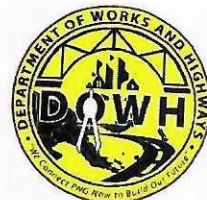




DEPARTMENT OF WORKS & HIGHWAYS

MINISTRY FOR WORKS & HIGHWAYS



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Date: 28th October, 2025
Port Moresby

MEDIA STATEMENT

SUBJECT: RESPONSE TO PETITION BY MEMBER FOR BULOLO ON THE STATE OF THE WAU BULOLO HIGHWAY (LAE TO BULOLO SECTION)

I wish to acknowledge the petition raised by the Honorable Member for Bulolo regarding the state of the Wau Bulolo Highway and provide the following update and clarifications. This government is addressing legacy issues and Wau Bulolo Highway is one of these legacy issues that has been neglected by successive governments we are addressing at the moment.

The Lae to Bulolo Highway remains one of the key economic corridors in Morobe Province serving mining, forestry, and agricultural activities, and is being progressively upgraded under the Connect PNG Economic Road Infrastructure Development Program and the Australian Infrastructure Financing Facility for the Pacific (AIFFP). The Marape-Rosso Government has committed over K165 million in road maintenance works that are ongoing in which 57kms is in good condition whilst 59kms is in fair to poor condition.

Section 1. Lae to Timini Bridge (45 km)

This section is currently funded under the Australian Infrastructure Financing Facility for the Pacific (AIFFP) at a cost of K66 million. To-date, 27 kilometers have been sealed to high standard, and 18 kilometers remain to be completed once loan variations are approved by AIFFP. The project is progressing well under supervision of the Department of Works and Highways and the contractor remains mobilized. The 27kms is in good condition whilst the 18kms is in fair condition.

Section 2. Timini Bridge to Bangalum Bridge (33km)

This section is funded under the Connect PNG Program worth K38 million Sealing works have commenced at Timini Village and the contractor is fully mobilized on site with steady progress toward Bangalum. The section forms part of the Phase 1 Connect PNG priority upgrades. The 10kms sealed sections are in good condition whilst the 23kms are in fair to poor condition.

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Section 3. Bangalum Bridge to Pine Tops Bridge (33km)

Procurement for the Bangalum to Pine Tops section has been completed, and works are commencing progressively under the Connect PNG Phase 1 budget of K55 million. This will ensure the full restoration of this road section with improved safety, drainage, and flood resilience. The 15kms sealed sections are in good condition whilst the 18kms are in fair condition.

4. Emergency and Washout Repairs

Several minor emergency works worth K5 million are currently being undertaken to repair washout sections caused by severe alluvial mining activities along the Bulolo and Watut Rivers. These activities have contributed to siltation, river diversions, and road and bridge embankment erosion that severely undermine the highway, bridge, and drainage crossings.

5. Appeal for Responsible Alluvial Mining Practices

While the Department continues to maintain and upgrade the highway, I appeal to the Members for Bulolo and Wau-Waria Districts, including Morobe Provincial Administration, and District Development Authorities including Mineral Resource Authority (MRA) and Kumul Mineral Holdings Ltd (KMH) to manage and control alluvial mining activities undertaken by the locals and contractors, especially in areas such as Sambio and Pine Tops, where heavy dredging operations are directly damaging the national road infrastructure.

These recurrent road failures are largely man-made disasters, and district level management and enforcement of environmental and mining regulations are critical to protecting public infrastructure investments worth millions of kina.

6. Government Commitment

The Marape-Rosso Government remains fully committed to upgrading and maintaining all strategic national highways, including Trans-National Highway corridor, as part of the Connect PNG Program to ensure safe, reliable, and Climate Resilient connectivity across the country. We have secured loan from ADB and the design works between Nentino to Bulolo is in its final design stages, Bulolo to Lae was designed under AIFFP Program, and design works for Kumalu Crossing was fully funded by PNG Government and we are seeking funding from development partners to construct a permanent crossing option. We are committed to fully rebuild this important national highway to Class 1 road.

We Connect PNG Now to Build Our Future Together.

HON. SOLAN MIRISIM, MP
Minister for Works and Highways



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