



Australian High Commission
Solomon Islands

“THIS CHANGES EVERYTHING.” MALAITA ROAD UPGRADES NEAR COMPLETION

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Daily life is being transformed, and economic opportunities are being unlocked, for thousands of people as upgrades to 133 km of key roads in Malaita near completion.

The upgrades to the South Road to Hauhui, and the Busurata and Fataleka–Subobono roads, are saving time, reducing transport costs, and delivering benefits for farmers, businesses and service users.

“For us, transportation is everything,” says Patteson Uania, Deacon for the Maa South Sea Evangelical Church, who also runs a small business and farm.

“Before the South Road was fixed, a trip to Auki could take all day, and we often had to pay twice—first to Bina Harbour by truck and then by boat to Auki. Now, travel is faster and business is better.”

Women and families working in key agricultural areas are also seeing change, with restored transport links to markets, clinics and hospitals.

“Before, it was very difficult for women transporting goods to market,” says Dorothy Takabio of the Gwaidingale community, also on the South Road.

“Now, transports can come to the community to collect goods, children can travel to school, and families can get to health services when they need them.”

Chief Eddie Gomi of West Kwaio highlights the broader economic benefits from the road improvements:

“The road connects our villages, makes it easier for people to sell produce at the market, and supports income generation to feed our families. We thank local contractor TTC, the government and their Australian partners for this investment.”

Australian High Commissioner Jeff Roach said the difference the re-opened roads are making to local communities is clear.

“These roads are really the lifelines of daily life in Malaita,” High Commissioner Roach said.

“For years, people have had to cope with roads that were poor or completely impassable. That’s why Australia is proud to support the National Transport Fund and the Ministry of Infrastructure Development in delivering SBD60 million worth of locally led roadworks across Honiara and Malaita. This work has created local jobs, used local materials, and made a real, positive impact for so many people.”

Across the Central Highlands of Malaita, the upgrades have dramatically changed life for those who once carried goods to market by hand or bicycle after the Busurata Road became impassable for vehicles.

Joyce Futoea recalled what happened when the trucks stopped coming:

“Women worked hard in their gardens to prepare food to sell at the market. But many times, they waited for transport, and no truck could come up the road because it was in such poor condition. So their food crops spoiled, and their hard work was wasted.”

“Now that the road has improved and trucks are travelling again, women are planting more garden food to sell at the market, to make money to support their families.”

Local entrepreneurs like Steven Misiosi, owner of Haodai Kirio Tourist Lodge, say the halving of travel time from Auki is opening up new opportunities for business.

“More tourists and local visitors are coming, and my income has definitely improved,” he says.

Busurata Community High School Principal, Ishmael Sihai, also notes how improved reliability has positively impacted his teachers and students.

“When I arrived in 2024, transport was very limited. Staff had to rise at 3:00am to catch the truck,” he says. “The road upgrade has eased travel and improved access to education.”

While works are in their finishing stages on the three roads over the next month, preparations are underway to tar-seal the first 5 km of the South Road from Auki—the final part of the Australian supported upgrades committed to last year.

All works are being delivered by local contractors as part of Australia’s commitment to supporting local companies delivering Australian funded infrastructure.

Chris Angisiringi, Community Liaison Officer for Exodus Trade and Development, which is rehabilitating Busurata Road, says most of their workers are sourced from the surrounding Busurata, Auki and neighbouring communities.

“We also discussed the use of local resources such as gravel with the community, and we’ve received strong cooperation,” he says.

“It’s a great outcome for the community. Trucks can now travel without four-wheel drive, and government services like police, health and education can reach the area more reliably.”

For so many like Patteson in Maa, life has been very hard, but things are looking up.

“Today, the improved road has made life much easier for the people of Maa,” Patteson said.

“People can travel at any time of the day, and if we need to get to Honiara, it can be done in one day.”

“Most importantly, people can reach clinics or hospitals much faster during medical emergencies. Life is easier now.”

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PHOTOS:



Photo 1 – Excavator Operator Allen Taba from Belau village is one of many locally employed workers prioritised by the project.



Photo 2 – Busurata Community High School students and teachers are happy to more easily reach school.



Photo 3 – The road works have been 100 percent delivered by Solomon Islanders, including those sourced from local communities.



Photo 4 – The road works have re-opened access to key agricultural areas in Malaita.



Photo 5 – Joyce Futoea said women are planting more garden food to sell at the market

since the Busurata road reopened.



Photo 6 - Steven Misiosi of Haodai Kirio Lodge says the upgrades have increased tourists coming to stay



Photo 7 - "For us, transportation is everything," says Pattleson Uania, Deacon for the Maa South Sea Evangelical Church, who also runs a small business and farm.



Photo 8 - Busurata school Principal Ishmael Sihai says school attendance has improved with the road improvements