



Publication: HoedspruitHerald - Main
Title: COMMUNITIES AT RISK AS BRIDGE COLLAPSES
Publish date: 20 Oct 2023
Page: 1

Reach: 12000
AVE: R 16378.10
Author: Anwen Mojela

COMMUNITIES AT RISK AS BRIDGE COLLAPSES



The collapsed Mongwana bridge. >Photo: Supplied

Anwen Mojela

The DA has called upon the MEC of Public Works, Roads and Infrastructure to urgently address the collapse of the Mongwana bridge on Wednesday, October 11.

This comes after an oversight visit by DA councillor in the Maruleng Municipality, Portia Moropane, revealed that the flimsy Mongwana bridge on the dilapidated D3901 road collapsed when a truck tried to cross it, injuring the driver.

"This bridge connects Bismark village to nearby villages such as Bellville and Tickyline as well as the Mahlakung Mall and Thusong

Centre.

"The bridge project was supposed to be completed in 2005 but was abandoned due to alleged poor workmanship and structural problems," said Risham Maharaj, MPL and the DA's spokesperson for Public Works, Roads and Infrastructure.

He said the area was declared a disaster area in 2015 due to heavy rains and flooding.

"This should have resulted in expediting the completion of the bridge project as well as addressing problems in the project, but this did not happen.

"The D3901 road also poses a threat to road users as it is riddled

with large potholes and there are no warning signs on the condition of the road."

He said that residents and vehicles are now forced to use a makeshift road to cross the river.

"This river becomes flooded during heavy rains and will put the lives of the residents at risk.

Workers and learners also run the risk of missing work and school.

"The collapse of the Mongwana bridge will negatively impact economic activities in the area and the accessibility of services for members of the communities.

"A well-built bridge is a priority for the area and the MEC must act immediately," Maharaj told the

Herald.

Witness Tiva, a spokesperson for the department, said that the department received a letter about the collapse of the Mongwana bridge and the poor state of the D3901 road in Maruleng Municipality.

"The department is cognisant of the fact that the bridge, including the road, is a major provincial economic artery that connects the movement of goods and people between Bismark to nearby villages and the Mahlakung Mall and Thusong Centre.

"The Roads Agency Limpopo (RAL) will deploy a team of engineers to do a thorough

assessment of the condition of the bridge and road," he said.

He said rehabilitating the road infrastructure, and ensuring quality service delivery, always remains a top priority for the department.

"The construction of bridges, roads, and other structures in the province must facilitate the smooth, even flow of traffic, among others, for the benefit of communities.

"We would also be investing heavily in construction and upgrading of high-lying bridges in rural areas that affect economic activity and the accessibility of services for members of the communities," he concluded.