



**National
Airports
Corporation**
PAPUA NEW GUINEA

MEDIA RELEASE

Monday 15th January, 2024

OFFICE OF THE MANAGING DIRECTOR

Tokua Runway Pavement repairs to commence in February

The National Airports Corporation (NAC) would like to inform the traveling public and all stakeholders that we will begin our planned pavement repairs on the Tokua Airport runway in the East New Britain Province, in February 2024.

This essential repair and maintenance work will be carried out on a section of the runway (600m x 12m) which has deteriorated over time, due to the age of the runway and the impact of heavier aircraft operations.

As a result of this repair work, the runway length available for operation will be significantly reduced, allowing for only Dash 8 operations during the maintenance period.

The work is planned to be carried out within 12 weeks, beginning in February 2024, dependent on weather conditions.

Hebou Construction have been selected as the successful bidder for this important repair and maintenance work, following a stringent bidding process.

“Hebou have already commenced mobilisation to the site at Tokua Airport in preparation for the work to commence in February.” Explained Dominic Kaumu, Acting Managing Director and CEO of the National Airports Corporation. “Since this maintenance work will involve pavement repairs and surfacing the runway with asphalt concrete, Hebou’s mobilisation includes setting up the asphalt plant and shipping materials from Port Moresby and Lae.” Mr Kaumu added.

In May 2023, NAC issued a Notice to Airmen (NOTAM) restricting the operations of heavier aircraft such as the Fokker 100 (F100). The NOTAM which is still in effect, was issued after defects began appearing on the identified section of the runway following scheduled F100 operations to the airport.

“As a background, Tokua Airport was built in 1998 in response to the volcanic eruption which destroyed the old Rabaul Airport and it was designed for the Fokker 28 then.” Mr Kaumu said.

“The introduction of heavier aircraft such as the F100 in 2004 had placed additional strain on the runway pavement over time, accelerating its deterioration and raising safety concerns,” Mr Kaumu added. “The useful design life for the runway pavement which is 20 years, had lapsed in 2018 and therefore the runway pavement is due for major pavement upgrade.” He said.

Whilst we acknowledge that the repair work will cause inconvenience to aircraft assignments and passenger movements in and out of Tokua, we would like to

emphasize the importance of maintaining the airport's runway to ensure safety and security of the travelling public and airline operators are not compromised.

NAC apologizes for any inconvenience that will be caused during this maintenance period and we appreciate your understanding and cooperation as we work together with all key stakeholders to undertake and complete this important work at Tokua airport. //End

Approved for release,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'DKaumu', is written over the text 'Approved for release,'.

Dominic Kaumu ML, OBE
Acting Managing Director/CEO
National Airports Corporation