



Ministry of Infrastructure
Development



Australian High
Commission
Solomon Islands

MEDIA RELEASE

NATIONAL TRANSPORT BOARD FUND PRAISES PROGRESS ON AUSTRALIAN-FUNDED ROAD UPGRADES

26 JUNE 2026

Solomon Islands' National Transport Fund Board has praised the quality and progress of Australian-funded road upgrades to the national transport network, reconnecting communities to markets, schools and essential services.

Speaking at a meeting of the Board in Auki on Friday 19 June, Deputy Chair of the Board, Mr Mike Qaqara, said it's clear that the partnership is transforming everyday life for families.

"Renewed roads mean safer travel, more reliable access to schools and clinics, and new opportunities for trade and jobs," Mr Qaqara said.

"We thank Australia, our local contractors and our government ministries for working together to deliver fast, and to such a high standard."

The SBD60 million (AUD11 million) partnership to improve road connectivity was announced last year by Australia and Solomon Islands to support the hosting of the Pacific Islands Forum Leaders Meeting in Honiara, as well as reopening and upgrading vital transport links in the north, south and east of Malaita.

Board members travelled with Australian officials along the upgraded Fataleka-Subobono, Busurata and South Roads, engaging with local contractors delivering these 100 per cent locally-led projects.

On the Fataleka-Subobono project, FT Builders have restored 40km of critical road drainage and surfaces, employing 34 local workers, and are continuing further upgrades.

On Busurata Road, Managing Director for Exodus, Jeremiah Fonota, says that as the project nears completion, it's already making a difference for communities with most of their workers sourced from the surrounding Busurata, Auki and neighbouring communities.

"As a local company, we're proud to deliver this project with local workers and community support," said Mr Fonota.

Australian High Commissioner, Jeff Roach, said the rapid rollout demonstrated the power of partnership to deliver life-changing improvements to communities who've long been cut off from services and economic opportunity.

"Farmers, truck drivers, store owners, teachers, students, police and health workers are all celebrating renewed access to markets, schools and clinics," High Commissioner Roach said.

"This has been a proud partnership to invest in local companies, lift up local communities and bring back local opportunities to thousands of people."

The SBD60 million grant targeted 11 economic corridors for development and transport in Honiara and Malaita identified by the Solomon Islands Government.

Seven feeder roads in Honiara are being upgraded, including Panatina Campus repair, road sealing at Down Kola road, and FFA road at West Kola and Kolale, and road and drainage improvements in Chinatown, central and west Honiara.

In Malaita, improvements to the Busurata, Northeast Malaita, and two sections of the Malaita South Road, including tar sealing of the first five kilometres from Auki are being undertaken.

Minister for Infrastructure Development, Hon. Ricky Fuo'o, has long championed the delivery of donor-funded projects by local companies. He said the impact of works in Malaita has been especially significant.

"Badly deteriorated roads are once again open to transport services, which have breathed life back into communities and kick-started economic activity."

"The upgrading of surfaces and drainage has reopened the lifeline and reduces wear and tear to our vehicles getting goods and people to market, services and school," Hon. Fuo'o said.

Board Member and Permanent Secretary for the Ministry for National Planning and Development Coordination, Mr Brian Lenga, thanked Australia for its long term commitment to support national institutions and local contractors.

"Australia channeling its investment through Solomon Islands companies and the National Transport Fund, not only builds better roads — it is building lasting local capacity to plan and deliver major infrastructure projects across the country".

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Photo 1 – The upgraded Busurata Road has reconnected communities to markets, schools and essential services across central Malaita.



Photo 2 - Road rehabilitation works underway on the East Road as part of the Australia–Solomon Islands partnership to improve national transport connectivity.

Photo 3 - National Transport Fund Board members and Australian officials inspect progress on the Fataleka–Subobono Road upgrade visit with local contractor FT Builders.



Photo 3 – The project has been a big employer of local workers, delivering income and skills while delivering the road upgrades.



Photo 4 - On Busurata Road, Managing Director for Exodus, Jeremiah Fonota (second left), says his company is proud to deliver works with local workers and community support.



Photo 5 – Representatives from the National Transport Fund Board, Ministry for Infrastructure Development and Australia meet with Premier of Malaita, Hon. Eliah Asilaua.



Photo 6 – The 11 projects across Honiara and Malaita have all been delivered 100 per cent by Solomon Islands workers.