responsible. Currently, the Prime Minister is responsible for ICTs in Vanuatu.

The office has been the source of contention a few times in the past, most recently when a labour dispute resulted in a dozen staff and contractors

leaving. Work is progressing again, however, and Ms Baniala is confident that the future is positive. "I know everything will go well," she said, "especially because of all the support I have around me."

The TRR's primary role is to provide oversight on the telecommunications sector. It is an independent role, although in practice TRRs work closely with government and industry and try wherever possible to make progress via consensus.

In addition to its regulatory role, the TRR is also responsible for the implementation of the Government of Vanuatu's Universal Access Policy. The TRR is also mandated to provide advice to the Minister on request.

Colleagues and well-wishers from all sectors gathered for the event, which took place at the APTC campus shortly after sundown.