



Draft Speech
Inauguration Ceremony for West Coast Road
Hon. Olo Afoa Fiti Vaai
[23rd August 2024]

Rev. Umi Pritchard

Honourable Ministers of Cabinet

and Members of Parliament

Honoured Representatives of the World Bank and Government of Australia

Distinguished guests

Ladies and Gentlemen

We gather to celebrate today, the completion of the Rehabilitation and Enhancement of the most significant road corridor for Samoa, the West Coast Road.

This achievement is a significant milestone in our country's plans and aspirations towards safe and climate resilient infrastructure. Towards Empowering our Communities, Building our Resilience and Inspiring Samoa's growth through sustainable development.

Recognizing the fundamental role played by road sector assets in the well-being of Samoa's citizens, the Government had launched over a decade ago, an ambitious program to strengthen the resilience of our road infrastructure, by reconstructing, **to higher standards**, the most critical of our roads and bridges.

We needed to raise the bar with the standards of design and construction to withstand the **impact of climate change** and extreme weather events.

Today we celebrate achieving that objective for our West Coast Road.

The West Coast Road is the primary artery road on Upolu. It provides a vital land transport link connecting our capital Apia and the main trading port at Matautu, with the Faleolo International Airport, and Mulifanua wharf - our main gateway to Savaii.

In short it facilitates a vital connection for our people and our industries. Often referred to as the "backbone of Samoa's economic corridor" – its' upkeep is critical for Samoa's economic and social well-being.

The site we are at today marks the western most end of the physical works. This road upgrade spans a total of 24 kilometres, 8 districts 28 villages and hundreds of residential households along the way. From the village of Saina in Faleata No.4, all the way here to Satapuata in Aana Alofi No. 4 where we gather today.

The total value of this work is equivalent to **\$115 million** Samoan tala, consisting of:

- **\$ 101.3** million tala for construction;
- **\$ 13.2** million tala for design and supervision services; and
- **\$ 0.5** million tala for land and property compensation.

Such an undertaking requires not just funding, but time, planning, and that most critical of components – the willpower and commitment of PEOPLE

.....The people behind the jobsthe people behind the organizations involved.....the people who have been accommodating of their lands and property .. the People of Samoa, who have cooperated and waited patiently to see the fruits of this labor.

The journey for this milestone has spanned **11 years** – and has been realized through the lifetime of three different projects in order to accommodate not just the planning, feasibility studies, the design and construction, but also balancing the competing needs for funding, from all sectors and within the transport sector itself.

This West Coast Road completion is therefore testament to lasting and successful partnerships, as between our Government and the World Bank. It also demonstrates the commitment of our Government and leaders, to fostering and sustaining forward thinking long term development initiatives for our people.

On behalf of the Government and people of Samoa I extend my deepest appreciation to our development partners represented here today. The Government of Australia and in particular the World Bank, for the grant financing that made this achievement possible.

Of the \$115 million tala cost of this development:

- 90% or **\$104 million tala** was funded from grant financing by our partners,
- whilst the Government of Samoa contributed 10% or **\$11 million tala**.

Faafetai tele and we look forward to continuing our successful partnerships.

The Design and Construction Supervision services were provided by Roughton International Ltd in conjunction with local engineering firm, PLT Consultants Ltd. Of all the consultants and contractors engaged for this work, your role has meant engagement right from the start of the project 11 years ago to completion just last month. Faafetai for the patience and commitment.

I also acknowledge with appreciation the input of local firm IPA Consultants Ltd towards project management services in the early years, until we had built capacity within the implementing agency.

I am particularly proud of the fact that this upgrade of the West Coast Road was constructed entirely by local construction companies, over 9 different construction contracts.

I extend my congratulations to :

- Ah Liki Construction Ltd,
- the joint venture company Ltd formed by Silva Transport Ltd, Uliia Construction Ltd and T & N Toleafoa Ltd;
- and **in particular, Off Constructors Ltd** who carried out the bulk of these works.

Congratulations and thank you for rising to the challenge, and demonstrating we have the capacity and capability within country for quality civil construction.

I acknowledge also the collaboration and assistance of all government agencies who have assisted our main implementing agency the Land Transport Authority. Your collaboration is crucial to successful outcomes.

Our Land Transport Authority commenced operations 15 years ago in 2009. This road project was commenced not long after in 2013. I therefore acknowledge and applaud the Boards, CEO's and staff, past and present for your contributions and perseverance. Malo le tautua.

Last but not least, I extend sincere gratitude to the people of Samoa and especially the residents of the 8 districts, many villages and the hundreds of households along this road. Your patience and cooperation throughout the course of this project has been invaluable. Whilst your government has provided monetary compensation for land and properties affected, we fully appreciate that their value goes beyond monetary. As such, your cooperation and contribution for the greater good of all of Samoa, is well appreciated.

As we officially inaugurate this road today, let us remember that it is more than just a means of transportation. It is a symbol of progress, resilience, and the enduring spirit of our nation. Together, we are building a stronger, more resilient Samoa for current and future generations.

May this road serve our people well, and may it stand as a lasting legacy of our collective efforts to create a brighter, more sustainable future.

SOIFUA MA IA MANUIA.