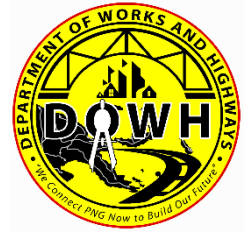




MINISTRY OF WORKS & HIGHWAYS OFFICE OF THE MINISTER



Date: 13th September 2023

Media Release

Minister for Works & Highways Independence Message

Minister for Department of Works & Highways Hon. Solan Mirisim, MP and Member for Teleformin on behalf of the Department Secretary and senior Management from headquarters, and all the staff from our 21 provincial establishment wanted to wish Papua New Guinea a happy 48th Independence Anniversary.

The Minister said that Department of Works and Highways was inspirational to set the platform during the decolonization period leading up to self-government and eventual PNG gaining Independence in 16th September 1975.

In 1953, the construction of the first highways was done under the colonial administration – the Government of Australia linking the highlands region into the coastal region of Momase in Markham, Morobe Province.

Then in 1975 Department of Works & Supply carried on the mandate with transfer of technology and knowledge to national engineers and the building and construction of gravel roads commenced with the department at the forefront.

In the 1900s to 2000s, that was the decade when bitumen seal roads and upgrade was done with the mandate and name change to Department of Works and Implementation. National roads were constructed to seal standards connecting regional economic corridors linking up towns to urban centers and city.

But it was during the time of the Late Mekera Morauta Government privatization policy that saw the abolishment of the plant transport branch which is an arm in the department of works & implementation that time that was responsible to doing up all the rural roads at the sub-national level (province and districts).

This saw the back then the starting of failing road network condition and the dilapidated state of the national highways because funding for routine maintenance and capital works was inconsistent, meaning the projection of projects and cost estimate did not match the funding warrants that was coming from the national government budget causing backlog of deferred maintenance resulting in poor state of the road network condition in the country as a result of deferred maintenance.

Postmortem into the mandate of the department and the challenges of serving the people with better roads and bridge infrastructure gave chance to the birth of the Connect PNG program which will run for 20 years to fix all the roads with adequate funding made available to Department of Works & Highways with a new mandate.

The department will now be responsible for the maintenance, upgrade and seal with connecting priority missing links at the national highway level whilst provinces and district will be responsible for the roads within their political boundary and jurisdiction.

For more information regarding my Independence statement and the historical perspective, with the current update on projects that department of works and highways is doing is published in my detailed special independence message supplement.

Therefore, I wish you all the best with your respective families, tribes, clans and colleagues please celebrate our independence in the true spirit of patriotism and always put the country first in whatever you are doing.

God Bless Papua New Guinea!

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