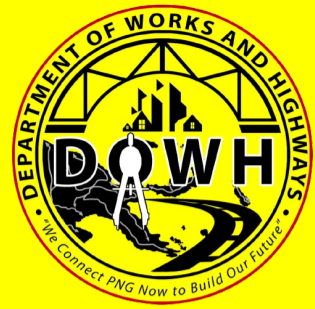




DEPARTMENT OF WORKS & HIGHWAYS  
MINISTRY FOR WORKS & HIGHWAYS  
OFFICE OF THE MINISTER



## MEDIA STATEMENT

# 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 updates and clarification.**

This Government is addressing legacy issues and Wau Bulolo Highway is one of those legacy issues that has been neglected by successive governments and we are addressing it at the moment.

Lae to Bulolo Highway remains one of the key economic corridors in Morobe province serving mining, forestry, and agricultural activities, and it's being progressively upgraded under the Connect PNG Road Economic Infrastructure Development Program and the Australian Infrastructure Financing Facility for the Pacific (AIFFP).

The Marape Rosso Government has committed over K165m in road maintenance works that are ongoing in which 57km is in good condition whilst 59km is in fair to poor condition.

### Section 1 - Lae to Timini Bridge (45km)

This section is currently funded under the Australian Infrastructure Financing Facility for the Pacific at the cost of K66m. To date 27kms have been sealed to high standards and 18kms remain to be completed once loan variations are approved by AIFFP. The project is progressing well under supervision of department of Works and Highways and the contractor remains mobilized.

### Section 2 - Timini Bridge to Bangalum Bridge

This section is funded under the Connect

PNG Program worth K38m. 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 section are in good condition whilst the 23kms are in fair to poor condition.

### Section 3 - Bangalum Bridge to Pine Tops Bridge

Procurement for Bangalum to Pine Tops Bridge has been completed and works are commencing progressively under the Connect PNG phase 1 of K55m. This will ensure the full restoration of this road section with improved safety, drainage and flood resilient. The 15km sealed section is in good condition whilst the 18kms are in fair condition.

### 4. Emergency and washout repairs

Several minor emergency works worth K5m are currently being undertaken to repair washout sections caused by severe alluvial mining activities along the Bulolo and Watut rivers. This activities have contributed to siltation, river diversion, and road and bridge embankment erosion that severely undermine the highway, Bridge and drainage crossings.

### 5. Appeal for responsible alluvial mining practice

While the department continues to maintain and upgrade the Highway, I appeal to the Members of Bulolo and Wau Waria Districts including Morobe Provincial Administration and District Development Authorities (DDAs), including Mineral Resources Authority (MRA) Kumul Minerals Holdings

Ltd 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 fully committed to rebuilt this important national Highway to class 1 road. We Connect PNG now to build our future.

Authorized by

  
  
**Hon. Solan Mirisim, MP**  
Minister for Works and Highways