

PT Pacific Tenders

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SUPERFAST BROADBAND

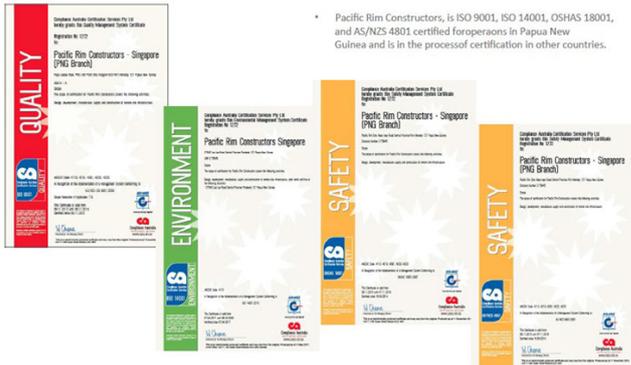
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NPC aims to empower provinces and districts deliver basic services



ACHIEVEMENTS IN 2019 - 2021

'PROMOTING OUR RURAL ECONOMY THROUGH CONNECTIVITY'

PROCUREMENT

101



DAVID SPRING
PT COLUMNIST
Sydney, Australia

Former ADB President Takehiko Nakao once commented that corruption is a threat to the basic fabric of society and fighting it is necessary to advance economic development in the Asia and Pacific region. This noble observation is the logic behind ADB's lengthy and frequently updated rules to manage their procurement of works and services. Their effectiveness in providing a level playing field is still debateable, but their difficulty to navigate is not.

Multilateral banks and bilateral donors are infamous for the density of their bureaucracies and inscrutable procurement outcomes. For contractors and consultants alike, the daunting task of bidding for a contract funded by one of these institutions will start long before the request for quotation ever lands in their inbox. Months and sometimes years of positioning and relationship building will go into securing a single project or program.

While large firms have the resources to commit to this game, small to medium sized businesses need a leaner strategy to be able to compete and build a platform for growth.

Where to start

A small firm needs to start small. Signing up to an online procurement provider like Pacific Tenders and subscribing to this worthy publication, will provide excellent information on the range of current and recently past tenders in various fields and disciplines. A quick internet search of the banks and donors will

also reveal their work pipelines, including timing and value. This information is promptly out-of-date, but certainly provides a starting point for any strategy or line of enquiry.

This kind of search assumes that one has already done their homework as to the suitability of their own staff and organisation to carry out both the task of bidding and the works or services. That self-assessment is so important and self-evident that it doesn't warrant discussion here.

An essential step is to visit the location where the project will take place. Even if you have been to the country before, it is strongly recommended that you visit the site again. Even if it's only been 5 years since you were last there, go again (COVID-19 permitting!). Things do change – access, services, residential density, availability of labour, materials etc, etc. Many things may affect your price, or indeed your willingness to take on the project at all. You cannot learn this from Google Earth or the tender documents.

Once the tender documents are released, get the documents and read them all. Then read them again. If you have others in your team working on the proposal, send it out to them noting what you want them to look at in particular. Convene a meeting to discuss and confirm the approach to the work and the bid-winning approach you will take. Don't separate these functions at the start – there's no point having technical people going on a tangent to the assumptions that the pricing is based on. Usually there is only a 6-week tender period - not a very long time to prepare a bid involving many different sections, and where bid securities are required.

Someone needs to focus on the bid submission documents. This can be a significant task and cannot be

¹ ADB, 2017, 'ADB President Calls for Stronger Efforts to Fight Corruption', <https://www.adb.org/news/adb-president-calls-stronger-efforts-fight-corruption>

left to the last minute. In fact, gathering all the paperwork and setting out the approval timelines is critical to timely delivery of the tender. If not done correctly, it can result in the rest of the tendering effort being wasted.

Another critical step is to confirm that your company can achieve the required minimum evaluation criteria and that you have (or can recruit) staff who meet the minimum experience requirements. A company has to have sufficient financial turn-over and also have the relevant previous work experience to qualify to bid.

Fish hooks

While many people will joke about colleagues planning to take on contracts in the Pacific, as if there will be a lot of sitting around on beaches, sipping pina colodas and fishing, the reality is quite different. The list of failed consultants and contractors in the Pacific, as if there will be a lot of sitting around on beaches, sipping pina colodas and fishing, the reality is quite different. The list of failed consultants and contractors in the Pacific, as if there will be a lot of sitting around on beaches, sipping pina colodas and fishing, the reality is quite different. The list of failed consultants

“

Infrastructure is funded primarily through aid money. Grants and loans from bilateral agencies and multilateral banks. It is not foreign direct investment, as the returns are not commercial. It is the purchase of political influence by foreign governments.

The wisdom of that situation is the topic for another day. Rightly or wrongly, the Pacific has chosen this path for now.

”

and contractors in the Pacific, even over the past 10 years, is long. This is not always their own fault, but there are common pitfalls which can be avoided at the procurement stage, which will reduce the likelihood of ending up on that list.



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Common pitfalls include:

- Expecting logistics and supplies to be similar to your country of origin, without doing the site visit and other research. Delivery times for goods can be months, not weeks.
- Failing to dot the i's and cross t's with critical paperwork submissions like bank guarantees
- Being inconsistent with the company/ subsidiary who is proposing to undertake the tender, and their place of company registration. This is not usually a problem for small firms!
- Providing a delivery program with the tender that achieves the milestones set out in the tender documents. This can be a two-edged sword, because if the program is in some way 'impossible', then you've just set yourself up to both fail and spend the contract duration arguing with the client
- The signatory on the tender has to be formally authorised by the company to do so – a power of attorney document from the Board or CEO is often required to prove this.

The elephant in the room

In any market, there are no guarantees of success. Tenders can be a mug's game. A success rate of 1 in 3 is considered to be quite good, which means there are a lot of lost tenders to debrief. But the hardest part is finding out the real reason why you didn't win. The scoring was the scoring, and often times it is done as fairly and objectively as possible by tender evaluation committees. But everyone wants the playing field to be level until they're winning on it. Take the hypothetical example of the NZ-based firm, with a long-term operation in a Pacific country. Chinese firms have been under-cutting their prices for 10 years now and they can't compete with the price element. So they lobby to have other elements of their work scored more highly in bids, such as quality or safety track record, to 'level up the playing field'. For the banks in particular, who idolise market competition, it has been difficult to prise them away from

their particular obsession with 'the lowest priced conforming bid.' There has been some movement in this direction, but it is discretionary and therefore corruptible. Banks try to avoid any subjective analysis when assessing evaluation criteria. The incentives for bank employees would need to change to encourage a deeper examination of "value" in tenders and resulting contracts.

None of this helps small firms much though of course. More requirements only raise the bar and therefore make the price and effort for entry higher. This reduces competitiveness overall. A nuanced approach to each market and project type, based on market survey and research, would be a welcome development. This may lead to more 'limited international bidding', market-appropriate evaluation criteria. E-procurement platforms, which Pacific Tenders is launching later in the year, also has a role – to provide remote tender submission and reduces perceptions of corruption. Perhaps then the ADB President would have a response to his own comment. ●

About the Author

David is an experienced engineer, with over 20 years' experience in construction, design and international development. David has been working in Solomon Islands and Vanuatu as a Team Leader for the past six years, specifically on road and bridgeworks. He worked on intra-ministry roles at the Ministry of Infrastructure Development (MID, Solomon Islands) and led the Cyclone Pam road reconstruction project in Vanuatu, understanding donor requirements and how development projects are procured and delivered. Continuing as a Team Leader for MID and with some corporate responsibilities for Cardno, David seeks to deliver equitable access for communities, which generate social and economic benefits.



L-R Leslie Penibanga (MoFT), Jillian Kari (MoFT), Namoi Rupokets (Pacific Tenders), Simaema Neilsen (SICCI), Philip Maru'arofa (MoFT) & John Kanai (SICCI).

SICCI holds fourth Procurement Workshop for Private Sector

The Solomon Islands Chamber of Commerce and Industry (SICCI) recognizes the need to support businesses and companies to better understand Government's procurement process as the private sector plays a vital role in goods and services delivery to the Government and the people of Solomon Islands.

As part of an ongoing collaboration with the Ministry of Finance and Treasury (MoFT) SICCI, on 14 July organised the fourth procurement training attended by more than 40 business representatives. The first training was hosted for members back in 2017.

It is understood that about 60% of the Government budget is spent through the procurement system.

In his opening remarks, Accountant General, Mr Bruce Philips said the Solomon Islands Government makes 4 billion dollars' worth of payments every year.

"It is very difficult to process 4 billion and at the same time adhere to good compliance and processes. This workshop will be the first of many to be delivered to all SIG Ministries, to understand what the rules of engagement are when contracting private sector and SIG Ministries", Mr Philips said.

The Accountant General also issued a stern warning to any businesses that are engaging in bribing public servants to obtain government contracts. "Companies will be blacklisted for 5 years, that's a responsibility that businesses have to ensure that SIG interests are looked after as well." Mr. Philips said.

SICCI Executive Officer (EO), Ms Rhibbie Auma highlighted that the Government procurement process is an important relationship between government and businesses, which means more understanding and information sharing of each other's needs and systems is vital.

"The private sector through the procurement process is always looking for solutions and ways to improve their products and service delivery to the public and this training is an opportunity to better understand and apply the procurement process for both parties," Mrs Auma said.

Presenters included, Mr Leslie Penibanga, Assistant Accountant-General of MoFT, Ms Jillian Kari, Procurement Adviser to MoFT and Mr. Philip Maru'arofa, Secretary to the Central Tender Board.

Participants went through a series of presentations covering

topics; Introduction to Procurement in Solomon Islands, Understanding what Government wants, responding to Government tenders, Evaluation, Approval and Award and Contract Management

Mr Penibanga highlighted that the training to SICCI members is as beneficial to their Procurement Unit as it is to members. SICCI members knowing what to do when tendering ensures quality bids which reduces problems within the procurement process and increase their competitiveness in the market. A win-win situation where government evaluation committees will make well informed decisions based on good submissions and make recommendations targeting wider participation for local companies.

"We hope that this training will assist them to have more proactive participation in SIG tendering process," he said.

In her closing remarks, SICCI Board Member, Mrs Namoi Kaluae Rupokets, thanked SIG for responding positively to SICCI's request for the training. Mrs Rupokets also acknowledged the Accountant General and the leading SIG Officers from the Procurement office for delivering the training despite their busy schedules.

"Since the first procurement workshop for businesses in 2017, we have had over 70 participants for this training. This year for the 4th procurement training workshop, more than 50 businesses have registered their interest which makes it more than 150 business representatives have participated in total," she added.

Mrs Rupokets said it was encouraging to see businesses have a genuine interest in working closely with the government through such platforms like procurement process.

"We believe that events like this helps bring SIG and the private sector closer in addressing the issues of corruption, as mentioned by the Accountant General. In addressing the need for transparency in procurement we are contributing to creating a more level playing field and allowing genuine local businesses the chance to be part of the procurement process," Mrs. Rupokets said.

"I encourage members to put what you have learnt during this workshop into practice to help your respective businesses and organizations," she concluded.

- SICCI media -

The not so distant future of the NTF

Following the withdrawal of Australian financing support to the National Transport Fund, PT takes a look at the uncertain future of the fund

By **DOUGLAS SAEFOA**
Honiara Solomon Islands

The NTF was set up to deliver the National Transport Plan which guides the long term development of transport infrastructure in Solomon Islands. The NTF was intended to be a single source of funding for donor projects, including Asian Development Bank (ADB), World Bank, DFAT, Ministry Foreign Affairs and Trade (NZ) and Japanese International Cooperation Agency (Japan).

They would all pool their funds in the NTF and the National Transport Plan would be used to allocate priorities for funding. It never eventuated. For a long time, MFAT, ADB and JICA sat on the steering committee, but this broader support faded in 2015.

But the ability/desire for donors to collaborate had evaporated. The NTF is now faced with the likelihood that there will be no donors willing to contribute to it. The Solomon Islands government has contributed to it for many years, sometimes similar amounts to the donors. So they could continue that and ramp it up.

In response to questions sent to the Director of the National Transport Fund Mr. Jimmy Nuake regarding the recent circumstances he said the Solomon Islands government will have to dig deeper into its pockets to fill the gap left by Australia.

"The impact is that SIG will have to put up more funds to the NTF to cover the gap that will be left by DFAT. Given the current covid-19 environment, it's going to be a challenge for SIG to maintain the level of funding that is required to maintain current infrastructure unless another willing donor steps in," Nuake said.

Mr Nuake added that a second generation NTF has been explored for the NTF to be sustainable possibly through fuel levy or other transport related taxes that would go directly to the NTF for investments on transport infrastructure. The other immediate option is for SIG to increase its annual contribution to the NTF.

Nuake said the Solomon Islands government has already committed funds to support NTF in 2021 since it's a warranted under an Act of Parliament.

"Support has to come from SIG and perhaps other new donors who wish to contribute to the NTF going forward. The government has also contributed to the NTF – will

this be ramped up? In order to sustain NTF, that is what needs to happen. MID may also have to ramp up NTF through other transport infrastructure related budget heads in the Ministry's development budget."

"SIG is planning to continue with this mechanism to deliver road maintenance. SIG has put up 45M towards NTF in 2021. NTF is established by an Act of Parliament so SIG will need to ensure that this mechanism continues," said Nuake.

When asked whether the NTF may be at risk of misappropriation once donor support ceases Nuake said such would be a misconception.

"The NTF is established under an Act of parliament and is governed by a board and its regulations. There is very little or no risk at all for the funds to be misappropriated once donor involvement is over."

PT understands that in 2019 Australian Prime Minister Scott Morrison announced in June during a visit to Solomon Islands, a new 10-year \$250m bilateral infrastructure program (SIIP). The SIIP will complement the AUD\$2 billion Australia Infrastructure Financing Facility for the Pacific (AIFFP).

"The Ministry of Infrastructure Development (MID) will be a key stakeholder in DFAT's next phase infrastructure program in SI. I hope MID will form part of any decision making body such as a steering committee that guides the implementation of the program. Any infrastructure priorities that will be implemented under such program will have to be a priority of SIG and MID as stipulated in our sector strategic plans such as the National Transport Plan or the Mid-Term Transport Action Plan as well as the National Infrastructure Investment Plan," said Nuake.

PT also understands that ADB later joined in the funding under an elaborate incentive scheme - USD 14m of LOAN funding under the Sustainable Transport Improvement Investment Program (STIIP) (2016-2021). So the government was borrowing to do road maintenance.

Mr. Nuake confirmed that the STIIP program will conclude around early 2022 and that's when ADB funding will also supposed to cease.

The NTF is managed by the NTF Board, who is accountable to parliament under an ACT on Parliament. ●



IN FOCUS

TECHNICAL Assistance

TA also stands for “Trusted Advisor”¹

 **DAVID SPRING**
PT COLUMNIST
Sydney, Australia

If the aid industry is a circus, consultants are the clowns. Brought in for their technical skills, the engineering can be like tightrope walking and stakeholder management like a juggling act. But consultants also regularly leave with their tails between their legs and mirth in their wake.

Consultants, or “Technical Assistance” (TA as they’re known), are both saviour and villain, expert and scapegoat. Similar tensions can arise workplaces in any country, but the difficulties and opportunities that make development work vexing, also preserve its unusual appeal.

Why TA?

Donors funding infrastructure projects typically procure a consulting firm to deliver the technical services required - to evaluate feasibility, undertake due diligence, deliver the engineering design, prepare construction tender documentation, and supervise construction.

The reason that an international firm is always recruited for these services arises from the assumed fact that firms in the host country are not capable of delivering the project to the donor's requirements. If they were (capable of it), then no-one would need the donor in the first place. Notwithstanding this self-defeating logic, importing some expertise is essential for specialist tasks, such as bridge design, geotechnical work and flood modelling. International firms often have access to the skills base, and most importantly the cash flow, to service the contract.

For specific types of contracts like program design, or discrete feasibility work, individual consultants may be hired by the donor, to run the project, or to represent their interests in managing it from the 'client' side. Due to the intentional selection and individual engagement of this type of TA, it doesn't suffer from the same level of staff turnover or consultant failure as that of the international firm.

However, TA who are 'advisors', also demonstrate turnover. "Programs", which are more the domain of bilateral donors, tend to dabble in this advisor TA, where individuals are recruited to operate in line responsibilities or advisor roles within ministries. Advisors are responsible for delivering intangible program outcomes, often without the management power to do so. There is an element of this powerlessness paradox in all of the TA work described. Just one of the reasons for high TA turnover.

Turnover the symptom not the cause

Analysing a small sample of projects where TA turnover was high, project outcomes were rated as poor.

However, while there was a correlation between TA churn and poor outcomes, it is not conclusively causal. Many other projects also demonstrated poor outcomes, without high TA churn.

Intuitively, TA churn is a significant risk factor to project success. A study of Australian hospitals found that, "Churn among CEOs and quality managers was negatively associated with compliance in aspects of the quality system used to plan, monitor and improve quality of care."²

Some industries are more susceptible to churn than others - typically those with short product or project lifecycles. This is not generally the case in infrastructure projects (or health care for that matter!), so the cause lies elsewhere. Maybe there is a deeper reason for poor project outcomes, that sometimes also leads to high TA turnover - an interplay of several dynamics:

1. The consulting firms' anxious desire to keep donors happy, sometimes counter-intuitively leads to the hiring of less-than suitable staff (due to availability, scarcity of options, demands to quickly service the project)
2. The sheer number of project opportunities means that the TA's next job is only a phone call and CV submission away
3. TA consultants in the development industry often display the temperament and technical competence associated with the storied "mercenaries, missionaries or misfits" trope³
4. Donors' interests are focussed on issues other than the genuine track record of consultant staff
5. An over-reliance on CV's and years of 'relevant' experience in the selection process
6. Donors' propensity to set project targets which are either impossibly high or impossibly vague, e.g., "climate-proofed infrastructure", or "Government and industry have enhanced capacity to XYZ"
7. The difficulties of working in the developing country context, including cultural and language illiteracy, living standards, security and interac-

¹ I was introduced to the development circus when I first started on a development project, as the fifth Team Leader on the project in just on two years. The most surprising thing about this was that no-one else seemed to think that this was unusual, even though there was broad acknowledgement that it was less than ideal. I then spent the final 2.5 years of the project with my team, trying to achieve what was supposed to be achieved over 5 years.

² Leggat, S.G., Balding, C., 2019, 'The impact of leadership churn on quality management in Australian hospitals' Journal of Health Organisation and Management, November 2019, DOI:10.1108/JHOM-08-2018-0216

³ "The origins of this tripartite characterization of the aid community are unclear but certainly it has a currency, or at least a resonance, within the industry." Stirrat, R.L., 2008, 'Mercenaries, Missionaries and Misfits: Representations of Development Personnel', Critique of Anthropology, Vol 28(4), 406-425 [DOI:10.1177/0308275X08098259]

tion with country systems

8. Powerlessness to enact any activities that require the combined effort of others

This reads like a litany of all that's wrong with the consultant-donor-national government client relationships in the development industry. So much of it is. This not only enables and propels high turnover, but project or development outcomes stumble and stagger from poor to unsatisfactory.

My purpose here is not to address each of these issues in turn, but to suggest a different approach. The costs of TA churn are multi-dimensional and can disrupt development progress, so addressing the broader causes of that churn – the working relationships – seems prudent. If TA were empowered to operate in a professional partnership with donor and government clients, a different set of (more desirable) outcomes would be more likely. Let's look at how that may be formed.

Building the contract first

A constructive contracting relationship starts with the contract terms. The client must carefully consider the way that incentives are built into the contract as these drive consultant behaviour. For example, using a lump sum contract for undertaking pre-feasibility and feasibility studies, where clients want a broad range of options and sub-options to be iteratively explored and evaluated, is not the right mechanism. It will lead to consultants limiting the number of options considered and drive to a conclusion, thereby frustrating the client and possibly landing on a less-than-ideal solution. Using a time-and-expenses format for a detailed design of well-defined scope is not going to drive efficiency, as the consultant will be paid more for taking longer. Being objectionable and unreasonable

towards variation claims, as if they are a comment on the competence of the client, is an excellent way to breed mistrust and frustration.

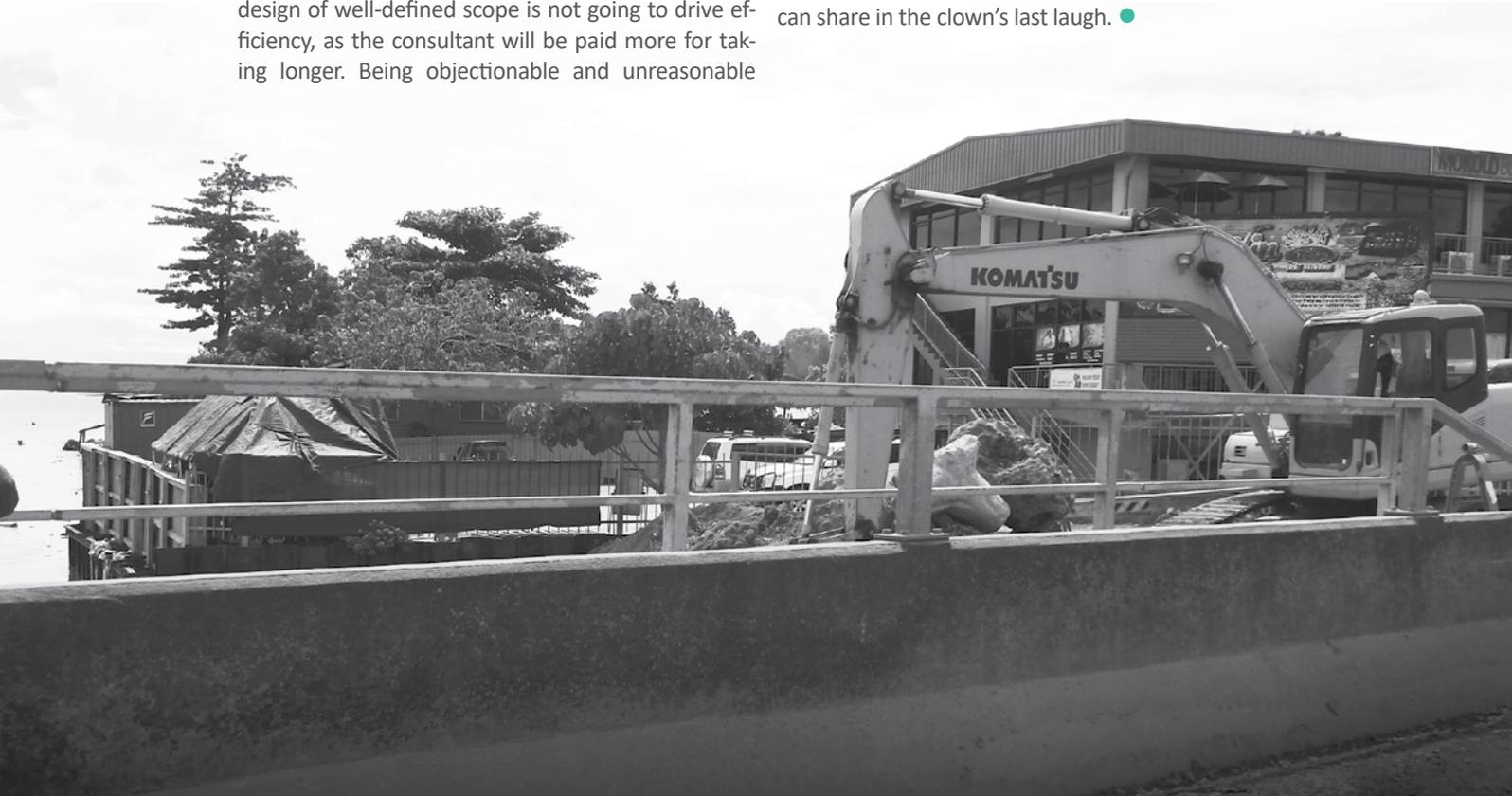
Consider using 'early contractor involvement' (ECI) style arrangements, where experienced TA and contractors are used during the development of TA scope and contracts. This does occur to a certain extent, but these TA need to be better at listening to national staff and seeing past their own fixed ideas, rather than being driven by an obsession with donor board approval timetables.

As markets mature, alliance style contracts, where risks and outcomes are shared will foster partnerships and respect. These are a 'we're all in this together' arrangement, with transparent finances, financial incentives paid to consultants for achieving targets and costs borne by all if over-runs or losses are experienced. This has the effect of animating all parties to produce efficiencies within their organisations. It requires buy-in from the highest levels of each organisation.

Clients should consider paying business class airfares. This may seem like an entitlement claim from already well-paid consultants. But as a relatively in-expensive benefit, it will breed goodwill and may prove enough to keep some TA from giving it up.

The holy grail

Even the most broken system can work if the people operating it work together to overcome its shortcomings. Professional relationships can achieve a lot. The trusted adviser is one who not only makes things work, but who can deliver unpopular advice to clients. It's only in such an environment that all parties can fully achieve their aims. Perhaps then everyone can share in the clown's last laugh. ●



FILLING the SPATIAL DATA GAP in the PACIFIC



When beginning any land development project, professionals in the development industry turn to publicly available land and spatial information to begin pre-development planning and due diligence.

In the Pacific Islands, there is a significant gap in publicly available land and spatial information compared to what our neighbors enjoy in Australia and New Zealand. Many of the datasets that are available are often old and outdated. This includes aerial imagery, topographical maps and other geographical information system (GIS) information that are enabled through pre-development planning.

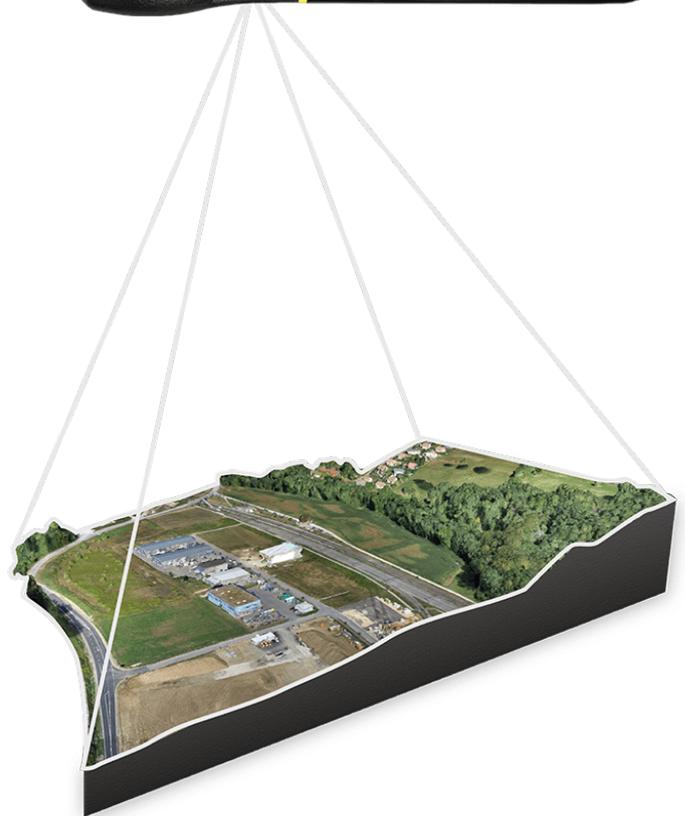
Such data is paramount for the understanding and management of the physical environment. Based on this, sophisticated method that produces accurate result must be adopted to ensure that the right decision is made during planning.

This initial lack of data can lead consulting firms into making costly assumptions and often results in firms requesting costly and time-consuming conventional land surveys for preliminary design work and feasibility studies.

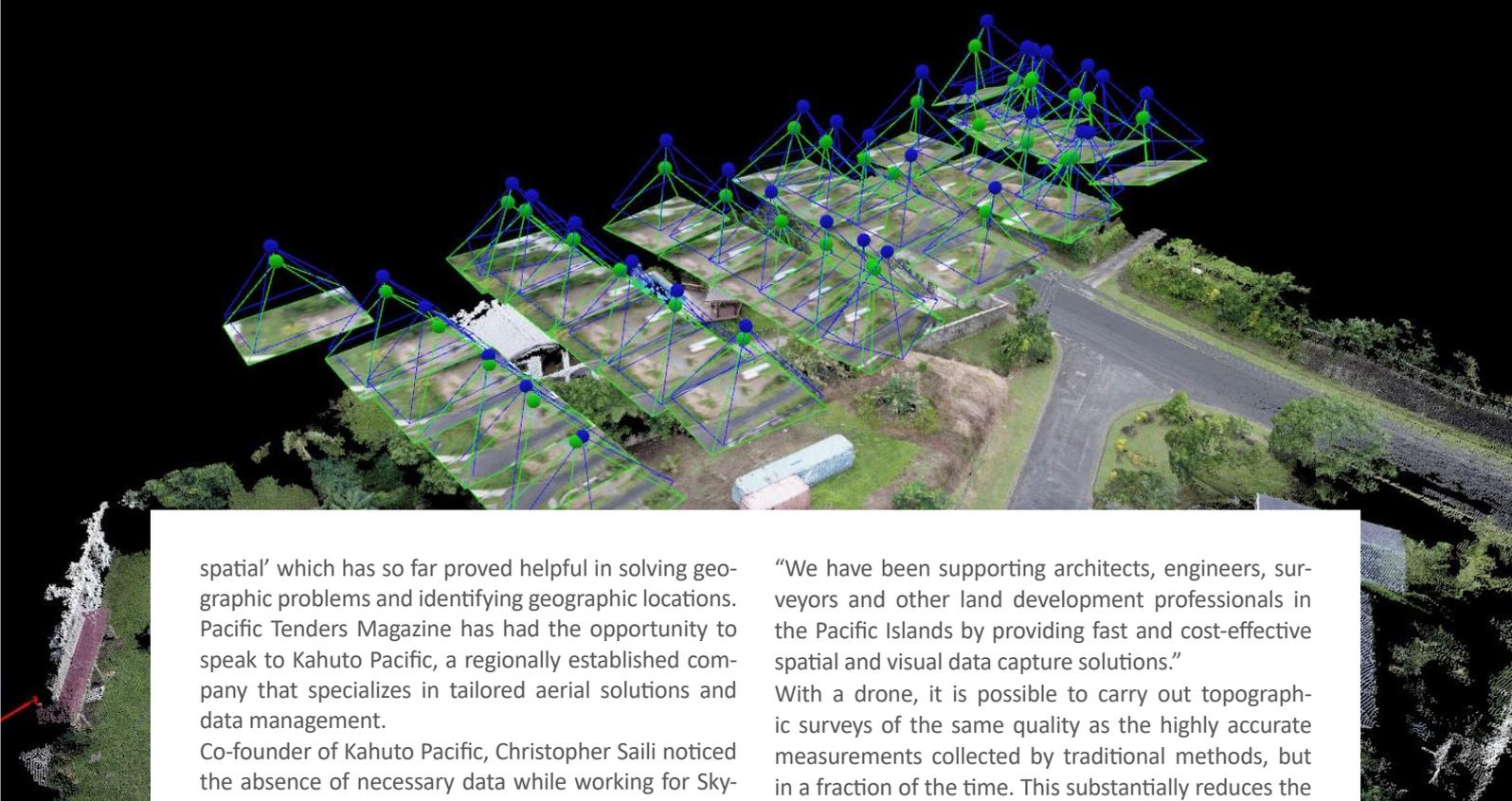
Traditional data collection methods often require multiple specialists and technicians on the site, which can be hazardous, time-intensive and costly. The data captured by conventional methods are often in 2D or are captured in a digital still photo, and are presented in points and lines on maps.

Before the introduction of GIS technology, cartographers relied heavily on data derived from conventional survey to produce topographical maps which were largely interpolated with contour lines, and manually produced hill shaded maps.

This crude method has been disparaged for its tediousness, less cost-effective, time consumption and less accuracy. These can also be hard to visualize by stakeholders and often don't truly reflect 'real world' environments with the level of detail needed for professionals to conduct thorough preliminary design or feasibility work. When engaging local stakeholders, these maps and data sets can be hard to interpret to the untrained eye, and concepts are often lost or misunderstood which can cause tension and confusion, especially around issues



relating to land. The advent of GIS and latest advancement in its associated technologies have revolutionized the entire processes of mapping and visualizing topographical data. The proper integration of GIS and its associated technologies such as remote sensing, have opened up a new frontier often termed 'geo-



spatial' which has so far proved helpful in solving geographic problems and identifying geographic locations. Pacific Tenders Magazine has had the opportunity to speak to Kahuto Pacific, a regionally established company that specializes in tailored aerial solutions and data management.

Co-founder of Kahuto Pacific, Christopher Saili noticed the absence of necessary data while working for Skyeeye, a family owned IT business in Samoa. Skyeeye had developed its own GPS tracking platform built using open source software tailored to the Pacific conditions. One major issue they encountered early in development was reporting reliable locations that their client's vehicles had visited, due to the lack of street addresses and locations mapped on Google Maps. Christopher and his team had to map out locations and individually identify each building, office, restaurant and church. Once their clients saw that they could map locations such as offices, farms and other important locations, they became interested in other applications.

Not-for-profit Women in Business Development Samoa (WIBDI), suppliers of organic coconut oil and coconut products for The Body Shop UK approached Christopher and his team to assist mapping organic coconut tree plantations. The rest, they say, is history.

Kahuto Pacific was born and has gone to map over 40,000 hectares across Fiji, Solomon Islands, Vanuatu and Tonga.

Kahuto Pacific's aerial drone services deliver the highest quality data capture solutions that enable accurate digital representations of the real world environment. They leverage aerial and photogrammetry technologies to create immersive digital survey and inspection solutions.

Their outcome-driven approach means they first seek to understand your project-specific objectives and use case, so that we can develop the most effective and appropriate solution.

"We have been supporting architects, engineers, surveyors and other land development professionals in the Pacific Islands by providing fast and cost-effective spatial and visual data capture solutions."

With a drone, it is possible to carry out topographic surveys of the same quality as the highly accurate measurements collected by traditional methods, but in a fraction of the time. This substantially reduces the cost of a site survey and the workload of specialists in the field.

"Our GIS technicians can also extract features from the aerial images such as signs, curbs, road markers, manhole covers and drains. After post-processing with a photogrammetry software, these same images can produce very detailed elevation models, contour lines and break-lines, as well as 3D reconstruction of land sites or buildings. All of Kahuto Pacific's deliverables are CAD-ready and can be loaded into all major GIS, surveying, civil and architecture planning and design software," says Kahuto co-founder Christopher Saili

With the ongoing travel restrictions caused by the ongoing COVID pandemic, specialists and consultants cannot visit project sites and teams. Therefore, digital solutions such as the services offered by Kahuto are becoming increasingly vital to development teams.

The manual method of topographic mapping and visualization can no longer satisfy the contemporary planning needs pertaining to the quality and quantity of spatial information. However, the tremendous role that topographic map play in national development has been recognized in many advanced countries of the world.

This is basically the reason behind the huge investment in technology both in data collection, manipulation and geovisualization. When you work smart, you increase your profit margin. Timely, cost-effective and detailed data collection means more money in the bank. ●



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'ON TRACK'

11 Cluster Groups identified to support the delivery of the PG 2023





By **DOUGLAS SAEFOA**
Honiara, S.I

The Pacific Games 2023 Government Services Integration Committee (GSIC) have identified key activities and tasks to be delivered for the upcoming 2023 Pacific Games following a series of cluster group meetings in past weeks.

A total of Eleven Cluster Group meetings have been held, involving all the Government Ministries and relevant Departments and Divisions. The Cluster Group Ministries have been assigned different functions and responsibilities to perform and support the Games Organizing Committee, the National Hosting Authority (NHA), and the Government, to successfully deliver the Games.

The 11 Cluster Groups

Cluster Group 1	Major Infrastructure Capital Works Renovation and Relocation
Cluster Group 2	Airport Services and Facilitation
Cluster Group 3	Protocol, Liaison and Media
Cluster Group 4	Education, Health, Sports, Youth and Women, Peace and Ecclesiastical Affairs, Awareness Talks and Information Dissemination
Cluster Group 5	Provincial Engagements, Developments and Awareness in the Provinces
Cluster Group 6	Transport, Highway Traffic Redirection and Service Relocation
Cluster Group 7	Trade Investment, Tourism & Cultural displays, Fisheries and Agriculture promotions
Cluster Group 8	Financial, Public, and State Services
Cluster Group 9	Health Services
Cluster Group 10	Security and Escort Services
Cluster Group 11	Environment, Beautification, weather and Keep Honiara Clean Services

Key activities and tasks were also identified and are to be delivered by the Ministries. “This involved working together with other Line Ministries and Stakeholders, and sharing of resources and manpower, as we work together to deliver the Pacific Games 2023”, says GSIC Secretariat. Ministries have also been advised to incorporate their proposed activities and budget in their respective work plans for consideration.

In the meantime, the GSIC will liaise with the Games Organizing Committee to see which activities can be aligned or support each other as we prepare for the Pacific Games 2023.

The GSIC Secretariat are expected to convene another meeting of all Government Ministries and Representatives to discuss the way forward on the identified activities as we work towards advancing our preparations for the 2023 Pacific Games. ●

Lot 1 of the project area where CCECC will construct the main stadium.



Practice Track and Football Field set to complete by December

By **DOUGLAS SAEFOA**
Honiara, S.I

Work on the Main stadium for the 2023 Pacific Games in Honiara has progressed smoothly with foundation works currently in progress on the specific lots.

According to CCECC General Manager Huang Peng, site preparation and clearance has been done in separate lots where lot 1 is where the SIFF office complex used to be and lot 2 is at the KGV1 school area.

Since the groundbreaking ceremony in early May, clearance work, fencing and excavation work has been done whilst foundation works are underway.

"In June last month we commenced excavation

work, for the main stadium. And at the other side, for Lot 2, there will also be other facilities built under this project. Foundation works forms work and concrete work are currently being done and will continue on in August," the General Manager explain.

By the end of this month, CCECC is expected to bring in a bitumen machine which will be installed and commissioned, to construct the pavements for track and field.

Mr. Huang Peng said they have a very strict work schedule and every step of the project has to be on time and of the prescribed expectation.

The practice track and the football field are scheduled to be handed over to the authorities before 31st December 2021 to allow the athletes a place

to train, as structural works proceed.

“So this year, we will target that part first, and next year, by March, all of the structural work will be done. And that is almost half of the way.

The government and the supervising team from CCECC are expected to carry out the first assessment and checks in March 2022 after the structural work is done, before the other phases of the construction can proceed. After that, the internal recreation work will start.

According to CCECC’s tentative work schedule by 2023, February and March, all major work should be completed, allowing CCECC to focus on landscaping, external works, and the final commissioning. By the end of April 2023 the overall project should be complete and ready to be handed over to the government.

Once the overall project is complete the Supervising team including some expatriates from Chi-

na and local government officials will do the final checks before signing off on the project. After that, CCECC will hand over to the Government. That is expected in May 2023.

This however is expected to change since the Prime Minister has announced the rescheduling of the commencement date which will now be in November 2023.

Projects include a new \$53 million 10,000-capacity National Stadium, with 1,000 VIP seats, which will be the centerpiece of the first Pacific Games to be staged in the Solomon Islands.

Other venues include an Olympic-standard aquatics centre, a six-court tennis centre, a full-sized athletics training facility, a multi-purpose sports hall, new offices and a food court.

The facilities are due to be handed over to Pacific Games organisers ahead of the Opening Ceremony in November 2023. ●



NHA, MID and SINU meet SIPPR for SINU feasibility study

Five Chinese nationals from SIPPR (Six Institute of Project Planning and Research) met with representatives from NHA (National Hosting Authority)/Project Management Unit, MID (Ministry of Infrastructure and Development), and SINU (Solomon Islands National University) to start initial discussion on the feasibility

studies for the new SINU dormitories that will be used to house athletes and officials for the 2023 Pacific Games.

The SIPPR team will be doing a feasibility study at SINU Kukum Campus to build 3 new dormitory buildings, each dormitory building will have 4 levels and have 80 rooms each. The new dormitories are expected to have a total of 240 rooms purposely built for SINU and can be repurposed for 2023 Pacific Games to be able to house up to 600 athletes and officials. This is another NHA driven project that will be funded by the PRC government for the 2023 Pacific Games Village that will leave a legacy for the Solomon Islands National University. ●



COMMUNITY ACCESS AND URBAN SERVICES ENHANCEMENT



The completed pavement road at Savo Heights.

The climate-resilient spot improvement and drainage for Savo heights of West Honiara have been completed.

The completed concrete pavement road has a total length of 226 meters and 3.5 meters wide and retained the existing concrete curb previously done by the Australian High Commission.

The contract took five months to complete and was constructed by RH Construction Company.

The completion of the project cost 842 thousand dollars.

Permanent Secretary of Ministry of Infrastructure

Development Mr. Stephen Masiola on-behalf of CAUSE Project thanked RH for constructing the concrete road based on MID specifications and said the project would benefit the community which lives up there at Savo heights.

PS Maisola encouraged the community to look after their roads for the years to come.

It is estimated that around 110 direct and indirect households will benefit from this sub-project. Funding for this project came from the World Bank and was implemented by the Ministry of Infrastructure Development and Honiara Council. ●





| After

Major CAUSE-MID road rehabilitation completed

People living in Kombivatu, Feraladoa, Fera-kusia, and Matariu will no longer face hiccups when planning to go down to town to access services like markets, schools, clinics, etc. through the completion of their road upgrade by CAUSE Project.

It took Island Kori, the local contractor, 14 months to complete the rehabilitation work. The total length of the road is 820 meters, of which 294 meters are sealed with concrete, and 526 meters are unsealed.

It is estimated that more than 400plus households will benefit from the road upgrade.

The road upgrade cost SBD 2.238 million. Funding for the road project comes from World Bank.

A statement from the Ministry of Infrastructure Development PS Stephen W Maesiola said now the road is completed, and beneficiaries need to look after it well for the years to come.

He emphasized the involvement of the woman contractor who undertakes this contract and the equivalent SBD 400 thousand dollars labors



| Before

“

It is estimated that more than 400plus households will benefit from the road upgrade. The road upgrade cost SBD 2.238 million. Funding for the road project comes from World Bank.

”

given to the community.

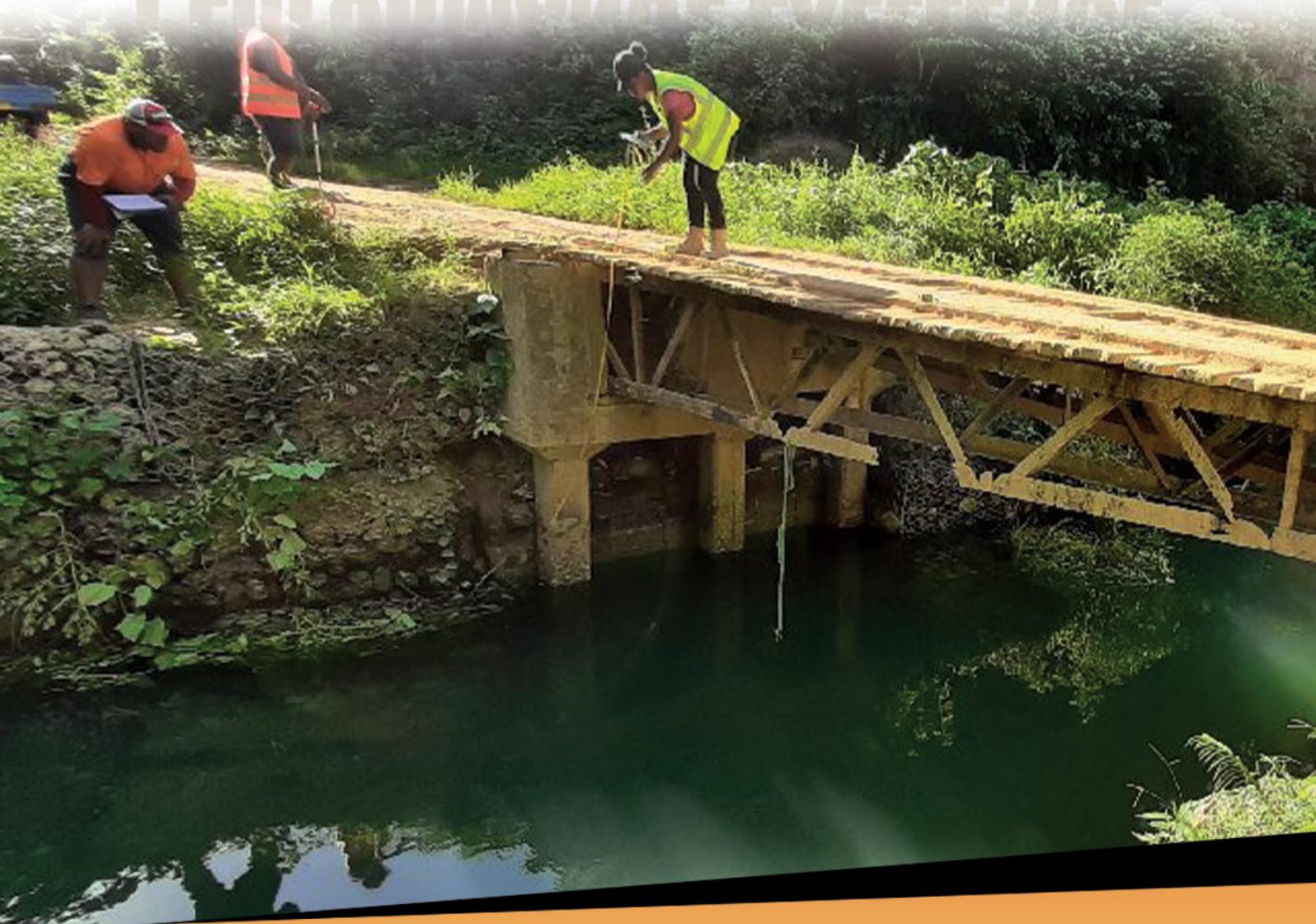
PS Maesiola also stated that MID is on its plan to implement the same road rehabilitation in urban towns of Western Province and Malaita Province. ●

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DEVELOPING A DETAILED SITE SURVEY FOR THE HONIARA

Botanic Gardens

By **DOUGLAS SAEFOA**
Honiara, S.I

The Botanic Gardens are Honiara's largest green space covering an estimated 19 hectares. Located approximately two kilometers from the city centre in Rove, the gardens showcase a range of local and exotic plant species.

The area also provides a sanctuary for native fauna, including a vast array of reptiles, birds and insects. The Honiara Botanic Gardens is a nationally significant site with huge tourism potential.

To that end, as part of the Intra-ACP GCCA+ Pacific Adaptation to Climate Change and Resilience Building (PACRES) project in Solomon Islands, SPREP has engaged Azimuth Surveys (Consulting Engineers, surveyors and planners group) to develop the Honiara Botanic Gardens Landscape Architecture Master Plan.

The Honiara Botanic Gardens Management and Business Plan 2020-2030 has identified specific activities to be included in the Landscape Architecture Master Plan. A 1965 design provides a very good base network of paths, open spaces and some buildings with which to work. However, the Master Plan must also take stock and determine a new way forward integrating valuable existing assets with new elements to expand and devel-

op the gardens.

Azimuth Surveys are currently developing the Master plan in collaboration with the Honiara City Council (HCC), Ministry of Forestry and Research, Ministry of Environment, Climate Change, Disaster Management and Meteorology (MECDM), Ministry of Infrastructure and Development, Ministry of Culture and Tourism, Solomon Water, Solomon Islands National University, University of the South Pacific (also under PACRES), and the Botanical Garden Management Committee.

In facilitating the development of the Master Plan Azimuth Surveys have undertaken a detailed survey of the whole area using both conventional survey techniques and GIS technology. Particular attention has been paid to the area to the south of the existing Gardens and around the reservoir which was not previously able to be accessed.

The site is also prone to flash flooding through the more developed area to the north. A holistic survey of the site will enable the new design to minimise physical and financial risks.

The current Scope of work which Azimuth is undertaking includes:

- Grading and contours to 100mm minimum as it's an extremely steep site;
- All trees over 100mm in diameter at 1.4m above

ground level (whether native or introduced) need to be provided; spot levels/ Relative Levels are to be provided at the base of the tree if not obvious in relation to contours/on steep site; the trees are to be shown on the plans with each tree having a number allocated to it, the true to scale diameter of the trunk and canopy extent shown to be shown on the final output drawings and final survey drawings also need to include a table indicating tree number, trunk diameter, canopy diameter, estimated tree height and scientific name / common name if known;

- Location of all waterways including rivers and riverbanks, drainage lines, using available hazard maps show how waterways have shifted overtime and state those that are operational and/or need refurbishment;
- Location of all buildings on the site including location and size of doorways/ entrances and windows and specify their conditions;
- Location of all utility services (water, sewer, electricity etc.) running through the site including service cover sizes and location, invert levels and diameter of underground pipes at service pit locations, storm water outlets, location of any power poles and alignment of overhead and underground cables etc;
- Flood levels if available from third parties to be shown on the plans to include for 2year, 10 year and

100-year events at minimum; and

- Area of encroachment of competing land uses into the boundary of the Honiara Botanic Gardens.

According to the Ecosystem-based adaptation (EbA) options assessment and master plan for Honiara designed by SPREP, the development of a management plan is proposed to strategically manage the area with the ultimate goal of declaring the Botanical Gardens as a forest reserve under the Forest and Timber Utilisation Act 1969 and Protected Areas Act 2010 to secure its future. A number of improvements to the services such as sustainable finance, education and information platforms will also be supported.

A targeted enrichment replanting programme of previously cleared forested areas within the Botanical Garden's boundaries will be undertaken. The establishment of a learning centre will be supported for environmental educational, awareness and training.

The EbA is part of the Solomon Islands Ecosystems and Socio-economic Resilience Analysis and Mapping (ESRAM) to assess and prioritise climate change-related ecosystem-based adaptation options for selected locations in Solomon Islands.

The implementation of the Project through SPREP has been enabled with the support of The European Union. ●

Azimuth Support CTI in preparatory work for Kukum Highway phase 2

By **DOUGLAS SAEFOA**
Honiara, S.I

Azimuth Surveyors have been contracted to assist CTI Engineering International Co. Ltd of Japan in their Consultancy work on Kukum Highway phase 2. The team was asked to mark out the edge of the new carriageway from SINU Panatna to Henderson at 20 m intervals on both sides, the drainage crossings and the bus bays from Ministry of Fisheries to Henderson and the roundabouts at KG VI and Sunvalley cross roads.

They also marked out the utility services that need to be removed e.g. power poles, telekom poles, manholes, fibre cable boxes, etc.

Pacific Tenders understands that representatives of the main utility service providers have this week been out along the proposed project area to survey where the work will be done and where they will unearthing their existing supply lines.

The Azimuth's team of Surveyors then assisted CTI engineers to show the reference points to Ministry of Infrastructure Development (MID), Solomon Water, Solomon Power and Telekom teams.

A consultancy agreement to begin consultancy services on phase two of the Kukum Highway project was signed in Honiara on 02 February between the Solomon Islands Government and the CTI Engineering International Co. Ltd of Japan.

The Phase two of the road improvement project will start from section at the Ministry of Fisheries Head Office to Honiara international airport and is expected to complete before the 2023 Pacific Games.

The agreement formally paved the way for CTI Engineering International Co., Ltd to start work on the design, supervision and monitoring of the project.

CTI's service of contract include design, outline design, detailed design and supervision.

During the construction of the road, CTI will supervise and monitor- assessing security and safety and other issues pertaining to the construction work.

CTI's service of contract would continue for a year after the completion of the road construction- in the year after the project completion CTI will assess the defect liability of the project. CTI will check for defects on the road and report to the contractor to fix if there are defects. ●

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1st Phase of Development for Mamara New Capital City

Mamara Spring Villas project

■ Approx. land coverage of 100 hectares and comprise of 1184 units of residential houses, shop houses, 41 units of logistic warehouses, school, utilities facilities and tourism facilities

■ 3 different designs for residential building:

Type A: 3 bedroom 2 bathrooms, approx. land area = 255sqm – 368 units

Type B: 3 bedrooms, 1 bathroom, approx. land area = 202.5 sqm – 310 units

Type C: 2 bedrooms, 1 bathroom, approx. land area = 150sqm – 506 units

Residential houses are built of a light steel structure, recyclable, reduced waste of materials, quick to assemble & construct. Houses are designed to be soundproof and well-insulated to protect from severe heat too.

Durability of structure:
Life-span of structure can reach more than 90 years

Safety Design Capacities for the light steel structure

- ▶ Earthquake resistance: can withstand up to magnitude 9, and suitable for areas with seismic activity intensity above 8
- ▶ Wind resistance: can withstand 70m/s hurricane, Wind Resistance level is 13 or above.

- ▶ Fire resistance: according to different designs, Fire resistance time can reach up to 3 – 5 hours
- ▶ Thermal Insulation: 200mm thick composite wall can reach 3.2 m2KW (meter 2 Kelvin) – 11 times greater than a brick wall of same thickness
- ▶ Environmental protection: 100% recyclable + most supporting materials can be recycled too
- ▶ Energy saving: Using new materials for heat preservation and heat insulation, energy required for heating and cooling is 65% more energy-saving than traditional buildings
- ▶ Housing acquisition rate: Light-steel integrated houses increase usable area by 5% to 13% compared with traditional buildings





Inside View



Mamara City to House first ever Light Weight Steel Factory

By DOUGLAS SAEFOA
Honiara, S.I

As part of the Mamara Tasivarongo-Mavo City Development project, the investor Metropolis Mamara Development Limited (MMDL) has also included the construction of a light weight steel framing factory within the vicinity of the proposed City.

In an Interview with Pacific Tenders Magazine the General Manager of the MMDL Mr. William Ling said the construction of the steel factory was expected to begin in June. The intentions of the developer with approval from the Development Council is to immediately erect a light steel factory to support the work on the ground and also avoid the huge cost of logistics and import of this particular material which will be used in most parts of the project.

“It is the council’s understanding that the availability of a light weight steel factory in country will boost our efforts, reduce costs and even lessen our working time-line in completing this massive project,” said Mr Ling.

Light weight steel framing is a unique building product that can be used advantageously in load bearing walls. This assembly is nearly three times lighter than a pre-cast concrete wall, and about five times lighter than a block and brick wall. “The lightweight steel factory will have the capability of fabricating light weight steel frames which are processed in pre-fabricated parts according to each digital blueprint design. This will allow for steel parts to be fabricated on site a then sent immediately for assembling,” Ling explained.

“This will be the first ever factory of its kind to be setup in the region and this will also stimulate employment and allow for the country to even export such materials to other parts of the region,” Ling added. “The production of light weight steel in the country will also be a game changer for structural design in the building and

constructions industry in the country especially with the introduction of light weight steel for construction,” said Ling.

Mr Ling also told Pacific Tenders that the current Maramra residential houses are also built using the material and can also withstand the harsh weather conditions in the country.

The current Residential houses at Mamara are built of a light steel structure, recyclable, reduced waste of materials, quick to assemble & construct.

Houses are designed to be soundproof and well-insulated to protect from severe heat too.

According to the developer the structure are of very high durability thus, Life-span of structure can reach more than 90 years. Safety Design Capacities for the light steel structure:

- ▶ Earthquake resistance: can withstand up to magnitude 9, and suitable for areas with seismic activity intensity above 8
- ▶ Wind resistance: can withstand 70m/s hurricane, Wind Resistance level is 13 or above.
- ▶ Fire resistance: according to different designs, Fire resistance time can reach up to 3 – 5 hours
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- ▶ Energy saving: Using new materials for heat preservation and heat insulation, energy required for heating and cooling is 65% more energy-saving than traditional buildings
- ▶ Housing acquisition rate: Light-steel integrated houses increase usable area by 5% to 13% compared with traditional buildings. ●

Telekom establishes 3G/4G network installations in provinces

Our Telekom continues to expand its rural mobile network with high speed 3G roll out for Guadalcanal, Makira, Isabel and Choiseul Province.

Our Telekom continues to expand its rural mobile network with high speed 3G roll out for Guadalcanal, Makira, and Choiseul Province.

Our Telekom established more 3G cell sites across the country with recent tower installation work done in Makira and Choiseul Provinces in April-May to be followed by builds in Isabel towards end of this year. This is part of Our Telekom's 2nd business transformation project, which started in 2017 with major upgrades for Honiara network and core mobile platforms and systems, introduction of 4G+LTE in Honiara in November 2017 and the completion of the rural high speed 3G network expansion for Malaita in September 2017 and Western Province in December the same year. You can access Our Telekom's nationwide mobile network map by going to <https://www.our-telekom.com.sb/contact/network-coverage/>

"I am pleased to announce that we have further expanded the rural high speed 3G network into Guadalcanal, Makira, and Choiseul Provinces with Isabel next later in the year," said Robertson Szetu, Chief Commercial Officer of Our Telekom.

Just recently, Mr. Szetu and his team returned from Makira/Ulawa and Choiseul Provinces where they launched 10 3G towers, 5 for each provinces. These new towers have already been launched and are currently online and in full service.

"Makira and Choiseul are the latest provinces where we've rolled out 3G. All the other provinces, West, Malaita, Central and Guadalcanal, already have 3G presence. We also have 3G service in Lata, in Temotu, Tigoa in Rennel and in Hairi, San Jorge Island in Isabel.

Our Telekom will also embark on revisiting its 2G mobile network footprint initially established in the provinces, replacing 2G with 3G on existing towers. This will also produce bigger signal coverage area as 3G has more powerful antennas, in effect filling access gaps with high speed 3G connectivity in places where previously there was no mobile coverage.

"4G is here in Honiara, as well as in West and Malaita – in Auki. In the West – at Gizo, Noro and Munda. The final province for us to roll out 3G in, and then

we'll cover full Solomon Islands with mobile service – 3G especially, is Isabel, and that will come on towards the end of this year or early next year," Our Telekom's Chief Commercial Officer told PT.

Ideally, we would like to reach every community with high speed connectivity, however in operational terms there will be some areas that will be hard to reach due to geography and also commercial considerations. Our Telekom is however committed as a longer-term objective to connect our many islands



Our Telekom continues to lead the industry investing millions of dollars in telecommunication infrastructure, paving the way for development, creating new possibilities and enabling economic activities to thrive in our rural areas through access to modern mobile voice and fast Internet services



and communities with fast mobile Internet and reliable voice services.

"Our Telekom continues to lead the industry investing millions of dollars in telecommunication infrastructure, paving the way for development, creating new possibilities and enabling economic activities to thrive in our rural areas through access to modern mobile voice and fast Internet services," said Mr Szetu.

"Our Telekom would like to acknowledge and thank the landowners in the country, especially for this next phase of 3G roll out in Guadalcanal, Makira, Choiseul Province and Isabel for allowing their land in partnership with Our Telekom bringing in land rental income for landowners and jobs for village tower caretakers in the roll out of modern communication development for their communities," said Szetu. ●

TELEKOM COVERAGE

TO REACH ALL OF SOLOMON ISLANDS BY END OF 2021

*Pacific Tenders gets
an inside look at
Our Telekom's expansion
and roll out plans for 2021*

- > **Name and designation at Solomon Telekom:**
My name is Robertson Szetu and I am the Chief Commercial Officer for this company
- > **Give us some insights into Our Telekom's current nationwide 3G/4G roll out plan?**
Yes, just recently, we returned from Makira/Ulawa Province. We'd just launched 5 3G towers there and right now in Choiseul, another 5 3G towers are online now. And they'll go live, in the next two weeks we'll do a Launch there. Makira and Choiseul are the latest provinces where we've rolled out 3G. All the other provinces, West, Malaita, Central and Guadalcanal, we already have 3G presence there. At Lata, we have 3G.
4G is here in Honiara, as well as in West and Malaita – in Auki. In the West – at Gizo, Noro and Munda. The final province for us to roll out 3G in, and then we'll cover full Solomon Islands with mobile service – 3G especially, is Isabel, and that will come on towards the end of this year or early next year.

- > **With regards to your 3G tower installments in Provincial Centres, whats the network coverage like for users throughout each Province?**

Yes. For most provinces, especially the bigger provinces, 3G is quite wide in terms of coverage. It can cover most of the islands. For Makira, only on certain parts of the island. A good part of the island, the Weather-coast part of the island, we do not have 3G. But there are 2G services that cater for voice only and text, which cover every part, let's say, MOST parts of the country, from Tikopia right down to Shortlands. 2G got it covered.

With regard to 3G, as I've said, recently it is Makira and then, Choiseul, add on to the other provinces, with the final province being Isabel. So a good 60+% of the population within these communities, are covered at this time. There'll be certain areas, certain villages, where it's hard because of the geography of the location, certainly they will not be able to have coverage. But the good majority will still be within mobile coverage from the company.

- > **What are certain capabilities which 3G users can experience with smartphones in the Provinces?**

Yes. This time, everyone uses smartphones. Even down to the rural areas, everyone has smartphones.

The good thing about 3G is it has internet. I think, that's its difference from 2G. It has internet on the mobiles. So with smartphones, every facilities, every app and services that we in Ho-



Our Telekom's Chief Commercial Officer, Robertson Szetu.

niara, enjoy on 4G, its available there on 3G too. So 3G will enable people to access online social media services, to go to internet website and things like that. Basically, all services that are available on the internet, 3G in the province brings that to our customers within the provinces.

> What commercial aspects, from your company's perspective, usually triggers for you to expand for more coverage outside in the provinces?

Our Telekom is a private company. We have our shareholder, which is NPF, and we have corporate obligations to meet shareholder expectations in regards to money. On top of the commercial considerations, Telekom, as a local company, has a grander objective to roll out these services right across to even the people in the rural areas who do not get to enjoy the same services as us in the towns.

Of course, market shares are a big thing. We expand more, we grow our network, and we secure more market shares in the Telecomm. Industry.

But as I've said, we are also providing communication to the least developed let's say, our people out in the villages so that they can also have access to modern communication. And that's why we've really pushed hard to roll out mobile and internet out to the village people.

> I understand that most recently, we've had upgrades like 4G, some more advancements that have come, now we also use fibre, and Telekom as I understand, is one company that provides 4G too, for people in Solomon Islands. It's usually a thing where we see that Telekom, at times, is more advanced than other service providers. Is that due to already existing infrastructure, or what makes for the fast moves for Telekom?

We have the heart to invest in our own country, as a local company. 4G is not existing infrastructure. 4G is quite new infrastructure that requires new capital spend and commitment, that is big money, for us to increase our infrastructure. So 4G is relatively new and it costs us millions of dollars.

But we see that as an investment, to ensure that our people have access to this new technology. And also, 4G is made possible because of the introduction of the submarine cable. Because, 4G, in comparison to 3G, is very data-heavy. Such as multimedia things that you can do on 4G, it requires a lot of bandwidth we call it.

So when Cable came in, it opened up more opportunities for us to roll out 4G out into the provinces. That's why you see us going to Gizo, Noro, Munda and Auki at the beginning, because that's where the cable landing stations are – for us to push 4G traffic to come through the landing stations in Noro and Auki, where it can cater for the high-data intensive demand of 4G.

Other provinces that do not have cable to land, we have already rolled out 3G. 3G is also data-hungry, but it is manageable. So we can bring, for example, Makira - we brought back data traffic from Makira (because they do not have cable there), coming through the cable landing station in Malaita, to Honiara.

So that's how 4G has been a bit slower to roll out, because it requires a bigger bandwidth to support its internet capability.

> Can you tell us a bit about the 4G experience that Telekom currently provides in the country?

There is always a demand for internet, amongst our customer base. We have to balance the capability of our resources at this time, concerning the network. So network resources, against the demand out there. Because, internet, you can do endless things. It's not something where, at once "every movie is finished". There's entertainment there, continuous new content, so demand is always incoming. People just find a lot of new things to use online.

In that sense, the demand out there for the

usage, for access to internet on mobile is never-ending. But, as a provider, we have to consider our capacity to meet the demand in terms of our network resources, in terms of the cost of investing in these resources, as well as, in terms of returns in this investment.

So it's because of this balancing-out that we cannot, at one time, roll out everything as 4G immediately. We're just going easy. Some for now, later on we will then try to expand this same services - 4G out to other places.

> Has there been any problem with the increasing demand for data?

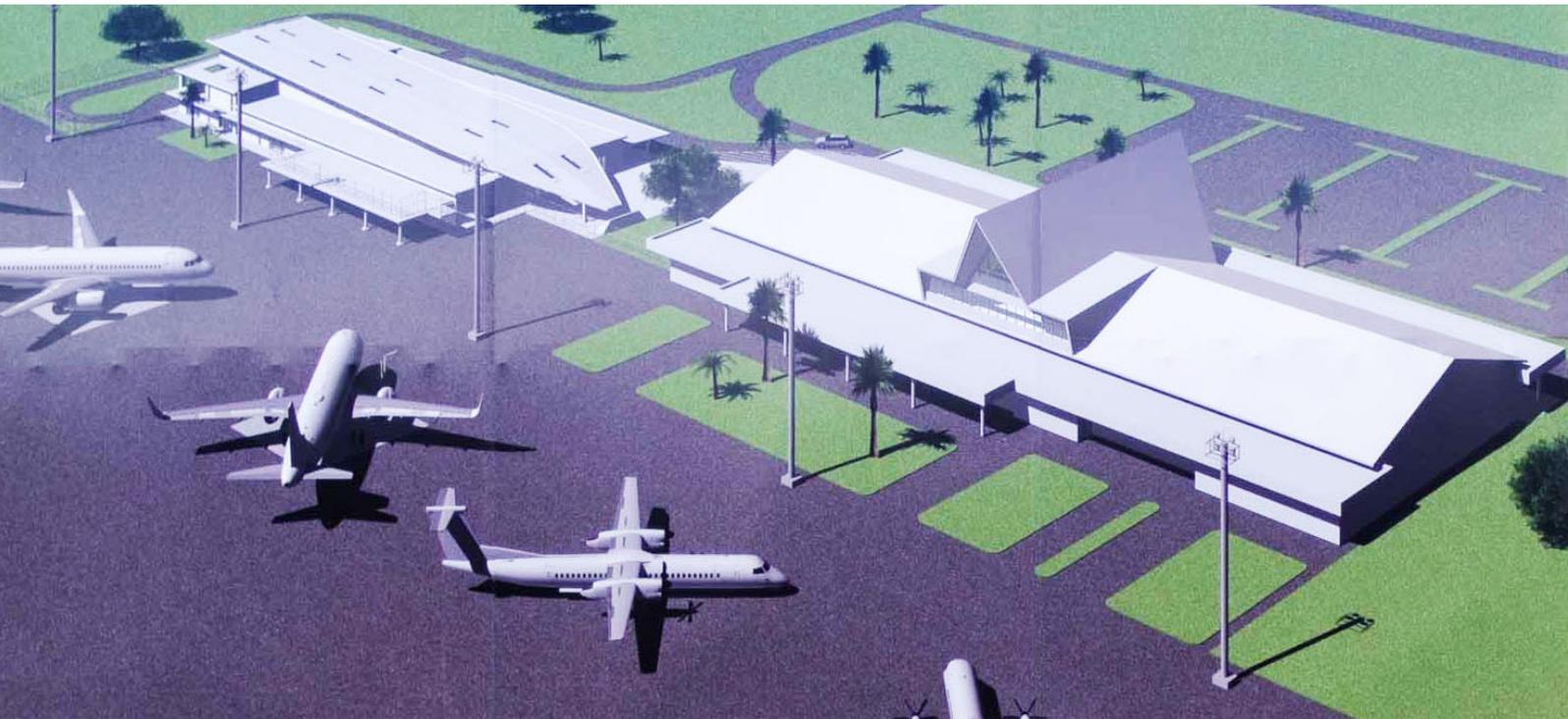
As I've said, no. There's no problem. We do not see any slowdown. We have for both - new capacity. Currently, we are upgrading the whole Honiara network. We are upgrading capacity on our 4G towers. Not only that, in addition to individual tower capacity, we also add Carriers – they call it, won't go too technical into it because this is proprietorial information, but we basically adding more capacity to meet the market out there.

> Any final comments you have to share with us today?

Yes. I'd like to thank the team for coming to do this interview.

Telekom is continuously building and expanding our network. Even now, these years, it's been a bit uncertain with respect to the business environment due to the COVID pandemic as we all understand. But we do not stop! That's one thing about Our Telekom. We do not stop. We continue to build. We continue to invest in our infrastructure. We've just finished Makira. We are going in to Choiseul, and Isabel is coming up. We are upgrading all the 4G resources – network resources here in Honiara to meet the huge demand in Honiara. And we always strive to give the best – Best Customer Experience out there, with our services.

Sometimes, maybe, we have not met it, but most times, I'm telling you, we are up there on top, with what we are doing. ●



Concept design of the Airport Aprons for both the Departure and arrival terminals.



concept design of the new International Departure terminal embarkment.



A concept design of the new departure lounge entrance side.

The project consists of 6 categories namely:

- > Expansion of Airport Apron
- > Construction a new Taxi way
- > Air Field Light (AFL) renovation
- > ETB renovation
- > Construction of a new International Departure Terminal
- > Embarkment for runway flood protection



New Honiara International Airport to be ready by 2023

PM and Ministers visit Honiara International airport upgrade project site

By **DOUGLAS SAEFOA**
Honiara, S.I

The Solomon Islands Prime Minister Manasseh Sogavare has expressed optimism that the Current Honiara International Airport Improvement project will be completed in time for the 2023 Pacific Games in Solomon Islands.

Mr. Sogavare made the statement during a progressive site visit to the project site at Henderson International Airport on 16 April 2021.

In his address Prime Minister Sogavare said both the Honiara International Airport upgrade and the Kukum Phase II are scheduled to be completed in July 2023, a few weeks shy of the official opening of the games.

“The progressive visit today is the fruition of seven years of commitment which started with a proposal by the Ministry of Infrastructure Development in 2014 to seek financial assistance for the airport upgrade. It was not easy but I would like to acknowledge the government and people of Japan for taking this request into consideration, a sign of true bilater-

al partnership,” said Sogavare.

Prime Minister Sogavare also acknowledged the support of Tribal Land Owners and Guadalcanal Provincial government for their acceptance and recognition to have this important piece of National Infrastructure built on their land.

On the other hand Japanese Ambassador to Solomon Islands H.E. Morimoto Yasuhiro recognized the commitment and effort put together by both the government and the contractor in ensuring the continuation of work despite the severity of the global pandemic.

“As you are aware, the project was affected by the pandemic, and has delayed the construction phase of the project from November 2019 until the end of last year when it actually restarted,” said H.E. Morimoto

“To fill the financial gap occurred during this period, the government of Japan is providing further grant assistance of three hundred and sixty five million Japanese Yen (approx. 26.5 million SBD). To formalize the financial assistance, the Exchange of notes



Government officials and guests in front of the new Departure Terminal currently being constructed at Henderson.

will be signed next week between the two governments. With this additional funding the project costs now stands at 4, 729,000,000 Yen (approximately SBD 347 million),” H.E. Morimoto said.

The site visit was organized by the Ministry of Communication and Aviation together with the project contractual team on site. The project aims to improve airport safety and accommodate future aviation demand by improving the airport and related facilities.

Project updates

The Honiara International Airport Improvement Project consists of 6 categories namely: The expansion of Airport Apron, the construction a new Taxi way, Air Field Light (AFL) renovation, ETB renovation, construction of a new International Departure Terminal and embarkment for runway flood protection. Of the six categories listed under the project only three of these are currently in construction being; the Expansion of Airport Apron (Tarmac) which will include new aircraft spots for international aircrafts and exiting apron and taxi way, the construction of new taxi way and base structure for the new International Departure Terminal Building (IDT) which is a partly 2 story building which will be located next to the current International Terminal.

The Tarmac expansion will now cater for 6 aircrafts

and 2 taxi ways parallel to each other. Originally asphalt was used for the tarmac pavement. Now reinforced Concrete will be used for the parking given to bigger airplanes a heavier and that concrete is stronger than asphalt, thus can cater for the heavy dead load especially when a plane is parked or at stationary position. Asphalt will still be used for the finishing. The current tarmac has the capacity to receive 3 planes at the same time on the airport. The expansion will increase the capacity to 4-5 planes parking at the same time with an additional 6 small planes for the domestic terminal. Passengers will however still disembark on the tarmac.

The new International Terminal Building (IDT) will be a steel building with concrete foundation. Current progress includes foundation beams and concrete ground. Construction of steel frame will commence once received. The steel frames are anticipated to arrive at the end of this month or early next month and work should start in May or June. Excavation, Formwork for slab, lean concrete, rebars and formwork removal have already been done. Current work is only being done on the floor stage. The second floor will house the business lounge. The new IDT will have 2 departure gates.

Kitano Construction has been contracted to undertake the project. ●

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The signing parties toast after completing all the formalities.

WORKS SECRETARY INKED K87 MILLION WORTH OF PROJECTS

DEPARTMENT of Works and Implementation have executed a staggering K87 million worth of projects under the World Bank Road Maintenance Rehabilitation Program (RMRP)II Program for Gulf and Madang Provinces respectively.

Works Secretary David Wereh as the employer’s representative inked the two-million-kina projects on Thursday 15 th July at the Government House witness by Queen’s Representative, Governor General Sir Bob Dada.

Contract No.	DOW/RMRPII/AF/RR/07/MD/2016
TENDER No.	NPC/19 0012: UPGRADE TO SEAL AND ASSOCIATED DRAINAGE WORKS ON COASTAL HIGHWAY FROM BOGIA TO AWAR IN MADANG PROVINCE
The Contractor that was awarded the Project is Dekenai Construction Limited with the contract price of K42,057,264.69 for 26kilometers and duration of the project is 15 months.	

While the other Project that was also signed is the Epo Junction to Kerema town the provincial capital of Gulf Province.

Contract No.	DOW/RMRPII/AF/RR/05/GLF/2016
TENDER No.	NPC/19-0013:UPGRADE TO SEAL ON HIRITANO HIGHWAY BETWEEN EPO AND KEREMA
The same contractor that was awarded, Dekenai Construction Ltd with the contract price of K46,629,271.54 for 10kilometers and duration of the project is 15 months.	



The project implementing agency is Department of Works and the Consulting Project Managers & Supervisors are Renardet S.A Consulting Engineers The procurement and implementation of both contracts was the main reason and consideration for the

extension of loan period from April 2021 to April 2023 for the Road Maintenance and Rehabilitation Project, Phase 2 (RMRP II). Tenders for both contracts were the first for major works for the World Bank financed projects after the launching of the NPC Act in April 2019 and passed through very rigorous government process and in line with the World Bank Guidelines.

The design of the works has been reviewed by the Department of Works & Implementation and determined to fulfil requirements of technical standard and specifications and safeguard guidelines including the necessary environmental and social impact assessment and management plans.

Both contracts will be wholly funded under the amended Financing Agreement while the counterpart funding support will be provided through the Department of Works & Implementation ceiling under the annual Development Budget.

Both contracts will be managed and supervised by Department of Works & Implementation with the support of the consulting project manager Renardet. SA Consulting Engineers. ●

Australia gives K190M for CONNECT PNG

The Australian Government through the office of the High Commissioner His Excellency (HE) Jon Philp supports the PNG road sector by making available a funding of K190m for PNG Connect Road Maintenance Program.

The Australian Government has agreed to support the Marape Government's signature PNG Connect Transport Initiative.

It will co-fund, with the National Government, Tranche 1 of the PNG Connect, which aims to stimulate social and economic development by improving and expanding transport links across the nation.

Australia will provide \$70 million (K170 million) on concessional terms, including a grant component, and PNG will co-fund just under one-tenth of the work at K16 million. Tranche 1 of the PNG Connect focuses on the Trans-National Highway.

This funding, from the Australian Infrastructure Financing Facility for the Pacific, covers the 9-mile Junction to Bulolo section of the highway in Morobe Province, and the Passam to Lumi section in East Sepik and Sandaun

Provinces.

Treasurer Ian Ling – Stuckey today welcomed Australia's funding decision, saying it was an important contribution to PNG Connect and the aspirations of the Marape Government to transform the domestic economy.

"The returns from building this type of road, connecting markets, far exceeds the loan costs," he said. "This is good sensible development.

"PNG Connect is a fundamental part of our push to promote development from a grassroots level rather than relying on a handful of major projects, as has happened in the past.

"The Marape Government regards agriculture, forestry and fishing, and the small to medium entrepreneurial businesses serving those sectors, as the main drivers of sustainable national development.

"PNG Connect transport spending is the key to unlocking the economic power of the grassroots, and I am grateful to the Australian Government for supporting it."

Mr Ling – Stuckey said the Tranche 1 project could be the start of further road financing, of up to \$370 million, from the AIFFP, focusing on the Trans National Highway. The Trans- National Highway is the major element of PNG Connect, a 20-year program to link all four regions. Mr Ling – Stuckey said the Tranche 1 project could be the start of further road financing, of up to \$370 million, from the AIFFP, focusing on the Trans National Highway. The Trans- National Highway is the major element of PNG Connect, a 20-year program to link all four regions. ●

PM ANNOUNCES K100 MILLION FOR HIRITANO HIGHWAY WORKS



Prime Minister James Marape recently announced a K100 million funding earmarked for road work on the Hiritano Highway linking the provinces of Gulf and Central with the National Capital District.

Prime Minister Marape also committed an additional K5 million that he announced as part of the Hiritano Highway works after launching the Ihu Special Economic Zone (ISEZ) and other projects in Kikori district.

The additional K5 million will be for the Kerema Town roads. He also committed K100, 000 from the National Gaming Control Board to upgrade the Kerema Rugby League Oval and K20, 000 to support the local basketball competition.

Prime Minister Marape told hundreds of people who gathered in Kerema that the Hiritano Highway is a major road that connected Gulf and Central with NCD.

“The upgrading to the last stretch of the Hiritano Highway that links Kerema is part of a K100-million road upgrade programme funded by the World Bank and co-funded by the Government of PNG. The road upgrade programme will see the World Bank meet 70 per cent of the cost while the Government 30% to meet the last stretch of the road to Kerema sealed.

These covers the road linking Malalaua to Kerema and other sections of the road that have deteriorated in parts of Central province, upgraded and reconstructed.

“

The upgrading to the last stretch of the Hiritano Highway that links Kerema is part of a K100-million road upgrade programme funded by the World Bank and co-funded by the Government of PNG.

”

The work is expected to be completed next year with the sealing of the final stretch into Kerema town.

While appealing to the people to let road works flow, he said where roads are, services and money will flow in.

He was accompanied by Gulf Governor Hon. Chris Haiveta and Central Governor Hon. Robert Agarobe; Goilala MP and Transport Minister Hon. William Samb; Works Minister Hon. Michael Nali; and Kikori MP and Foreign Affairs and Trade Minister Hon. Soroi Eoe.

The PM said the National Government will support upcoming resource projects like Papua LNG and Pasca A, and others like ISEZ. ●



CONNECT PNG



“Promoting our Rural Economy through Connectivity”



ACHIEVEMENTS IN 2019 - 2021





ACHIEVEMENTS IN 2019 - 2021

"Promoting our Rural Economy through Connectivity"

DEPARTMENT OF WORKS & IMPLEMENTATION FROM 2019 -2021



CONNECT PNG ROAD FUNDING

- K1.5billion so far for Connect PNG Road Plan
- K4.3 billion spent so far on 2,424km of roads throughout the entire country with 45% of the targeted 5,388km completed
- K400million being rolled out on 2,450km of important rural and district roads
- 232 major and important both existing highways and new roads being built throughout the country
- Gulf-SHP highway to be partly open by August 2021
- Responsibility to priorities, design and build provincial and district roads transferred to provinces and districts
- Three districts of Finschaff in Morobe, Maramuni in Wabag and Telefomin in West Sepik provinces will be connected to the main provincial center for the first time
- More local companies engaged as sub and major contractors on all our major road works under the Connect PNG 2020-2040 road plan
- Connect PNG Plan Phase 1 2020-2025: Seven (7) major tenders out under the Connect PNG 2020-2040 Road Plan
- Inclusive distribution of infrastructure development especially roads and bridges to all regions taking a hardline stance on abuse and misuse of infrastructure funds as part of Marape fight against corruption

REFORMS TO DEPARTMENT OF WORKS (DOW)

- Passage of the PNG National Roads Management and Fund Act 2020. It gives an

- efficient road management and ownership system that reflects our political and administrative structure and decision making and at the same time creates a sustainable funding regime to eliminate the accumulation of maintenance back log
- New legislation to guarantee continued road funding to be tabled in August 2021 Parliament session
- Marape Government's Approval for Trial of new pavement technology. Cold recycling road pavement technology to be trialed in the Simbu Provincial Section of the Highlands highway
- Improvements to the design, construction, maintenance and upgrading of new and existing roads to be consistent to meet international standards
- Major upgrade and highlands highway rehabilitation to last longer

PUTTING AN END TO CLAIMS AND COMPENSATION CULTURE

- Massive K465million saved through court cases from dubious claimants
- Land compensation claims for new roads will be properly assessed and referred to courts

PROMOTING PRIME MINISTER MARAPE/GOING RURAL POLICY

- Improving rural roads to enable local farmers access to markets
- Link East West New Britain as major palm oil producing provinces
- Support District Development Authorities open new roads and maintain existing feeder roads

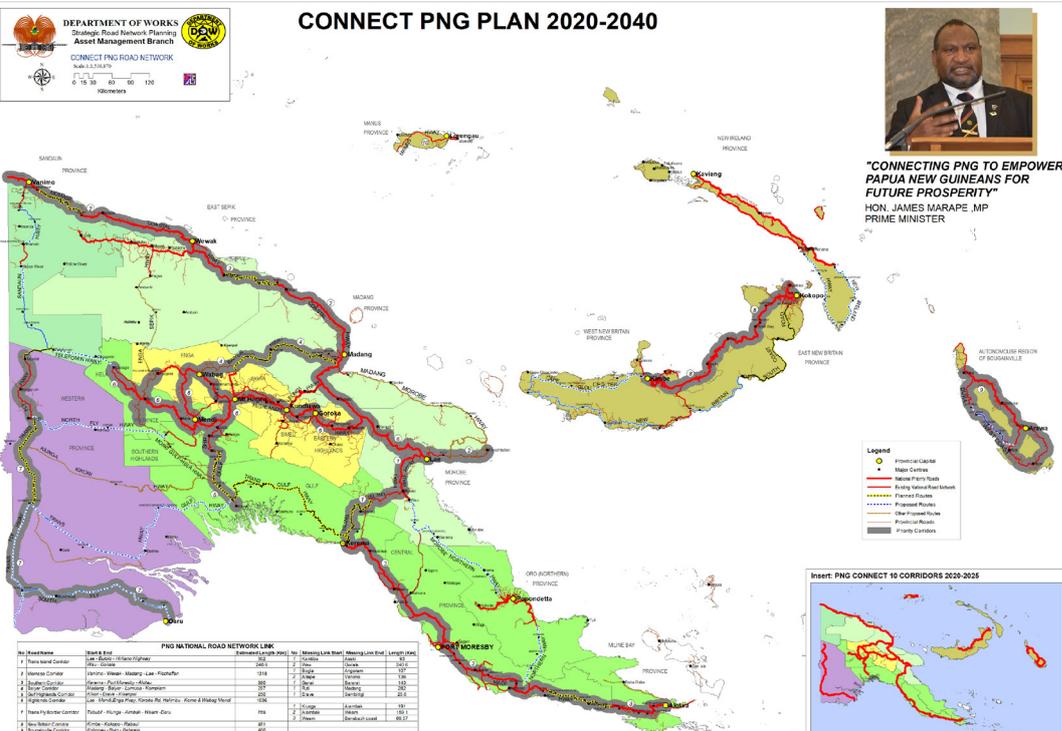
BRIDGE REPLACEMENT PROGRAM

- Replace old bridges under 2nd Tranche of Asian Development Bank (ADB) loan funding
- Over 70 bridges identified through the Connect PNG 2020 - 2040 Plan
- BRIRAP (Bridge Rehabilitation Improvement Rural Access Program) funded by ADB and EIB which saw 18 bridges completed in Central Province and West New Britain under package 1 & 2.
- Under BRIRAP package 3 will see Construction of 6 Bridges along Ramu Highway-(476m), K88.12m
- While package 4 will see 3 planned to be built along the Sepik Highway.

ROADS BUILD NATIONS BY GROWING THE RURAL ECONOMY THROUGH CONNECTIVITY & INCLUSIVENESS: HON. MICHAEL NALI WORKS MINISTER ADDRESS

Papua New Guinea's National Road Network is the backbone of the country's transport system carrying ninety-five(95percent)of passenger and freight movements across the country and must be in good condition.
Minister for Works & Implementation Hon. Mi-

CONNECT PNG PLAN 2020-2040



chael Nali says roads are fundamental to keeping people and places connected and the economy flowing.

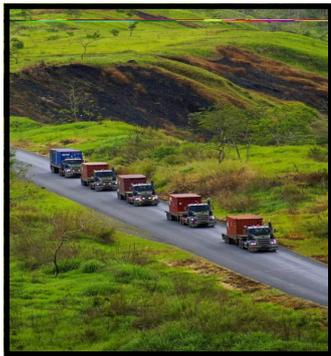
"That is the reason for the Government's "Connect PNG" roads plan to distil a series of five-year projects that will eventually lead to developing an unbroken single road network for PNG connecting the Momase and Highlands regions into the Southern region for the first time.

"The National Government has spent up to K1.5billion between 2019 and 2020 based on actual contract payment outlook by contractors," he said.

Minister Nali said in the 2019 supplementary budget an appropriation of K300 million was made and in the 2020 budget K1.195billion including donor funded projects was made.

He says one of the issues the Department of Works (DOW) face is that warrants are being issued late and contractors not paid on time makes road-work left incomplete and or delayed.

"Generally, all the payment process is slow and cannot meet the timelines specified



in the contracts which leads to "stop and start work" practices. Only donor funded contract payments are done in timely manner and these contracts are running smoothly.

"The progress on all Government of PNG (GoPNG) funded contracts are yet again greatly affected by the delay payments in 2020," said Minister Nali.

However, he urged citizens and critics to understand building roads does not happen overnight and that the benefits of building roads and the impacts it has on businesses and ordinary people outweighs the durations of constructing roads.

"One of the benefits we are seeing is the increased participation of local contractors engaged as both sub and lead contractors for some of our major road upgrade, rehabilitation and new roads projects in the country.

"They are able to create jobs and employment for our people and pay tax. That is the benefit we are getting for their investment not only the roads," he said.

"The first five years starts from 2020-2025 to develop and improve 2,000km of the core national highways including 1,500km of new missing links and additional 9,000km of provincial and rural commodity roads.

Minister Nali said despite the challenges, the Department of Works has prioritized seven (7) key roads based on their high socio economic rate of returns under the Connect PNG Plan Phase 1 from 2020-2025. Phase 2: 2027-2030 while Phase 3 is 2031-2040. The first Phase will see the following 7 key roads implemented on rolling phases:

- **The Trans Island highway** - a 302km road starting in Lae's 9-mile junction to Bulolo in the Morobe province to Mala-



laua on the Hiritano Highway in the Gulf province which will cost an estimated K895million from 2020-2030.

- **Momase Highway** (proposed as the Somare highway in Honour of our late founding Father of the Nation Grand Chief Sir Michael Thomas Somare). That is a 318km road starting in (Waterais, Madang, Bogia District linking Angoram in Wewak in East Sepik and Vanimo in the West Sepik at an estimated cost of K2.9 billion from 2020-2040

- **The Southern Corridor Highway** - 880km (from the Hiritano, Magi highway connecting to Alotau in the Milne Bay province at a cost of K2.3billion from 2020-2040

- Another connecting the highlands to the South region is the **Gulf-Southern Highlands-Hela province corridor road** which is 880km and will cost K2billion and expected to be completed between, 2020-2040.

- The Manus highway which is a 120km will cost K99million and is planned to be constructed between or from 2020-2025

- For the **New Britain provinces is the East/West New Britain highway**, which is a 629km road connecting Kimbe-Kokopo at an estimated cost of K1billion from 2020-2026

Also, the Provincial trunk roads which include some 9,000km in all the regions will cost an estimated K2 billion from 2020-2030

The total (GoPNG) requires is K20billion in the next 20 years or K1.2billion per year on the priority "Connect PNG" road investment program alone.

Minister Nali says so far, the Connect PNG Phase 1 saw a total of 7 major tenders on the 4,200km of the important economic highways which are in the final stages to be awarded after evaluation at National Procurement Commission and National Executive Council (NEC) approval before signing of these contracts by the Governor General for works to commence sometime in July or August at the earliest: The following are the 7 major Connect PNG roads under Phase 1 2020- 2025;

- **Sepik Coastal Highway** - design and construction of 40km section at a cost of K146million

- **Ramu-Madang Highway** - design and construction of 40km section at K134million

- **Manus Highway** - design and construction of 30km section at K99million

- **Magi Highway** - performance based

long term maintenance of 148km at K78million

- **Magi Highway** - design and construction of 52km at K213million

- **New Britain Highway (2sections)** - design and construction of 70km costing K170million

He said the contracts are expected to commence in 2021. The increase in COVID 19 cases will be the only set back.

The Gulf/SHP/Hela missing link under a Bank South Pacific (BSP) loan funding with Civil Pacific Contractors (CIVPAC) is yet to start due to mobilization delays and local issues.

He added that the Government's increased budget support and leadership commitment for rural road is unprecedented after the abolishment of Plant and Transport Division (PTD) operations 30 years ago.

"Rural connectivity is critical for access to education, health, market and lift the 85% of the rural population above the current poverty lines and it is a proven evidence that as rural road connectivity increases, rural poverty levels decrease.

DESIGNING AND BUILDING ROADS UNDER CONNECT PNG TO PROMOTE MARAPE/BASIL GOVERNMENT GOING RURAL POLICY

The Connect PNG plan is an investment target to achieve 4000km of the core economic road-network in good condition and 9000km of the commodity roads in the province and district roads to good condition for the next 20 years.

The Plan is broken up into four (4) five (5) year periods/phase. The first phase or five years starts in 2020-2025. The Marape/Basil governments target is to connect the Highlands and Momase Regions into the Southern Region and link Port Mores by to Lae by opening up the Trans Island Highway into the Hiritano and Magi Highway further into Milne Bay Province on a rolling phase.

It already achieved by connecting the East-West New Britain in New Guinea Islands and plans too pen up the Gulf-Southern Highlands highway. These works will involve construction of 1,500km of new missing links and maintaining and upgrading of existing regional highways to standard national highways.

REGION/PROVINCE	NO. OF ACTIVE CONTRACTS	TOTAL CONTRACTS VALUE (PGK)	TOTAL CONTRACTS LENGTH (KM)	EQUIVALENT LENGTH COMPLETED (KM)	OVERALL PERCENTAGE COMPLETED
A. SOUTHERN REGION	29	396,141,440	895.914	323.717	36.1%
WesternProvince	6	27,693,529	71.199	30.011	42.2%
GulfProvince	4	10,828,555	105.400	21.318	20.2%
CentralProvince	15	253,517,222	495.615	161.915	32.7%
MilneBayProvince	2	99,105,065	77.000	52.770	68.5%
NorthernProvince	2	4,997,069	146.700	57.703	39.3%
B. HIGHLANDS REGION	73	1,716,830,493	837.286	382.022	45.6%
HelaProvince	10	230,233,730	151.700	52.315	34.5%
EngaProvince	25	264,339,488	305.460	113.163	37.0%
SouthernHighlandsProvince	17	261,567,127	188.950	136.263	72.1%
WesternHighlandsProvince	8	366,935,627	51.786	27.605	53.3%
JiwakaProvince	3	228,594,867	10.500	2.300	21.9%
ChimbuProvince	10	365,159,654	128.908	50.377	50.377
C. NORTHERN REGION	75	1,496,735,774	2,258.417	895.037	39.6%
EasternHighlandsProvince	12	707,133,504	462.000	153.654	33.3%
MorobeProvince	30	488,843,416	696.504	221.749	31.8%
MadangProvince	6	144,296,679	308.476	223.166	72.3%
EastSepikProvince	22	127,877,873	516.547	175.639	34.0%
West SepikProvince	5	28,584,301	274.890	120.828	44.0%
D. ISLANDS REGION	53	678,261,582	1,396.804	824.105	59.0%
ManusProvince	0				0.0%
EastNewBritainProvince	5	52,129,083	92.443	35.841	38.8%
West New BritainProvince	11	92,855,798	461.985	242.389	52.5%
New IrelandProvince	34	92,769,415	716.876	495.444	69.1%
AutonomousRegion ofBougainville	3	440,507,285	125.500	50.4322	40.2%
E. HEADQUARTERS	2	37,979,745			66.0%
GRANDTOTAL:	232	4,325,949,033	5,388.421	2,424.881	45.0%



The plan is also to stabilize the other sections that are also overdue for a road pavement stabilization technology. Therefore, the Government has also approved a technology to stabilize and strengthen the road pavements to give longevity. It reduces the overall maintenance costs associated with the wear and tear of the roads in many parts of our country and the existing major national roads.

The new technology has been trialled on the road from Mt Hagen in the Western Highlands to Wabag in Enga province. The results are good and we would like to extend that to other roads in the country.

The technology makes the roads last long despite many vehicles and heavy traffic on the roads. It will be adopted in other parts of the roads. That is the way to go and the Government has approved additional funds. It also reduces maintenance and operating costs for road users. The economic impacts related to good roads are maximized whilst the environmental impacts related to bad roads are minimized. The focus now is about building roads that will last long and reduce maintenance cost and allow road users to get maximum benefit and reduce travelling time. That is the benefit for the Connect PNG Road Plan 2020-2040, to promote business through connectivity and inclusivity.

BRIDGE REPLACEMENT PROGRAM

The Government is also doing a major bridge replace program worth K178million along the main highways under the BRIRAP program funded by ADB and EIB (European Investment Bank). Under the Bridge program we have achieved 18 new bridges completed with dual carriage way

made of concrete and steel structures piled and driven into the riverbed. Six of the newly constructed bridges were constructed along the Hiritano and Magi Highway in Central Province and 12 of the bridges in West New Britain along the East West New Britain Highway. Another 6 will be constructed along the Madang Ramu Highway and 3 more to be along the Sepik Highway.

Bridges and culverts identified to be in a very bad condition are being selected and replaced. Those works are starting and the Marape/Basil Government is looking at extending this program.

We have on the Highland highway about seventy-two (72) bridges to be replaced at a cost of K1billion under the 2nd phase of the SHHIP program. This is a massive unprecedented investment in the roads sector for the first time. The Government has approved the Second Tranche loan from the Asian Development Bank (ADB) and the tenders have gone out and are being evaluated. The First Tranche of ADB loan is the costs of construction, rehabilitation and upgrade of 430km of road from Nadzab in Lae to Kagamugain Mt Hagen.

The idea is to improve the key logistical highways and similar treatment will be applied to the other roads throughout the country. It is about giving a balanced view and benefit to all our people. The Connect PNG Project Steering Committee headed by the Departments of National Planning & Monitoring, Treasury and Works & Implementation Department are negotiating loans in pipeline for the Connect PNG projects to be implemented over a period of 20 year worth K20billion on a 5 year rolling plan intervals.

IMPROVED STANDARDS OF ROADS

In terms of road construction and maintenance the standards have improved significantly. We can see that in the four lane Lae-Nadzab road in Morobe province, and the Kagamuga to Keltiga in Mt Hagen Western highlands province.

These are very high standard road design and construction that can give us better returns for the massive investment we are doing in terms of capital cost absorbed in that road program. Therefore, we are building roads that can continue to give us internationally accepted standards.

The Lae city arterial cement roads and

massive storm drainage structures constructed to keep the roads in a drier condition which can last for 10-15 years. These are land mark programs the Department of Works is doing in the design and construction of road programs to promote the Government's vision to grow and connect the rural economy through connectivity and inclusivity and provide access to markets for goods and services.

This is how we stimulate the economy by improved access to roads. The Marape/Basil Government policy focus is to go rural where 85 percent of our people live. There is huge potential to develop certain economic activities and building proper roads into these rural landlocked areas is the key goal of this government Connect PNG Policy.

SUB-NATIONAL ROADS FUNDING

The Government is already for the first time given massive funding down to the sub-national level. In the last two years from 2019- 2021, the Department have spent about K400-500million for sub-national roads alone. It is a massive investment that has gone down to the rural areas. The onus is now up to the sub-national authorities to design, construct, maintain and upgraded those roads to ensure the people get the benefits derived from these developments.

Since the abolishment of the Plant and Transport Division (PTDs) which was responsible for the upgrading and maintenance of sub-national roads 30 years ago, rural roads have deteriorated. However, our challenge is the capacity issues on the ground but we are creating a lot of Small to Medium Enterprises (SMEs) now by our local content policy at the back end of Connect PNG Policy initiative to go rural where majority of Papua New Guinea live.

The Marape/Basil government encourage to engage and promote local SMEs in spin-off business activities. The regime always wants to see equal or more opportunities given toward building our local construction industry. That is now a key performance target of the Department of Works and we are keeping track of how many SMEs we are creating in the construction industry, maturing and graduating them into becoming bigger competitive players in the road sector.

The Marape/Basil Governments example of going-rural are highlighted by imple-

LASTING SOLUTIONS TO ROAD UPGRADE, MAINTENANCE AND REHABILITATION

A lasting solution is the woes and deteriorating condition of the biggest highway in the country, the highlands highway in terms of economic activity is the ADB SHHIP program.

The ongoing significant roadworks DoW is doing on the Highlands Highway, which the Marape/Basil Government took over from the previous Government is the SHHIP program. It is a K3 billion investment under the Asian Development Bank (ADB) (Sustainable Highlands Highway Investment Program) or SHHIP that will see the road investment program cover a period of 10 years of value for money and quality infrastructure development program will see long lasting solution to the woes and deteriorating condition of the famous Highlands highway.

In order to make sure quality road is built the Marape Government has approved an additional K300 million to stabilize and improve the slip sections in Simbu, which has always been a problem along the Highlands highway.



menting;

- The Finschaffon roads in the Morobe province. For many years the people of Finschaffon have never seen a car in their area, they have been using air and sea transport. But for the first time Finschaffon District will be connected to Lae City.
- The other game changer is the Maramuni road in Wabag in Enga province. The National Government is partnering with the Wabag District Development Authority (DDA) to link those landlocked and remote sub-district like Maramuni into the Sepik Planes. It is almost 70-80 percent complete and in the next few years this road should be open.
- The Kiunga-Tabubil-Telefomin road in the West Sepik province. It will link the remote Telefomin District with Kingain Western province. This project is under a special tax credit scheme arrangement with the Ok Tedi Mine. In a very difficult and challenging terrain and environment the Department of Works with the contractor have now punched a standard class three (3) road that should reach Telefomin for the first time.
- While the upper people of highlands region especially Hela and Southern Highlands provinces will witness in August 2021 the Hela-Gulf-Southern Highlands highway to be partly opened for traffic from the Sembirigi section in Southern Highlands to Kikori in Gulf Province.

REFORMS TO DEPARTMENT OF WORKS(DOW)

The Government under its vision to Take Back and Connect PNG has approved major reforms to the Department of Works to enable some of these projects to be fully implemented without any setbacks. The passage of the Papua New Guinea Road Fund and Management Act 2020 will build capacity and strengthen the governance structure. The department will get continuous and undisturbed funding for road design, construction and maintaining to meet contractual obligations. The Marape Government has strongly supported reforms to rationalise key institutions involved in the management of PNG roads, with the objective of cutting duplication of functions and responsibilities and improving efficiency. This has culminated in the introduction and passing of the new Road (Management and Fund) Act 2020 in late 2020, which will strengthen and streamline the management of road assets throughout the country and increase provincial and district participation and partnership in the road sector. The establishment of the PNG Road Fund is intended to streamline funding of road projects and improve governance and value-for-money in the procurement of road contracts. To meet these new challenges in this sub-sector the Marape Government is also driving the reorganization of the Department of Works and Implementation to improve capacity and efficiency in their management of the road network, as well as support the Road Traffic Authority as it regulates Road Transportation throughout the country.

PUTTING AN END TO CLAIMS CULTURE

One issue that affects the construction industry is the rampant and abusive claims against the Government through the Department of Works. It is a major hindrance or leakage to limited funds allocated for the road projects. The Department of Works has now taken a bold stand to clear and stop such leakages. Under the shrewd leadership of Minister for Works & Implementation Hon. Michael Nali all claims have been taken to the courts for verification. So far, the Depart-



ment has saved over K465million worth of claims over the last three years.

This is a landmark achievement against dubious claims culture. DoW has a no tolerance stance against claimants who run around with yellow envelopes and collect money that is meant for public roads. Therefore, DoW discourage dubious or over exaggerated claims. We want to stop this claims culture and save money for doing more road in the country.

The Prime Minister Hon. James Marape is personally taking this vision wholeheartedly. A new legislation is being mooted to allow minimum funding of key infrastructure in PNG. It will be tabled in the August parliament sitting. That is to ensure the funding is used and spent on intended purposes.

MARAPE GOVERNMENT'S CONFIDENCE IN DEPARTMENT

The "Connect PNG" road plan, has been launched. The Marape/Basil Government has now tendered K1.5 billion worth of road projects and the tender evaluation is almost nearing completion. That is looking at the fixing up of all the highways including Manus, East-West New Britain highway, the Magi-Hiritano highway, the Boluinski Highway in New Ireland province, and the Mendi-Tari road. This National Highways are given more attention under this Marape/Basil Government Connect PNG Policy 2020- 2040.

This is a road infrastructure policy that is designed to distribute the benefits from road works programs equally across all the regions. The objective is to see that there is fair distribution of the infrastructure development projects to give equal opportunity for agricultural development, access to markets, and other spin off economic benefits.

DoW is targeting the main highways as well as the sub-national roads in totality and linked to the rural areas where 85 percent of our population resides. This is in line with the vision to see that the rural population is empowered to contribute meaningfully to the growth and development of the country.

The Connect PNG Policy has a huge task to harness untapped potential in our citizens involved in small businesses, agriculture and other major locally owned businesses and investors operating in our country by connecting the rural population to markets in urban centres.

Since Marape became the Prime Minister in May 2019, the improvement of land transport throughout PNG has been a major priority for this Government. This is reflected in its strong support to the Department of Works and Implementation, for the preservation and development of both the national and sub-national road networks, throughout the four regions, with significant investment to arrest the deterioration of existing road assets, as well as develop new road links. These investments will promote development in rural areas of the country that have viable development potential in agriculture, fisheries and tourism, etc.

During its current term, the Marape Gov-

ernment has made significant achievements in the Land Transport subsector. Foremost among its achievements:

- Over 5,000km of roads maintained, rehabilitated and constructed, investing approximately K2.0 billion on maintenance and development of both national and sub-national roads.
- Major reforms of key institutions managing PNG's roads. This came at the back end of a vision, formulation and commencement of the Connect PNG Economic Roads Development Program, 2020 – 2040 or Connect PNG.
- The Marape Government is currently supporting 232 projects in all regions and provinces, of total value K43.25 billion. Of these, 222 are road works contracts with total value of K3.76 billion. This plan is depicted under the National Road Network Strategy (NRNS), 2018 –2037.
- The Marape Government has continued to support the NRNS program from the previous government, to improve the sustainability of the National Road Network by prioritising maintenance, (maintenance first) of existing road assets. Under this program over 2,000km of roads are rehabilitated and maintained towards the ultimate target of 50% "Good" and 50% "Fair" condition of the 8,740km of national road network in the country.

CONNECT PNG 2020-2040

The Marape/Basil government Connect PNG targets for the road sector that when PNG celebrates the 50th Independence Anniversary, Port Moresby will be linked to Northern and Highlands regions from Lae to, Goroka, Madang, Mt Hagen and Alotau. By 2030, PNG must have a single undivided road network on the mainland of Papua New Guinea and single road Highway corridor in the Island provinces of Manus, New Ireland, East & West New Britain and the Autonomous Region of Bougainville (AROB).

- Connect PNG Phase 1: Starts from 2020- 2026 where a road link between Port Moresby and the main urban centres of Northern and Highlands regions of Lae, Goroka, Madang, Mt Hagen and Mendi will be established.
- Phase 1 (2020–2026): This program is currently underway, targeting the country's most important core highways.
- Recent notable key achievements under Phase 1 2020-2026 included:
 - Wau-Bulolo road maintenance from 9 mile Junction to Wau K65m
 - Improvement and long-term maintenance of Mendi-Tambul Road in Southern and Western Highlands Provinces (55.53km) K172.1M.
 - Rehabilitation & Upgrade of Kundia-wa-Gembogl-Bundi Highway in Chimbu Province (20.4km) K113.9m
 - Upgrade to seal of the East-Cape Road in Milne Bay Province (52km), K96.5M
 - Rehabilitation & Upgrade of Pangia-Wiru Loop Road in Southern Highlands Province (31.14km) K86.0M
 - Rehabilitation & Upgrade of Henganofi-Nupuru Road in Eastern Highlands Province (34.0km), K85.2M
 - Construction of 12 bridges on the New

Britain Highway in West New Britain Province (380m), K48.98M

- Upgrade to seal of Hula Road in Central Province (46.0km) K48.87M
- Boluinski Highway in New Ireland Province (32km), K39.4M
- Rehabilitation and Upgrade to Seal of Halimbu-Komo Road in Hela Province (10.1km) K38.4M
- Reconstruction of Aum and Kapiura Bridges in West New Britain Province (120m), K34.43M
- Hiritano Highway rehabilitation and long-term maintenance (125km), K77.56m
- Connect PNG Phase 2 (2027–2034): which includes improvements and maintenance of a further, 300km of provincial and Districts in the 21 provinces.
- Connect PNG Phase 3 (2035-2040): Will see the completion of the project from Phase 1 to 2 and the commencement of the development of Gulf, Madang Corridor, which will connect the Gulf Province with Madang Province through Chimbu Province. From its commencement, the Marape Government adopted an integrated economic corridor development concept, with the two main objectives of:
 - (1) Improving links between the major urban, commercial, industrial and transportation centres in the Highlands and Momase regions, with Port Moresby city in the Southern region; and
 - (2) Connect regional areas with significant economic development potential, especially in the renewal resources sectors of agriculture, fisheries and tourism, to the national land transport network.

In this regard strategic national and sub-national land linkages are planned for development over the next 20 years under the Government's Connect PNG Economic Roads Development Program (Connect PNG 2020-2040), which will reduce transportation costs and promote economic development at the cost K20 billion.

The Department of Works and Implementation is currently progressing this program with:

- Engineering and construction of key missing links: Angoram-Bogia, Morobe-Gulf and Central-Milne Bay Missing Links; and improvement of existing highways including the Momase Coastal Highway, Ramu Highway, Highlands Highway, Wau Highway, Hiritano Highway and Magi Highway.
- The ADB (SHHIP) from Nadzab Airport Junction to Kagamuga Airport Junction which is 340km at the cost of K3 billion. The SHHIP Program is implemented on three separate sections along the Highlands Highway running through Morobe, EHP, Simbu, Jiwaka and Western Highlands Provinces.
 - I) The First Section- under the SHHIP: Rehabilitation, upgrading and maintenance from Nadzab to Henganofi (210km), K264.1m
 - II) The Second Section- under SHHIP: Rehabilitation upgrading and maintenance from Henganofi to Mangiro and Miunde to Kagamuga (218km) K203.26m
 - III) The Third Section- under SHHIP: Reconstruction from Mangiro to Miunde in Chimbu Province (57km) K341.3m

High impact projects under the DoW high impact office saw two major infrastructure investment to our second and third cities:

- a) Upgrade to Mt Hagen 4 Lane from Keltigato Kagamugain Western Highlands Province (13.76Km), K306.31m
- b) Completed Lae 4 lane of the Highlands highway section from Lae to 9-Mile junction
- c) And 9 mile to Yalu Bridge in Morobe Province (9.3km), K134.84m. ●

CONNECT PNG PLAN 2020-2040



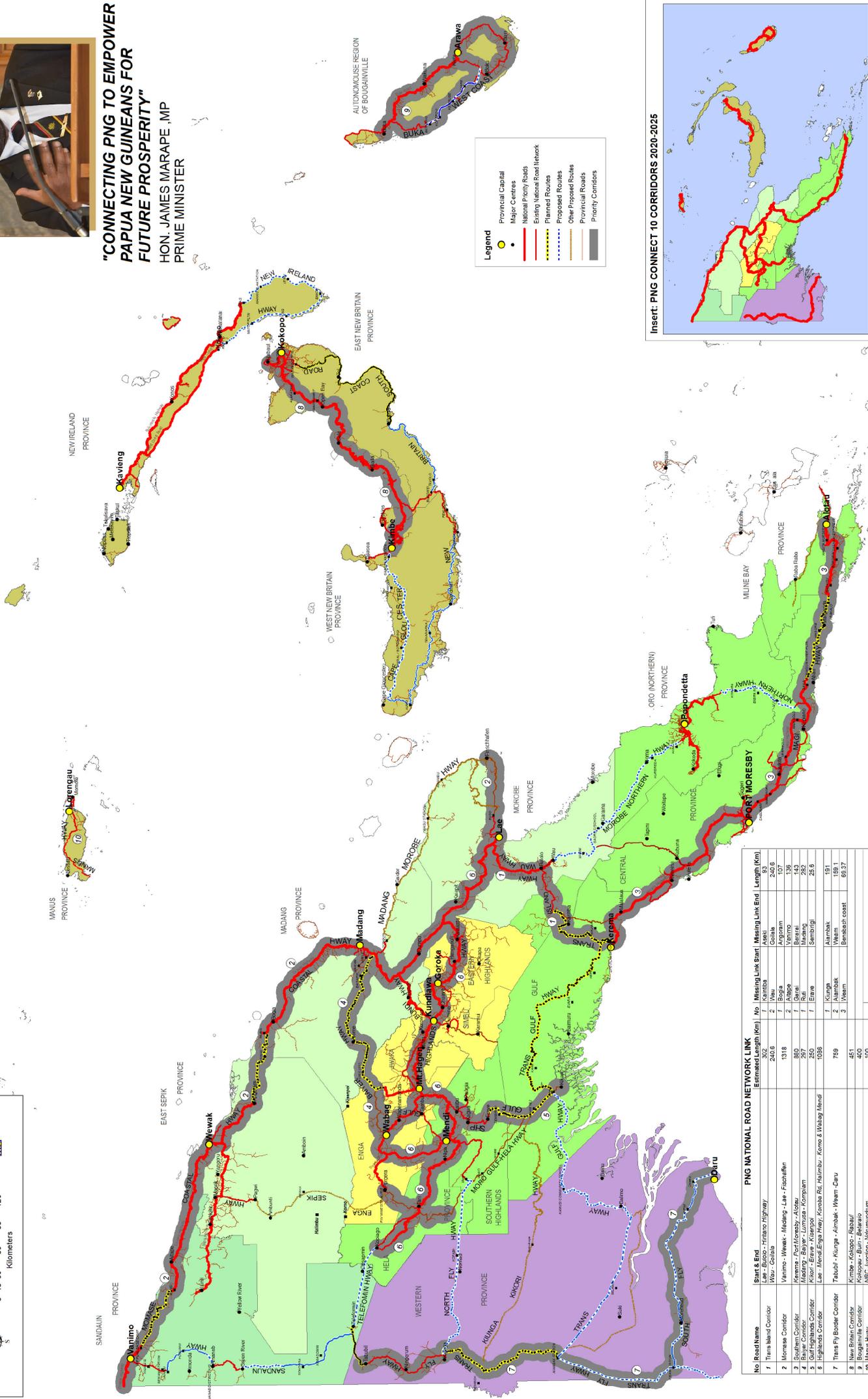
DEPARTMENT OF WORKS
Strategic Road Network Planning
Asset Management Branch

CONNECT PNG ROAD NETWORK
Scale: 1:1,598,570



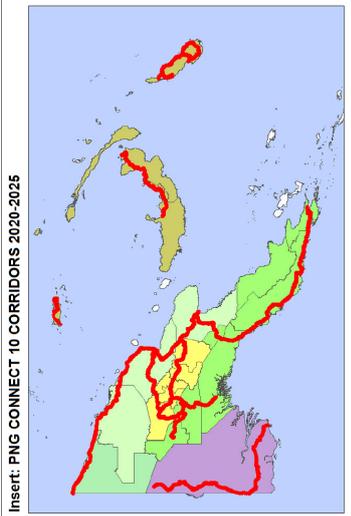


**"CONNECTING PNG TO EMPOWER
PAPUA NEW GUINEANS FOR
FUTURE PROSPERITY"**
HON. JAMES MARAPE, MP
PRIME MINISTER



Legend

- Provincial Capital
- Major Centres
- National Priority Roads
- Existing National Road Network
- Planned Routes
- Other Proposed Routes
- Provincial Roads
- Priority Corridors



PNG NATIONAL ROAD NETWORK LINK

No. Road Name	Start & End	Estimated Length (km)	No. Missing Link Start	Missing Link End	Missing Link Length (km)	Length (km)	
1 Trans Island Corridor	Wau - Goraka - Milne Bay Highway	240.6	2	Wau - Goraka	240.6	240.6	
2 Moresby Corridor	Vunavo - Wewak - Madang - Lae - Freetown	1318	7	Boga - Argamam - Vunavo	107	107	
3 South Corridor	Kororarua - Goroka - Madang - Lae - Freetown	583	2	Aliliga - Vunavo	138	138	
4 Bayik Corridor	Madang - Bayik - Luraisak - Komtam	267	1	Baka	267	267	
5 Gulf Highlands Corridor	Kikori - Erave - Kisanipul	250	1	Erave	25.6	25.6	
6 Highlands Corridor	Lae - Mendil - Enga Hwy - Kondea Rtg - Halmirub - Komo & Wasing Mendil	1088	7	Ugaga - Alimbak - Wunamb - Bransbath coast	151	151	
7 Trans Fly Border Corridor	Tabubil - Kungur - Alimbak - Wunamb - Cusu	749	2	Alimbak - Wunamb	159.1	159.1	
8 New Britain Corridor	Kororarua - Kororarua - Rabaul	451	1	Wunamb	68.37	68.37	
9 Bougainville Corridor	Kororarua - Bougainville	400	1	Wunamb	68.37	68.37	
10 Manus Hwy	NSC - Manus Hwy	400	1	Wunamb	68.37	68.37	
TOTAL LENGTH (KM)						6,983.00	1,448.67



*Without Dreams, we would not have much of what we enjoy today!
So dream big, there is absolutely nothing wrong about dreaming big.*

By **JASON SOM KAUT**
Port Moresby, PNG

These sentiments were shared by Governor for Northern Province, Hon. Garry Juffa during the launch of the ambitious K1 billion Connect PNG road program during the last quarter of 2020 at the Apec House in Port Moresby.

“Without dreams we would not have tonnes of steel floating on water or planes flying in the air, we would not be able to transmit information to masses...,” Hon. Juffa had said.

He also talked about the government’s ‘take back PNG slogan and how criticism could be something positive, giving different perspectives.

“Among the critics, you find some value...,” Governor Juffa said.

His address to those gathered to witness the official launch of the Connect PNG road program by Prime Minister Hon. James Marape, talked about greater collaboration, utilisation of local contractors, more government support, step up in road inspections and quality checks to quality road standards for delivery of government services and market access for the people. The Connect PNG road program is geared toward opening-up agriculture enclaves throughout the country that would become economic hubs attracting investment and socio-economic development.

Juffa said: “Roads must not be politicised”.

The vocal Governor asserted the need for Government, through the Department of Works to clearly define and raise awareness about the different levels of road responsibilities for the National, Provincial and Districts to ensure all levels meet their responsibilities.

He also said local contractors who are qualified to do the job must be engaged to take ownership of the road

works. He said government must provide them support to ensure they meet the quality standards required.

‘Local contractors can be assisted to ensure they meet high standards of road quality...’

Talking about collaboration and roads being everyone’s responsibilities, he said road inspectors must inspect all road works that are happening in the districts and provinces.

“I do not see road inspectors going and inspecting roads to ensure the right material...is used...,” Juffa said. “It is not company’s role to check to ensure quality standards are met’, he added.

The governor thanked all those who had supported road programs in Papua New Guinea, singling out Australia in particular who has been an avid and close development partner in PNG.

Despite many differences over the years, PNG and Australia have always maintained a very close relationship with Australia championing many PNG infrastructure and other programs that includes the Australia-PNG Defence Corporation Package that is now 42 years going strong.

The Connect PNG road program was launched on November, 2020 by Prime Minister Hon. James and witnessed by most of representatives of major development and bilateral partners including, our closest Australia.

Connect PNG is a K1 billion road program over a 20 year period that will see missing links established, thus opening up economic hubs, supporting governments current focus on agriculture, livestock and fisheries, ensuring produce find their way to markets, improving livelihoods of the majority 80 per cent of the population who depend on agriculture for their livelihoods. ●

PNG ROAD FUND BOARD SWORN IN

Milestone Achievement in Road Industry

The Marape Government recent passing of the PNG Road (Management and Fund) Act 2020 is a significant milestone in the history of road sub-sector intent to ensure PNG Road Network is supported with a sustainable system of funding.

Minister for Works & Implementation Hon. Michael Buku Nali, CMG, CBE, MP in witnessing the newly established PNG Road Fund Board Members swearing in ceremony at Department of Works HQ, congratulates the board members and make a commitment to work with the board to achieve the objectives of the PNG Road Fund.

The PNG Road Fund Board members include the Chairman, Finance Secretary Dr. Ken Ngangan, Deputy Chairman Transport Secretary Roy Mumu, Board Members including Works Secretary David Wereh, Planning Secretary Koni Sameul, Treasury Secretary Daire Vele and State Solicitor Daniel Rolpagarea.

The functions of the PNG Road Fund is established to oversee the collection, disbursement and monitoring of the funds for road maintenance, road safety and rehabilitation of the National Road Network. The Board of the Road Fund is responsible implementing the government policies on the Road Fund and to ensure the growth of the Road Fund in order to meet the cost of road maintenance programmes.

The establishment of the PNG Road Fund is a demonstration of this intent and plan to be able to provide guaranteed funding of road maintenance program so critical to the economy of PNG and the livelihood of our people. The Road Fund set up to grasp the urgency and the importance of the commitment this government is making to deliver much needed economic and social services. Our people's prosperity depended on opportunities provided by reliable access to markets and services, and the quality of road infrastructure play a critical role in giving this access.

There is much expectation on the board to grow the Road Maintenance Trust Fund vested under the PNG Road Fund as important path towards reducing reliance on the funding appropriations from the National Budget. This is a critical performance indicator for the Road Fund members. Unless we grow the fund, the idea of creating a sustainable funding source of road maintenance will not happen.

The Board will need to work with provincial and district



Chairman

Dr. Ken Ngangan

Organization:
Department of Finance
Position:
Secretary



Deputy Chairman

Mr. Roy Mumu

Organisation:
Department of Transport
Position:
Secretary



Board Member

Mr. Daire Vele

Organisation:
Department of Treasury
Position:
Secretary



Board Member

Mr. David Wereh

Organization:
Department of Works
Position:
Secretary



Board Member

Mr. Daniel Rolpagaea

Organisation:
State Solicitors
Position:
State Solicitors



Board Member

Mr. Joseph Kintau

Organisation:
PNG Road Fund
Position:
Chief Executive Officer

government to ensure road network within their respective province and district are included in the funding development strategy. This is important because the provincial and district roads form this important link for the delivery of the socio-economic services and opportunities to the entire country. With the Connect PNG Road Infrastructure Programme, the planning and delivery of the PNG roads must be effectively coordinated so that all regions of the PNG benefits. The Road Fund Board will provide the total network perspective for funding and will be in a better position to advise the government on the economic value the road network is contributing to the development of the country.

I also expect the Road Fund Board to be a role model on good governance. The concerns on value for money performance of our contractors and other funding and contracting processes within the road sub-sector must reflect a high level of governance. The Road Fund Board is in a unique position to enforce the ethics of doing business in the road sector. The work plans from road authorities such as DOW, Provincial and District Administrations will have to demonstrate that best practice principles are being applied.

The Government will be expecting a Business Plan and

a Performance Agreement from the Road Fund, so that together we can continue the momentum to create the value our people deserved by accessing a reliable and sustainable road network.

The challenges ahead will not be easy, given the backdrop of the COVID and the related economic implications. But the PNG Road Fund Board after swearing in will continue to apply the best of their skills, commitment and determination to lead the board forward.

That is what the government is asking from Road Fund Board members to be, taking on the challenges of developing a new organization. To work with the government and industry to create a collaborative strategy to grow the fund and reduce the cost of travelling by ensuring roads with good conditions.

The Road Fund Board is here to ensure that every kina invested in road maintenance is creating the value to the user by undertaking technical and performance audits of works done by road authorities and their contractors. At the end of the day, the Road Fund must be able to report that all the funds put into the roads maintenance met their intended performance targets, benefiting the road user and the people of Papua New Guinea. ●



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ROADS ARE A PILLAR FOR PROGRESS

By **JASON SOM KAUT**
Port Moresby, PNG

In August 2020, the Asian Development Bank (ADB) introduced a new and innovative way to fast-track road projects in Papua New Guinea while improving engineering designs and procurement.

This was revealed when ADB Country Director for PNG, Mr David Hill announced a \$31 million loan to boost Papua New Guinea's road network through the Transport Sector Preparatory Project (TSPP).

The TSPP will finance a feasibility study and detailed engineering designs, including bidding documents and procurement support, for three transport projects along the northern road corridor and continue im-

provements to the Highlands core network in central PNG.

"This facility is the foundation for implementing the government's new Connect PNG strategy and will support the construction of key economically strategic roads for the next 10 to 15 years," Mr Hill was quoted saying in a posted ADB statement.

The northern region road corridor starts at the Indonesian-PNG border and runs almost 1,500 kilometres, connecting the ports of Vanimo, Wewak, Madang, and Lae with the Highlands highway and southern region corridor. Improvements to the corridor and the con-

struction of missing links will make an important contribution to the economic growth of the region, which is home to about 40% of PNG's population.

The 2020-2040 Connect PNG is a multi-modal infrastructure development strategy aimed at securing and positioning the key drivers of economic growth, such as roads, ports, energy and communication infrastructure. The Connect PNG strategy aims to enable access to opportunities under PNG's agriculture revolution, the SME and local capacity development initiatives and investments in PNG's mineral, gas and petroleum resources.

"I am pleased that the Department of Works and Implementation inaugurated the Connect PNG in its 2020-2021 Corporate Plan," PM Marape remarked of the plan, emphasising the underlying importance of the strategy to improving the national road network. Under Connect PNG major roads and missing links will be constructed including the Trans Papua New Guinea Highway, the Momase Corridor, the East and West New Britain Corridor, Highlands Corridor, and other major roads.

Roads are the most important part of transport infrastructure for agriculture in PNG. Both because of their significance to agricultural livelihoods, and because they exist at the furthest reaches of the transport network—including connecting people to wharves/jetties and airports—roads serve as a particularly important symbol of state capability and reach in PNG.

Roads are, of course, not the only component of transport infrastructure that matters for people's livelihoods or their access to basic services: wharves/jetties and airports are important too, especially in remote inland and outer island locations. But the overwhelming importance of roads is undeniable, something that can be best understood when the significance of agriculture to livelihoods in PNG is considered.

In the sixth edition of the World Bank's recently published PNG Economic Update series titled: 'Dealing with a Triple Crisis', an additional Part B has been included with a special focus on 'Institutional Capital for Service Delivery'.

Under the sector the report also covers roads and the vital importance of maintenance, funding constraints and suggests recommendations to address the constraints and improve service delivery.

There is no proper maintenance system for roads while the nature of roads also makes funding very vulnerable to capture and to patronage use – where MPs tend to fund projects in areas that are political strongholds rather than maintaining the whole road network in the district or province.



The 2020-2040 Connect PNG is a multi-modal infrastructure development strategy aimed at securing and positioning the key drivers of economic growth, such as roads, ports, energy and communication infrastructure.

This usually ends in disrepairs that needing more funding to rehabilitate them later, something that has become common in the deteriorating road sector – the build, neglect, rebuild cycle. The special part covered village courts, health clinics, schools and roads.

The key finding of this study is that the capability to deliver basic services in PNG depends on how effectively different state and non-state institutions come together to jointly provide the services.

Under the National Road Network (NRN) PNG has 21,000 kms of a subnational road network, classified by the Department of Works and Highways (DoW) as provincial and district roads.

Development and maintenance of the subnational road network is a shared responsibility between provincial and local level governments and the National Government through the DoW.

National government funding for these roads are provided via the Provincial Support Improvement Program (PSIP) and the District Support Improvement Program (PSIP) and managed separately by the Provincial and Local Level Governments.

Only about 15 percent of the roughly 29,700 km total road network is sealed.

While more needs to be done, progress has been made in the sector with the DoW institutional reform and restructure and launching of DoW Corporate Plan 2020-2024 and the Connect PNG strategy last year by Prime Minister James Marape. ●

INFRASTRUCTURE PROJECTS IN DISTRICTS EXPECTED TO SPEED UP

By **JASON SOM KAUT**
Port Moresby, PNG

Infrastructure projects in districts can be expected to be completed quicker, on schedule, within budget and per regulatory requirements.

This follows the establishment of District Procurement Committee's, championed by the National Procurement Commission, who has so far facilitated that establishment of more than 50 DPC's, many of them during 2021.

One of those was the Yangoru-Saussia District Procurement Committee (DPC).

Local member for Yangoru-Saussia Honourable Richard Maru who described the establishment of the procurement committee as a 'timely call, as our district is on the move'.

He assured that they can stand up to and comply with all government statutory regulations.

"Establishing and empowering district procurement committees is very important in improving service delivery in districts and making decision on tenders quickly so work can continue," Mr Maru said, asserting that government releases funds in 'drips and drabs' usually at the expense of work stopping.

"I want the committee to function outside of politics and must be open to public scrutiny," Mr Maru said.

He said he ensured that they assemble the best com-

mittee for Yangoru-Saussia district to manage all tenders, reply to questions and comply with all laws.

It is understood that four more districts in East Sepik were yet to establish their procurement committees.

NPC will establish procurement committees for all 22 districts and 89 districts.

Following the taking of oaths and signing NPC CEO Mr Stanley Bole clarified powers of the district committees and NPC and what NPC is all about.

Under the NPC Act, district and provincial procurement committees are required to submit quarterly reports.

Failing compliance, the act allows for a K2 million penalty fine and 15 years imprisonment.

"No-one is immune to the law," Mr Bole said.

Under the new changes, the financial threshold for districts has been increased from a low K500, 000 to now K2.5 million.

Under the procurement act, all tenders less than K10 million must be awarded to a local company.

Recently NPC Board rescinded a decision by the former board to award a contract less than K10 million to a foreign company, and re-awarded the contract to a local bidder, headed by a female.

With the bulk of the people living and working in the districts, establishing procurement committees, recognised by the NPC, is important to provide goods and services and encourage progress of development. ●

NPC aims to empower provinces and districts deliver basic services

The National Procurement Commission (NPC) is looking at giving more powers to districts and provinces to undertake procurement for effective and efficient delivery of goods and services, NPC chief executive officer Mr Simon Bole said.

He made the statement during the swearing in of the Hela Provincial Procurement Commission, Mendi Muni District Procurement Commission and Tari-Pori District Procurement Commission of the NPC in Port Moresby on April, 2021.

Mr Bole said limited procurement powers given to districts and provinces over the years has been a contributing factor towards lack of basic services and that is the change the Government wants to see in the current procurement reforms NPC is implementing.

"Under the previous Central Supply and Tenders Board

(CSTB), only provincial tenders board were established, and districts did not have the capacity to undertake their own procurement.

"Districts were only limited to projects valued up to the threshold limit of K500, 000 and were depending on the provincial governments for tendering and that has impacted badly on service delivery," Mr Bole said.

He said with the NPC now, the Commission through the board is delegating its procurement powers and functions to the districts to undertake procurement at the threshold limit of K2.5 million which was a very huge jump from K500, 000 limit.

"So if a district undertakes procurement for five different projects valued at K2 million, then they are presiding over contracts worth around K10 million which is significant enough to have real impacts and bring change in the district.

"Likewise, for the provinces which have a threshold limit of K5 million," Mr Bole said.

He however warned provincial and district committees to use the powers delegated to them 'with greater care and responsibility'. ●

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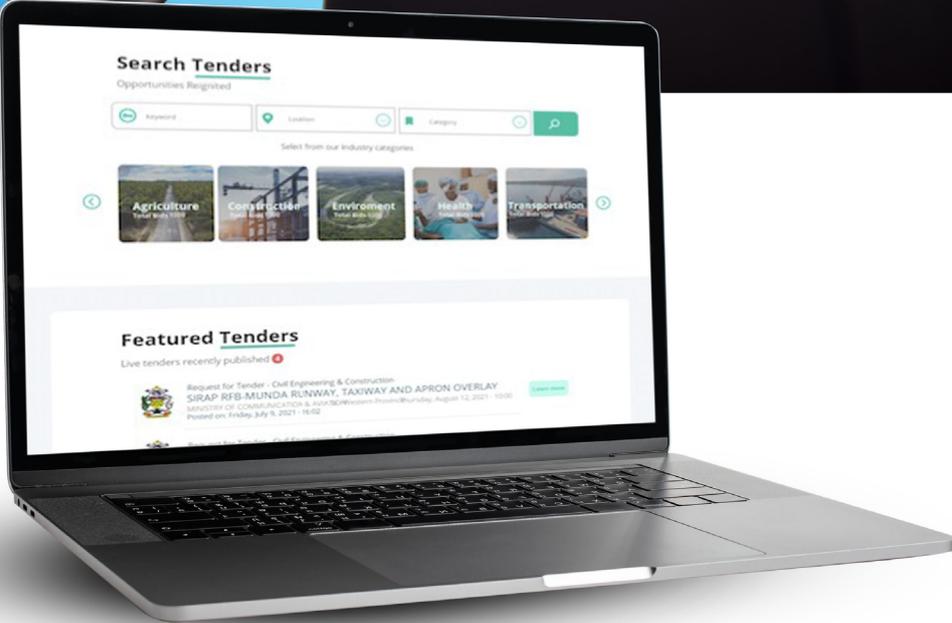
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