

The political parties and groupings of Vanuatu

First Edition

An initiative of Australian Labor's International Projects Unit and the Pacific Institute of Public Policy under the Australian Political Parties for Democracy Program (APPDP) August 2008

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Cover photo: Dan McGarry

Foreword

This is the first edition of the *Political Parties and Groupings of Vanuatu*, a collaborative project between Australian Labor's International Projects Unit, the Pacific Institute of Public Policy (PiPP) and the political parties of Vanuatu. This booklet was commissioned by the International Projects Unit, under the Australian Political Parties for Democracy Program (APPDP). APPDP programs are designed to assist the major Australian political parties promote democracy in Asia and the Pacific and build links with our counterparts around the world (see Appendices).

This booklet offers people interested in Vanuatu politics and Vanuatu's many friends around the world up to date information about the political parties and movements which have shaped and will continue to shape the political landscape in Vanuatu. For many of Vanuatu's political parties, this is the first time they have had a chance to promote their platform and vision for Vanuatu's future on a national and international scale. As we note in the introduction, the information contained in this booklet will need to be updated regularly as Vanuatu's political scene changes rapidly. We invite all Vanuatu's political parties and candidates to keep us informed about changes or corrections to their policies and platforms in preparation for the forthcoming 2008 elections, and for all future elections in Vanuatu.

We are passionate believers that political parties are fundamental building blocks in any democracy. Vanuatu's recent history shows that the rise of independents and minor parties has challenged the dominance of the major parties significantly. Some argue that this has given rise to political instability. Given the geographic, ethnic and cultural diversity of Vanuatu, an increasing emphasis on local, independent candidates could create a diverse Parliament with few unifying ideologies. The challenge for political parties and candidates is to harness the diversity of public sentiments while maintaining internal cohesion or building workable alliances with other representatives. For political parties this means reconnecting with party members and potential voters and mobilising around issues. The best bases for political alliances are agreed upon goals and shared agendas. It is no easy task developing these. But for Vanuatu to remain stable and diverse, its political parties and candidates need to continue to build links between provinces, islands, communities, ethnicities and language groups. In short, they need to stay in contact with the people while building a national debate about the future.

Vanuatu's political parties and candidates share a set of common concerns with their counterparts the world over. Foremost, they exist to find solutions to the problems faced by everyday people. There are few vehicles as effective as political parties for delivering these public sentiments into national debates. Political parties will continue to lead public debate in Vanuatu in conjunction with traditional leaders, the churches and community groups. Importantly, political parties and groupings have a unique ability to rise above regional, community, religious and linguistic differences and they will continue to shape the ways these issues play out in public policy.

Providing accessible information to voters on political party platforms and policies is a crucial step to ensuring that political parties stay connected to voters' everyday concerns. Political parties need strategies for communicating with the public about their ideas and policies. Without them, political parties can only rely on personality, family, kinship and money. These are all important, but voters need to be able to evaluate the promises made by their politicians before every election. This is what public scrutiny of government is all about. That this work represents the issues as the parties see them is therefore significant.

We have tried to capture the major debates as stated by Vanuatu's political parties. We have included entries for a number of new, start-up parties formed to contest the 2008 elections. Many of these parties will not have their candidates elected, but we have included them to capture the broad range of public policy issues being discussed presently in Vanuatu. Although we would also like to be able to capture the policies and platforms of independent candidates there are simply too many running in the 2008 elections to be represented here. We wish all candidates the best of luck.

Australian Labor wishes to express its sincere thanks to the Australian Government for funding the APPDP. Nikunj Soni, Derek Brien, Vincent Boulekone and Hannington Alatoa of the Pacific Institute of Public Policy (PiPP) undertook the bulk of research and writing of this booklet.

I would mostly like to thank the government, people and political parties of Vanuatu for their ongoing support for our APPD programs. We hope these notes contribute to a better understanding of the political situation in Vanuatu in our region and contribute to the continuation of open and sustainable political processes.

Michael Morgan Director, International Projects Unit
Australian Labor Party

July 2008

Abbreviations

APPDP	Australian Political Parties for Democracy Program
CMV	Chiefs' Movement of Vanuatu
FFVP	Family First Vanuatu Party
FMP	Friend Melanesian Party
GCP	Green Confederation Party
MA	Melanesian Alliance
MANH	Mouvement Autonomiste des Nouvelles Hebrides
MPP	Melanesian Progressive Party
NAG	Nagriamel Custom Movement
NCAP	National Community Association Party
NMA	Namangi-Aute
NUP	National United Party
PAP	People's Action Party
PIPP	Pacific Institute for Public Policy
PPP	People's Progressive Party
RUM	Reassemble of Union Movement for the People of Vanuatu
SAP	Shepherd Alliance Party
SDA	Social Democratic Alliance
TCM	Tomburin Custom Movement
UCNH	Union des Communautés des Nouvelles Hebrides
ULF	United Liberation Front
UMP	Union of Moderate Parties
UNUA	Unua one to five bloc
VACP	Vanuatu All Christians Party
VDPP	Vanuatu Democratic Protection Party
VLP	Vanuatu Labour Party
VNP	Vanuatu National Party
VP	Vanua'aku Party
VRP	Vanuatu Republican Party

Introduction

Vanuatu became independent on 30 July 1980. Previously known as the New Hebrides, Vanuatu was administered jointly by France and Britain under the Anglo-French Condominium from 1914 until 1980. At independence, Vanuatu was left with English and French educational, legal and administrative systems. In 1979, a rebellion had erupted against the nationalist Vanua'aku Pati Government. Although the VP commanded a two thirds majority in the 39 seat Parliament, many parts of the country were effectively no-go-zones for the government. Fomented by French settlers, land speculators and fragmented groups throughout the islands, the rebellion was quickly defeated, but its legacy remained a significant political cleavage in Vanuatu for a number of years. Party politics became polarised between the anglophone Vanua'aku Pati (VP)—previously known as the New Hebrides National Party—and an alliance of predominantly francophone opposition groups, the Union of Moderate Parties (UMP).

From the late 1980s onwards, the VP's dominance was eroded by breakaway groups—notably, the formation of the Melanesian Progressive Party (MPP) led by Barak Sope and the National United Party (NUP) led by the independence Prime Minister Father Walter Lini. The subsequent fragmentation of the UMP created a Parliament of shifting alliances and potentially unstable coalitions. Since the early 1990s, the break down of these old alliances has resulted in a number of minor political parties and independents contesting elections in Vanuatu. The consequent breakdown in parliamentary stability meant that forming and holding government became a complex process of negotiation between parliamentary groups, rather than the simple result of national elections. Indeed, no party has been able to form government in its own right since the 1991 elections. Since 2004, the situation has stabilised with Ham Lini and the National United Party (NUP) leading a coalition government. Importantly, this stability has been effected without legislative or constitutional reform.

Despite this challenge, Vanuatu has a strong tradition of democracy and national identity, in which regional, religious and linguistic differences have by-and-large been managed peacefully. The continued importance of national elections in Vanuatu demonstrates ably the gravity parties and candidates attach to Vanuatu's system of government.

Currently, Vanuatu's legislature consists of a unicameral Parliament containing 52 seats, elected every four years, using a single non-transferable vote (SNTV) electoral system. These seats represent an archipelago of about 80 islands and reefs, some 70 of which are inhabited. At the time of the 1999 census, its population was 186,678, with almost 80 per cent of that number residing in the rural areas. Transport and communication costs remain high in any political campaign in Vanuatu.

Members of Parliament are elected on the basis of universal suffrage through an electoral system that includes multi-member, SNTV constituencies to 'ensure fair representation of different political groups and opinions'.

The following table shows electoral results since independence.

National elections	Election results	MP
First National Election 1979	Vanua'aku Pati (VP)	25
	Pati Federel/UCNH	5
	Independent	2
	Namangi-Aute (NMA)	2
	Natuitanno (VP)	1
	MANH	1
	Nagriamel	1
	Jon Frum	1
	Kapiel	1
Total	39	
Second National Election 1983	VP	24
	Union of Moderate Parties (UMP)	12
	Nagriamel	1
	NMA	1
	Fren Melanesia Pati (FMP)	1
Total	39	
Third National Election 1987	VP	26
	UMP	19
	Independent	1
	Total	46
By-Election 1988	VP	14
	Tan Union	3
Fourth National Election 1991	UMP	19
	VP	12
	National United Pati (NUP)	10
	Melanesian Progressive Pati (MPP)	4
	FMP	1
	Total	46
Fifth National Election 1995	Unity Front	20
	VP	(13)
	Tan Union	(5)
	MPP	(2)
	UMP	17
	NUP	9
	Independent	2
	Nagriamel	1
	FMP	1
Total	50	

The political parties and groupings of Vanuatu

National elections	Election results	MP
Sixth National Election 1998	VP	18
	UMP	12
	NUP	11
	MPP	5
	Jon Frum	2
	Independent	2
	FMP	1
	Vanuatu Republican Party	1
	Total	52
By-election 1999	UMP	2
	NUP	2
Seventh National Election 2002	UMP	15
	VP	14
	NUP	8
	Independent	5
	VRP	3
	Green Confederation Party (GCP)	2
	MPP	2
	FMP	1
	NMA	1
	People's Progressive Pati (PPP)	1
	Total	52
Eighth National Election 2004	NUP*	10
	VP*	8
	UMP	8
	Independents	8
	VRP	4
	PPP	4
	GCP	3
	MPP	3
	National Community Association (NCA)	2
	NMA	1
	People's Action Pati (PAP)	1
		Total

**VP and NUP contested under a joint platform.*

Since independence, there have been eleven changes of Prime Minister (see below).

Prime Ministers	Date in office
Father Walter Lini (VP)	30 July 1980–6 Sept 1991
Donald Kalpokas (VP)	06 Sept 1991–16 Dec 1991
Maxime Carlot Korman (UMP)	16 Sept 1991–21 Dec 1995
Serge Vohor (UMP)	21 Dec 1995–23 Feb 1996
Maxime Carlot Korman (UMP)	23 Feb 1996–30 Sept 1996
Serge Vohor (UMP)	30 Sept 1996–06 March 1998
Donald Kalpokas (VP)	06 March 1998–25 Nov 1999
Barak Tame Sope (MPP)	25 Nov 1999–13 April 2001
Edward Natapei (VP)	13 April 2001–29 July 2004
Serge Vohor (UMP)	29 July 2004–11 Dec 2004
Ham Lini (NUP)	11 Dec 2004–2 Sept 2008

We hope that this booklet will provide a baseline of information about political parties, their platforms, contacts and office bearers. This publication is by no means the complete guide to Vanuatu's political parties. All of the parties listed have registered to contest the upcoming national elections. Ten parties were represented in the last parliament with a further eleven having formed since the 2004 elections. Every effort has been made to profile all parties contesting the 2008 election, however, some have not released any material in the public domain prior to our publication deadline. The parties that are known to have registered to contest the election, but are not profiled in this booklet due to lack of information include:

- Melanesian Alliance (MA)
- Social Democratic Alliance (SDA)
- Tomburin Custom Movement (TCM)
- United Liberation Front (ULF).

It is noted that parties that contested previous elections and have not registered for the upcoming election (and therefore not listed in this publication) have either ceased to operate due to a lack of people, support

or resources or have combined with other parties to form a stronger presence. This including:

- Conservative Party
- Federal Party
- Jon Frum
- Kapiel
- Mouvement Autonomiste des Nouvelles-Hebrides (MANH)
- Natatok
- Nevsem Nenparata
- Tan Union
- Union des Communautés des Nouvelles-Hebrides (UCNH).

As the 2008 election approaches, parties are still refining their policies and platforms. Given the fluid nature of politics, it is likely that changes will be made to the platforms and policies of Vanuatu's political parties. This booklet should go some way to explaining how parties have changed over time, the people behind them, and what ideas and policies parties have for the development of Vanuatu. More information should become available over time, as parties reach out to more people, civic education grows and the reporting of political events becomes more widespread. This should in turn mean a more responsive and accountable political system.

The document focuses on the present and the future, rather than the past. Where possible, however, historical background has been included. This is an essential part of any transparent curriculum vitae and is not intended in any way to compromise any party or politician.

As far as possible, the information contained in this booklet is based on interviews with party leaders and officials and on official party documents where these exist or could be obtained.

Any mistakes are entirely our own. As a 'living' document, we hope that this booklet will be updated given that new parties are still being created and parties continue to release new policies.

The authors Michael Morgan
 Nikunj Soni
 Derek Brien
 Vincent Boulekone
 Hannington Alatoa

Please forward any amendments, suggestions or updates to

Email international.projects@cbr.alp.org.au
Mail PO Box 6222, Kingston ACT 2604, Australia

CMV

Chiefs' Movement of Vanuatu

Key facts:

Leading figures – Dominique Dinh

History – Movement formed on 15 August 2007

Links – Not affiliated or linked with any other party or movement.

Parliamentary seats – 0

Stronghold – A national movement with support in all six provinces.

Status – A start up movement with considerable traction in the lead up to the 2008 general election.

CONTACT DETAILS

Address	PO Box 870, Port Vila
Telephone	+678 22125
Email	ddinh@vanuatu.com.vu

OFFICE BEARERS

Chairman	Chief Tamakaro Dominique Dinh
Treasurer	N/A (see below)
Secretary	N/A (see below)

HISTORY AND ORGANISATION

The Chiefs' Movement of Vanuatu (CMV) was founded by former National United Party (NUP) supporter and financier Dominique Dinh on 15 August 2007. For over 14 years, the Dinh family supported the National United Party (NUP) following the adoption of the eldest of the Dinh brothers (Gilbert Dinh Van Than) into the Lini family of North Pentecost in 1991. However, following the ousting of Dinh Van Than as NUP president in 2003 both brothers split with the party to go on and form their own political movements.

Dominique Dinh was adopted by the Kalpoi Family of Pango, South Efate in 1997 and was later given the chiefly titles of Tamakaro from Tanna (2006) and Lapangtau from Pango (2007).

The Chiefs' Movement does not have a structure like most political parties in Vanuatu, specifically it does not have a party president, secretary general and other office bearers. Rather the National Council of the Chiefs' Movement is represented by two chiefs from each of the six provinces, appointed on a two year term.

The National Council is the primary decision making body of the movement. Members of the National Council cannot stand as MPs without first resigning their executive post within the movement.

The movement's constitution stipulates that all MP allocations for CMV members will be distributed directly to the constituency and administered by the chiefs of that area.

OUTLOOK AND POLICIES

The motto of the Chiefs' Movement is serving the people through respect, sharing and transparent action.

The movement strongly opposes the staffing of government administration with political party officials. It promotes government that works through the roles and powers of traditional chiefs, and supports self sufficiency. Key policy objectives include:

- free primary education
- compulsory education from years 1–13 with appropriate technical training relevant for rural living
- provision of social services (clean drinking water, health and education) for the rural population
- encourage cooperatives and saving societies by re-investing MP allocations via these conduits
- increasing powers of the Ombudsman.

The Chiefs' Movement promotes the establishment of an Upper House composed of chiefs elected directly by popular vote.

The movement is proposing to field up to 30 candidates throughout the country.

SOURCES

Discussions with movement officials August 2008.

Chiefs' Movement Constitution

Chiefs' Movement Statement of Agreement/Declaration

FFVP

Family First Vanuatu Party

Key facts:

Leading figures – Rave Nikahi

History – Party was established in Vanuatu in 2008.

Links – Drawing on the name of the Family First Party founded in Australia in 2002, the FFVP also has ties with Neil Thomas Ministry and other Christian churches.

Parliamentary seats – 0

Stronghold – Party seeks to represent the voice of ‘born again’ Christians across Vanuatu.

Status – A recently formed party that suffered an early split with three former members leaving and establishing the rival Vanuatu All Christian Party.

CONTACT DETAILS

Address PO Box 877, Port Vila

OFFICE BEARERS

President Rave Nikahi

Treasurer Marie Aru

Secretary General Bartholomew Vira

HISTORY AND ORGANISATION

The Family First Vanuatu Party was formed in 2008 with the aim of uniting the voice of all born again Christians in the national parliament. The party emphasises the importance of family in every aspect of life. In April 2008 three high profile party members split from the party and established the rival Vanuatu All Christian Party.

OUTLOOK AND POLICIES

The Family First Vanuatu Party platform sets out the party’s polices, including:

- strong law and order
- increased government spending on health care
- increased education budget
- the promotion of the ‘true meaning’ of family
- the protection of the rights of women and children
- the promotion of youth and sports.

SOURCES

Family First Vanuatu Party Platform

Vanuatu Daily Post 24 April 2008

Vanuatu Daily Post 2 May 2008

FMP

Friend Melanesian Party

Key facts:

Leading figures—Albert Ravutia, Roman Gustav, J. Ravu, Jacob Thyna

History—FMP was established by the small communities of French-speaking Protestants concentrated in northern Malekula and south Santo.

Links—Eglise Libre Protestante (ELP), Union of Moderate Parties (UMP), Nagriamel.

Parliamentary seats—0

Stronghold—Santo and Malekula

Status—2004 was the first time since 1991 that the party did not win a seat representing Santo.

CONTACT DETAILS

Name Albert Ravutia
Address c/- PO Box 239, Luganville, Santo

OFFICE BEARERS

President Albert Ravutia
Secretary General TBC
Treasurer TBC

HISTORY AND ORGANISATION

In the early 1970s, members of the French-speaking Protestant church, Eglise Libre Protestante (ELP), which was established in northern Malekula and south Santo, came together to form the Fren Melanesia Pati. In 1981 leaders of FMP joined other francophone groups in the Union of Moderates Party (UMP). The majority of UMP members were Catholic, and FMP leaders elected to retain the party's identity within the union (rather than merge) in order to protect the interests of its mainly francophone Protestant membership base. Party members have argued that had the Vanua'aku Pati been more inclusive of francophone Protestants, the FMP would never have been born. As Protestants, and given a strong link with the Presbyterian Mission at the time, it had been expected that the members of the ELP would join the VP.

This sectarian division led to FMP and UMP fielding separate candidates in Santo and Malekula, effectively splitting the francophone vote. FMP has been successful in returning a candidate in Santo (1983, 1991, 1995, 1998, 2002) but has never won a seat in Malekula.

FMP remains loyal to the over arching objectives of the UMP, and in the past the single FMP member has generally voted with UMP members in parliament.

OUTLOOK AND POLICIES

FMP supports the general policy base of the UMP, which originated in support for bilingualism and a slower approach to independence. Central to its development policies is the realisation of land as an asset, while protecting customary land ownership. Founded in rural Santo and Malekula, the party is a strong advocate of administrative and economic decentralisation.

FMP maintains strong ties with Nagriamel, UMP and Namangi-Aute, and shares a strong belief in the need for development, governance and politics to be relevant in a Melanesian context.

SOURCES

Discussion with FMP members June 2008

GCP

Green Confederation Party

Key facts:

Leading figures—Carcasses Moana Kalosil

History—Party was established in Vanuatu in 2000.

Links—Green Alliance (Friends of Green), Asia–Pacific Green Network, Global Greens

Parliamentary seats—3

Stronghold—Port Vila and TAFEA province.

Status—The president of the party has established himself as the leader of the opposition, and used this position to present the GCP as the alternative government in the next parliament.

CONTACT DETAILS

Address PO Box 538, Port Vila

Tel +678 24492

OFFICE BEARERS

President Carcasses Moana Kalosil

Secretary General Silas Yaten

Treasurer John Collwick

HISTORY AND ORGANISATION

The Green Confederation Party was formed in 2000 by Father Père Gerard Leymang (deceased), Paul Telukluk and Vincent Boulekone. The founding principles were to promote sustainable development balancing custom, the environment, social welfare, free enterprise and regional autonomy for each of the six provinces.

At the outset, the party was effectively an umbrella organisation for the Namangi-Aute and Jon Frum movements. The party retains close ties with these and other social and custom movements, which contest the elections under the movement name (e.g. Jon Frum) and are grouped under the banner Green Alliance (or Friends of Green). This arrangement allows the party to run locally credible candidates while maintaining a national profile.

Following the death of its founder Père Gerard Leymang, Paul Telukluk left the GCP to lead a re-established Namangi-Aute. Moana Carcasses Kalosil, MP for Port Vila, took over as president of the party. Carcasses is 'the face of the party'.

GCP is a member of the Global Greens, the international network of Green parties and political movements, which was founded in 2001 at the First Global Greens Congress, in Canberra, Australia. In 2008, the international network met for a second time in São Paulo, Brazil. It is understood no representatives from the GCP Vanuatu attended the Brazil congress.

The GCP is openly supported by members of the Finance Centre and Port Vila business community.

OUTLOOK AND POLICIES

The party launched its policy platform for the 2009 financial year at Rentapao, North Efate on 17 July 2008. The platform includes seven policy priority areas, including:

Education:

- compulsory education for all children
- no school fees from years 1–16 (kindergarten to secondary school)

Health:

- upgrade health centres to Aid Posts
- remove hospital bed fee and out-patient fees
- increase health awareness and access to health facilities (including medicines and human resources)

Decentralisation:

- increase provincial grant from VT 30 million per province per year to VT 250 million per province per year
- increase power to provincial authorities and area councils
- address linkages between rural communities, municipalities, provinces and other entities

Land reform:

- review Land Act
- enforce Articles 73 and 74 of the Constitution to ensure chiefs are included in any land decision and identification of ownership
- introduce a 'speculation fee' (i.e. undeveloped land purchased by a buyer and resold without being developed)
- review the section of the Land Act that allows the Minister of Lands to sign a land lease only after identifying custom owners in disputed land
- enforce land zoning

Security and law and order:

- review Vanuatu Police Act
- separate Vanuatu Mobile Force and Vanuatu Police
- review the Correctional Services Act
- enact legislation to provide for chiefs to assist the Vanuatu Police force in relation to crime and other domestic disturbances

Grow the economy:

- provide financing to the National Bank of Vanuatu to lend to rural farmers and other cooperatives (agriculture, fisheries, commerce and tourism) with restricted lending interest rate of around 5 per cent
- promote renewable energy such as wind power, hydro power, solar power, and coconut oil
- enforce Environmental Impact Assessment (E.I.A) requirements for all major projects in Vanuatu.

SOURCES

Discussion with GCP members July 2008.

www.globalgreens.org

GCP, Minutes of Green Confederation Party Convention, Rentapao, North East Efate, 16017 July 2008.

Morgan, M. G. 2006. 'The Origins and Effects of Party Fragmentation in Vanuatu'. In R. Rich with L. Hambly & M. G. Morgan (Eds.), *Political Parties in the Pacific Islands* (pp.117–142). Canberra: Pandanus Books, The Australian National University.

MPP

Melanesian Progressive Party

Key facts:

Leading figures – Barak Tame Sope

History – MPP split from the VP in the late 1980s.

Links – Nagriamel, FMP.

Parliamentary seats – 3

Stronghold – Efate.

Status – Despite its small number of seats MPP has been influential in coalition makeup. Party leader Barak Sope was Deputy Leader of the Opposition 2004–08.

CONTACT DETAILS

Address c/- Barak T S Mautamate, Ifira Tenuku, South Efate
Telephone +678 7758964 (Co-ordinator: Kai Patterson)

OFFICE BEARERS

President Barak Tame Sope
Secretary General Jeffrey Laua
Treasurer Natotawla

HISTORY AND ORGANISATION

The Melanesian Progressive Party was formed in after an internal leadership struggle within the Vanua'aku Pati in the late 1980s. The feud between Father Walter Lini and the then secretary general Barak Sope culminated in the expulsion of Sope from the VP and the National Parliament for taking part in the protest against the government's decision to close the Urban Land Corporation (ULC) in April 1988. Sope argued the closure of the ULC was a departure from VP policy and deprived custom land owners from the right to have a say in how land was to be used.

The MPP was modelled closely on the original VP party platform and structure.

On graduating from the University of the South Pacific, Sope was a vocal advocate for a swift move to independence to protect custom lands. As a leading member of the Vanua'aku Pati, he was elected to parliament in 1987 as a representative for the Port Vila constituency. Since establishing the MPP he has consistently been returned as MP for Efate Rural.

Barak Sope was Vanuatu's 5th Prime Minister, holding the position from November 1999 to April 2001. His term in office was brought to an end by a parliamentary motion of non confidence amid allegations of corruption and financial mismanagement. He was convicted on two counts of forgery involving the issue of government guarantees to the value of about US \$200 million and sentenced to three years in prison. He was granted a presidential pardon after serving three months in prison and was subsequently re-elected to parliament.

OUTLOOK AND POLICIES

MPP advocates the decolonisation of West Papua and New Caledonia and champions an autonomist foreign policy. On the domestic front, the party promotes agricultural sector development through the provision of assistance to farmers and the establishment of an Agricultural Bank.

MPP is exploring legislative and procedural options to encourage greater political stability in Vanuatu.

The party has worked alongside the Green Confederation Party in opposition in the last parliament, and has positioned itself as a champion for environmental issues, especially climate change and its impact on Pacific island nations.

In the lead up to the 2008 general elections, Barak Sope has been vocal in calling for an increase of seats in Efate Rural constituency and filed a Supreme Court challenge to the change to the People's Representation Act 2007 that gives rights to people voting outside of Port Vila and Luganville to vote in these two urban constituencies.

SOURCES

Discussion with MPP members July 2008.

Morgan, M. G. 2006. 'The Origins and Effects of Party Fragmentation in Vanuatu'. In R. Rich with L. Hambly & M. G. Morgan (Eds.), *Political Parties in the Pacific Islands* (pp.117–142). Canberra: Pandanus Books, The Australian National University.

Sope, B.T., 1995. 'The Melanesian Progressive Party' in Howard Van Trease (Ed) *Melanesian Politics Stael Blong Vanuatu*. Macmillan Brown Centre for Pacific Studies & Institute of Pacific Studies.

Vanuatu Daily Post, 1 March 2008

Vanuatu Daily Post, 3 March 2008

Vanuatu Daily Post, 17 July 2008

NAG*Nagriamel Custom Movement***Key facts:**

Leading figures—Jimmy Steven (founder), Frankie Steven, George Steven, Tari Buluk, Paul Tulumlum, James Garae, Thomas Tungu, James Tangis, Paul Buluk, Timothy Welles, James Bakeo.

History—Often referred to as the first political party in Vanuatu, the Nagriamel movement emerged in Santo in the mid 1960s in response to the alienation of custom land by foreigners.

Links—Michael Oliver, Phoenix Foundation, Namangi-Aute, MPP

Parliamentary seats—0

Stronghold—Santo, Malo, Ambae, Maewo, Pentecost, Ambrym, Malekula, Paama.

Status—Nagriamel has not held a parliamentary seat since 1998. In recent times the party has had something of a resurgence with separate reconciliation ceremonies held with break away factions and the national government.

CONTACT DETAILS

Address PO Box 303, Luganville, Santo

OFFICE BEARERS

President	Timothy Welles
Chairman of 10 Head Committee and Head of the Upper Council of Chiefs	James Tangis
Head of Political Commission	Gaetan Pikioune
Head of Socio-economic Commission	Frankie Steven
Head of Native Land Commission	Antoine Pikioune
Spokesperson	Jeff Patunvanu

HISTORY AND ORGANISATION

In the early 1960s Jimmy Moli Steven worked on the plantations and stevedoring operations in Santo as a heavy vehicle driver. He was ordained as a chief after becoming a vocal advocate for the return of alienated customary land. He founded the 'Native Company', which later became known as the Nagriamel custom movement. Nagriamel's position on land was for the return of undeveloped land (dark bush) to customary ownership with the understanding that land already developed could be retained for use by foreign interests.

Nagriamel quickly took hold as the primary anti-colonial movement and its support base spread from through the central and northern islands (some report support of up to 20,000 people at this time). In the lead up to the first national election in 1979, Nagriamel supporters pushed for a confederation of independent islands. Following the VP landslide at the 1979 elections, some supporters of Nagriamel and some of the Moderate parties rebelled against the new government, with aims of secession from the newly formed state. The result was violent confrontations in Santo, Tanna and elsewhere. In 1980 Jimmy Steven and other prominent Nagriamel leaders and members were arrested and sent to prison for their part in the rebellion and the movement entered what family and supporters refer to as the 'dark ages'. During this period, the leadership decided that in the immediate interests of the movement it would be best to fall under the umbrella of the UMP. After UMP won government in 1991 and failed to release Jimmy Steven, the leadership of Nagriamel split with UMP and again contested under its own banner, with Frankie Steven (son of Jimmy Steven) winning a seat in Santo in the 1991 election. The movement's last elected MP was Edouard Melsul in Pentecost constituency at the 1995 election.

Nagriamel is governed by a body called 'the Ten-Head Committee', representing 15 islands. Taking its name from the Ten Commandments, the primary responsibility of the Ten-Head Committee is to ensure that Nagriamel's vision and policies are consistent with the Ten Commandments (The Ten Heads). Jimmy Steven appointed members and chaired the committee and also headed the movement's Upper Council to oversee the functioning of the Ten-Head Committee. The movement operates through three commissions: Political Commission (parliamentary management and drafting of bills), Native Land Commission (charged with identifying custom land owners and registering all land in Vanuatu), and Socio-economic Commission (liaise with overseas governments and foreign investors).

Factions within the movement contested the right of Jimmy Steven's sons to inherit the leadership and a breakaway group was known as 'Nagriamel 2'. It was under the breakaway leadership of Timothy Welles that Nagriamel made its political comeback in the 2007 Sanma provincial elections, taking three of the 18 seats. Following this the movement held its first ever national congress 5–7 December 2007 to capitalise on the Sanma result and attempt to revive the movement nationally. In July 2008 the Nagriamel factions came together under a reconciliation ceremony and will contest the national general election under a united banner.

OUTLOOK AND POLICIES

Nagriamel is now a strong defender of Vanuatu's national sovereignty. In the lead up to the 2008 election, the movement has articulated a policy based on law and order, reviewing the system of governance and promoting the business sector.

The movement calls for a return to custom values and calls the current government system a threat to the unity and peace of the country because it is based on individualism. According to Nagriamel, the country is divided between a select group of beneficiaries of government services and a raft of marginalised church and custom groups.

Nagriamel criticised the raids on businesses associated with the Financial Centre in what it sees as an attack by foreign interests on the tax haven status of the country.

In response to the growing community unrest concerning rising crime levels, Nagriamel suggested utilising prison facilities on remote islands such as Matthew and Hunter.

The movement supports the provision of free education and free healthcare.

Nagriamel will field candidates in every province for the first time.

SOURCES

Discussion with Nagriamel members July 2008

Garae, L., 2008, 'Moli recognised relevance of Republican System', in Vanuatu Daily Post, 1 January 2008.

Howard Van Trease (Ed) Melanesian Politics Stael Blong Vanuatu. Macmillan Brown Centre for Pacific Studies & Institute of Pacific Studies.

Morgan, M. G. 2006. 'The Origins and Effects of Party Fragmentation in Vanuatu'. In R. Rich with L. Hambly & M. G. Morgan (Eds.), Political Parties in the Pacific Islands (pp.117–142). Canberra: Pandanus Books, The Australian National University.

Vanuatu Daily Post, 14 March 2008

Vanuatu Daily Post, 2 November 2007

Vanuatu Daily Post, 8 September 2007

NCAP

National Community Association Party

Key facts:

Leading figures – Sabi Natonga

History – The party was established in May, 1996.

Links – The NCAP platform notes that the party has no affiliation with any other political party.

Parliamentary seats – 0

Stronghold – Tanna, Efate Rural and Port Vila.

Status – The party took its first two seats in parliament after the 2004 election. Joshua Kalsakau (MP for Efate Rural) defected to lead the Vanuatu Labour Party.

CONTACT DETAILS

Address c/- Parliament House, Port Vila

Telephone +678 27142 (Sabi Natonga)

OFFICE BEARERS

President Sabi Natonga

Secretary General William Tari

Treasurer Jean Pierre Surei

HISTORY AND ORGANISATION

With the increasing migration of young people from Tanna to Port Vila and the surrounding peri-urban areas, Tanna chiefs residing in Efate sought to find ways of engaging their youth in activities that could steer them away from trouble. The discussions led to the formation of the National Community Association Party and Sabi Natonga (a Tannese businessman and working in Port Vila) was appointed as its first president.

The NCAP has been structured along similar lines to most political parties in Vanuatu, with a people's congress (as main decision making body), national executive (administrative arm) and regional and sub-committees to organise party affairs at the regional and local area levels.

As the leader of the national executive, the president appoints the chair of the party's national convention (which is held every two years) and is responsible for financial affairs (especially fundraising). Members of the national executive are appointed for five year terms and must resign their office if going to run for national, provincial or municipal government elections.

The party structure also includes a council of chiefs that meet to resolve any contentious matter and hear complaints levelled at party officials. The NCAP also has a disciplinary committee, which is appointed at the national convention.

The party has a trust account to administer any MP allocation, and requests originate through regional and area sub-committees and are screened by the national management committee, which comprises the Secretary General, the Assistant Secretary General plus 3 other ordinary members including at least one woman and a person with a 'significant' job.

The party constitution is reviewed every two years at the national convention, drawing on consultations through regional and area executive councils.

OUTLOOK AND POLICIES

The NCAP motto is 'togetherness, honesty and justice is my policy'.

The policy platform includes:

- reform national policy on land and give more interest to the custom owners to develop their own land
- strengthen agricultural systems to include growing new crops for international markets
- encourage more research on the countries natural resources
- establish office of the Environment Unit in each province
- amend tax laws
- encourage participation of ni-Vanuatu in the Finance Centre through legislative reform
- legislate to ensure banks provide credit facilities for ni-Vanuatu
- review role of the Vanuatu Investment Promotion Authority
- guarantee access to credit facilities for participation in the tourism sector
- encourage ni-Vanuatu to take over ownership of industries and reserve textile industry for ni-Vanuatu only
- legislate to ensure only ni-Vanuatu have the right to export local produce
- prepare infrastructure master-plan
- review telecommunications monopoly
- increase government allocation to education and reduce school fees
- improve health care system and encourage the development of a private hospital
- increase the Ministry of Youth and Sport budget

The political parties and groupings of Vanuatu

- strengthen the role of women in society
- enforce customary and national laws to prevent crime and review service of the judiciary
- undertake feasibility study to separate police from Vanuatu Mobile Force
- explore options for the creation of an Army of the Republic of Vanuatu
- improve place and system of work of chiefs
- maintain freedom of worship under Christian principles
- introduce new legislation to guide immigration, in particular that which gives effect to investment
- review the laws regarding freedom of movement to avoid urban drift
- protect the rights of all people and standard of living
- strengthen and review labour laws to increase minimum wage and ensure local people have access to public and private sector jobs
- strengthen relations with Asian and western countries
- amend the Constitution to ensure stability
- review the Decentralisation Act to reduce dependency on central government and increase provincial budgets
- strengthen the role of the media
- strengthen the participation of all non-governmental organisations (NGOs) at the community level.

The NCAP will field five candidates in the 2008 national election, with two in Tanna and one each in Ambae, Efate Rural and Port Vila.

SOURCES

Discussion with NCAP members June and July 2008

National Community Association Party Platform (undated)

NMA

Namangi-Aute

Key facts:

Leading figures—Aimé Maléré (deceased), Père Gerard Leymang (deceased), Paul Telukluk, Adrian Maléré,

History—Formed as a political movement in Malekula in 1975 by Aimé Maléré.

Links—Originally formed as a break away faction of the now defunct MANH party and once a key member of the Green Confederation, Namangi-Aute maintains links to VP, Nagriamel, UMP, FMP, and the recently established Kastom Democratic Laef Muvmen (KDLM) - an NGO advocating the rule of customary law.

Parliamentary seats—1

Stronghold—Malekula

Status—As leader of Namangi-Aute, Paul Telukluk was returned to parliament in 2002 (MP for Malekula). Principally a Malekula based movement, NMA is gaining support in Efate.

CONTACT DETAILS

Address PO Box 495, Port Vila

Telephone +678 22340

OFFICE BEARERS

President Paul Telukluk

Secretary General Paolo Lawac

Treasurer Daniel Amos

HISTORY AND ORGANISATION

Namangi-Aute was the political movement of choice for most of the mainly francophone Catholics living in south Malekula in the mid 1970s. The party opposed an immediate move to independence, fearing the country was not yet ready for such a move and the dominance of the opposing Anglophone political leaders in a newly independent nation. Some supporters of Namangi-Aute were believed to have taken part in the 1980 rebellion.

The founders of Namangi-Aute sought recognition for the role of the people of Malekula in World War II.

Namangi-Aute has not been directly represented in parliament between 1987 and 2002, although was involved in the Union of Moderates Party

and later Green Confederation. Current president and MP for Malekula, Paul Telukluk, was elected to parliament in 2002 as a Namangi-Aute candidate having previously held the seat under the UMP banner.

OUTLOOK AND POLICIES

Central to the party's belief is that Malekula should be developed as part of a confederation of provinces. Its policies include reducing the size of parliament (to the original 39 seats), compulsory voting, recognising traditional chiefly systems and customary law, and supporting the role of grass roots in development.

Although its sitting member has a strong affiliation with the seat of Malekula, Namangi-Aute will face strong competition from a revitalised UMP and the new Chief's Movement.

SOURCES

Discussions with Namangi-Aute members July 2008.

Howard Van Trease (Ed) *Melanesian Politics Stael Blong Vanuatu*.
Macmillan Brown Centre for Pacific Studies & Institute of Pacific Studies.

Morgan, M. G. 2006. 'The Origins and Effects of Party Fragmentation in Vanuatu'. In R. Rich with L. Hambly & M. G. Morgan (Eds.), *Political Parties in the Pacific Islands* (pp.117–142). Canberra: Pandanus Books, The Australian National University.

Vanuatu Daily Post, 10 April 2008.

NUP

National United Party

Key facts:

Leading figures—Father Walter Lini (deceased), Ham Lini

History—Established in 1991 by the late Father Walter Lini and 21 dissident VP members after Lini's ouster from the leadership of the Vanua'aku Pati.

Links—Formed from VP breakaway group and still retain strong ties.

Parliamentary seats—10

Stronghold—Pentecost, Ambae, Ambrym, Malekula, Banks/Torres,

Status—Under the prime ministership of Ham Lini, NUP has governed in coalition from 2004–08.

CONTACT DETAILS

Address Oceania Building, Port Vila

Telephone +678 29772 (Clifford Bice)

OFFICE BEARERS

President Ham Lini

Secretary General James Bule

Treasurer Morkin Steven

HISTORY AND ORGANISATION

The party was formed following the ouster of Father Walter Lini as president of the Vanua'aku Pati in 1991. Lini took 21 dissident members of the VP with him, and together with prominent business man Dinh Van Than established the National United Party.

Many saw Dinh Van Than's association with the party, culminating in him assuming the presidency after Lini, as the main blockage to a possible reunion with the VP. Ham Lini, brother of Father Walter Lini, was first elected to parliament to represent the constituency of Pentecost at the 1999 by-election. He took over as president of the party after Than was voted out at the party congress in Maewo in 2003. In December 2004, Ham Lini became the first member of NUP to take the position of Prime Minister while a member of the party.

NUP is structured in a similar fashion to the VP, with the People's Congress being the supreme decision making authority. The main point of difference is the president of the party appoints the office bearers within the NUP executive.

OUTLOOK AND POLICIES

As the senior coalition partner since 2004, NUP has placed great emphasis on maintaining political stability. Party officials have repeatedly stated that political stability is a pre-requisite to providing for a healthy, educated, prosperous and peaceful Vanuatu. Although the party managed to maintain a relatively stable coalition government without legislative or constitutional change, party officials point to the possible need to introduce such measures to ensure ongoing political stability in the future.

The NUP has released its 2008 policy and platform through which it wants Vanuatu to become a 'golden state' of the Pacific.

Key policy initiatives include:

- increase economic base through more investment in manufacturing sector, including finalising membership to World Trade Organization, signing the European Union Economic Partnership Agreement and PACER, and establishing new departments of Industry and Consumer Affairs, and External Trade
- strengthen productive capacity of primary industries (agriculture, fisheries, forestry and livestock)
- ensure everyone has access to quality health and education services as a means of supporting development
- increase tertiary education to 10% of the population by 2020
- improve transport infrastructure (road, air, shipping)
- promote Vanuatu as a tourism centre of the Pacific and increase tourist numbers to 500,000 per annum by 2025
- increase employment and business opportunities to ensure people can pay school fees, including establishing the Vanuatu Indigenous Business Council to promote participation in economic activities
- Norsup, Lenakel, Saratamata and Sola to become urban centres
- facilitate inter-island trade
- ensure banking services are available on every island
- schools to teach principles and values of Custom and Christianity
- strengthen role of chiefs, church, women and youth in development process
- strengthen governance, including amending the Constitution to enable the following a right to vote in the Parliament: President of Malvatumari, President of Vanuatu National Council of Women, President of national Youth Council, President of each provincial government council, Chair of Vanuatu Council of Churches
- implement recommendations of the Land Summit

- strengthen competitiveness of Vanuatu as a tax haven and prepare guidelines to cover the operation of the Finance Centre
- prepare a foreign policy that includes support for independence movements in West Papua, New Caledonia, Tahiti, Wallis and Futuna, recognition of One China Policy, and establish embassies in New Caledonia and Australia
- implement national security policy that includes separating Vanuatu Mobile Force from Vanuatu Police Force
- establish a new Department of Information Technology and Communication
- improve cost of doing business in Vanuatu to make more internationally competitive and efficient.

SOURCES

Discussion with NUP members June 2008

NUP 2008 National General Election Policy and Platform

PAP

People's Action Party

Key facts:

Leading figures – Harold Qualao, Peter Vuta

History – PAP was formed in Ambae in 2003.

Parliamentary seats – 1

Stronghold – Ambae

Status – The party was successful in securing a parliamentary seat in its first election contest in 2004. Determined to remain as a small party focused in Ambae and Santo.

CONTACT DETAILS

Address PO Box 462, Port Vila
Telephone +678 22430
Email peoplesactionparty@yahoo.com

OFFICE BEARERS

President Harold Qualao
Secretary General Elizabeth Qualao (acting)

HISTORY AND ORGANISATION

The party was founded after a split with VP over the process of endorsing candidates for the Ambae constituency in 2002. After failing to secure the VP ticket that year, Peter Vuta stood as an independent but did not secure a seat. In 2003, supporters and those disillusioned with the VP executive formed PAP with the stated aim of promoting self sufficiency both in government and in the party's membership base.

Peter Vuta contested and won the 2004 election as a PAP candidate for Ambae and went on to serve as Leader of Government Business in the Lini led NUP coalition government.

The party's main decision making body is the national conference - as opposed to a congress - which aims to promote the participation of members in public life. Each area has a Local Party Committee (usually referred as a sub committee or regional committee. The executive has 14 members, most of which are elected by the conference with the exception of the position of secretary general, which is appointed on merit (and can not be a sitting MP). The party president can only serve three terms.

The party stresses that candidates for PAP must be independent and not rely on hand outs.

OUTLOOK AND POLICIES

The party encourages all people to work 8 hours a day, five days a week, 52 weeks per year. Party members are encouraged to plant 200 productive plants – such as kava, coconuts, trees, etc. and must report back to each conference on their progress.

In order to create a productive environment, PAP prioritises human development, infrastructure (tools for work and development), stability and forward planning.

The party supports the promotion of family planning to tackle the rapidly growing population and the introduction of health insurance for the older generation.

It proposes changing the current lump sum retirement payout to be an ongoing retirement pension.

Other policy measures promoted by PAP include:

- registering all land to clearly identify land owners
- growing the National Bank to be a bigger player in development
- giving judicial power to chiefs to manage village affairs
- water supply to every community
- review parliamentary systems and laws of the land
- separate VMF from police force.

The party calls for MP allocations to be fully accountable and tabled a report on the spending of its first MP Peter Vuta during the 2004–08 parliament.

The party leadership wants to focus activities on Ambae and Santo with a long term aim of building the party in TORBA, SANMA and MALAMPA provinces.

SOURCES

Discussion with PAP members April–June 2008

PAP Platform Executive Summary

Report of Distribution of MP Allocations for the Year 2004–08 Ambae Constituency, presented by Hon. Peter Vuta, MP for Ambae

PPP

People's Progressive Party

Key facts:

Leading figures – Sato Kilman

History – Party founded by Sato Kilman in 2001 following his split with MPP.

Parliamentary seats – 4

Stronghold – Malekula

Status – PPP has held 5 seats since it first contested elections in 2002.

CONTACT DETAILS

Address PO Box 154, Port Vila

Telephone +678 24917

OFFICE BEARERS

President Sato Kilman

Secretary General Willie Lop

Treasurer James Wango

HISTORY AND ORGANISATION

The party was formed in 2001 by former Police Commissioner Sato Kilman in response to the failures he saw in political leadership over the previous decade. At the time Kilman was deputy president of the Melanesian Progressive Party and MP for Malekula, a seat he has held since entering parliament in 1995.

Citing poor decisions of the past, weak leadership and corruption, Kilman formed the PPP in the 'belief that political and economic progress can only be achieved through political reform within party leadership structure and policies'.

The party's structure as set out in the constitution is similar to that of MPP and VP with a national congress as the supreme decision making body, executive council and sub-committees. The office bearers of the party include women's and youth representatives. The constitution further details criteria for nominating candidates for elections, a leadership code and disciplinary procedures for party members.

The party suffered a severe blow in mid 2007 when three of its four sitting MPs were implicated in a serious bank fraud scandal. The three MPs - Noel Tamata (Pentecost), Dunstan Hilton (Torba) and Malon Hopsmander (Malekula) - were suspended from parliament and the party

was dismissed from the ruling coalition government, losing the portfolios of Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs (Sato Kilman) and Minister of Youth and Sport (Hilton Dunstan). Both Noel Tamata and Dunstan Hilton were acquitted. Former Malekula MP Malon Hopsmander was found guilty of complicity to commit forgery and sentenced to fifteen months in prison.

OUTLOOK AND POLICIES

PPP emphasises improving domestic and international trade markets to bring about economic prosperity and its policy platform details reforms to the agriculture, fisheries, tourism and industry sectors.

The party recognises the importance of customary land ownership, and the need to find ways for land owners to realise the capital potential of the land to promote economic growth and development.

The party's platform calls for a review the Constitution, in particular to pursue the following amendments:

- extend life of parliament to five years
- ensure clear separation of powers
- clear provisions for land ownership and succession of lease interests
- establish dual citizenship (with the view to encourage the establishment of retirement homes to allow for rich people to retire to Vanuatu)
- status of English and French as official and working languages.

PPP proposes a review of the procedures of the parliament in order to achieve good governance, social equity, economic growth and political stability.

The party supports reducing the number of seats, increasing constituency allowances (to Vt 3 million) and introducing legislation to ensure that at least 10% of MPs are women.

SOURCES

People's Progressive Party The New Millennium Platform

People's Progressive party – Constitution

Vanuatu Daily Post, 14 July 2008

Vanuatu Daily Post, 4 March 2008

Vanuatu Daily Post, 5 October 2007

Vanuatu Daily Post, 6 August 2008

RUM

Reassemble of Union Movement for the People of Vanuatu

Key facts:

Leading figures – Tom Kasso , Lawrence Dick, John Luen Tarenuamate

History – Formed in 2008 to contest the general election.

Links – UMP

Parliamentary seats – 0

Stronghold – Unknown.

Status – A start up political movement.

CONTACT DETAILS

Address PO Box 2067, Port Vila

Telephone +678 66725

OFFICE BEARERS

President Tom Kasso

Secretary General Lawrence Dick

Treasurer John Luen Tarenuamate

HISTORY AND ORGANISATION

The movement was formed to unite supporters and like minded independent candidates in a quest to return power to the chiefs and churches.

As a newly formed movement, the organisation lacks specific structure and operates through an informal network of affiliated independent candidates. The movement also proposes to field six candidates in addition to affiliated independents. Any supported independent that is elected to parliament is expected to adhere to the movement's policies.

OUTLOOK AND POLICIES

The founders of the movement share a common belief that the country could benefit from returning power to the traditional and church leaders. It proposes paying a tithe (ten percent of the government budget) to the churches of Vanuatu as well as royalties to all chiefs. Other policy measures include:

- free education
- free health service
- recruit and review Vanuatu Military Service
- introduce business policies to guarantee indigenous people receive financial assistance from lending agencies and commercial banks.
- review and reduce the tax system.
- review the national provident fund policy.
- increase the capital of the Agriculture bank
- create an effective price control system
- review Decentralisation Act to provide power to the provincial government councils
- review land lease systems
- introduce anti-corruption legislation
- introduce dual citizenship
- promote agriculture and manufacturing
- localise all coastal shipping to indigenous people of Vanuatu
- introduce wind powered electricity generation in every island.

SOURCES

Discussion with RUM members August 2008

RUM Policy Platform 2008

SAP

Shepherd Alliance Party

Key facts:

Leading figures – Markson Niptik, Abel David, Ruben Ismael

History – Party was established in 2008.

Parliamentary seats – 0

Stronghold – SAP will be fielding candidates in Port Vila urban constituency.

Status – A start up party that plans to field candidates across the central and northern islands.

CONTACT DETAILS

Address PO Box 232, Vila North, Port Vila, VANUATU

Telephone +678 25559

OFFICE BEARERS

President Markson Niptik

Secretary General Tchivi Genevieve

Treasurer Chief Tamata

Spokesperson Chief Alec Akati Manasakau

HISTORY AND ORGANISATION

The Shepherd Alliance Pati was formed in 2008 to represent the voice of traditional leaders and draws its name both from the Shepherds group of islands and the analogy that chiefs are akin to shepherds, who must look after their flock. The party emphasises the need to respect 'kastom' and promotes the need for every community to have a meeting place or nakamal to strengthen the role of chiefs and provide a forum to discuss kastom and development.

The party is established under a constitution that details the operation of the National Assembly, National Executive Committee and affiliated associations.

OUTLOOK AND POLICIES

The SAP has released a detailed policy platform, which includes:

- review of tax systems
- removal of provincial government in favour of area or village level representation
- re-establish cooperative system
- strengthen the Land Tribunal
- re-establish the co-operatives system
- abolish school fees for classes 1–8
- reserve business under 100 million vatu for ni-Vanuatu
- increase minimum wage and improve/protect working conditions
- promote women in business
- establish means for ni-Vanuatu to access loan funds from commercial banks
- include kastom in legal system
- establish a port of entry in Tanna and the Banks islands
- encourage sport and music.

The party also supports amending the constitution to:

- allow for the President to be elected by Chiefs, the Prime Minister to be chosen by the President, and the Prime Minister to appoint the ministry
- Chiefs to decide who can stand for election to the parliament
- direct that any bill must be presented to Malvatumari Council of Chiefs before being tabled in parliament.

SOURCES

Shepherd Alliance Pati Constitution and Policy document.

Vanuatu Daily Post, 21 March 2008

UMP

Union of Moderate Parties

Key facts:

Leading figures—Serge Vohor

History—UMP was established in 1981 as an umbrella body for the mainly francophone political opposition to first VP government of Vanuatu.

Links—UMP (France), FMP, Namangi-Aute, Nagriamel, Jon Frum, Kapiel, Tabwemassana.

Parliamentary seats—

Stronghold—The UMP draws electoral support from across Vanuatu, concentrated in Sanma, Penama, Tafea and Shefa Provinces. Its support is particularly pronounced in the urban constituencies of Port Vila and Luganville.

Status—In opposition—last PM

CONTACT DETAILS

Address PO Box 483, Port Vila

Telephone +678 22521

OFFICE BEARERS

President Serge Rialuth Vohor

Secretary General Charlot Salwai

Treasurer Stephen Kalsakau

HISTORY AND ORGANISATION

The Union of Moderate Parties was formed in 1981 as an amalgam of political parties and movements opposed to the majority VP government that swept to power in a landslide at the 1979 elections. The principle groups to behind the union were the Union Communautés des Nouvelles Hebrides (UCNH) and the Mouvement Autonomiste des Nouvelles-Hebrides (MANH), both formed in 1973. The party also attracted support from the Tan Union on Pentecost, Namangki Aute from Malekula, former Nagriamel supporters in Santo, Pentecost, Ambae and Maewo, and from Jon Frum and Kapiel in Tanna and the southern islands.

Party members were unified through their pre-independence opposition to the rapid progress to statehood, preferring instead to follow a model of autonomy before independence. The UMP is predominately but not exclusively made up of Francophone groups with ties to the Catholic church. While uniting under the UMP umbrella, members retained individual identity of their respective entity, which has at times led to vote splitting between UMP and individual members (e.g. FMP and Namangi-Aute).

The party's influence grew at the same time that internal difficulties within the Vanua'aku Pati contributed to the fall of the Kalpokas led government

at the 1991 national elections. Maxime Carlot Korman formed UMP's first government in coalition with Walter Lini's breakaway VP group the National United party. Korman led the government for a full term but was subsequently ousted as leader of UMP by Serge Vohor who became Vanuatu's fourth Prime Minister after the 1995 elections. Over the next few years, government leadership changed numerous times due to leadership struggles between Vohor and Korman. Korman left the party to establish his own Vanuatu Republican Party to contest the 1998 elections.

Serge Vohor remained party president and UMP won 12 seats in the 1998 elections. In 2002 it took 15 seats and joined VP in a short lived coalition government. At the 2004 elections the party only won 9 seats but was able to lead a coalition government made up of several parties, a number of independents and two disaffected senior members of the Vanua'aku Party, Joe Natuman and Sela Molisa. After only four months in office, Vohor lost a parliamentary vote of no confidence after recognising Taiwan despite Vanuatu's One China Policy.

OUTLOOK AND POLICIES

After independence, the UMP's policy platform focused on liberal investment, economic and development policies. Foreign investment was encouraged, alongside support for local business and in particular realising the capital value of land to fund economic activity. Under the leadership of Maxime Carlot Korman (1991-95) the party became the first to advocate private ownership of land. The party has a long history of supporting decentralisation and created the current provincial government system in 1991. In response to the economic and political challenges facing the country, the UMP led coalition government of Serge Vohor signed up to the Asian Development Bank (ADB) sponsored Comprehensive Reform Program (CRP) in 1997. In line with the CRP, the Vohor led government introduced a Value Added Tax, as well as tariff reform and new program budgeting format during 1998.

At the extra-ordinary Congress held in Santo 8 June 2008 the President of UMP Serge Vohor announced the following policy priorities in his address:

Fiscal reform to increase tax base through introduction of tax on financial transfers out of the country and through offshore banks.

Control of public expenditure through:

- reduction in number of political advisers, public servants and boards of directors of government owned institutions
- the sale of government houses
- reduce number of government vehicles
- controls over government travel overseas
- privatisation of institutions such as National Housing Corporation, VCMB, Air Vanuatu
- transfer of some government functions to provincial government.

- improving governance through review of the role of the Ombudsman and the Leadership Code, reinforce the functions of the Auditor General to audit and certify national accounts.

Economic development through closer cooperation between government and the private sector, including:

- introducing a 'development budget' to finance projects that do not attract donor funding
- invest heavily in infrastructure
- improve tourism
- land reform to improve investment security and respect customary land ownership
- investment in the agricultural and marine resource sectors including strengthening the role of the Agriculture Bank
- increase awareness of environment protection
- review role of the Reserve bank
- reduce cost of business by controlling tariffs
- restrict rural retail business for ni-Vanuatu
- establish office of price control
- increase provincial grant to 100 million vatu per year and transfer central government powers to the provincial level
- review laws to provide for women to serve as chiefs.

Social reform through:

- fee-free education with improved access and quality
- fee-free health care with improve access and quality by upgrading hospitals, rural health centres to be staffed by doctors and nurses, creating aid posts inside secondary schools
- improved access to private housing stock through restructured National Housing Corporation
- protect local labour force and ensure localisation of posts held by foreign nationals through the introduction of an Office of Employment to oversee recruitment
- strengthen immigration controls
- political reform to enhance government accountability and transparency and improve consultation with civil society.

SOURCES

Discussion with UMP members June 2008

UMP National Extraordinary Congress, Hog Harbour, Santo—Opening address of the President, 8 June 2008

Howard Van Trease (Ed) *Melanesian Politics Stael Blong Vanuatu*. Macmillan Brown Centre for Pacific Studies & Institute of Pacific Studies.

Morgan, M. G. 2006. 'The Origins and Effects of Party Fragmentation in Vanuatu'. In R. Rich with L. Hambly & M. G. Morgan (Eds.), *Political Parties in the Pacific Islands* (pp.117–142). Canberra: Pandanus Books, The Australian National University.

UNUA

Unua one to five bloc

Key facts:

Leading figures—Chief Sam Mahi, Chief Edward Kordi, Enock Kordi, Andrew Bob, Reymond Bob

History—Founded by Chief Sam Mahi in 2004 with the aim of bringing about unity for the peoples living in Unua One to Unua Five in southeast Malekula.

Parliamentary seats—0

Stronghold—Southeast Malekula and central Pentecost

Status—A relatively new movement slowly gaining recognition firstly in southeast Malekula and more recently in northwest and east Malekula and central Pentecost. Supporting two candidates in the 2008 election.

CONTACT DETAILS

Address c/- Unua Village, Southeast Malekula

Telephone +678 5427755

OFFICE BEARERS

President Chief Sam Mahit

HISTORY AND ORGANISATION

Founded as a movement by Chief Sam Mahit with the motto ‘Yumi go wan, yumi Stanap wan’ (Together we go; together we develop” or “Unity equals development”). Unua is an area of south-east Malekula, that is further broken down into sub-areas numbered one to five. The primary motivation for forming the bloc as a political movement was the lack of development in Unua despite the promises of political leaders. By rallying the people of Unua One to Unua Five to nominate a candidate from the region, the hope is that a local MP can deliver some tangible benefits to the area.

OUTLOOK AND POLICIES

Chief Sam has spoken out in the media on the need to tackle what he sees as a worsening crime situation, adding:

“If four MPs and one Mayor cannot work together to fix our streets and create a safe environment to guarantee investor confidence and public safety then the Electoral Office should consider encouraging the election of only one candidate to oversee the affairs of the public in Port Vila”.

To date no other policies have been published by the bloc.

SOURCES

Discussion with Unua One to Five Bloc members July 2008

Vanuatu Daily Post, 18 April 2008

VACP

Vanuatu All Christians Party

Key facts:

Leading figures – Luc Siba, Moses Stevens

History – Party was established by Luc Siba and Moses Stevens following their split from the Family First Vanuatu Party in April 2008.

Parliamentary seats – 0

Stronghold – Pentecost, Port Vila

Status – The party is in its infancy and will seek to capitalise on the personal profiles of its leading candidates.

CONTACT DETAILS

Address	PO Box 5113, Port Vila
Telephone	+678 26191
Email	mo.stevens@yahoo.com

OFFICE BEARERS

President	Luc Siba
Secretary General	Moses Steven
Treasurer	Jean Stephen

HISTORY AND ORGANISATION

The Vanuatu All Christians Party was formed in April 2008 by former police commissioner Luc Siba and media personality Moses Stevens. In forming the party, Stevens reflected a main reason for the failure of political leaders of the past is that the ‘candidates were chosen by political parties, and those parties had platforms that had no reverence for the motto of the country *Long God Yumi Stanap* (In God We Stand).

A media release issued by the newly formed party stated

‘We wish to assure our prayer warriors, supporters and citizens of Vanuatu who have been praying for us, that we will uphold the calling on our lives to represent all God fearing people in Vanuatu in the national parliament and to help our good leaders turn back to our motto (In God We Stand) and to pay attention to the welfare of the family including, children, women and the elderly’.

OUTLOOK AND POLICIES

The VACP policy platform includes:

- return control of prisons to the police
- increased spending on police and Vanuatu Mobile Force
- control movement of people between provinces
- increase budget for health care and improve working conditions in health sector to attract more people and those studying overseas to return
- increase spending on education and improve conditions for teachers
- teach the true meaning of family
- protect the rights of women and children
- promote the tradition of male head of family
- strengthen the Agriculture bank and encourage planting of new cash crops
- remove licence and taxes for all ni-Vanuatu businesses with less than 4 million vatu turnover
- encourage women in business
- enforce regulations on land leases
- encourage tourism and ni-Vanuatu participation in this industry
- reserve shipping and media industries for ni-Vanuatu
- reinforce authority of chiefs
- remove any traditional practices that do not accord with the national motto 'Long God Yumi Stanap' (In God we stand)
- support ni-Vanuatu Christian missionaries overseas and encourage exchanges with neighbouring countries
- ensure Vanuatu's sovereignty is enhanced and support independence movements in West Papua, New Caledonia, Tahiti.

SOURCES

Discussion with VACP members July–August 2008

Vanuatu Daily Post 24 April 2008

Vanuatu Daily Post 2 May 2008

VDPP

Vanuatu Democratic Protection Party

Key facts:

Leading figures—Mackenzy Maling, Norbert Sumsum

History—Party was established in 2008.

Links—Finance Centre/business community.

Parliamentary seats—0

Stronghold—Unknown

Status—Startup party

CONTACT DETAILS

Address PO Box 3428, Port Vila

OFFICE BEARERS

President Mackenzy Maling

Secretary General Simeon Nixon

Treasurer Tom Avock

Spokesman Hosea Alex

HISTORY AND ORGANISATION

VDPP was formed to redress the unfair distribution of resources and to fight increasing poverty among rural and urban grass roots.

OUTLOOK AND POLICIES

VDPP's foreign policy is based on the perceived negative effects of globalisation, the Commonwealth (which VDPP states has ignored the custom judicial system and facilitated the interests of foreign companies and governments inside Vanuatu) and the One China Policy (viewed as a total abuse of political freedom and a new form of colonisation).

VDPP points to a new program of diplomacy—what it calls the Third Protocol—to take Vanuatu into the global economic market.

VDPP supports a Tax Haven Policy for Vanuatu and calls for the repeal of the *Mutual Assistant Act 2002* and review of the foreign legal judicial system in Vanuatu.

Domestic economic policy includes the protection of local industries, the reduction of interest rates on loans and introduction of a Farmers Association (market produce) and Island Forum (decentralise economic and political power to each island).

VDPP proposes the introduction of a comprehensive national security policy to be implemented through a Vanuatu National Security Commission and cover fraud, illegal drugs, gambling, illegal fishing and domestic crime prevention.

SOURCES

Discussions with VDPP members July 2008

VDPP Platform 2008

VLP

Vanuatu Labour Party

VLP

Key facts:

Leading figures—Ephraim Kalsakau, Joshua Kalsakau

History—The Vanuatu Labour Party (VLP) was first established in June 1987 and has contested every national general election since then. It took its first seat in parliament in 2005 when NCAP member and then Minister for Ni-Vanuatu Business, Joshua Kalsakau joined the VLP. Kalsakau was later appointed Minister for Justice in the NUP led coalition government.

Links—Vanuatu Council of Trade Unions, Vanuatu National Workers Union

Parliamentary seats—1

Stronghold—Port Vila

Status—The party is seeking to capitalise on its high profile member of parliament and the growing push for better working conditions and increased wages to win seats in its own right at the next election.

CONTACT DETAILS

Contact	Leba-Union Haus
Address	Rue La Perouse Street, PMB 9089, Port Vila
Telephone	+678 25816
Email	leba@vanuatu.com.vu

OFFICE BEARERS

President	Joshua Kalsakau
Secretary General	Richard Kaltonga
Treasurer	Rorin Miller

HISTORY AND ORGANISATION

The Vanuatu Labour Party was established on the 3 June 1987 in order to contest the 1987 national general elections. The party was formed out of frustration at lack of recognition of the trade union movement by the VP led government of Vanuatu. The founding members of the VLP recall the support provided by the Australian and New Zealand trade unions during the nation's struggle for independence.

In 1986 Vanuatu's pioneering trade union activists made applications to establish a general union to cover all private sector workers. Realising there would be little government support for such a union, the founders set about establishing a political arm of the labour movement. Trade union leaders from across the country, Kenneth Satungia (VTUC), Job Tabi (VTU), Willy Morris (VMWU), Ericson Manar (VEWU), Eric J Saila (VTU), Toufau A Sheyrild (VTUC), Thomas Reynold (VMWU), Temo Saeity (VPWU), Anas T Bule (VWW&SU), Loane Simon (VTUC) and Osea Steven (VHWU) agreed unanimously to the proposal by Ephraim Kalsakau from

the Vanuatu Municipal Workers Union and founded the Vanuatu Labour Party.

The party fielded four candidates in the 1987 election: Willy Romain of Tanna, George Kalsakau (deceased) of Port Vila, Kenneth Satungia of Efate and Thomas Reynold of Luganville.

The objective of the party is to strengthen the trade union movement as a rightful partner in the development of the nation.

In 2007 there were difficulties when attempting to merge the political and industrial arms of the labor movement. A reconciliation was undertaken in early 2008, which set the ground for Joshua Kalsakau to serve as President of the party until 2 September 2008 and for a Congress to be held in December on Aneityum to endorse a Party Constitution and hold elections for the executive positions.

OUTLOOK AND POLICIES

The party has advised that its detailed policy base is to be drawn up after the December Congress. It will be based on the over arching aim of ensuring fairness in the distribution of resources as well as fairness in trade. The party will always maintain its support for and link to the international labor movement and is a strong advocate against the privatisation of health and education facilities. It also believes that customary land ownership is paramount to the future well being of the nation.

SOURCES

Discussion with VLP members and union officials June–July 2008

VNP*Vanuatu National Party***Key facts:****Leading figures** – Dinh Van Than**History** – Established in 2004 after Dinh Van Tan was voted out of the leadership of the National United Party, a party he co-founded with Father Walter Lini. Dinh Van Tan unsuccessfully contested the 2004 election in the constituency of Port Vila.**Parliamentary seats** – 0**Stronghold** – Port Vila**CONTACT DETAILS****Address** PO Box 205, Port Vila**Telephone** +678 23115**OFFICE BEARERS****President** Dinh Van Than**Secretary General** Petre Malsungai**Treasurer** George Berry Tongariki**HISTORY AND ORGANISATION**

Dinh Van Than formed the Vanuatu National party (VNP), a naturalised citizen of Vanuatu, co-founded the NUP with Father Walter Lini, after the latter had been toppled from the leadership of the VP. Than served as Chairman of the People's Congress and later succeeded Father Walter Lini as president of the NUP in 1999. He was ousted as leader of the NUP at the Maewo congress in 2003, and replaced by Ham Lini (brother of Walter lini) as party president.

In June 2004, Dinh Van Than formed the VNP to contest the snap election called in that year. The party's constitution states that in establishing the party it was hoped that the ideologies and principles of Father Walter Lini could be revived. The party structure is based on the Party Congress (the supreme decision making body of the party), Commissars Council (overseeing the work of the commissars and executive council), Executive Council (determines administrative functions), Regional Co-ordinators Council (execute resolutions of the Congress) Sub Committees (encourage and co-ordinate activities in local areas).

Dinh Van Than is a prominent businessman in Vanuatu.

OUTLOOK AND POLICIES

The VNP emphasises the need to develop rural employment opportunities, provide confidence to business and invest in primary industries (agriculture, horticulture, etc.) to grow the economy.

If the party was to form government after the 2008 election it would:

- investigate the granting of citizenship from 2000–08
- restrict Asian businesses from operating beyond the municipal boundary
- stop long line fishing within the 12 mile zone
- stop live export of fish and cattle
- cut the ministry down from 13 to 9
- reduce the salary of MPs.

Further, VNP will push for the following changes:

- review the constitution
- redirect government investment program (GIP) to the six provinces
- appointment of 5 non ni-Vanuatu the positions of Attorney General; Ombudsman; Chief Justice; Police Commissioner; Public Prosecutor.

The party proposes to develop an effective national telecommunications strategy across the country and invest in higher education and qualifications especially in technical fields, infrastructure, utilities and telecommunication. In health, form strong partnerships with churches (as prior to independence) engaging them to provide social services for the people in the provinces and whilst the government should concentrate in urban areas to provide quality health and education services.

VNP will field 12 candidates in the coming election.

SOURCES

Discussion with VNP members June–July 2008

Vanuatu National Party 2008 Nasonal Jenerol Eleksen Platform

Vanuatu National Party Constitution

VP

*Vanua'aku Party***Key facts:**

Leading figures—Father Walter Lini (deceased), Donald Kalpokas, Peter Taurokoto, Edward Natapei, Sela Molisa, Joe Natuman

History—Vanuatu's first orthodox political party and arguably most successful, having governed in its own right for the first eleven years after Independence and participated in numerous coalition governments since then. In recent years the party has suffered from factional infighting, and lost a number of 'safe seats'.

Links—Founded by members of the Anglican and Presbyterian clergy, teachers and British Administration bureaucrats. Mostly supported by Anglophone community. Break away group (under Fr Walter Lini) formed NUP in 1991. VP ran joint platform and campaign with NUP in 2004 election and became coalition partners in the Ham Lini (NUP President) Government, with Edward Natapei (VP President) as Deputy PM.

Parliamentary seats—10

Stronghold—Tafea Province, Efate, Port Vila, Santo, Malekula, Ambae

Status—Established Melanesian nationalist party seeking to restore its status as a key political force.

CONTACT DETAILS

Address Oceania Building, PO Box 472, Port Vila
Telephone +678 25508

OFFICE BEARERS

President Edward Natapei
Secretary General Sela Molisa
Treasurer Philip Boedoro

HISTORY AND ORGANISATION

Formed by an educated elite with strong ties to the Presbyterian Church, the Vanua'aku Party (meaning "Our land party") started out as a cultural association in the late 60s, evolving into a strong political force in the early 1970s. The VP was founded in Luganville, Santo on 17 August 1971 as the New Hebridean Cultural Association (NHCA), renamed later that year as the New Hebridean National Party (NHNP). The party was renamed as the Vanua'aku Party in 1977, and championed the rapid ending of colonial rule and maintaining territorial integrity in a new nation state of Vanuatu.

Key personalities in the early days of the party were: Fr. Walter H Lini, Fr John B Bani, Aiden Arugogona, Lawrence Tarisesei, Doland Kalpokas, Peter Taurakoto and Kalkot Matas Kelekele. The VP drew on the

experiences of Africa independence and nationalist movements in the development of their initial ideologies.

As the first orthodox political party in Vanuatu, the VP structure has become the template for party organisation. VP is governed by a People's Congress, which comprises delegates from regional subcommittees, island delegates (where there are no subcommittees), members of the Commissars' Council and members of the National Executive Council. Administrative functions are determined by the Central Administrative Council, which includes the major office-bearers of the party (president, treasurer, secretary) women's and young people's delegates, provincial and municipal councillors and other members as determined by the People's Congress. The basic party functionaries are the Commissars, who are elected by regional subcommittees for two-year terms and who, as far as possible, should be residents of the area they represent. Commissars are responsible for long-term party planning and the decisions of the Commissars' Council are binding on the Executive Council. Former party members who have left to join or form other political parties have cited the gradual erosion in the separation between the parliamentary, executive and administrative wings of the party. Restructuring of the party machine in 2008 sought to revitalise role of the People's Congress as the supreme decision making organ of the party, re-establish regional co-ordination committees to oversee support, fund-raising and reporting activities of sub-committees, and to periodically review the performance of the executive council.

The party won the pre-independence 1979 elections and Father Walter Lini became chief minister. On gaining independence in 1980, Lini became the first Prime Minister of Vanuatu, remaining in the post until the party split in 1991. Lini and 21 dissident VP members left to form the National United Party. The early years of the Lini government were occupied with suppressing the rebellion brought about by federalist movements in southern and northern islands, and building institutions of government from the remnants of the parallel British and French condominium governments.

After the party split in 1991, it remained a strong political force over the next decade, with Donald Kalpokas and Edward Natapei serving as Prime Minister. However, in recent years the party has been losing seats (18 seats won at the 1998 election, 14 in the 2002 election, and 8 in the 2004 election - gaining a further two when independent MPs joined the party).

Faction tensions culminated in the early months of 2004, when three senior members, including former Prime Minister Donald Kalpokas, formed a breakaway group, known as the Vanua K Group (VKG). The group was differentiated by the Vanuatu Electoral Commission in the 2004 election, and the split cost a number of senior VP candidates in the

heartland constituencies such as Tanna and Tafea Outer Islands in the 2004 election. Following this election, two VKG members, Joe Natuman and Sela Molisa, split from the rest of VP to join UMP in a new coalition government led by Serge Vohor.

An internal structural review was undertaken during 2007 culminating in an internal reconciliation ceremony held on Aniwa in April 2008, to reunify the party in the lead up to the general election.

Party President, Edward Natapei, became Deputy Prime Minister and Minister for Public Utilities and Infrastructure in the NUP led coalition government of Ham Lini in July 2007, and in this role was instrumental in the breaking of the telecommunications monopoly.

The party platform details provisions for the empowerment of women and was the only party to have women MPs in the last parliament: Isabelle Donald (MP for Epi) and Taso Leinavao (MP for Epi and Minister of Education).

OUTLOOK AND POLICIES

VP was founded on the principles of political freedom, national identity and return of alienated land to customary ownership. Foreign policy has been based on membership of the Non-Aligned Movement and

advocacy for the decolonisation, especially the Melanesian West Papua and New Caledonia.

Under the leadership of Edward Natapei, and in response to the years of political turmoil that typified the 1990s, the party shaped itself as the party of institutional reform through its implementation of the Comprehensive Reform Program (CRP). Initially supporting the Asian Development Bank (ADB) sponsored CRP, the VP led government of Edward Natapei moved to prioritise activities through the introduction of the Prioritised Action Agenda (PAA) in 2003.

Following the factional split in the lead up to the 2004 election (campaigned on a joint platform with the National United party), VP leaders set about reconciling the differences within the party, and in particular the emerging generational shift that is seeing a number of younger MPs aspire to leadership roles within the party. In 2007 the party executive embarked on a re-visioning exercise to reposition the party for the next 25 years.

The party's new vision statement seeks to restore the status of the VP as the key political player in the country that is to become prosperous 'through hard work and equitable access to resources and opportunities whereby entrepreneurship and partnership are encouraged and ni-Vanuatu given a fair go in the business environment'. The vision further sees Vanuatu as a well educated and healthy nation.

Priorities for the coming years include:

- productive utilisation of land for food security and expansion of export orientated agro-based processing and manufacturing industries
- enhance growth in tourism and services
- manage urban growth
- preserve Vanuatu's diverse cultural heritage.

The VP remains well organised and has taken steps to recover from the disastrous split in 2004. Its major challenge in the coming political cycle will be accommodating the aspirations of its younger leaders while continuing to develop coherent policies. VP is confident of a strong showing in the 2008 elections but will also need to overcome the perception of disunity among its senior leaders.

SOURCES

Meeting with VP members May–July 2008

VP Constitution (as amended 1999)

Howard Van Trease (Ed) *Melanesian Politics Stael Blong Vanuatu*.

Macmillan Brown Centre for Pacific Studies & Institute of Pacific Studies.

Morgan, M. G. 2006. 'The Origins and Effects of Party Fragmentation in Vanuatu'. In R. Rich with L. Hambly & M. G. Morgan (Eds.), *Political Parties in the Pacific Islands* (pp.117-142). Canberra: Pandanus Books, The Australian National University.

Vanua'aku Party Vision for the next 25 years (2008)

Vanuatu Daily Post, 23 February

VRP

Vanuatu Republican Party

Key facts:

Leading figures – Maxime Carlot Korman

History – Founded by Maxime Carlot Korman, who was previously a member of the Union of Moderate Parties and had served as Prime Minister of Vanuatu while a member of the UMP. Having split the UMP, Korman founded the VRP to contest the 1998.

Parliamentary seats – 4

Stronghold – Port Vila, Malekula, Ambrym.

Status – Despite its leader being embroiled in controversy, VRP is widely predicted to pick up more seats at the forthcoming election.

CONTACT DETAILS

Address PO Box 3163, Port Vila

OFFICE BEARERS

President Maxime Carlot Korman

Secretary General Yoan Mariasua

Treasurer Edward Melsul

HISTORY AND ORGANISATION

Maxime Carlot Korman was first elected to Parliament in 1979, and served as the first Speaker for a period of three years. He served as Prime Minister on two occasions during 1991–95 and 1996, a period marked by his rivalry with UMP heavy weight Serge Vohor. Having been toppled as leader of UMP in 1996, Korman established the Vanuatu Republican Party as a vehicle to contest the 1998 elections. Since then the party has grown to include sitting members in Malekula, Ambrym and Santo constituencies and was part of coalition government led by Ham Lini's National United Party.

OUTLOOK AND POLICIES

The VRP platform for the 2008 election contains a comprehensive policy agenda. Specific policy actions described in the platform include:

- Upgrade Radio Vanuatu and Television programming
- Sell all government housing
- Review legislation and structure of the office of the ombudsman
- Relocate prison
- Establish government training centre in each province
- Decentralise power and budget from provincial to area council

- Establish wages arbitration board
- Reinstate price control unit
- Update legislation controlling Finance Centre
- Open Agriculture Bank
- Establish separate Ministry of Fisheries
- Open up export market for timber
- Repeal VCMB Act and create small regulatory unit
- Review legislation regarding lands
- Upgrade office of the Environment Unit and update legislation to account for Climate Change and globalisation
- Create more conservation areas in each island
- Supply water tanks to areas where there is no access to water supply
- Establish diplomatic relations with Middle Eastern countries
- Appoint ambassadors, consul general and trade commissions around the world
- Compulsory education and no school fees for classes 1-8
- Create provincial secondary schools, provincial vocational schools, and schools for those with special needs (e.g. students with disabilities and those requiring specialist teachers)
- Reintroduce Scouts and Brigade
- Amalgamate Ministry of Youth and Sport and Ministry of Education
- Create provincial health clinics staffed by doctors and nurses
- Upgrade Vila Central Hospital and Luganville Hospital to include specialist health services
- Remove fees for medical services in hospitals, clinics and dispensaries
- Upgrade all air strips on each island to be 'all weather airstrip' and build wharf on each island to facilitate trade
- Reduce age to claim VNPF benefit from 55 to 45 years
- Increase budget to enable all MPs to engage advisors and secretaries (to improve contribution to debate) and increase MP allowance to 4 million vatu per year
- Establish Malvatumari as 'Kastom Senate' of Vanuatu
- Government to pay allowance to all chiefs in Vanuatu
- Government to allocate funding to Vanuatu Christian Council.

SOURCES

VRPPolicy Platform 2008

Appendix I

Australian Labor—International Projects Unit

The International Projects Unit was established in 2006 to manage Australian Labor's international relations around the world and to deliver cutting edge technical assistance to political parties in Asia and the Pacific.

Through the Australian Political Parties for Democracy Program (APPDP) and our other international activities, we will target the strengthening of political parties in the region. Political parties are the primary vehicles for everyday people to have their aspirations reflected in government decision-making.

Each year we undertake a raft of networking and training initiatives designed to build links with political party campaigners in the United Kingdom, the United States, New Zealand, Europe, Asia and the Pacific. These include our signature events the Progressive Summit and the Asia Pacific Leaders Forum at our Australian Labor National Conference.

Which countries do we work in?

Labor is committed to broadening and deepening our engagement with Asia and the Pacific across a range of activities (National Platform 2007).

Our technical assistance programs are designed to respond to the governance and democracy demands of political parties in the region.

We undertake focused, sustainable and effective party strengthening activities in Asia and the Pacific. We have run programs in Indonesia, Philippines, Timor Leste, Papua New Guinea, Solomon Islands and Fiji.

We maintain dialogue and exchange relationships with political parties the world over.

The Constant Campaign

Our technical assistance programs focus on the fundamentally democratic process of the political campaign.

We believe that the campaign necessarily brings everyday people into the process of governing.

While we recognize that political parties and their campaigns are different from country to country, we share common challenges in an increasingly global world. International Projects provides a focal point for innovative technologies and strategies in campaigning and party-building from around the world and tailors them to fit local circumstances.

Technical assistance provided under the Australian Political Parties for Democracy Program (APPDP)

Australian Labor's International Projects Unit will draw on our people from state branches and federal politics with skills in party organisation and policy development in the planning and delivery of training.

Under the APPDP scheme, we will:

- Provide training, education and advice
- Support democratic activities and programs in overseas countries
- Provide technical assistance in the conduct of local, regional or national elections in overseas countries
- Liaise with international organisations with the purpose of achieving the program's objectives
- Support visits to Australia by visiting delegations of legislators and other party representatives

These activities include guided study missions to Australia, workshops and seminars to be undertaken in recipient countries, and our soon to be launched online campaign

resource tool, where we will be able to share information about our campaigns, generate innovative ideas for election materials and so on.

Importantly:

- no financial assistance will be provided directly to any party under the APPDP
- no activism outside the abovementioned guidelines will be undertaken by Australian Labor's members under the APPDP basis of engagement.

In determining whether parties are suitable recipients of technical assistance, political parties:

- must support democratic frameworks
- must oppose violence as a means of achieving political aims
- must be viable, sustainable and relevant.

What issues does Australian Labor's International Projects Unit Target?

Australian Labor has broad experience in party-building and policy development and these themes will be reflected in our programs.

Party building:

- internal governance, developing unified party structures and resource sharing
- branches as membership and campaign resources
- internal party democracy, membership management, candidate scrutiny, pre-selections, caucus discipline
- relationship with parliamentary party
- constitutions, rules and procedures
- campaign roles and structures
- campaigning, marginal seats, broad strategies and mini-campaigns
- campaign finance, funding and disclosure, fundraising codes of conduct, candidate pledges/signed declarations.

Policy development:

- policy development, process, lobbying and advice, identifying and pursuing government priorities
- the role of the media and media liaison
- political advertising, political communication and message delivery
- public opinion, research, electoral statistics analysis, focus group polling.

Want to know more?

Contact me on the details below or search through our website for more information:

Michael Morgan
Director, International Projects Unit
Australian Labor

Address	PO Box 6222, Kingston ACT 2604
Telephone	+612 6120 0800
Fax	+612 6120 0801
Web	www.ip.alp.org.au

Appendix 2

Pacific Institute of Public Policy

The Pacific Institute of Public Policy (PiPP) is an independent, non-partisan and not-for-profit think tank based in Port Vila, Vanuatu. PiPP exists to stimulate and support policy making in the Pacific by:

- conducting user-relevant policy-based research grounded in empirical analysis
- communicating the outcomes of new research to policy makers
- providing an inclusive forum for debate on pressing policy issues.

Overseen by a Board of Directors, the institute is supported by an international Advisory Council comprising eminent regional leaders, academics, policy practitioners and private sector figures.

Political Engagement

PiPP is not affiliated with any political party. The institute was founded on the belief that every person should be afforded opportunities to contribute to policy making processes through informed public debate. It is intended that the outcome of this study will equip the electorate to:

- stimulate awareness and understanding of the policy issues and programs espoused by the main political parties and groupings
- raise the level and sophistication of public policy debates
- provide up to date information regarding the political parties and movements which have shaped and will continue to shape the political landscape in Vanuatu
- promote the use of policy platforms/manifestos to focus the agenda for evidence-based policy making.

Why we do it?

We believe evidence based policy making can be improved through better communication that includes adapting the best ideas and latest thinking to the local social and political context. Further, if key policy stakeholders have access to quality information and forums to share ideas and experiences, then the level of public debate on important issues will improve. This in turn energises the search for practical solutions to social, economic and environmental development challenges.

Want to know more?

Please contact us or browse our website for more information about our programs and activities

Derek Brien
Communications Director
Pacific Institute of Public Policy

Address	PMB 9034, Port Vila, Vanuatu
Telephone	+678 26579
Fax	+678 26578
Email	pipp@pacificpolicy.org
Web	www.pacificpolicy.org



www.ip.alp.org.au