

PWD, VCAP & NORTH ERROMANGO AC

RESULTS & RECOMMENDATIONS FROM VULNERABILITY ASSESSMENTS & COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

Recommendations for PWD: North Erromango AC

- Specialist from PWD to inspect primary footpaths and create technical plan for “climate proofing” in 2016
- Construct pedestrian footbridge over large river in Iluvuwalam (Cooks Bay)
- Only certain portions of primary footpath require assistance, focus on biggest challenges - river crossings, erosion issues on major slopes, etc
- Consider lessons learned and successes from previous PWD footpath project on Futuna, which was successful
- Encourage complimentary measures such as vetiver grass and planting of trees to curb erosion around access ways
- VCAP should not engage in attempting to improve former forestry vehicular roads due to GEF / LDCF requirements, funding constraints and also because these roads normally provide transport into the interior of the island and forest reserves rather than to services.
- Priority for work on footpaths should focus on area between Cooks Bay & Port Narvin initially due to hazards, population figures and frequency of use. Next priority area for improvement in accessibility is between Ipota and Cooks Bay.



(Above: coastal footpath between Ipota and Cooks Bay)

Primary Footpath & Pedestrian Bridges

Improving the condition and accessibility of footpaths and construction of pedestrian bridges over rivers was the **highest priority** for each community consulted in North Erromango AC. The footpath connecting the communities of Ipota, Cooks Bay, and Port Narvin is the most commonly access way on the island. Every week, hundreds of villagers utilize the footpaths to travel to Ipota as a main service center on North Erromango where the health dispensary, junior secondary school, airport and banking services are located.

There are portions of the footpath that are inaccessible in rainy conditions due to moderate coastal and upland erosion and / or flooding of rivers and creeks. A small portion of the path is inaccessible at high tide as well due to their proximity to the coastline and impeding tidal waves or storm surge.

There are **currently no bridges for any of North Erromango's three major rivers** along the primary footpaths. There are a few makeshift bridges (fallen trees or timber nailed together) used to cross smaller streams in some locations. A small boy in Ipota nearly drowned in 2011 while attempting to cross the Melvin river (Ipota) during inclement weather, but luckily was seen and helped across by a family member.

Primary footpath between Ipota and Cooks Bay area

Along the northern and southern boundaries of Ipota are two rivers that must be crossed in order to depart the community. The southern footpath towards the “station” of Ifo requires crossing a small river that can typically be waded through weather permitting. The northern footpath

Challenges for PWD North Erromango AC

Many portions of coastal and upland footpaths to be “climate proofed” are very remote and difficult to access. Community members have stated that improving accessibility of footpaths is a top priority and that community members would actively support implementation

While every VDC and a majority of community members have expressed total support for improvements to the footpaths, a small number of individuals may express **preference or desire for the construction of vehicular roads**. This request should be met with practicality as the available VCAP budget for the creation of a vehicular road and LDCF requirements that “**incremental**” investments be made will not allow for the construction of a new access way, but rather the strengthening or resilience building of a current one.

The North Erromango sub-site has a residing Site Coordinator in Ipota village available to assist with logistical arrangements, however, his ability to travel to Cooks Bay and Port Narvin is weather dependent.

Limited shipping options or scheduled trips for North Erromango often result in island-wide fuel shortages, inhibiting use of local fiberglass boats for transportation purposes.

Due to **challenging topography** and lack of a vehicular road connecting North and South Erromango, two separate missions will likely be required to service both sub-sites.

towards Cooks Bay and Port Narvin requires crossing a moderate sized river that is prone to flooding during heavy rain and typically require a canoe to cross. Prior to reaching Cooks Bay, the “stations” of Norah and Nalvin are traveled through, requiring two small creeks be crossed. Portions of the coastal footpath require passing alongside steep cliffs and underneath narrow overhangs. Upon reaching Cooks Bay, the island’s largest river in Iluvuwalam must be crossed by canoe prior to continuing northward.

Recommended that a pedestrian crossing be constructed several hundred meters inland from the mouth of the Iluvuwalam river (Cooks Bay) due to coastal erosion / storm surge impacts at the mouth of the river. This is **biggest vulnerability on the access way as reported by North Erromango VDC and should be a priority item for delivery**. Due to the area’s primary school being situated across the river from the main population center, most students are

required to cross daily.



(Above: upland footpath between Cooks Bay and Port Narvin where locals have attempted to install stairs)

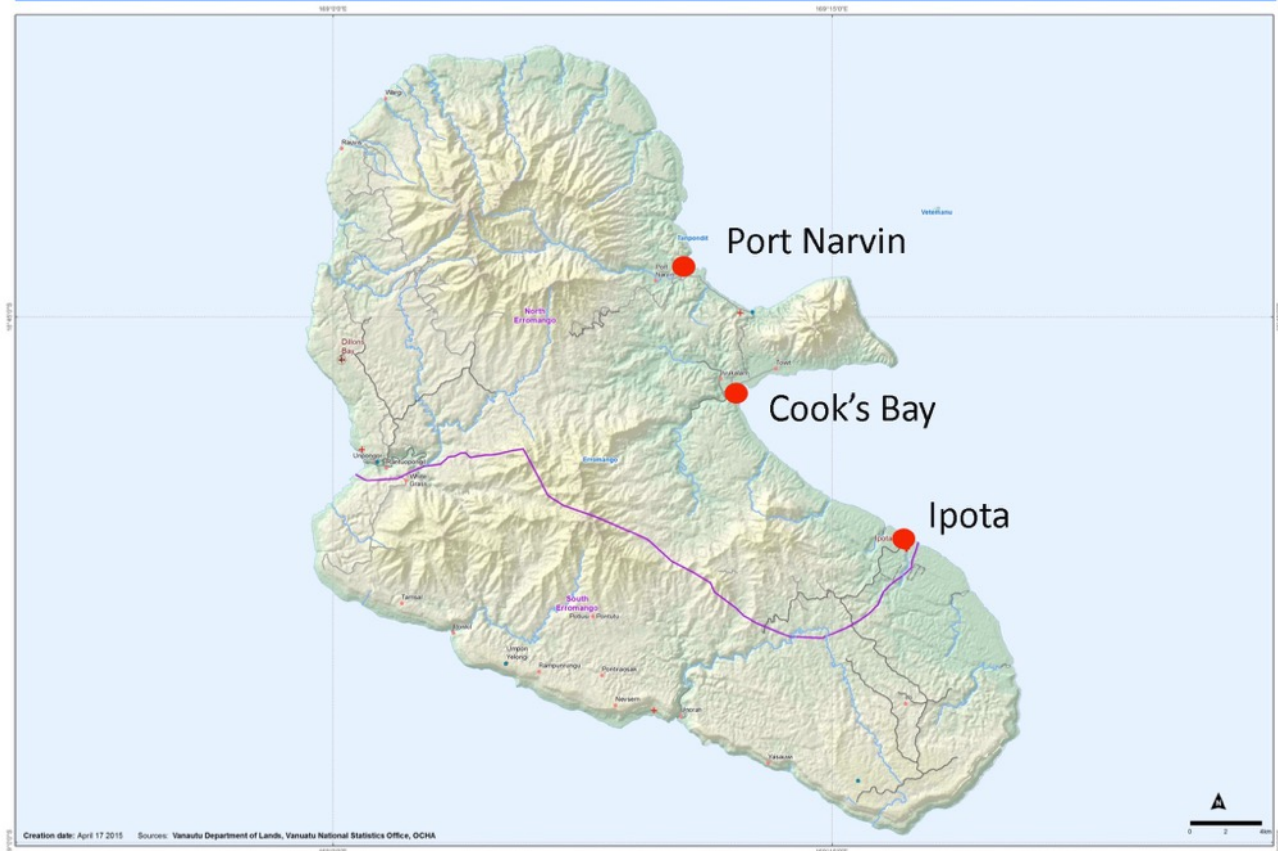
Footpath between Cooks Bay area and Port Narvin

Continuing northward from Cooks Bay towards Port Narvin requires traveling through the “station” of Perusia at the southern edge of Mt. Urantop. The footpath then departs the coastline and continues upland, ascending a few hundred meters.

Upon descending towards the

community of Port Narvin, the footpath experiences moderate erosion as it passes through hillside gardens. A wild bushfire in October, 2015 consumed large swaths of nearby vegetation and trees, which will result in further erosion according to locals.

Recommended that the upland footpath between Cooks Bay and Port Narvin be inspected by a specialist who can recommend interventions. This is **second biggest vulnerability on the access way as reported by North Erromango VDC and should be a priority item for delivery**.



(Communities of North Erromango Area Council)

Roads & Vehicles

There are currently **no operational vehicular roads providing access between communities in North Erromango**. However, a vehicular road was previously constructed from Ipota leading towards the interior of the island, connecting to Williams Bay and surrounding villages during the 1970s. These older roads were built and used by foreign logging companies operating heavy machinery. Abandoned during the 1980s, the roads have deteriorated in condition and are now obstructed by trees and dense vegetation. There is one vehicle based in Ipota that is utilized to transport timber and wharf cargo to the airport over very short distances within the immediate area only. This vehicle frequently experiences mechanical problems.

Resources Available

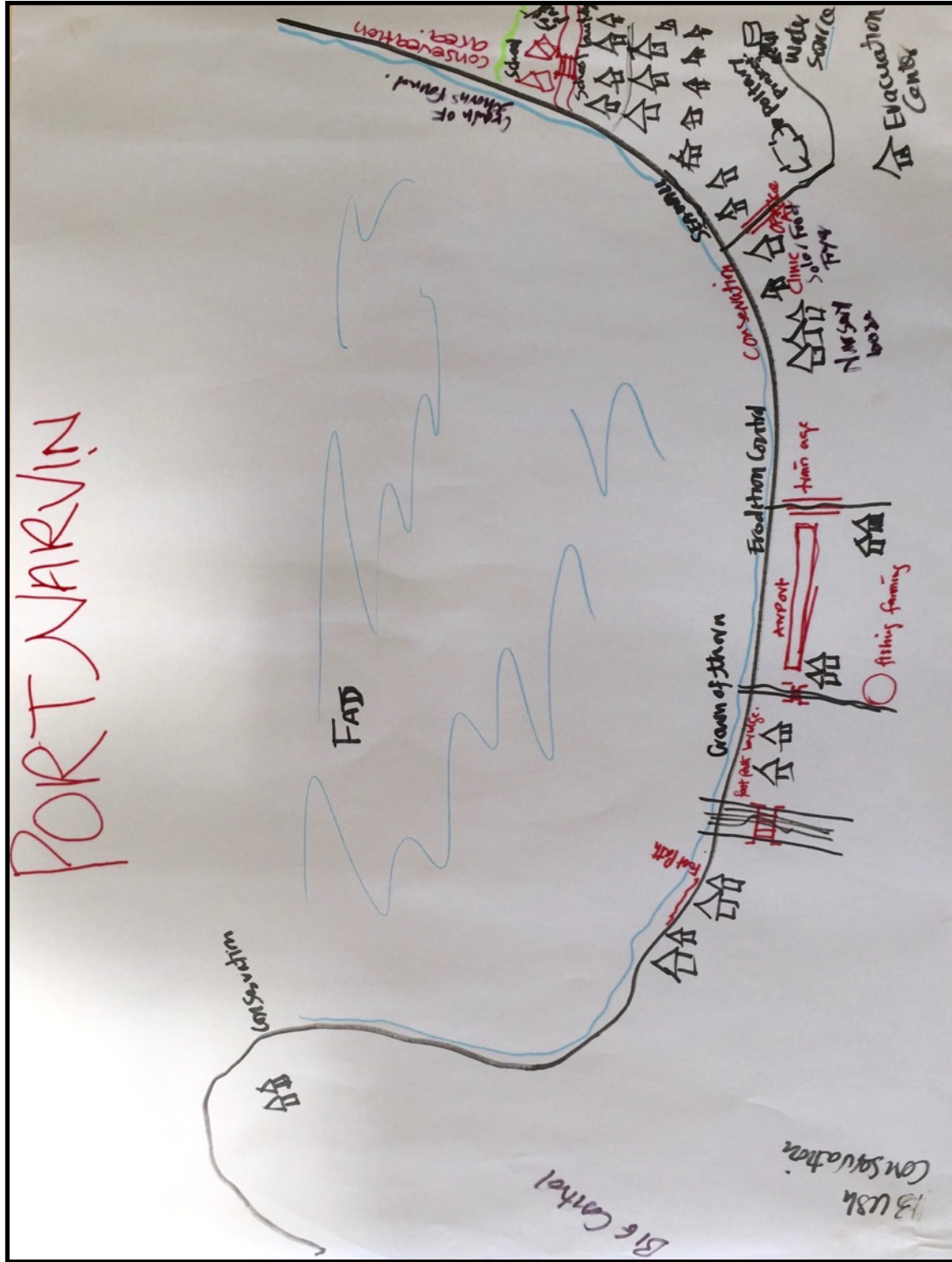
- Plentiful timber
- Ships can access most communities, safe passage
- Established Village Development Committees (3) & Provincial Area Secretary

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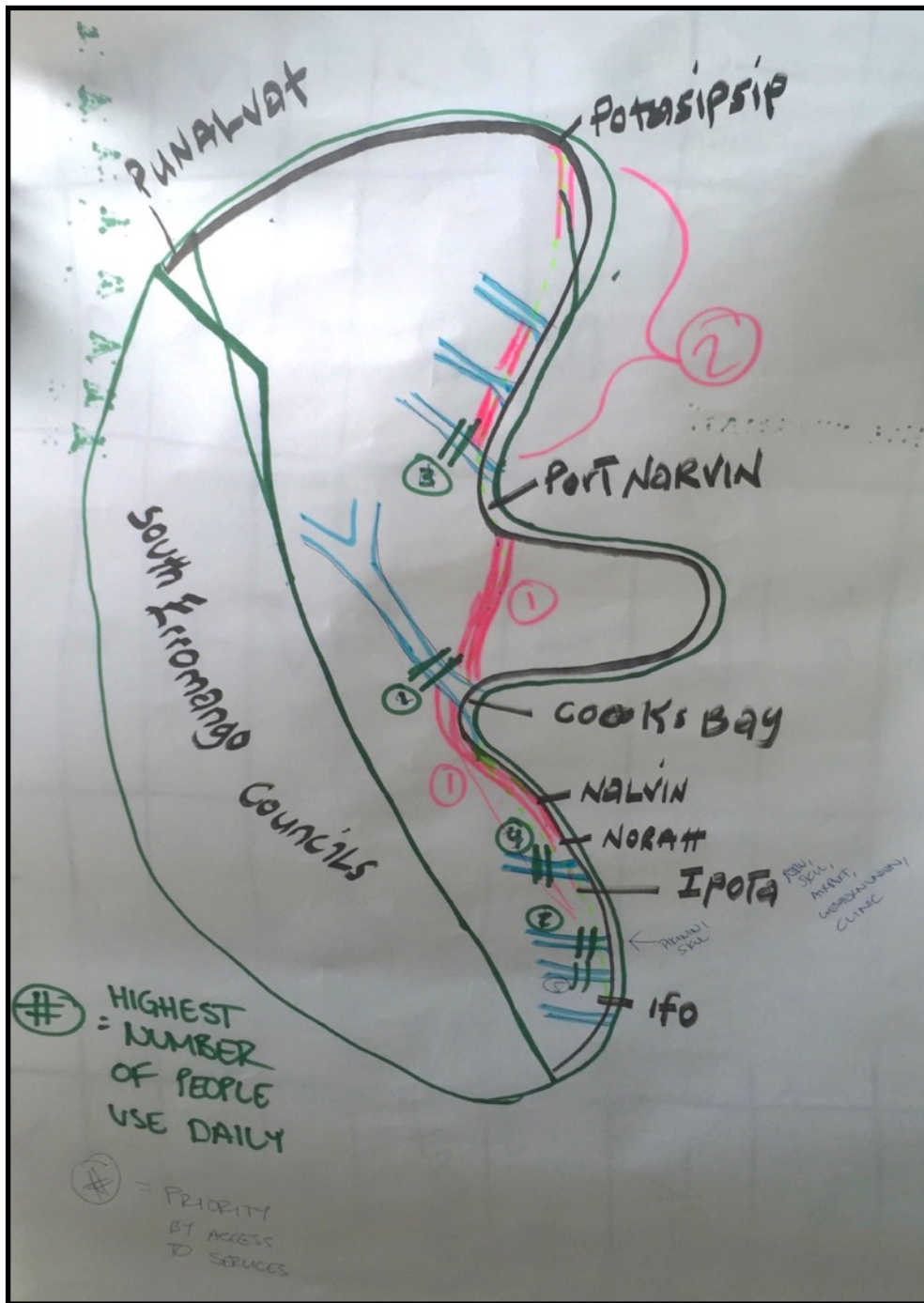
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Port Narvin; Community Mapping



Community mapping exercise showing climate related vulnerabilities as indicated by community members in Port Narvin. Red writing denotes location of suggested conservation areas, aquaculture farming, and pedestrian foot bridges.

North Erromango: Community Mapping of Footpath Vulnerabilities



Community mapping exercise showing climate related vulnerabilities as indicated by North Erromango Area Council and VDC members. Pink lines denote location of priority footpaths (numbered 1-2) and green lines denote location of priority pedestrian foot bridges (numbered 1-4) over water crossings.