

Boral's key role in massive resort project

The Republic of Vanuatu may look like some small dots on a map of the Pacific Ocean, but it is where Boral is establishing a bridgehead that will enable it to serve a much larger number of Pacific Islands. It is also where the company is playing a leading role in creating an A\$80 million tourist development that will bring many thousands of new visitors to Vanuatu annually.



*Fran Vella, National Export Manager
Boral Plasterboard.*



Today, Boral is a key supplier of materials and hardware to construct the 400-hectare Whitesands Resort, being developed by Vanuatu business leader Dominique Dinh. Whitesands is a vast development that will support some 350 luxury homes, an 18-hole international PGA-rated championship golf course designed by Robert Trent Jones (the world's leading golf course architect), a conference centre and a casino.

Boral's first contact with the project was initiated in August 2007 in a telephone call from Nic Atherinos of Eaton Street P/L (Whitesands Resort's Director of Marketing and Sales) to Steve Caust at Boral Plasterboard, Port Melbourne. It was a simple enquiry about purchasing a small quantity of plasterboard.

Fran Vella (National Export Manager Boral Plasterboard) was brought in initially to discuss logistics and payment. Little did she know how this decision would change her life.

Shown the size and the scope of the development, she immediately saw opportunities to link other Boral divisions

into the project and to make Whitesands a showpiece of Boral's Australian products - bringing in Boral Bricks, Formwork & Scaffolding, Hancock, Masonry, Plywood, Timber, Windows and Roofing as additional suppliers. Nic Atherinos was more than happy about this, knowing Boral as a nationally recognised and respected organisation with a variety of quality products.

Site excavation started recently, but Fran's role has grown steadily to the stage where, in addition to her position with Boral, she has also become a 'de facto' project manager liaising with all of the project's suppliers. If this were not challenge enough, she has significantly assisted in establishing a new local business - Vanuatu Builders Hardware - which will open in Port Vila in mid-2009. This represents a significant further investment by developer Dominique Dinh.

Although many Boral divisions will put stock into the new facility (which will carry Boral's colours), it will also be both a showcase and a distribution centre for an estimated 80

other Australian-based suppliers including Hagemeyer, Harvey Norman, Home Outlet (blinds), Laminex, Bosch/Siemens, Clipsal and Dulux, to name a few. Its potential market extends to Fiji and New Caledonia, where there are large markets for its products.

"There is nothing like this in the South Pacific and, as at Whitesands, we will be able to supply everything in building materials and hardware - right through to the keys to the front door," said Fran.

Fran said that the team working on the project had developed more than a customer/supplier relationship. They had become close friends. Whitesands Resort had supported Boral's JDRF fundraising efforts by providing a seven-night holiday package to the Iririki Island Resort Vanuatu. With the support of Grays Online, this package was auctioned off by the Plasterboard team in Victoria as a 'Walk for the Cure' fundraising initiative; raising more than \$5900.