



MINISTRY OF RURAL AND MARITIME DEVELOPMENT AND DISASTER MANAGEMENT

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No more walking on coconut trunks for Nabouwalu villagers



Caption: ***Minister for Rural and Maritime Development and Disaster Management Hon. Inia Seruiratu opens the newly constructed footbridge in Nabouwalu, Kadavu.***

KADAVU – Chances of injuries and fear of crossing a river on slippery coconut trunks have been drastically reduced, according to villagers of Nabouwalu, Kadavu after a new footbridge was constructed by Government.

Youth member Suliasi Serewai is at ease knowing that villagers – especially elderly people and persons living With disabilities can now cross the river separating the village without fear of getting injured.

"We have been crossing the river using coconut trunks for many years. There were times when we had to cross broken coconut trunks because it had started to rot," he said.

"We have a lot of elderly people who go to church using the bridge. We don't have to worry about their safety now as there is a new cement bridge that will provide safe accessibility to them, and children as well."

The 32-year-old thanked the Government for thinking about them, especially during this challenging time.

"We did not expect this to happen as we have been battling a pandemic, but to see this come to fruition is a testament of Government's commitment of improving the living standards in our village."

Marica Jueka, a 72-year-old villager, echoed similar sentiments of having a safer and improved access for villagers of her age to use.

"There were times when I could not go to church because the crossing was too slippery, but this new bridge will help me get to church on time and other places as well," she said.

The project which costs \$49,377 included the construction of a safe and durable standard 27.9m footbridge that would allow the villagers access to essential services such as school and health facility with an inclusive concept. Funded under the Ministry Rural and Maritime Development and Disaster Management's Community Access Roads, Footpaths and Footbridges (CARFF) Programme, the project also included the installation of solar lights for safety of women and children at night and ramp for people living with disability.

The Minister for Rural and Maritime Development and Disaster Management, Hon. Inia Seruiratu commissioned the newly constructed footbridge last Friday, saying the project would bring forth many opportunities for the villagers. This, he said, included a safe access to services on the island.

"This project is aimed at promoting socio-economic development by creating opportunities for uplifting of living standards through the provision of a safe and durable footbridge access to essential services. The project will encourage villagers to revive small and micro businesses as alternative sources of income," Hon. Seruiratu said.

"Persons living with disability, the elderly, women and children, and the vulnerable groups are provided the opportunity to access health services in Naqara at any given time with the installation of solar lights and ramp."

A total of 68 people will benefit from this timely assistance.



Caption: **Minister for Rural and Maritime Development and Disaster Management Hon. Inia Seruiratu says the project is aimed at raising living standards in rural and maritime communities.**

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