



GOVERNMENT OF SAMOA

**OFFICE OF THE MINISTER**

**MINISTRY OF WORKS, TRANSPORT AND INFRASTRUCTURE**

MINISTRY OF WORKS, TRANSPORT AND INFRASTRUCTURE; ELECTRIC POWER CORPORATION;  
SAMOA WATER AUTHORITY; SAMOA AIRPORT AUTHORITY; SAMOA PORTS AUTHORITY;  
SAMOA SHIPPING CORPORATION; LAND TRANSPORT AUTHORITY;  
SAMOA SHIPPING SERVICES; PACIFIC FORUM LINE

Tel: +685-25239 / +685-24379

Email: [MinisterMWTI@mwti.gov.ws](mailto:MinisterMWTI@mwti.gov.ws)

12 June 2023

Editorial Board  
Samoa Observer  
Vaitele  
APIA

Afioga e,

**SUBJECT: RESPONSE TO CLAIMS MADE BY THE SAMOA OBSERVER**  
**EDITORIAL JUNE 10TH, 2023 – “GOVERNMENTS RESPONSE TO**  
**NATURAL DISASTERS NEEDS TO IMPROVE”**

This letter is to address claims made in an editorial by the Samoa Observer published June 10 2023, alleging that the Government did not promptly respond to the flash floods that occurred last Thursday. I would like to clarify some inaccuracies presented in the article and emphasize the need for responsible journalism when disseminating information to the public.

Contrary to what has been reported, our government agencies, specifically those within the Transport and Infrastructure sector, acted swiftly and responsibly in response to this natural disaster.

Teams from the Land Transport Authority (LTA) were dispatched immediately around the big island assessing the situation of road safety and accessibility during heavy downpours, and alerting the public through its Facebook pages about areas they ought to avoid and those safe to access.

As soon as the water started to recede, multiple teams from the Electric Power Corporation (EPC) and the Samoa Water Authority (SWA) and LTA visited affected areas to assess the damage, assemble needed resources and commence repairs to ensure families were connected to clean water and electricity as soon as possible.

At the same time, the LTA staff and contractors had started to work on building a temporary road access for areas completely disconnected and repair dismantled roads.

A quick search of these Corporations' Facebook pages would have shown the Samoa Observer that our teams worked tirelessly until 3am Thursday night, risking their safety, to reconnect these essential services for our people.

The very next day, Friday June 9th 2023, a majority of the affected areas had been reconnected to water and electricity and temporary access roads had been completed to ensure accessibility of the traveling public. The LTA CEO and I traveled to Savaii on Friday, visiting the affected areas to witness the progress of our response efforts and start planning for recovery work.

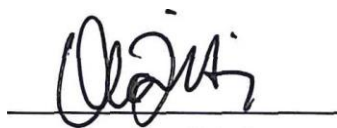
Surely enough, the people responsible for writing this Editorial must have seen the timely updates from the Government Agencies during and after the flash floods hit.

We strongly believe that these efforts demonstrate immediate response and recovery from our Transport and Infrastructure teams, despite assertions claiming otherwise.

It is crucial that media outlets such as yours hold themselves accountable for upholding journalistic integrity by presenting accurate information, especially in such trying times for our people. The circulation of misinformation can have adverse effects on public perception and trust in both government institutions and news organizations.

In closing, I would like to acknowledge and commend the Chief Executive Officers of the Transport and Infrastructure Sector, respective Managements and staff for their timely and effective actions last week. Thank you for your service to Samoa.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Olo Fiti Afoa Vaai', is written over a horizontal line.

Olo Fiti Afoa Vaai

**Minister of Works, Transport and Infrastructure.**