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## New Municipal Markets Planned to Strengthen Local Commerce

July 16, 2025

— Categories: *Economics*



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The Ministry of Local Government has announced plans to construct new municipal markets in Nakasi, Levuka, and Savusavu in the next financial year, a move designed to invigorate local economies and provide improved facilities for small businesses and producers.

Speaking in Parliament, Minister Maciu Nalumisa emphasised that this initiative will help create better opportunities for vendors across the country. He noted that the projects will specifically support women, persons with disabilities, farmers, and entrepreneurs who contribute to the stability and growth of communities.

In addition to new construction, the government has allocated \$335,500 for improvements to existing marketplaces. Among these upgrades is a dedicated floor for Micro, Small and Medium Enterprise (MSME) activities, intended to drive innovation and encourage more participation from local traders. Nalumisa highlighted that for too long, vendors in Seaqaqa, many of them women and micro-entrepreneurs, have operated in challenging conditions without adequate infrastructure.

“With \$1.7 million committed to the Seaqaqa market, we are not only honouring their perseverance but also ensuring they have a dignified, modern space,” Nalumisa said. The upgraded facility will accommodate 50 vendors and include designated areas for fresh produce, handicrafts, and hygienic, climate-resilient fish markets.

The Seaqaqa development goes beyond retail spaces. Plans include a bus terminal, secure parking, administrative offices, and landscaped public areas to help transform the site into a well-connected township. These improvements are expected to make market access easier, strengthen small enterprises, and create an environment where commerce can thrive sustainably.

By focusing resources on infrastructure that directly benefits everyday business owners, this program aims to empower communities, promote self-reliance, and bolster regional economies over the long term.