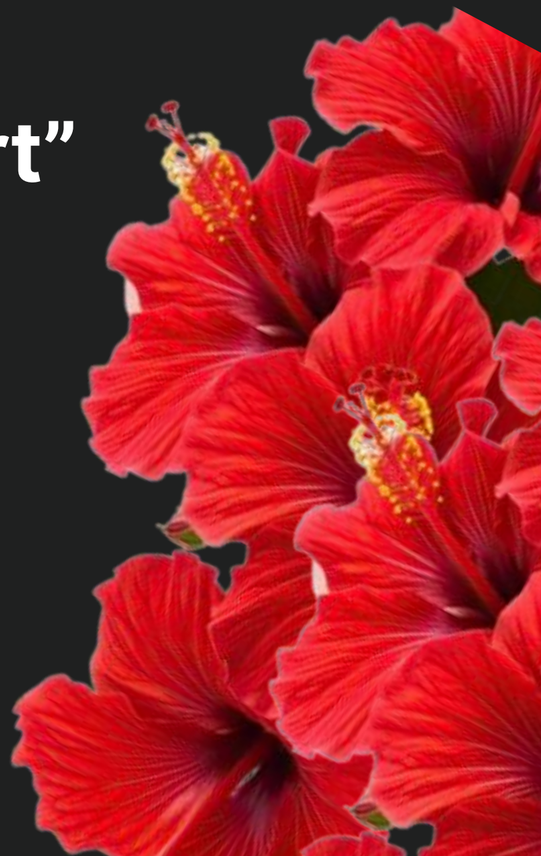
My Journey

“Women in Transport”



Silaulii Patu Tilialo

About Me

Age : 30 years
Married
4 Siblings : 3 brothers, 1 sister

RESPONSIBILITIES

- Sole carer for my parents
- Member of Worship Centre Christian Church
- Worship Team
- Youth Leadership
- Youth Leadership & Cell Group Media team

HOBBIES

- Cooking/ Baking
- Crafting - Clay Earings
- Elei Printing
- Fishing

Brief Reflection:

What infrstructure impacts your daily life most?

For many of us the answer is roads...

My journey into the transport sector started with that same realization—that roads are more than just physical structures. They are lifelines.

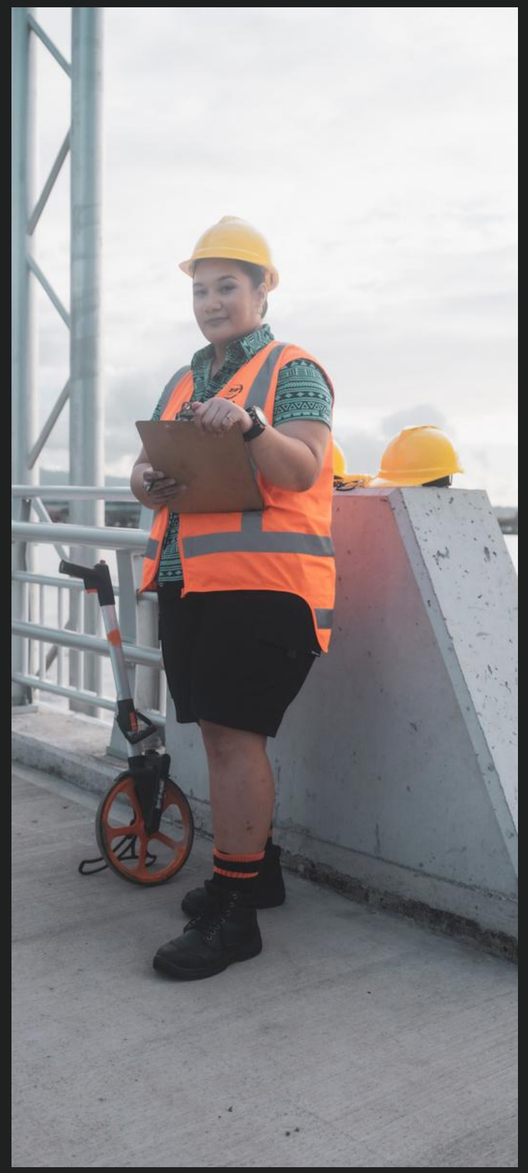
Growing up in Samoa, I saw how access to a well-maintained road could determine whether families could reach hospitals, whether children could get to school safely, or whether businesses could operate efficiently.

That understanding helped shaped my decision to pursue civil engineering.

QUALIFICATION

I was fortunate to receive a New Zealand Aid scholarship, in 2014, 1 year & half in the University of Canterbury, due to health issues defferred 6 months and resumed my New Zealand Diploma in Engineering in Civil Engineering (NZDE- Civil) at Unitec Institute of Technology in Auckland. (2016 -2019)

Studying overseas was a life-changing experience. It exposed me to new technologies, new perspectives, and a broader understanding of how transport systems are designed and managed. But more importantly, it reinforced my desire to return home and contribute to the development of my country.



Professional Journey & Responsibilities

After graduating, I joined the Land Transport Authority in Samoa in 2019, starting as an Engineering Officer.

Like many young professionals, I began by learning the fundamentals—supporting projects, conducting site visits, and understanding how theory translates into real-world application.

Over time, I progressed into more senior roles, and today I serve as a Contract Civil Engineer in Infrastructure and Climate Resilience and at times take on the role of overseeing our Procurement & Programming Division, a team comprising of 15 resilient team members,

Road Operations Division: 2019-2023

Professional Journey & Responsibilities

Programming & Procurement Division 2023 - Current

In my current role, I oversee our Bridge & Coastal, Road safety, Road reserve and Drainage team. Our team also oversees traffic light maintenance. I have been involved in the full lifecycle of projects—from planning and cost estimation, to procurement, contract management, and construction supervision.

I also contribute to high-level reporting for decision-making at organisational and government levels, which adds another layer of responsibility to ensure accuracy, transparency, and accountability.

Key Projects and Practical Impact

One of the most rewarding aspects of my role is seeing projects come to life.

Upon joining I have been involved in the reconstruction of a few key roads in Samoa, including Faleula–Malie Road, Tuanai Road, Falelauniu Loop Road, and the Fagalei Pass- through Faleaseela. Also RRM, DRM , LMRM

Each project presents unique challenges—whether it's environmental conditions, technical complexities, or stakeholder coordination.

My responsibilities have included preparing tender documents, evaluating contractor submissions, supervising construction works, and ensuring quality through inspections and material testing.

But beyond the technical aspects, what stands out most is the impact.

When a road is completed, it's not just a project milestone—it's improved safety for drivers, better access for communities, and increased opportunities for economic activity

Climate Resilience in Transport

Working in the Pacific, climate resilience is not optional—it is essential.

Our infrastructure must be designed to withstand heavy rainfall, flooding, and other climate-related challenges.

In our work, particularly in drainage and infrastructure planning, we focus on ensuring that roads are not only functional but also durable and sustainable in the long term.

This means thinking beyond immediate needs and designing systems that will continue to serve communities for years to come.

Women in Transport - A Personal Perspective

Now I'd like to touch upon a topic that is central to this webinar—women in transport.

Engineering and construction are traditionally male-dominated fields. Early in my career, I often found myself at times as the only woman on site or in technical discussions.

That experience can be challenging—but it can also be empowering.
It pushes you to build confidence, to speak up, and to demonstrate your capability through your work.

Over time, I have come to see my presence not just as participation, but as representation.

Of empowered 'women in transport'

Promoting Inclusivity and adding value

Inclusivity is something I actively practice in my work.

Within my teams, I aim to create an environment where everyone feels respected and encouraged to contribute. I believe that diverse perspectives lead to stronger, more innovative solutions.

I also make it a point to support and encourage young women who are interested in engineering and transport.

Sometimes, it’s through mentorship. Other times, it’s simply through visibility—showing that there are women in these roles, and that it is possible.

As a woman in engineering, I believe I bring value through a balanced approach—combining technical expertise with collaboration, communication, and a strong focus on community impact.

Promoting Inclusivity and adding value

Mothers Day - SC. 2025

Celebrating Youth-SC. 2025

Fathers Day - SC. 2025

Sector Sports Day - Organising Committe 2025

Contribution to organisation & Country

Emergency Response Team

Transport Liason Officers with Lenora

LTA - Chogm Transport team

Climate Change Action- Green industry Development training China 2025

Contribution to organisation & Country

Through my role at the Land Transport Authority, I contribute to more than just infrastructure projects.

I contribute to building a transport system that supports national development—improving accessibility, enhancing safety, and strengthening resilience.

Transport connects people to opportunities, and being part of that process is both a responsibility and a privilege.

Challenges

Balancing a demanding career in engineering while carrying the weight of personal responsibilities requires resilience, discipline, and unwavering determination. As a woman in a traditionally male-dominated field, navigating complex technical challenges and high expectations, all while remaining committed to ensuring I am delivering what is required of me.

Beyond my professional role, I shoulder the profound responsibility of being the sole carer for my parents, managing their wellbeing with compassion and strength. Despite the emotional and physical demands, my ‘faith’ and my ‘why’s are what have kept me grounded.

My journey is a testament of quiet strength, faith, sacrifice, and the powerful impact of women who lead both at work and at home.

Fa’afetai tele lava

As I close, I’d like to leave you with this thought:

The future of transport depends not only on innovation and technology, but also on people —on diverse voices, inclusive leadership, and a shared commitment to progress.

To the women listening today, especially those considering a career in this field—there is space for you here.

And to all of us, let us continue to build a transport sector that reflects the communities we serve.