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SOLOMONS

ISSUE 78



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Mr Brett Gebers

Welkam Frens

We are over halfway through the year and already thinking about the year-end celebrations. Talking of celebrations, Solomon Islands have just celebrated 40 years of independence. Having been in business for over 65 years, we are proud to have played a role in the development of Solomon Islands.

We can only guess what the next 40 years will look like, however I predict that Solomon Islands will become one of the more sought-after holiday destinations. There are many fun filled and challenging activities to be enjoyed in pristine surroundings. We also have a unique opportunity to build resorts which are eco friendly in all respects thus preserving the current unspoiled environment. To top it all we have friendly people who are very welcoming in a unique Solomons way.

Tourism Solomons (TS) has just launched their new brand. The brand is based on "Solomon Is." Solomon Is Unique. Solomon Is Special. Solomon Is Romance. Solomon Is Adventure. We work very closely with the TS to promote Solomon Islands.

As mentioned before one of our biggest challenges in Solomon Islands is to develop enough resort rooms of an acceptable standard and sell them at an appropriate price. The price comfort level is a very important part of the holiday experience. To this end Solomon Airlines established the Solomon Islands Tourist Infrastructure Development Fund (SITIDF). This non-profit organisation was initially set up and funded by Solomon Airlines to assist resort owners primarily in the Munda area to upgrade their rooms.

I am absolutely delighted to announce that the New Zealand Government has donated NZ\$1 million to the fund. Our thanks go to all in the New Zealand Government who have worked tirelessly over many months to make this happen. The injection of funds now means that many more resorts particularly in the Western Province will be able to apply for interest free loans to renovate and develop their resorts.

Simultaneously the Australian Government's initiative to define room standards and grade existing resorts in the Western Province has set the benchmark for renovations and future development. Everyone in the area will now know what they need to aim for.

It was our intention to start flying from Brisbane to Munda in

April this year, unfortunately the Munda Airport development is running about 6 months behind schedule. I am pleased to say there has been some significant activity recently with the arrival of the Fire Engines which were kindly donated by the New Zealand Government. The next phase is to set up a temporary terminal building with the appropriate security screening equipment. This should all be in place by mid-September.

The past year and most probably for at least a year or two yet, many of the world's airlines have been plagued by a spate of problems with the newest and most fuel-efficient engines ever built. The engine problems have led to numerous aircraft being grounded and engines being changed prematurely. I have absolutely no doubt that these problems will soon be overcome, and we can look forward to significant savings in fuel and of course reduced emissions.

Due to the engine issues, the older aircraft with their engines have remained in service for much longer than anticipated. This situation has led to a worldwide shortage of engine parts and spare engines. We were caught up in this undesirable state which resulted in an engine which normally would have taken a little over a month to restore, taking 5 months and costing nearly 3 times the expected price.

We would like to thank all our regular customers over the past 5 months for your patience as we worked tirelessly to keep our services intact. We fortunately never had to cancel a service but like all airlines have rescheduled several flights due to the non-availability of aircraft. To all our passengers, our staff, Nauru Airlines and Alliance Airlines we thank you very much for working with us over this trying period.

We look forward to things running a lot smoother over the coming months.

Tengiu tumas.

Mr Brett Gebers
Chief Executive Officer

WHAT'S ON WHEN & WHERE 2018

August 13 - October 15
Langa Langa Lagoon, Auki

September 20-28
Lagoon Festival, Munda

October 2-6
Dive Festival, Honiara

October 31 - November 1
Stunned Mullet, Zipolo Habu Resort, Munda

December 1-31
Surfing Tournament, Gizo

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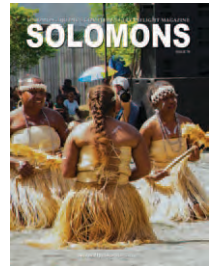
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Cover photo: Gloria Hong

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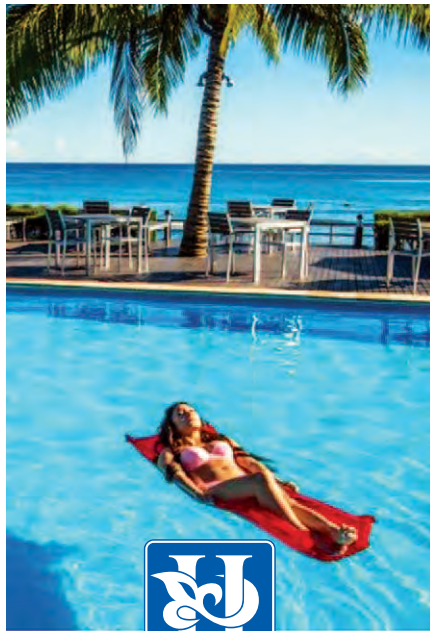


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Feast *for the eye and soul*

It was a feast for the eyes, ears and soul for 10 straight days in July when Honiara hosted a festival of arts and culture of Melanesia. Each day and in different venues throughout the capital, women and men display their cultural dress, dances, songs and arts in crafts and painting.

Men walk around bare breasted with seashell headband, shell money necklace and white markings all over their face and body, while women wear strips of dried tree barks to cover their breasts and privates, decked with assorted shell money necklaces and intricately designed head wear, arm bands and bracelets.

Dancing, songs and arts of all sorts and forms in the various colours of earth, sky and ocean were in display in the festival that brings together the Melanesian regions

of Papua New Guinea, New Caledonia, Vanuatu, Fiji and host, Solomon Islands.

Also invited to participate in the 10-day festivity were Melanesians from Indonesia's controlled West Papua, Timor Leste and the Torres Strait Islanders in northern Australia.

This was the 6th Melanesian Arts & Cultural Festival, held every four years. Honiara hosted the inaugural festival in 1998.

We bring you a glimpse of the colours and wonders of the Melanesian Festival through the lens of Today Solomons' director and photographer Gloria Hong, as well as of Nings Oligao of the Ministry of Tourism, Solomon Islands.



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Out & About

Deli King is here

Honiara has another choice for its meat and deli needs. King of Meatz Deli & Butcher has opened at the Pacific Ace Plaza on the Kukum Highway. New, air-conditioned and tidy, the new deli also houses a café to quench that thirst or provide your much needed caffeine shots. Call on them next time you are in the Kukum area.



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Meeting Her Majesty



Millicent Bartly meets Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II.

More than 2 months after meeting Queen Elizabeth at Buckingham Palace, Millicent Bartly says she's still in a limbo, "between a dream and reality."

Recognised for her work on using



With former Prime Minister Sir John Major

traditional oral history or Kastom Stories to address illiteracy, the young woman was in London in June this year to receive the Queen's Young Leader Award. She was among several youths from other Commonwealth countries that were recipients of the royal award.

"Deciding upon what to wear came easy to me as everywhere I go, I must always carry elements of my national and traditional pride with me. I chose a simple dress that complements the traditional ornaments from Makira Province."

Millicent also met British Prime Minister Theresa May, former PM Sir John Major and Right Honourable Patricia Scotland, Secretary General of the Commonwealth.

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Solomons is the complimentary inflight magazine of Solomon Airlines, the national airline of Solomon Islands. It is published four times a year by Front Page Limited.

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Melanesian connects at Tavanipupu

Words: Dorothy Wickham

Photos: Zayhid Namu

Tavanipupu Island Resort, once considered the gem in Solomon Islands' tourism industry is rising again to reclaim its former status.

This resurrection comes with a helping hand from a neighbour in Melanesia, promoting the exchange of Melanesian skills, knowledge and experience to enrich the Solomon



Ms Mereoni Dike, the resort's new general manager.

Islands tourism, sports and fashion.

Mereoni Dike is but one of the many Fijians who have chosen to come and share her vast experience in the hospitality

industry. She comes with a wealth of experience and knowledge that she now is passing on to local staff

at the exclusive Tavanipupu Resort, in the Marau Sound region of Guadalcanal.

For Mereoni, she is of the view that Solomon Islands have a lot to offer in tourism but that potential is still to be fully harnessed. Sitting in the restaurant at Tavanipupu Resort, she is all smiles during the interview in between sending out instructions to her kitchen staff.

"I love this place and the local staff are very good and getting better with training and a lot of guidance. Bookings are slowly picking



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up, but there is a lot of work to be done due to years of neglect.”

Eunice Otorā, a long time female staff at the Resort stops by our table. “Mereoni has taught us a lot of things we did not know and things are improving now,” says Eunice.

Local food and access to fresh sea food on the island is an aspect of the resort that Mereoni is mastering. She is happy with this because it cuts both way; fresh local food for her guests and income for the local fishermen and women.

One of her famous desserts is the Tavanipupu-pandana coconut chiffon pie – served with Tavanipupu coconut ice cream. The blended pandanas leaves cooked with coconut milk and baked as a pie is out of this world! It is so deliciously

sweet that her guests keep asking for more. And it is gluten free.

The push to have visitors come to the island has taken a turn for the better with a Carnival Cruise ship expected to call in around November. The ship is expected to bring 300 passengers.

Says Mereoni: “We have formed a committee that will cater for their visit – the beach and the inland safari will be the highlights basically because landowners will have to step forward to showcase their home.”

Another highlight was the arrival at Tavanipupu Island Resort in August of the private super yacht, Vava II. This Swedish-registered and owned super yacht arrived with its own helicopter which the owners put to very good use visiting sites

and places on Marau Sound.

Mereoni pays tribute to her host country saying it has a lot to offer to world tourism. “I have found out that Solomon Islands have the best art and craft in the Pacific and the people are great. The problem now is flights and access to goods to support top class service on the island.”

With eight beach bungalows in a coconut estate setting and a website that is under reconstruction, Tavanipupu Island Resort is pushing the frontier. “We have the best service in the country and I am proud of this and I also have big support from the people and landowners of Marau Sound. We have the biggest conservation area in East Guadalcanal. We have fresh food from our farm and from the sea for our guests. Our wine selection is world class.”

The experience in all factors of tourism; from the kitchen, marketing and management of an island resort that Mereoni brings to the table is paying off with visitor numbers rising on a monthly basis.

“It’s a slow rise but we are getting there.”



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Cool for a tattoo

Denounced as pagan practices by Christian missionaries, Solomons' youngs are now leading a resurgence of the ancient art of body tattoo

Words: Dorothy Wickham
Photos: Zahyid Namu

The art of tattooing in Melanesia is distinctly different from other islands of Oceania, as the former is consid-

ered much more brutal and raw.

Melanesia's warrior culture dictates the way tattoos have evolved with the body markings used as identifications. Head hunting was the way land was won and women taken as trophies. Body markings were one way of identifying women

prisoners or to establish their tribes or clans.

There is a debate as to which part of Solomon Islands the face engraving culture originated from. Some say it was original Isabel Province traditions while the people of Lau, in Malaita Province



claim it as their own. There, the tattoo of the sun on the face is etched by bamboo when the girls are very young.

“I don’t remember when it was done, maybe because it was so painful that my mind just mentally blocked it,” says Rosa Lola. “But it is a dying art now as our women are educated and they do not want their daughter’s face to be tattooed,” she adds.

The Lau woman also believes that the strong influence of Christianity in Solomon Island communities could also be a reason, as the tattooing of women’s faces were denounced as pagan practices by missionaries.

In Isabel Province meanwhile, tattoo on women and girls represent the tribe or clan they belong to. It’s called ‘Tapi Tapi’ and no one wears them so proudly than cultural activist and youth worker, Millicent Barty (left).

“This tattoo is for girls to mark their progress in life from being single to marriage,” explains Millicent. “I cheated with mine – it’s supposed to start at a certain point and finish when you are married.”

Tapi Tapi actually starts at the abdomen, thigh, back and the arm. It is tattooed at different stages, which when completed on the arms - marks your strength of character because of the pain you have endured.

As is true with the women of Lau, Millie says the art of Tapi Tapi is also dying in Isabel. She believes though that it is upon young women like her to get the practice revived.

Fanai Tangai` basa Taika cannot agree more. He’s a popular tattooist in Honiara and believes Melanesian tattoo is undergoing a revival especially among the younger generation.

“There is more interest in the Melanesian patterns in tattoo but I use Polynesian structures to tattoo. I get better feedbacks and more customers wanting that blend.”

“For our parents’ generation, the art of tattoo was frowned upon considered a taboo because of their religious beliefs but I guess the younger generation is now swinging back into tattooing big time.”

It is now becoming cool again to have a tattoo, and many young Solomon Islanders are joining the queue to get one.



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A stylized form of Lata's face adorns both ends of a Tepuke. Like a good navigator, Lata looks both ahead and behind to determine his course

In the Garden of Lata

By H. M. Wyeth and the Vaka Taumako Project

“What is the first thing you should do,” we asked the old Chief, “when you want to build a voyaging canoe?” Expecting him to say something like, “Find a good tree,” or “Sharpen

your tools,” we were taken aback when he replied, “Plant a garden.”

The old chief was Koloso Kaveia, a master navigator from the island of Taumako, one of the so-called Polynesian outliers in eastern Temotu Province. So tiny and remote are these islands that they do not even appear on many maps

of the Solomons. Contact with the outside world comes mostly by way of marine radio or occasional visits from local cargo ships.

Taumako has no roads, airport, or harbour, and until recently, no trade stores. As their ancestors did for centuries, nga Taumako (Taumako people) still get most of

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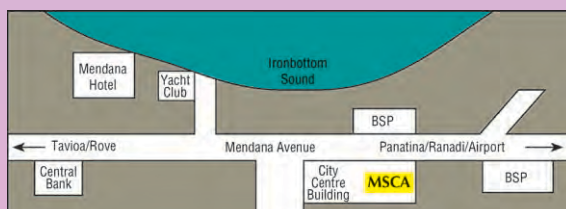
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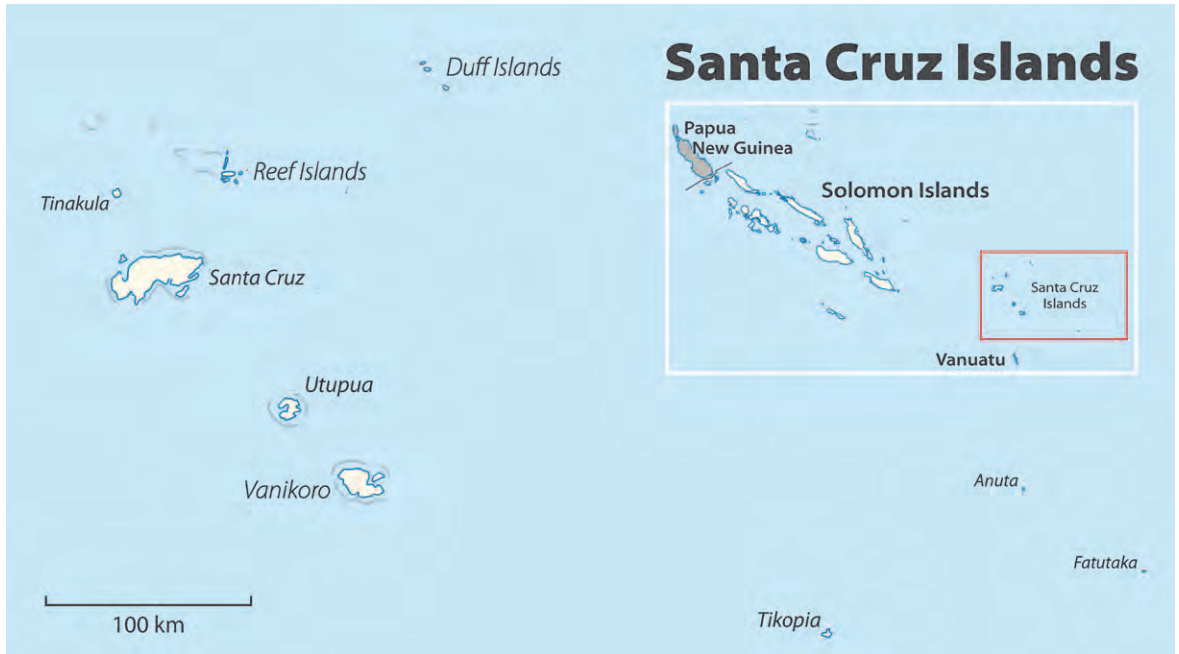
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Map of Temotu Province showing Taumako in the middle of the Duff Islands.



It takes a village to build a voyaging canoe. Many of the complex lashings that hold the vessel together require more than one pair of hands to create.

their food directly from the land or sea.

This explains Chief Kaveia's answer to our question. Building a voyaging canoe takes many hands and much time. When people work on the canoe, they cannot fish or farm, but still they must eat. It is therefore the duty of the person in charge of construction to feed them. Nowadays this can be accomplished by importing rice and other exotic foods before construction starts. But traditionally the organisers would grow, fish, and hunt provisions for their labourers.

Chief Kaveia traced his lineage back to Lata, a culture hero known all over Polynesia. To nga Taumako, Lata was the first person to build and sail the type of voyaging canoe called Tepuke. In other Polynesian lands, Lata, also called Laka, La'a, Rata, 'Ata is a forest goddess, a dancer, a tree cutter, a sailor, and a wind controller. The common denominator of these various characters is the idea of balance, physical poise needed to dance or to stand on the deck of a canoe, equilibrium between male and female elements in a complete personality or a healthy society, and balance

between humans and nature in an orderly universe.

For the Taumako people, the Tepuke embodies their ancestor



Paramount Chief and Master Navigator, the late Koloso Kaveia


body, and stylised carvings of his face adorn both its ends. Thus Lata, gazing both behind and ahead like a proper navigator, carries his descendants forward.

The canoe's engine, its sail, is a depiction of Lata grasping the wind with his upraised arms. Woven by women, assembled by men, it incorporates and symbolises the male/female balance required for a stable and prosperous community. If either the women or the men do not do their respective parts properly, the canoe, and the community, will go nowhere.

As Lata's direct descendant, Chief Kaveia had a responsibility to carry his community forward. Seeing that many Taumako people who tried to nourish themselves in the modern world fell prey to its negative features, such as alcoholism and drugs, he decided to feed his people by supporting the best

of their culture's traditional values and practices.

Kaveia described this plan as planting a garden. By this he meant the physical garden that grows on his ancestral lands, where Lata was born, and produces not just taro, sweet potato and other food crops, but also trees for making canoe components, and pandanus for weaving sails. He also meant the traditions his ancestors have cultivated.

Chief Kaveia passed away in 2009, but his garden, the garden of Lata, continues to nourish his people. His able student, Chief Jonas Hollani, now tends the garden. As Kaveia hoped, young Taumako are working hard to revive the ancient skills of canoe building and sailing. They do this not just to satisfy nostalgic cravings, but to move forward into a sustainable future, and bring balance to the world. 



The Taumako people are working hard to revive the ancient skills of canoe building and sailing.



Check out The Vaka Taumako Project on Facebook for more information.

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Gateway to Munda



By Samisoni Pareti

Bdarely 10 minutes after disembarking from Solomon Airlines' Dash 8 plane at Munda Airport, I was already in a small tender boat skimming gently on the calm waters of Roviana Lagoon.

I had opted to stroll down from the airport to Agnes Gateway Hotel down by the waterfront, and thank God I did because I arrived just in time to catch Hotel manager Vili Koyamaibole about to head off on his usual evening routine, trawling in the lagoon.

I was so glad that I went along.

Seems hard to believe that just little more than an hour before this, I was fighting the long and congested queues of Honiara traffic to get to the airport. This is life, man.

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Icing on the cake was the yellow fin tuna Vili hooked in one of his lines. Its the lucky lure again, he said happily. I reached for a chilled Canoe can in the eskee. The stars seem to be aligning just right.

Back on shore, chairs were put

out on the hotel jetty with a small table hosting a rounded wooden bowl. Aha, kava time. Originally from Fiji, Vili has imported his country's traditional drink to Munda and guests are always welcome to join him for a bowl or a few.

There have been a lot of changes at Agnes since my last visit. The yacht club is a welcome addition and its being put to very good use with the number of marketing events Munda hosts annually. The club's veranda, up on the second

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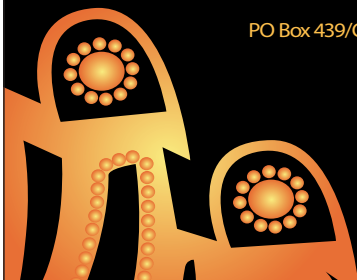
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storey acts as the stage for the Dive and Lagoon Festivals.

A new timber boardwalk has been added to the waterfront of Agnes for extra rooms to diners and bar patrons of the hotel. Bungalows are well maintained and the rooms tastefully decorated.

Since headhunted by the owners of the hotel, Vili has done a lot of good both for the hotel and for Munda as a destination. The hotel got a name change with Gateway added on, reflective of the key role it serves in receiving guests off the plane to stay either at Agnes or to transfer onto the many other resorts and eco lodges located around Roviana, Vonavona and Marovo lagoons.

Agnes Gateway is also home to Dive Munda, the key to the underwater wonders of Munda, with many of its World War II wrecks to explore with professional divers and guides. When US camera giant Nikon wanted to test its new ME20F-SH low light camera, it flew in a team of 45 people to Dive Munda to get the tests successfully done.

Vili has also been instrumental in sourcing training for hotel workers not only in Agnes Gateway but for other accommodations in Munda. He and Belinda Botha of Dive Munda worked hard to convince national carrier Solomon Airlines to offer a weekly direct flight to Munda from Brisbane, a breakthrough that will tremendously boost tourism in the province. 

Details

Agnes Gateway Hotel

Address: P.O. Box 161, Western Province, Munda,
New Georgia, Solomon Islands

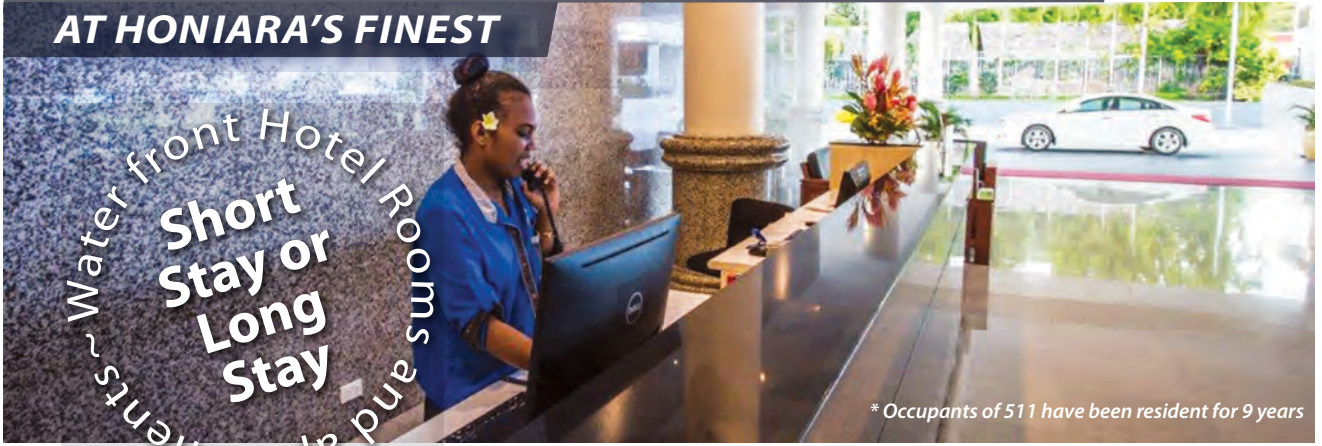
Website: www.agneshotelsolomon.com

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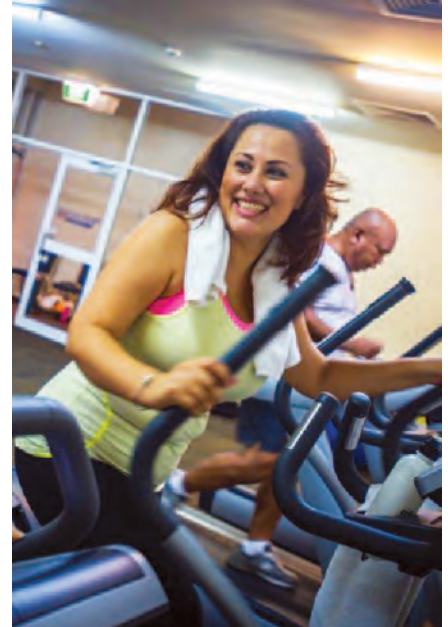
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Munda's underwater world

Be ready to be blown away



By *Camilla Wagstaff*

J'm descending into the crystal blue waters of Sosu Hite island in Munda for my very first scuba dive, and I'm hurtling towards a full-blown panic attack.

Belinda Botha, Owner and Operations Director at Dive Munda, jumps into action with ease and professionalism that speaks to her 20 years as a diver, divemaster and instructor/trainer.

Using just her eyes, she manages to bring me back to myself,

and I take my first proper look at the spectacular underwater universe that surrounds us.

I've always been a little apprehensive about scuba diving. But when the opportunity arose to give it a try in the picturesque Western Province of the Solomon Islands, I simply couldn't pass it up. Because when it comes to new divers, Munda has it all.

Forget practicing your diving skills in a sad little pool. The warmth, calmness and clarity of Munda's azure oceans is just the right environment. My partner and

I learn our out-of-air drills, the how-tos of mask clearing and the laws of buoyancy in the shallows of stunning Lola Island, curious baby reef sharks circling us the whole time.

Munda's myriad reefs are exquisite, their lush hard and soft corals, gigantic sea fans and anemones in pristine condition. On my second dive at just 10 metres down, we spy thousands of vibrant reef fish, flat worms, rays and a school of tuna. It's an entirely new universe to watch, weightless, beneath the waves.

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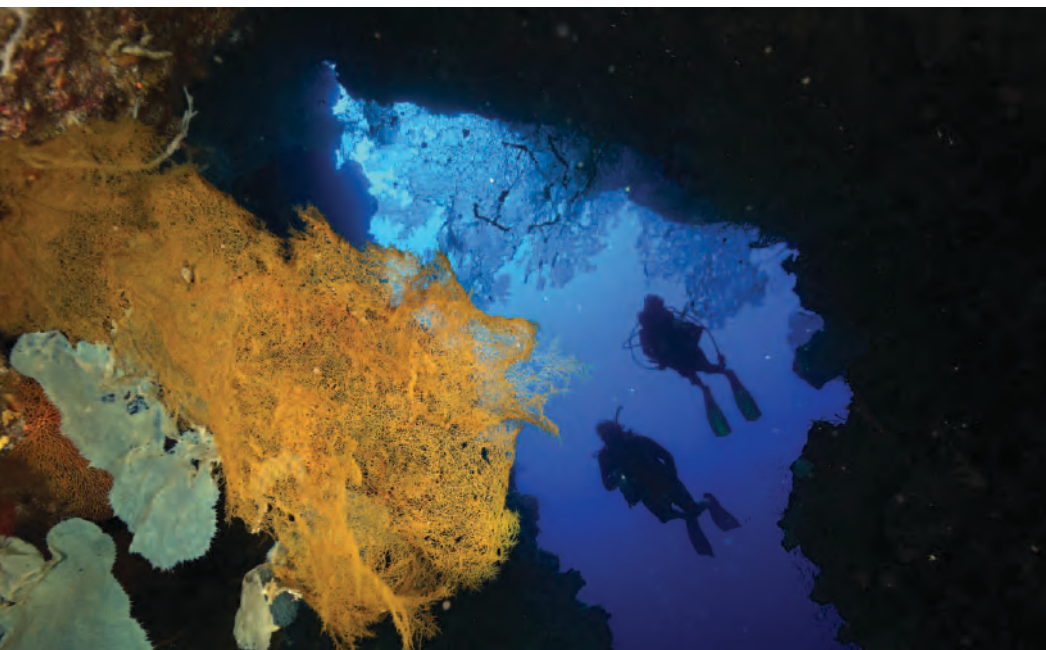


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Our Destination



myself who will be blown away by Munda's underwater world. The reef walls drop off to a spectacular 600 metres, with reef sharks, hammerheads, eagle rays, barracuda and other pelagics patrolling the depths. The seabed floors are smattered with fighter planes, bombers, Japanese freighters and tanks from WWII.

Visibility varies from 15 to 40+ metres, with the wet season kicking off late December and tapering off in March. But Dive Munda dives year-round at more than 40 dive sites; the team discovering another prime spot almost weekly.

The best news? Solomon Airlines is running direct flights from Brisbane to Munda later in 2018. Which means you can be smack bang in the middle of paradise in less than half a day and for around half the cost!

Belinda has been at the helm of Dive Munda since 2016. She began diving in the late 1990s, and like me, had a bit of a rocky start: "At first I hated it!" she recalls. "But then, as I was surfacing that first time, a leatherback turtle looked me intensely in the eye. I decided to give it another try." The rest, she says, is history. She's since dived all over the world, from the icy waters of Canada, right throughout Africa, the Middle East, Europe, the Caribbean and, of course, the Pacific.

Qualifications aside, Belinda is simply a joy to be around. Her passion for the Solomon Islands is palpable, as is her commitment to ocean conservation, sustainable tourism and making a measurable difference in local communities.

"Dive Munda is very passionate about our ocean and environment and we are actively working towards protecting and preserving our fragile marine ecosystems," says Belinda. "Some of our islands are the last frontiers of untouched beauty and need to be protected. Every responsible traveller visiting gives strength to the theory of sustainable eco-tourism."

Dive Munda is also fiercely dedicated to educating and developing the skills of locals. Belinda employs a group of 12 local SSI professional divemasters and staff. This includes the first and second locally trained and qualified female Dive Instructor in the history of the Solomons.

“Dive Munda is committed to issues like gender equality and female empowerment,” says Belinda. “We are proud to have five female dive professionals on our team and we continue to develop youths within our villages and community.”

Dive Munda is certainly being recognised for these efforts. The company just won the 2017 Tourism Business of the Year Award presented by the Solomon Islands Chamber of Commerce and Industry’s Business Excellence Awards. Dive Munda was also recently awarded – for the second year in a row – the Diving Company of the Year Award by Luxury Travel Guide’s Global Awards recognising excellence in service, employee satisfaction, marketing and branding, local knowledge and cultural understanding.

Dive Munda also took out the 2016, 2017 and 2018 South Pacific Tourism Exchange Social Media Award focused on creating awareness for sustainable tourism and development. In addition, Belinda was awarded the Runner Up Award for 2016 Entrepreneur of the Year presented by the Solomon Islands Chamber of Commerce and Industry’s Business Excellence Awards.

Dive Munda services three surrounding hotels and resorts. We stayed at Agnes Gateway Hotel, about a 3-minute walk from Munda airport and the home of Dive Munda HQ. The Agnes’ cabins are very basic but comfortable, with a personal bathroom, separate bedroom and lounge room areas and decent aircon. We were particularly impressed by the vegetarian options available at the restaurant/bar. And as far as sunsets go, the Agnes wharf can’t be beaten.

But if you’re looking for a more castaway-on-a-beautiful-island experience, you’re best to stay at Zipolo Hapu Resort on Lola Island and Titiru Eco Lodge on Rendova Island. Accommodation at Ziplo takes the form of gorgeous traditional-style leaf-houses, some with private facilities and 24-hour power (but no aircon). Dive Munda offers complimentary transfers for divers staying here.

Titiru is nestled at the foot of the luscious Rendova hills, about a 40-minute boat ride from Munda. Peaceful and picturesque, Titiru is an eco-travellers dream. Bungalows



are sheltered around the mangroves of Saqiri Cove and fringed by dense forest. There is a small additional cost for transfers between Tituru to Munda Dive HQ.

Wherever you stay, Munda offers so much to discover for divers of all ages and all stages. If you’re looking for a new diving experience off the regular tourist trail that still feels safe, comfortable and professional, add Munda to the top of your list. We can’t wait to

visit Belinda and the crew for some more fun soon!

Camilla Wagstaff is a travel and lifestyle writer based in Sydney, Australia. Her travel writing has appeared in publications including Harper’s Bazaar, Luxury Travel Magazine, Our Planet Travel and The Carousel on destinations across the world, from Bhutan to The Galapagos to the Greek Islands.

Dive Munda - www.mundadive.com

Agnes Gateway Hotel - www.agneshotelsolomon.com

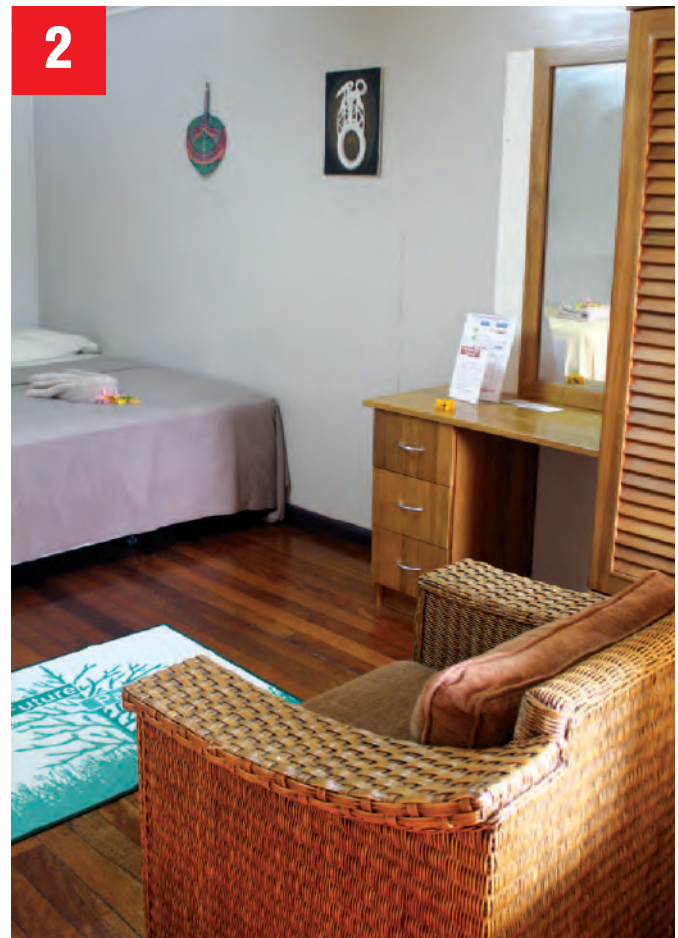
Zipolo Hapu Resort - www.zipolohabu.com.sb

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Our Destination

Accommodation guide in Munda

Munda does offer choices when it comes to places to stay where you can select from a room to a bungalow. While the number of rooms differ from one accommodation to the other, all however are kept clean and well screened and secure.



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1. Qua Roviana Accommodation

Located right at the centre of Munda town, just next to Agnes Gateway Hotel, Qua Roviana offers 5 self-contained rooms, 5 standard rooms and 4 backpacker rooms. All have air-condition/fans.

Landline: +677 62123

Email: quaroviana@gmail.com

2. IBIBU Transit Lodge

Welcome Street, Munda
Rooms are located on the second level, above the hotel bakery and butcher. It is fenced and close to the centre of Munda town.

Landline: +677 62200

Email:

ibibutl.munda@ibibu.com.sb

3. Munda Guest House

Operated by David Kera, the family that owns Agnes Gateway Hotel, this double storey accommodation offers 7 rooms, located inland in a quiet, well wooded part of Munda.

Landline: +677 62113

4. Ravihina Home Stay

Offers 5 rooms with 2 beds in each room. Guests also have access to a lagoon viewing deck.

Owner: Mrs Myrie Tema

Mobile: +677 7102951

Munda Village

5. Toremudie Guest House

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Facebook page:

Toremudie Guest House



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Bill Quinn, placing a wreath in waters near Savo Island aboard HMAS Success on his last trip in August 2017.

By Marie Quinn

Many residents of Honiara will remember in August or in August 2016 seeing a very old Australian man, Bill Quinn, who visited to commemorate the Battle of Guadalcanal. He had travelled from Sydney to pay his respects because he had been in the battle in 1942, when he was just a 19 year old sailor aboard the ship, HMAS Australia. He had watched the battle on that terrible night of 9 August 1942, as ships were sunk, leading to the death of his compatriots and allies. On Saturday, 3

February 2018, Bill passed away at the age of 94, with memories of his visits to Honiara in 1942, 2016 and 2017.

Bill was born on 6 May, 1923 in the town of Lithgow in a rural area and then moved to Sydney when he was a teenager. He was the eldest surviving son of six children in a family who were strong Catholics and worked together to help each other during a time of economic hardship in Australia in the 1930s. When war broke out, he felt it was his obligation to help his country so he joined the Australian Navy when he was 18 years old. He turned 19 aboard his ship in the Coral Sea where the allies were fighting the



Bill Quinn was 18 when he joined the Australian Navy during World War 2.

Japanese army. He worked as a Stoker, the man who kept the boat engines going and it was a vital part of the ship. It meant that he was usually deep inside the ship, allowed up onto the deck for short

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Bill Quinn (2nd from left) with fellow recipients of the Solomon Islands Scouts and Coastwatchers Medallion in August 2016.

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breaks to get some air. It was on deck that he first saw the shoreline of Guadalcanal and the island of Savo on 7 August for the landing of the US Marines and then again on the night of 9 August for the Japanese attacks. He remembered it as a terrible sight, like watching a movie, before the ship moved in to rescue the survivors.

When his ship left Guadalcanal, Bill had never set foot on it: that would have to wait another 74 years! He went on to PNG and then the Torres Strait Islands where he spent the rest of the war, returning to Australia to marry his sweetheart, Betty, and have 6 children of his own. He worked all his career in the public service because he believed in helping people with good government. When he retired, he and Betty liked to travel throughout Australia. He also volunteered with the Catholic charity, St Vincent de Paul.



Bill Quinn (right) often spoke of things he saw and did in Honiara and the wonderful Solomon Islanders.

World War II

In 2016, Betty died and Bill was very sad and lonely. At the same time, his family discovered that he had been in the Battle of Guadalcanal and so organised for him to visit and be part of the Honiara community for the ceremonies. Bill loved his time in Honiara and asked if he could return in 2017 for the 75th anniversary. He enjoyed meeting Solomon Island families whose relatives had assisted the allies in victory, he loved walking around the streets, looking in shops and the markets and the great beauty of the islands. He was humbled by the interest and respect that he was shown by everyone he met. When he returned to Australia last year, he put together all his photos and souvenirs into a book and then wrote down the story of his experiences in the war. He often spoke of things he saw and did in Honiara and the wonderful Solomon Islanders. Maybe some people reading this will remember him and his lovely smile.

Early in February this year, Bill became unwell and went into hospital. His body was just too tired to get better and he went home to be with his family. He passed away quietly, happy now to be with his beloved Betty in heaven. He was buried on Friday, 9 February 2018, wearing his favourite island shirt that he wore in Honiara. 🇧🇲

Marie Quinn is the niece of the late Bill Quinn. She worked in Honiara at the Ministry of Education, and accompanied him on his visits to Solomon Islands.



HMAS Australia (above) leaving Sydney during World War 2 bound for Solomon Islands. Bill Quinn served as a Stocker on the warship. His last visit to Solomon Islands was in August 2017 to participate in the 75th anniversary of the Battle of Guadalcanal.



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Granite

By *Samisoni Pareti*

Brisbane or Queensland for that matter is not greatly renowned for its great wine, well at least to me until

quite recently. I mean any wine lover would have heard or if lucky enough like me visited Napa Valley, outside San Francisco to have a view and of course get a taste of the great white and red that California has on offer.

Come to think of it, I have also visited Hunter Valley outside Sydney, we had a great time there actually, my late wife and I together with friends – Rosie and Greg – visiting a few wineries in the valley and taking time out for a picnic

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lunch in one of its many decent and well kept parks in that region of New South Wales.

But Granite Belt in Brisbane? I haven't heard of it to be honest until one sunny day in April this year when Salote, a cousin living in Brisbane decided to drag me along for a wine tasting tour in Granite Belt on Brisbane's southwest.

In fact the story goes that one of the reasons Terry Morris, the owner of Sirromet Wines (the name being Morris spelt backwards and including the first two letters of his first name) started his wine business was because his friends did not believe him when he said that he had tasted fine wines in Brisbane. This apparently happened in Melbourne in the early 1980s when he was there for a business meeting.

As the saying goes, the rest is now history.

Since opening its doors to public tours in 2000 to 900 prestigious national and international wine awards later, Sirromet in Brisbane's Granite Belt has made its mark. Sirromet not only offers tours to wine lovers, but their large 100-hectare property also offers accommodation and is a popular wedding venue. You not only get to catch a glimpse of its state of the art winery, but participate in wine tasting of a few of Sirromet's Pinot Gris, Sauvignon Blanc or a Cabernet Sauvignon.

At the end of the tour, you may also enjoy a meal at the few restaurants they have. If a la carte is your preference, then there's Restaurant Lurleen's, otherwise café style dining is available at the Tuscan inspired terrace or the Cellar Door.

You pick up a lot of interesting facts during the tour, and you get to see for yourselves how your favourite white or red is made. And you get to even taste it, if you are 18 years and over. About one tonne of wine fills 900 bottles. Red requires a lot more aging time than white and champagne does not need any aging at all. Some aging takes up to 2 and a half years.

Wine ages better in wooden oak barrel and each of these barrel can only be used for no more than 5 years. Retaining the best taste of the wine is paramount. No nails or glue are used in any of these barrels.

"Barrel ageing is a vital part to the red winemaking process, as well as for wooded white styles. Sirromet uses a mix of traditional oak barrels, with 80% being French



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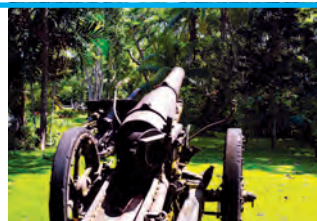
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oak barriques and 20% American oak barrels,” says www.sirromet.com.

“Our premium Chardonnay and Viognier are traditionally fermented in French oak. Oak barrels add complex flavours and soften the wines via slow ageing over 10-15 months. Each barrel is used over five years, holding 4 to 6 different wines over this time, before being retired.”

Sirromet also produces sparkling wine, one of Queensland’s largest producers of this type of wine. Their website says: “A labour of love, these wines are aged over yeast lees for 3-5 years or more after bottle fermentation, before going through disgorgement to remove the yeast in preparation for release.” 

For a tour of Sirromet Winery, you need to book on:

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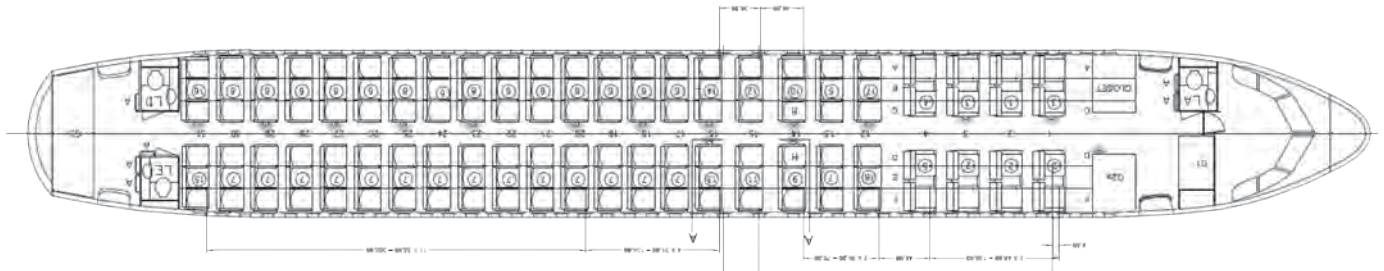
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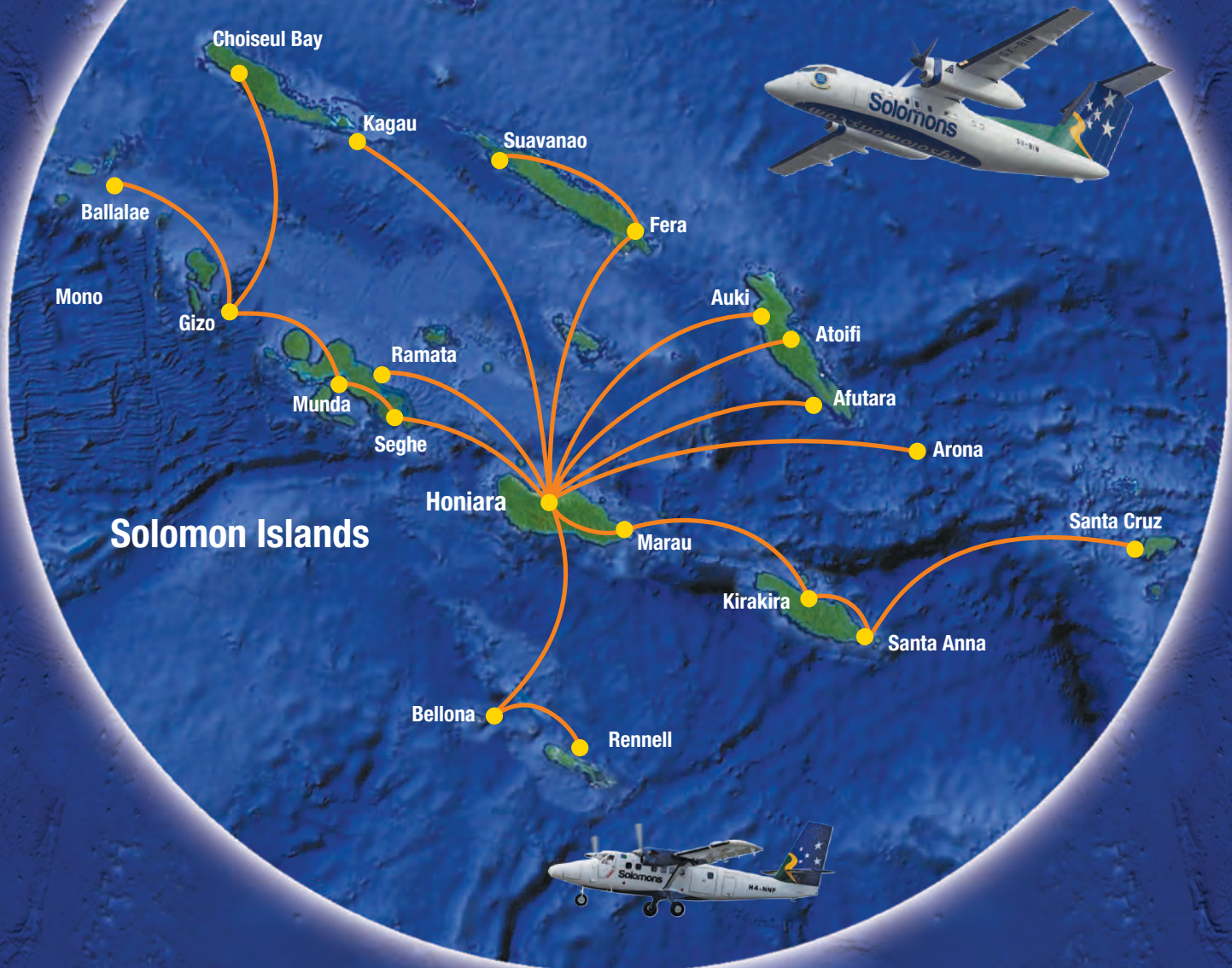
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 Fax: +44 (870) 240 2208
 Email: web@solomonairlines.co.uk

VANUATU
 Surata Tamaso Travel Limited
 La Casa D'andrea,
 Lini Highway, Port Vila
 Tel: (678) 22666
 Fax: (678) 24275
 Email: tamaso-tours@vanuatu.com.vu

VANUATU Cargo GSA
 Ridley Daniel
 Right Freight Services
 PO Box 1407, Port Vila, Vanuatu
 Phone: +678 24690
 Mobile: +678 7744690
 Email: rfs@vanuatu.com.vu

For all bookings, ticketing and flight enquiries:

Domestic Connections



Solomon Islands Offices

Head Office
Administration
Finance
Sales & Reservations

P O Box 23, Henderson Airport, Honiara, Solomon Islands
 Tel: (677) 20031 • Fax: (677) 20232
 Tel: (677) 20031 • Fax: (677) 20232
 Tel: (677) 20031 • Fax: (677) 23992
 Reservation - 177 (Local calls)

Airport Offices

HONIARA
 Operations
 Engineering
 Cargo
 International Terminal Traffic
 Domestic Terminal Traffic

Tel: (677) 36048
 Tel: (677) 36104
 Tel: (677) 36071
 Tel: (677) 36077
 Tel: (677) 36048/36251

• Fax: (677) 36244
 • Fax: (677) 36040
 • Fax: (677) 36372
 • Fax: (677) 36076
 • Fax (677) 36244

SANTA CRUZ Sales & Reservations
GIZO Sales & Reservations
MUNDA Sales & Reservations
KIRAKIRA Sales & Reservations

Tel: (677) 53159
 Tel: (677) 60173
 Tel: (677) 62152
 Tel: (677) 50070

• Fax: (677) 53092
 • Fax: (677) 60202
 • Fax: (677) 62152

Overseas Administration Offices

AUSTRALIA - Brisbane Airport
Administration
Operations

Solomon Airlines, Level 1, International Terminal,
 Brisbane Airport, Eagle Farm, QLD. 4007
 Tel (Aust Wide): 1300 894311 • Tel (Outside Aust): 617 3860 5883
 Fax: 617 3860 4351 • Email: reservations@fysolomons.com

Solomon Airlines, Level 1, International Terminal,
 Brisbane Airport, Eagle Farm, QLD. 4007 • Tel (Aust Wide): 1300 894311
 Tel (Outside Aust): 617 3860 5883 • Fax: 617 3860 4351
 • Email: reservations@fysolomons.com

F I J I - Nadi
 Solomon Airlines
 P O Box 10229, Nadi International Airport, Fiji • Tel: 679 672 2831
 • Fax: 679 672 2140



MEET our man in Munda

Major developments are happening at Munda Airport and in the centre of it all is Conray Saepio.

He is Supervisor of Solomon Airlines in Munda, a job he says he loves because he gets paid to stay in his own village to ensure that airline operations at Munda work smoothly.


“I love meeting and serving others, so the job offers me the chance to do so, every day,” says Saepio.

Solomon Airlines posted him



to Munda eleven years ago and with developments to upgrade Munda into an international airport, hosting its first international direct flight from Brisbane, Saepio is excited like everyone else.

Landing lights have been installed, the fire engines have arrived and now work has shifted to upgrading Munda’s terminal to allow for security screening and baggage handling, as well as serving passengers.

“The people of Munda are excited by the new developments and we are all looking forward to welcoming the Airbus here soon” adds Saepio. 





SOLOMON Is. rebranding

As the national carrier, Solomon Airlines works in partnership with the country's tourism industry in marketing the destination abroad.

We sit on the board of Tourism Solomons, and we partner together in marketing tours in our source markets in Australia, the US and Europe.

Tourism Solomons underwent a rebranding recently, starting with a new name, a new logo and a fresh tagline.

Tourism Solomons replaces Solomon Islands Visitors Bureau, the iconic dugout canoe is now the official logo and Solomon Is. succeeds the old tagline of 'So Solomons – So Different.'

"Solomon Is. tagline can be applied to just about anything; be it an emotion, an action, a noun or



adjective," explains Tourism Solomons CEO Joe Tuamoto.

"We can also readily combine

it to target specific demographics such as couples, honeymooners and families."

Your Guide to the Solomon Islands

Things to know as visitors to our shores:

Climate ... Tropically warm and humid with coastal day temperatures averaging 28C (82.4F). April to November tends to be drier and November to April wetter.

What to wear ... Light and casual. Keep brief beachwear for the beach.

Immigration ... Commonwealth, United States and most European visitors do not need holiday visas but need return or onward tickets. People intending to work must have a work permit.

Honiara ... The capital is eight kilometres (4.97 miles) from Honiara International Airport.

Airport Tax ... SB\$100 payable by passengers (12 years and over) boarding international flights, and these are generally added onto your air ticket.

Health ... Malaria is a problem. Take anti-malarial medication a week before arrival, once a week during your stay, and for four weeks after departure. Consult your chemist or doctor about an appropriate brand of tablet. Maloprin is usually recommended.

Currency ... \$100, \$50, \$20, \$10, \$5 and \$2 Solomon Islands notes. Coins are \$1, 50c, 20c, 10c and 5c.

Business Hours ... Government and some business offices open Monday to Friday, 8am to 4.30pm with a one-hour lunch break normally beginning at noon. Shops and some offices open Saturday 8am – noon.

Banks ... Bank South Pacific opens Monday to Friday 8.30am to 3pm; ANZ Banking Group open Monday to Friday 9am to 4pm. Pan Oceanic Bank Limited opens 9am to 4pm Monday to Friday, and its Panatina Plaza branch opens 10am to 1pm on Saturday. Bred Bank Opens 9am - 4pm

Telecommunications ... Local and international calls may be made from Our Telekom public card phones which are in prominent locations in Honiara and provincial centres or from GSM Mobile services. Telephone and Internet cards are readily available through shops, hotels and Our Telekom offices and bmobile and Vodafone outlets. GSM prepaid



and postpaid mobile cards are available in Honiara, Gizo and in some provincial centres.

Tipping ... Not expected and not encouraged.

Transport ... Taxis and buses are readily available in Honiara. Rental cars are also available from Avis, Economy, Travel Car Solomon and Zome.

International air ... National airline, Solomon Airlines operate out of Honiara International Airport. Other carriers include Fiji Airways, Virgin Australia, Air Niugini and Air Nauru.

Domestic ... Solomon Airlines operates services throughout the country.

Electricity ... 220-240 volts in Honiara and some outer island centres.

News Media ... The country has a vibrant media business offering choice in both English and Pidjin languages. Radio services are offered by state radio, Solomon Islands Broadcasting Corporation and private operators and some religious bodies. Our Telekom relays BBC and other satellite TV networks while The Island Sun and Solomon Star are the two daily news papers, with a couple of monthly business and lifestyle magazines

Provinces

The Solomon Islands is made up of 992 islands which are divided into nine provinces:

Choiseul - Provincial capital: Taro • **Central** - Provincial capital: Tulagi

• **Isabel** - Provincial capital: Buala

Rennell/Bellona - Provincial capital: Tigoa • **Guadalcanal** - Provincial (& national capital): Honiara

Makira/Ulawa - Provincial capital: Kira Kira • - Provincial capital: Auki

Western - Provincial capital: Gizo • **Temotu** - Provincial capital: Lata
Malaita

The Solomon Islands are divided into nine provinces as follows:

Province	Area	Population	Highest Point	Capital
Guadalcanal	5,336 km ²	141,403	2,447m	Honiara
Central	1,000 km ²	27,928	510m	Tulagi
Western	5279 km ²	81,214	1661m	Gizo
Ysabel	4,014 km ²	26,310	1,392m	Buala
Malaita	4,234 km ²	159,923	1,303m	Auki
Makira	3,188 km ²	40,386	1,250m	Kirakira
Temotu	926 km ²	24,412	923m	Lata
Choiseul	3,294 km ²	25,870	1,060m	Taro
Rennell & Bellona	276 km ²	3,025	220m	Tingoa

Our Subsidiary

 **Sun Printing Ltd**

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CANOE BAR | THE GARDEN BAR & RESTAURANT | PACIFIC FLEX SUPREME CASINO

Phone No: (677) 25009

Email: reservation@thepch.com

P.O. Box 1298, Kukum Highway, Honiara



WeChat QR Code

