

MCA Update #6: Efate Ring Road & Santo East Coast Road

Highlights:

Wet weather continues to affect our programme, there have been some very heavy rainfalls and the only work that can be done in the prevailing conditions is clearing vegetation and laying culverts. It is not possible to either produce coral aggregate in our quarries or construct new road pavement while flood conditions prevail. These constraints have affected the order that we have undertaken some of our work and means we have cleared more sections and laid less pavement than planned. Thus we have cleared near some villages but not progressed to constructing pavement as originally intended. It is stressed that these work order changes are due to the weather and are not due to anything that the adjacent village is responsible for.

Work Done Last Week

We have substantially completed clearing and widening between Siviri and Lakenasua. Fence relocation work continues near Malatia. We also commenced to place bulk fill at the base of Meten Hill. This fill will mean that the finished road on Meten Hill will not be as steep as the current road.

Work Planned for This Week

We will commence to construct drainage culverts in the Siviri area as well as clear vegetation and widen the road from Lakenasua through to Emua Village. If weather permits we would like to start placing pavement aggregate in the newly widened section, starting near Siviri Village and progressing towards Emua Village. Relocation of roadside fences at Malatia is expected to continue as this work is less affected by wet weather. At Meten Hill bulk filling will continue at the base of the hill and the detour will continue at the top of the hill meaning that motorists should exercise particular care when driving anywhere on the Hill.

Malarua Basalt Quarry

We have progressed with cutting the stockpile/equipment platforms and have established a small mobile crusher on site to produce aggregate so that a hardstanding base can be constructed on the platforms for the permanent equipment to sit on.

Santo East Coast Road

The pavement investigation crew has started work and are now at Saraoutou/Coconut Research Station and working towards Matevulu. Most local motorists are driving with care around the work sites but there are a few who do not slow down and create concern for the work crew.

Tanoliu Realignment

Last year following consultations with the Tanoliu community and relevant Government departments, the MCA Steering Committee approved a realignment of the road through Tanoliu village as being in the best interests of the project, the community, coastal erosion protection, road sustainability and tourism on Efate in general. A Consultation Meeting was held in Tanoliu Village on 4 February so that the location and likely impact of the realignment proposal could be confirmed with those directly affected and any questions about the proposal answered. After the meeting the route was walked. We are grateful to the villagers of Tanoliu for their willingness to give their agreement to these changes to their properties.

Pikinini Safety

With schools having restarted for the year we plan to approach school Principals in the areas where we have heavy equipment working and request to talk to children about safety at roadworks sites. This will concentrate on the importance of the Stop/Go traffic controller and be particularly for children who walk or ride bikes along the road.

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Next update will be provided on Thursday 12 February 2009