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ISSUE 70



Solomons



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WELKAM FRENS

To all our valued customers

Best Pacific Games

As the Official carrier to the Pacific Games for Team Solomons, we were proud of our Team Solomon's achievement.

What with the highest number of medals ever achieved at any Pacific Games in history by our team, specifically our two ladies in long distance running and weight lifting, they did us so proud...we salute them.

Congratulations to Jenly Wini and Sharon Firisua for their wonderful achievements and also to all other team members who achieved medals to assist with the major feat of "best performance" for our Team Solomons. We also assisted Team Kiribati to get to and from Port Moresby from Tarawa and ensuring all charters maintained schedule for our Airbus' first operation to Tarawa was a clear sign of achievement by the ground crew from Kiribati.

Our congratulations also marks our aim to be the "best little airline in the Pacific," a feat that we are focused on achieving.

Partnerships

Whilst we did intend to be operating already as the new Melanesian Partners with Air Niugini and Air Vanuatu, the technical aspects of our reservations systems are still yet to be completed.

Air Niugini being the operating carrier works on a platform called Mercator which was an arrangement with Emirates Airlines who also operates their distribution on this platform. On the other hand, Air Vanuatu and Solomon Airlines operate on Amadeus which is also operated by Qantas. This alone is not unusual but the testing and ensuring that both platforms speak the same language has taken longer than we originally anticipated.

We are nearly there at the time of writing and trust our Melanesian Partnership will truly be in full swing by October just prior to the high peak Christmas season although Air Niugini has been operating on their own since just prior to the Pacific Games.

Review of BUS

Our Airbus A320 registered as H4-BUS or kindly referred to as "the BUS", will be entering a major maintenance service programme already locked in for 20th February 2016.

The BUS will be out of service for about 4-6 weeks and we are busily working on a replacement contract aircraft that will achieve our same goals during this down time period.

In our last issue, we also indicated that we were studying the potential whether to extend the current lease of BUS or to seek a replacement with a similar model Airbus either in the A320 model or an A319 with marginally less seats for our market.

I am pleased to say that at our board meeting in the last week of August, it

was confirmed that the BUS has done us proud in its service to date and we would extend the lease for a further 3-4 years subject to upgrading of some equipment required to fly in Australian airspace. This is also underway with an order soon to be placed for ADS-B and RNP, both equipment mandated by CASA for all aircraft flying into Australian airspace. We welcome the extension approval by the board.

We naturally would also be looking at some upgraded features in the cabin and **a fresh look internally and externally.**

Our read ahead

Includes the following-

- Our Pacific Games queens
- The Grass huts
- Titiru.....worth a visit in the Western Province
- Great local fish but only Tuna is the main export
- We review Melbourne in Australia to check out this Multi-cultural city
- A Solomon boy making his mark on music in Fiji

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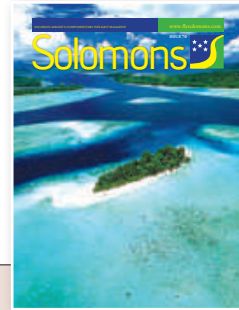
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Solomons



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CONTENTS

From Solomons with love Son of two lands unites the music	12
The Shell Money As good as the mussels	14
Indigenous nut craze Fusion in the kitchen with the Ngali	16
Fish at your price Nowhere else in the Pacific do you get such a deal	24
Hut on the go Sustainable living the Solomons way	26
JFK - The real story How the legend lived to tell his tale	38
Marvelous Melbourne The inside and out of this beautiful city	42
Solomon Airlines Fact Sheet	48
Route Maps	51
Contact Information	52
Airline News	52
Solomon Star Guide	54



Publisher
Netani Rika

Editor
Samisoni Pareti

Editorial Consultant
Gus Kraus

Senior Advertising Consultant
Abigail Covert-Sokia

Design
Media Vision

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Correspondence to the airline to:

The Chief Executive Officer
Solomon Airlines
PO Box 23, Honiara
Solomon Islands
Tel: +677 20 031
Fax: +677 23 992

Editorial correspondence to:

Solomons
P O Box 12718, Suva, Fiji Islands.
Tel: +679 3303 108
Fax: +679 3301 423
E-mail: editor@islandsbusiness.com

Advertising correspondence to:

Abigail Covert-Sokia
Advertising Manager, Solomons
PO Box 12718, Honiara, Fiji Islands.
Tel: +679 3303 108
Fax: +679 3301 423
E-mail: acovert-sokia@islandsbusiness.com

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SEPTEMBER

Chief Festival (Isabel Province)

OCTOBER

Stunt Mullet Fishing Competition (Lola, Western Province)

Beginning of Green Turtle & Leatherback Turtle Season (Tetepare, Western Province)

Birdwatching Season (Oct - Nov/Malaita Province)

NOVEMBER

Surfs Up

Land Crabbing Migration

Lagoon Festival (Munda, Western Province)

DECEMBER

Carol in the Islands (Honiara)

Gizo Mile Run (Western Province)

Western Province 2nd Appointed Day

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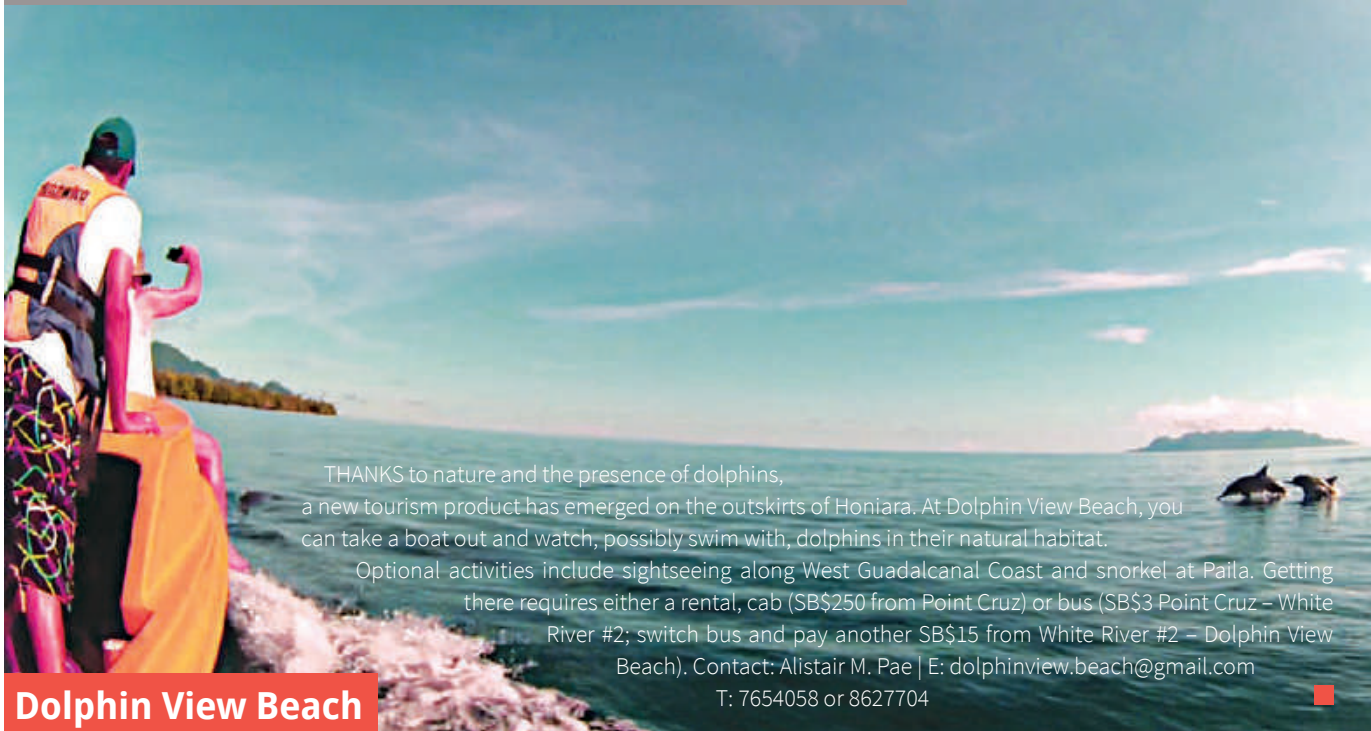
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OUT & ABOUT



THANKS to nature and the presence of dolphins, a new tourism product has emerged on the outskirts of Honiara. At Dolphin View Beach, you can take a boat out and watch, possibly swim with, dolphins in their natural habitat.

Optional activities include sightseeing along West Guadalcanal Coast and snorkel at Paila. Getting there requires either a rental, cab (SB\$250 from Point Cruz) or bus (SB\$3 Point Cruz – White River #2; switch bus and pay another SB\$15 from White River #2 – Dolphin View Beach). Contact: Alistair M. Pae | E: dolphinview.beach@gmail.com

T: 7654058 or 8627704

Dolphin View Beach



IF it's anything Solomon islanders know how to do well, it's drinking the liquid content of green coconuts; its naturally sweetened juice, unlike soda sugars, will not induce non-communicable conditions like diabetes. Smart move, Wantoks! Green coconuts are in abundance at the Honiara market.

You'll see them along the roadside, even at cafes and hotel restaurants. The markups though once they get into the comforts of a building and decoratively sit on a glass holder can be at least three times more than what you'd pay on the street.

But, hey, a green coconut with juice intact bought at any location is still nutritious and possesses multiple benefits. It's quintessentially tropical. And it's almost a very Solomon thing to do, which is nice because you feel blended. It's also wonderful seeing young children lift a coconut to their mouths rather than a can of soda.

Two random folks I spoke to (one Solomon Islander, the other Filipino) gave similar reasons why they chose to drink coconut beverage – having a coffee or tea in the morning is enough caffeine to last the day; coconut juice fills the void just fine; it's clean water and balanced, no more no less.

Coco fresh



Solomons Gold

SINGLE-origin dark chocolate made from Solomon Island cocoa beans will be on designated store shelves in Honiara soon. It's called Solomon Gold. Makers Commodity Corporation (C-Corp) says: "This product is dairy-free, nut-free, gluten-free, contains no additives or preservatives, and loaded with antioxidants."

Currently comes in four varieties – Smooth dark chocolate bar (70 per cent cacao); smooth dark chocolate bar (70 per cent cacao and cane sugar-free); smooth dark chocolate with nibs (75 per cent cacao); and smooth dark chocolate with nibs (75 per cent cacao and cane sugar-free).

The Bulk Shop will distribute Solomons Gold in the Solomon Islands. Solomon Gold may be made in New Zealand but its main ingredient, cocoa beans, are sourced from tropical Solomons.

For further information see www.solomonsgold.co.nz/ | commoditycorp.com.au/cocoa-bean-progress-chainnew-page/ | Facebook: Solomons Gold



St Agnes Transit

ALTERNATIVELY you can comfortably stay at St. Agnes lodge for a reasonable cost.

If you're in Honiara for a short period St. Agnes, also known as Mothers Union, is ideal. There are two levels of accommodation each level with shared kitchen and dining room facilities. It has a homely feel and filled with character. Bottom rooms are newly built.

Location: Lower Vavaya Ridge on Lekamoli Street; walking distance to central market and Hyundai Mall. Owned by the Mothers Union of the Anglican Church of Melanesia, it has 24-hour security. Room rates – Between SBD\$400 – SBD\$450.

Contact: Betsy or Josephine | E: stages@solomon.com.sb | T: 27785 or 7485532



Ropika Beach Resort

WHERE: Gatokae, Western Province. Ropika Beach Resort is nestled in a large coconut grove with private beach. A one-hour flight from Honiara to Seghe begins your journey. You will be met by Ropika staff at Seghe Airport and transferred to a boat for an additional 90-minute ride through the largest double barrier reef in the world, the stunning Marovo Lagoon.

Ropika targets couples and families.

Bungalows are dormitory and family style. Activities include: Snorkeling/swimming, Kavachi underwater volcano visit, fishing (boat, canoe, spear), village visits, trekking, and World War Two sites. For rates contact the resort directly.

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Proud son of two lands

Phil the love

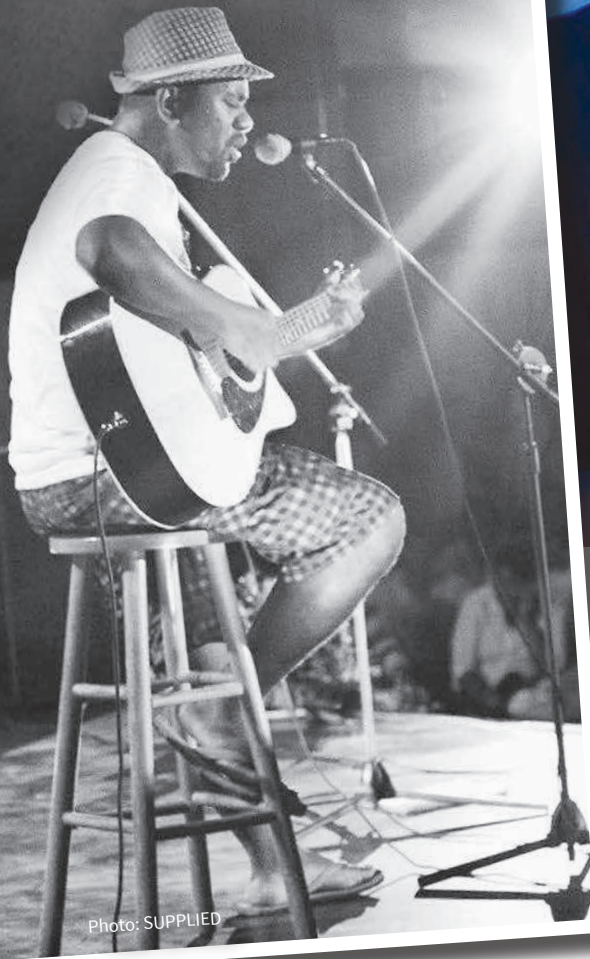
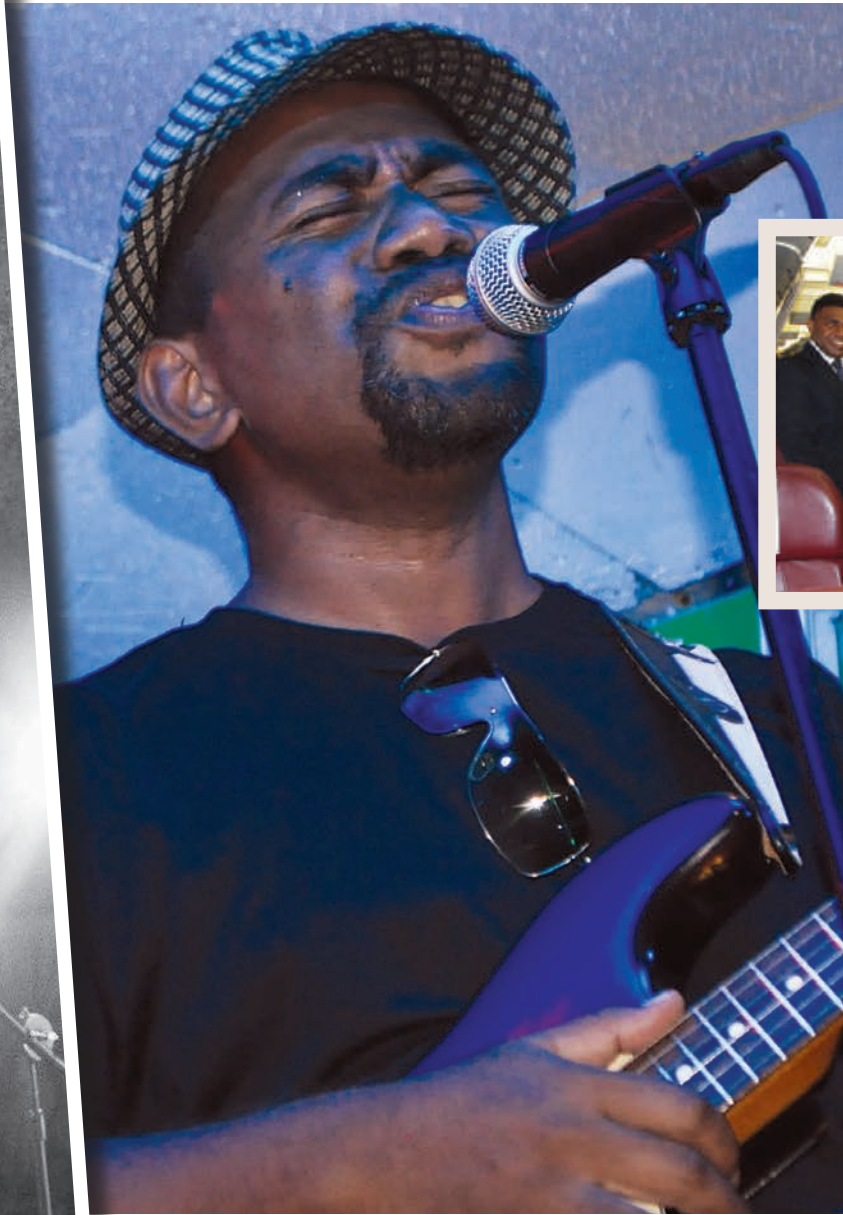


Photo: SUPPLIED



By Mere Tuqiri

ON STAGE HE IS DAKAI – the artist, musician, mesmerising the audience with feel-good island vibes often spotting his signature fedora.

Off stage he is Phil, an unassuming type of guy. Faded denims, an orange t-shirt advertising a concrete-making company, shades, sneakers; that's what he wore when

connects new sounds across the waves



Photo: FELIX CHAUDHARY

Full name: Filimone Qailigana Dakei

Also known as: Phil, Tukai

Artist name: Dakei

Label: Noisy Oyster Productions

Base: Lautoka, Fiji

Age: 37

Vocal tone: Tenor

Genre: I prefer to not restrict myself. I'm a producer. I'd like to go from *Play On* to Makare to Rako tribal music, which is what I'm working on, to reggae.

Island links: Dad from Hunde, Kolombangara, Western Province; Mum from Bureta, Ovalau, Fiji.

Instrument: I play a Fender strat electric guitar.

Influences: John Mayer, Bob Marley, and George 'Fiji' Veikoso, Guns n' Roses, Steely Dan, Samoa Five Stars, and many more.

Inspiration: Apart from raw emotions, I'd say my maternal grandfather Amena Wainibu and paternal grandfather Solomon Dakei, who were both great musicians in their era. (The late Solomon Dakei was a member of a band that first recorded an LP in the Solomons. One of his compositions was Auki Love Song.)

Do you identify yourself more as Solomon or Fijian: I was brought up in both societies so I understand Solomon and Fijian cultures. Like my music, I don't want to box myself into any one culture. I've always had that sort of mentality. I am an Islander.

Is your personality reflected in your music: Definitely. I'm open minded, no fuss, passionate person but if I do something I do it right.

What's important to you musically: Copyright

issues, proper acknowledgement of original composers.

Childhood music experience: I used to join reggae bands (in the Solomons) when I was a teenager. My first band was Kool Roots. It was just to hang out with the boys but really it was my first experience with a group. After that I started carrying around a guitar.

At what point did it really take off: It wasn't until year 2000 when I moved to Fiji to work as a production engineer for a radio station that it really started for me. Surrounded with technical equipment I began to experiment. A few years after I released my first single 'Play On' under the Dakei label. I was beginning to find my sound. It was a special song because I always knew I had to do something, make some music. I also had to think outside the box, do something totally different; not reggae... 'Play On' had to be special. I played a few chords and the words came out. The words I felt at that time was procrastination, I had to do something (laughs), you know play on, start playing.

Collaborations: That is my priority. Collaboratively you can come up with new ideas; I'm looking forward to the day when I begin that journey especially with Solomon musicians.

Medium term musical goals: I'd like to do a Pacific album or a Melanesian album, something that identifies Melanesians and Melanesians can identify with.

Likes: Seafood animated movies.

www.facebook.com/dakeimusic | www.reverbnation.com/dakei

I interviewed Phil Dakei.

It's the same Dakei that composed and sings the current Solomon Airlines 60-second jingle - "Close your eyes, we can be anywhere, another world another paradise, take me above the clouds to the Happy Isles, fly me away Solomon Airlines."

Phil's heritage is paternal Solomon and maternal Fijian.

So far he has produced four singles - *Before it's Over*, *Kneel and Pray*, *Just Two*, and

his debut single *Play On*.

Phil's ReverbNation profile categorises his music as alternative/soul, but he prefers versatility.

Currently a member of contemporary Fiji band Makare music has forever been, to use a cliché, in his DNA. His paternal grandfather and maternal grandfather were accomplished Solomon and Fijian artists.

Dakei is due to release his solo album soon.



Making waves with Makare:

Photo: MAKARE

Cherished cash in the shallows

Shells for \$hells



By Mere Tuqiri

THAT is what the sign said. Wayne Leve was selling a sack of shells. Apparently there is a market for it in Langa Langa Lagoon, Malaita, and Honiara.

The raw supply of certain shells in Malaita has dwindled. As you may know Malaitan shell money makers largely originate from the Langa Langa area and they may have, due to years of harvesting, exhausted sizable portions of types of shells typically used to produce shell money necklaces.

So Wayne, who is from Vonavona, Western Province, has picked up on the supply gap.

The trend these days seems to be – Western Province supplying Malaitan women with much-needed shells for shell money production and Malaitan entrepreneurial men and women supplying other provinces with sago palm leaves for leaf house construction, sago palms being in abundant





supply on Malaita. Fish, although largely migratory in nature, could be the other inter-province trade.

Wayne tells me his customers are Malaitan women. His Sol Rice yellow sack was filled with empty saltwater mussel shells.

Price per bag: SB\$200 negotiable. It could be SB\$350 or even more; shell type determines price.

Most expensive are the red shells because they're valued among traditional shell money makers. Wayne calls these red shells nakolo and one sack of that could go for SB\$600. Red shells are hard to find.

Shell money was once traditional currency and varied in type and trading strength across the Solomon archipelago.

The customary valuables were used as payments for bride price, exchange for goods acquired (inter-island, intra-island, or highland-coastal and vice versa), settling


of land disputes, disagreements between parties, or reconciliation.

Apart from the Malaitan taefuliae (threaded strings of circular red/black/white beads), also common to Guadalcanal and Ulawa provinces, Solomon Islands' traditional currency included bird feathers, dog teeth, porpoise teeth, and other shell types.

Four years ago I set through a demonstration of how shell money was made in Langa Langa.

Imagine a 6-foot bead of small circular disks; each tiny shell is handcrafted using various techniques from smashing, grinding, drilling, and smoothing.

Tina Geli sells her Langa Langa-made taefuliae and an assortment of shell accessories at the Honiara Central Market. Now it's beyond tradition and culture.

Times have changed and it's all about survival. 





Ngali nutricious

By Theresa Fox

DEEP IN THE FORESTS, the tree towers majestically, lording over the terrain.

The woman cuts a tiny figure at her base. She rummages in the leafy brush carpet of the forest floor searching for something. Her face lights up with discovery and the first ngali nut from the *Canarium Indicum* tree, indigenous to the Solomon Islands and Papua New Guinea hits the bottom of the bag. Soon the bags are full.

She looks up and pats the tree trunk with approval, her eyes pools of gratefulness. It's another successful harvest and Dorothy Walter sings a chorus back to Baniata.

"I'll make you ngali nut pudding. It tastes good, you know," she laughs, her nimble steps belie her 55 years.

Guardian waves

Baniata village occupies the southern end of Rendova Island in the Western Province of Solomon Islands.

Rendova is one of the larger islands of the New

Georgia Group, with lush forests of ngali nut and all kinds of fruit trees, coconut plantations, misty mountains and shimmering wide, black sandy beaches where the world's largest turtle species, leatherbacks, nest.

Canoeing from Munda, a government administration centre to Baniata is two hours of craziness.

Furious waves toss the sturdy canoe about, from crest to pit, at times hurling it into the air to the screams of terrified passengers. Soaked to the bone and all you can think about are crocodiles lurking beneath bluish black sheen of Morovo Lagoon. You can take an outboard, but it takes the joy out of the soulful experience of a traditional Baniata canoe.

It's a warrior's ride to wild country. Right up to the shores, where excited children wait, the waves clutch and pull as if to keep the visitors from landing and discovering the beautiful secret that is Baniata. Stay away! Stay away they scream in a protective, incessant roar.

But on shore, it's a feeling of pure achievement, like passing a test of worthiness to be here.

Dorothy Walter heads out into the forest to fetch ngali nuts, just as her ancestors did hundreds of years before her. Photos: Theresa Fox



Ngali nut

Smoke curls lazily out of sago palm thatched huts. The roasted aroma of baking fills the air.

Dorothy Walter, 55 is bent over an earth oven called motu in the Touo language, picking at the hot stones with bamboo tongs.

She'd been shelling nuts the whole day. Nuts are tossed on to the hot stones and covered with taio leaves.

They can be done in two hours but she prefers to leave them overnight, slowly baking a golden brown.

Baked nuts add a crunchy texture to vegetable dishes like slippery cabbage that form the staple part of the healthy Baniata diet.

Ngali nut harvest seasons run from August to February.

December is peak season. Men clean the picking area for the women and children who pick the nuts.

Jillian Paina, 42 is a seasoned nut picker having been at it since a mere babe.

Her grandmother taught her to pick, shell and bake nuts.



She also taught Jillian’s mom, Ruth. Jillian will pass the same skills to her daughters. Ngali nut is an inheritance passed down the female line.

Baniata boys grow up to conquer the wild waves. The girls become expert Ngali nut bakers.

A tree can offer nuts to fill three 10 kg bags. On average a family owns between 20 to 40 ngali nut trees. It can take at least a month of picking, shelling and baking to fill several buckets for export.

Baniatans believe the trees were planted by God and wild bats dispersed seeds of the ngali nut all over the forest.

Sometimes they’d sit in the forests and shell the nuts using traditional tools. Flat slabs of rocks they call ofata with grooves gouged out and rock pounders or orugo make delightful, archaeological finds along the pathways. Just as knowledge about ngali nut is passed down so are these ancient tools.

“Our ancestors made them. They’ve been in the forest a long time. We don’t use anything else to shell the nuts but these,” Jillian said.

“We like to use them because it makes ngali nuts taste even better knowing we are doing it the way our ancestors did.”

“Our culture is part of our daily lives.”

Women are so intimate with the ngali nut; they know the shapes of the nuts their trees produce.

“There can be rawa (argument) if we see another family shelling our nuts. We can tell by the shape of the nut,” Jillian said.



Pudding specials

Puddings are signature ngali nut cuisine.

Rabarusa is grated tapioca mixed with the white or innermost portion of roasted ngali nuts and in the motu.

Black pudding or iqirusa is considered food for the gods that is a similar mixture but turned black over hot stones and pounded to achieve an elastic consistency.

Masierusa is combination of grated tapioca, taro and nuts

A great Baniata warrior ancestor named Ome offered ngali nuts to the gods for victory in tribal clashes and for acquiring the juiciest human flesh. Ome was a cannibal.

“Our forests are clean and pure and we want to give it to our descendants as it is now. It's our duty. We respect nature and it provides for us.”

– Walter Silvae, Baniata Organic Committee chairman



Clockwise: Jillian Paina cooks the nuts over hot stones; Baniata's ancestors used the forest to grow and process the nuts, leaving their traditional tools for their descendants to use today; such is the passion for the nuts that the women know which trees each come from; the nuts are baked in many ways and now enter the Solomons export market.

Photos: Theresa Fox



Going organic

To protect the ngali nut, their sense of identity, cultural enrichment and income the Baniata community has gone organic.

They've banned the use of harmful chemical fertilisers, insecticides and weedicides.

With help from POETCom/SPC and funding support from the European Union Increasing Agriculture Commodities and Trade programme the Participatory Guarantee System of organic certification for the Ngali nut has been setup.

The PGS involves a peer review mechanism where farmers keep each other in check to ensure compliance with the Pacific Organic

Standards. “Our forests are clean and pure, and we want to give it to our descendants as it is now,” Baniata Organic Committee chair Walter Silvae said.

“It's our duty. We respect nature and it provides for us.”

After a period of certification, Baniatangi nuts will bear the Organic Pasifika mark, which is a guarantee of purity or naturalness, free of harmful chemical toxicity.

It will be the first Ngali nut from the Pacific to be organically certified for export. The export is a partnership between the people of Baniata and Dr Shane Tutua's Sol-Agro, a Solomon Islands company that specialises in organic exports.

Just different

Baniata is not a typical tropical island destination.


Far off the beaten tourist path, her black sands don't holler at you. There's no television, no cell phone coverage. Unplugged and free of social standards and trappings.

Food comes from the forests and the

sea. Life is simple and enough.

People live harmoniously with nature in a way many Pacific Islanders are now unfamiliar with. It's a sanctuary both for nature and man – an experience that inspires the soul for the worthy traveller in the land of the ngali nut.

□ The writer works as a communication

officer for the Pacific Organic and Ethical Trade Community (POETCom) housed within the Secretariat of the Pacific Community, an inter-governmental agency in the Pacific. 

Solomon Airlines flies to Munda, West Province daily. For bookings, log on to www.flysolomons.com, or call +677 20031.



SINPF Hibiscus Apartments

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All apartments have access to the swimming pool, outdoor entertainment and BBQ deck.

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Beautiful, bountiful ocean and the best buy

Fish heaven

By Mere Tuqiri

DO YOU KNOW OF ANY PACIFIC ISLAND COUNTRY where you can buy A-grade fish for a fraction of their worth? Forget currency differences or conversions, just think numbers.

Try Solomon Islands. Visit the Honiara Central Market any time Monday to Saturday to find out for yourself.

Skipjacks, yellowfins, and mahimahi are the A-listers of fishdom here. Unlike the smaller reef fish that are priced according to weight, the A-listers tend to be priced at the seller's whim. I bought a skipjack that had just been fished fresh off the icebox, forearms length, and substantially fleshy around the belly for SB\$40. Alright, now think conversions – cheapest in town, right? Even if you didn't mentally convert, it's still way below what you'd expect to tender.

The only thing missing from my temporary kitchen was wasabi and light soy sauce. Nevertheless, the meat was absolutely succulent. Cherry tomatoes, spring onions, and a squeeze of lemon added a little zest.

I befriended Helen Russell, the lady who sold me my skipjack.



I got one big yellow fin. \$1000. OK tell somebody to come. Oh ... I can't keep that yellowfin for you, maybe somebody like come takem



I figured it's a good idea to know someone at the fish market, you know for fresh deliveries.

She and her male colleagues own a few blue industrial ice boxes. I scrutinised them from afar at first and came to the decision that: "Yep, I trust these guys and their fish."

Meanwhile, Helen attends to customers: "Forty dollars, 50, last two \$50, yellow fin lo hia \$60... \$10 change, thank you."

What she meant was last two on the table but more in the icebox. On the side laying on its lonesome was a goliath yellowfin tuna – SB\$1000 (negotiable from 900).

These mammoth ones are aimed at the restaurants, hoteliers, and the Solomon Islanders with deep pockets.


I asked why they're priced so low. Helen replied it's what they think an average customer can afford on any given day. Customers do say it is affordable. I'm not complaining.

Her mobile directory lists some hoteliers and restaurant boss names.

She is shrewd and even resorts to terms of endearment as she makes a call to one boss man: "Hello... I'm Helen. I got one big yellow fin. \$1000. Ok tell somebody to come. Oh arling I can't keep that yellowfin for you, maybe somebody like come takem."

That was definitely worth a giggle. Helen's fishermen work the waters around the Russell Islands, Isabel, and Western Province. If you intend to visit the fish market one day this week, it might be best to start Wednesdays because that's when the passenger-cargo vessels come in from the Western Province.

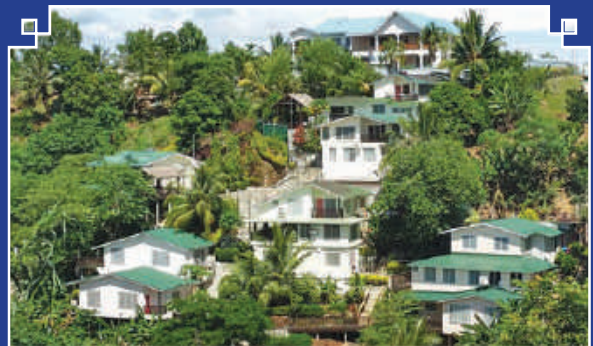
And you know what that means – eskies full of fish caught by individuals or bought from the fish cannery in Noro, Munda, iced and destined for a tabletop in the Honiara market.

You'll find arm-length mahimahi as well sold between SB\$50 to \$70. Some fish sold by other fisherfolk are clearly questionable. Overall, you can't beat the price busters at the municipal fish market in Honiara. 

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The Solomons leaf house, of various designs, remains cool during warm days and keeps warm when the temperature drops.

Photo: DAVID KIRKLAND

Happy hut

By Mere Tuqiri

I AM at the Honiara Central Market carpark where pockets of men and women, most of whom are Malaitan, wait for customers to rock up, inspect, and buy building materials.

It's not your usual one-stop hardware store. There are no nails here. No steel implements; just natural wood, bush vines, and leaves.

It's all one needs to build a complete leaf house.





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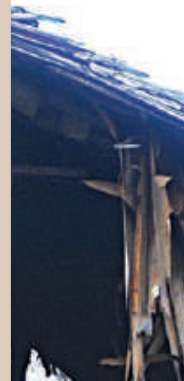
“I can come in here and buy what I need. No need for me to go to the bush to get sago palms and sew it together. It's done ... this is such a good idea fore a local business”
– **Businessman and hut builder Ben**

Leaf houses are so called because of their natural appearance and composition. They are traditional Solomon Island houses (like Fijian bures or Samoan fales), a common sight in the provinces and even on the outskirts of Honiara.

At the Monday to Saturday carpark open market you can buy a roof covering for SBD\$8 a piece. That's eight Solomon dollars worth

of pre-sewn sago palm leaves. What holds the leaves together isn't some industrial cord; on the contrary, it's another part of the sago palm – the mid-riff, a sturdy spine that can be threaded through leaves.

Ben is building his fish & chips hut called Ben Bun Bon at the Ranadi industrial area. Vertical, horizontal, and angled wooden beams create a skeletal frame of this seaside food joint.



One-stop shop ... from walls to posts, all that takes to build a simple leaf home are available at the Honiara Central Market carpark.

Photos: MERE TUQIRI



All it needs now is some flooring, walls, door, and roof thatching. He buys 55 sets of threaded sago palm at SBD\$8 a piece. Within 10 minutes he is SBD\$440 lighter but gains some valuable pre-assembled building materials for his project.

"This saves time for people like me," said Ben, before I hopped on to the back of the hired truck to check out his fish & chip hut.

"I can come in here and buy what I need. No need for me to go to the bush to get sago palms and sew it together. It's done. All I need is a truck to load. This is such a good idea for a local business."

What I learnt

A hardware vendor pays the central market master SBD\$18 to rent an open-air concrete space for one week. In that space he/she sells planks, ngali nut tree vines, loekin vines, mangrove poles, pre-sewn sago palm thatch, and a range of other timber.

The vendors tell me that while the supply of sago palm is dwindling on Guadalcanal, there are plantations of the resourceful plant on Malaita, hence the inter-province trade.

Hony Jethro and Reuben Burobo have been freighting their materials from Auki, Malaita, to Honiara for some two years now.

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From experience they've found that two weeks is sufficient time to get their materials sold.

Prices are almost standard and may vary according to quantity and type. Coils of bush vines, which are substitute for nails, start at SBD\$15 to SBD\$30. Timber can be bought at SBD\$150 per pole (bigger ones) or SBD\$200 for a bunch of 10 mangrove sticks.

The men estimate that to construct a two-bedroom leaf house plus labour could be around SBD\$5000. But you save some time because a trip to the market carpark gets you the essentials. Of course, different wood are designated for different parts of the house.

Hony: "Mangrove wood is very, very strong and lasts for years. You can use it for posts or rafters. Thatching lasts long if you use mature leaves and it's staggered close together on the roof."

A gentleman passerby joins the conversation: "As Solomon Island men, knowing how to build a traditional leaf house is very important in our culture. Sewing the thatching is men's work too and we learn that from a young age. You sew the leaves together when they're fresh, once it dries up it's trickier to handle."

Reuben has brought the following locally-named wood from Malaita – kaumanu (for rafters), vasa (for posts), and sago palm midriiffs.



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I met 79-year-old Donald Bisili (Western Province) on a domestic Solomon Airlines flight Munda-Honiara, a former agriculture officer during Solomon Islands' colonial era, dressed in bureaucratic khaki shorts and shirt. I asked him his thoughts on pre-made leaf house materials.

"Sometimes it would take me six months to build my house. In my time we didn't follow any clock. We went into the bush and selected the best wood for our houses," Donald said.

"But I was very strict with time, I went into the bush and collected more than necessary for one day. The next day we might do something else. You know the same man is a fisherman, a hunter, gardener; in that sense it took time."

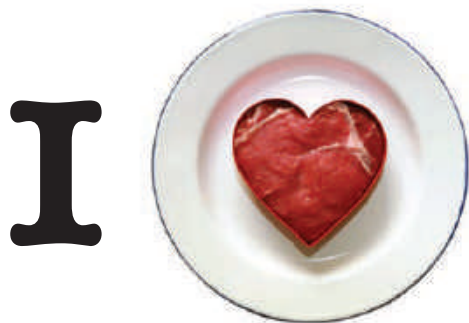
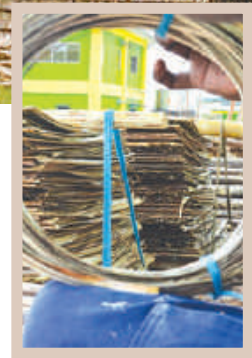
"There was a story, it's not true, we used to tell small children; when posts had to be fastened, the vines had to be tied in the same pattern throughout the house otherwise a nasty spirit might inspect it and would be upset if the knots were not consistent and correct."

"The purpose of the story was to scare the



kids so that when they became adults and built their own houses, they would follow the right pattern for fastening posts."

When in Honiara, take some time to stroll to the market leaf haus center. As there are no signs, simply look out for wood planks and pre-sewn sago palm thatching.



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Simple pleasures of **Titiru**



By Mere Tuqiri

THERE IS SOMETHING ABOUT THE ROPE SWING that received most comments in the guest book at Titiru Eco Lodge. Aly Jennings from Australia wrote on 17th Aug. 2014: “Find your childhood again in Titiru”, this was followed by scribbled images of people on the swing located over the water. Simple pleasures!

Beyond the swing, there's the cultural visit, mangrove tour, hike up Rendova Peak if you're adventurous, bend through an underground cave, in evenings lay on the jetty overlooking Sagiri Bay and star gaze, or you could just sea-swing all day.

If you feel out of your comfort zone in Titiru for whatever reason, I say – this is what a holiday in the Pacific will do to you. It's an experience.

I opted for the cultural tour at nearby Ugele Village. Here the villagers attempt to recreate what life may have been like. Your guides are Joel and Haigo, both well-spoken individuals.

It begins with an enactment, a verbal dual between the village chief and priest. Does the visitor have good intentions? The spirits are consulted. If it turns out the visitor is not 'clean', well it won't be a pleasant ending for him or her. In headhunting days, this was the only way visitors were granted entry to villages. I've experienced similar customary performances in Mavo (Ramata) and

Titiru Eco Lodge

Location: Munda, Western Province. Solomon Airlines flies daily to Munda. From Munda Airport it's 45 minutes to an hour to Titiru (depends on currents and horsepower), which prides itself on its off-the-beaten-track feel and appearance.

Biche (Gatokae).

The culture walk takes me through several stages: How cloth was made, making coconut salad, how children entertained themselves, bamboo music, local cooking, and carving.

Bark cloth

Strips are torn from banyan tree roots and beaten with a wooden mullet, sprinkled with water until tender. The processed bark had multiple uses - sanitary cloth for women's menstruation, towel, clothing for men and women, and strips used as baby slings.



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And if warm water was needed to bathe, a hot rock was dipped into water to add heat for a lukewarm bath.

Coconut salad

White flakes are scraped from both a young green and mature coconuts. The flakes are blended by manually stirring together and served in a coconut shell. Folks in Ugele these days add a pinch of sugar to the blend. I'd prefer it without sugar. If you haven't tasted coconut flesh or juice from a young coconut, you need to try it when in the Solomons.

Children's toys

No video games or building blocks, back in the day it was toys and some essential accessories woven and carved from nature. From coconut fronds comes fly whips, belts for boys and girls, balls, and handheld windmills. And then there's shell collecting, something that has never gone out of style anywhere. Throughout my Solomons travels I have found children entertain themselves with their own inventions – helicopters from sago palm branches, wooden cars, coconut frond balls, stacking empty coconut shells, slings, and seed pellet guns.



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Bamboo Tunes

A coconut husk is beaten against open-ended bamboo poles strung together horizontally. It produces various degrees of hollow sounds. With a guitar and singing voices to accompany makes for smooth tropical sounds. A guitar may not have existed hundreds of years ago but you get the idea. I believe Rendova and Roviana people use husks to make this kind of music. Do you know others?



Local cooking

Ingredients: Slippery cabbage (a popular nutritious green vegetable), freshly squeezed coconut milk and hot rocks. Interlay the slippery cabbage, form a bowl shape and squeeze coconut milk into it, place a steamed rock in the milk and wrap. Additionally drape a banana leaf around the vegetable wrap to keep steam intact. The hot rock bakes the cabbage within minutes. Verdict: Delicious! I'd like to try this at home.



Carving

The men carvers of Ugele have inherited their skill from their parents. Wood from the rosewood or ebony trees is used. They will explain to you the stages carvings go through from wood selection to shaping to inlaying. One particular carving on display that caught my attention was a stone carved into the shape of a face (cat-like eyes and snout-like nose). They explained it was found at a sacred site at Ugele and if someone wanted to purchase it, they could. It is thought to be a net sinker, attached to a net before release into the sea most likely accompanied with traditional chants to ensure a good fish catch. The two holes on either side of its head could fit a thin string.



Underground cave

Advice: If you have back problems, don't do the cave 'walk'; it really does work your lower back. The cave was perhaps a former course way for a stream, the bottom is soggy; expect your feet to sink into soft mud for several meters from entrance. You will be glad you wore your reef shoes and old t-shirt.



Helmets and reflector vests are provided, request if not given. Your head-light will be useful. A stream gurgles through the cave. You might find prawns and eel fish in its clear waters. While bats hung from cave roof, one snake partially coiled partly hung lazily from the ceiling. It ignored me. Instead it hoisted its tail ever so slowly, curled up in between the rocky crevices above inches from my head and that was all the entertainment it gave me. I should be thankful, right? I'm told they're harmless.



Titiru essentials: Torch or head-light, reef shoes, walking shoes, mosquito repellent, book. Generator use is available on request for charging appliances, but best to keep it green. Kilo, Esther, May, Gwenyth, Haigo, and Melba will make you feel welcome. By 2016 you can expect a nature park, two honeymoon bungalows, and a dam at Titiru Eco Lodge. And when its owner Kilo Paza says he will do it – consider it done.



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WWII HEROES:

The true story behind JFK's PT-109



Soldier and statesman ... JFK at the helm of PT109.

Photo: JFK Library

One of America's distinguished and unforgettable Presidents was more than just a World War II soldier. **David Ellis** and **Roderick Eime** tell the story of a famous hero who rose from Gizo.

ONLY THE MORE adventurous travellers make it to remote Gizo in the Western Province of the Solomon Islands. It's a magical place with some of the world's best fishing as well as wreck and reef diving.

From Gizo you can venture a further 10 kilometres to a minuscule dot shown on most charts as either Kasolo Atoll or Plum Pudding Island. This sandy speck is better known in popular mythology as Kennedy Island – the place where a then 26-year-old US Navy Lieutenant John F. Kennedy, commander of the motor torpedo boat *PT109* and future President of the United States, together with ten of his crew, waded ashore in pitch-blackness after their boat was rammed and sunk by the Japanese destroyer *Amagiri* on the night of 2 August, 1943.

For decades, South Pacific adventurers have laid claim to finding and even salvaging the wreckage of *PT109*. But their assertions are in fact their imaginings. What little remains of *PT109* lies at an impossible depth of 374 metres, 4km off Kasolo.

On 1 August 1943, *PT109* had been one of fifteen PTs sent from the US Navy's base on Rendova Island to harass a Japanese convoy that had dropped reinforcements and supplies on the nearby and much larger Kolombangara Island as Japan tried to shore up their retreat after the end of their disastrous Guadalcanal campaign earlier that year.

But in the inky darkness of that moonless night, the 2000-ton *Amagiri*, travelling at high speed, rammed the little 25m *PT109*, splitting her lengthwise and setting her fuel tanks ablaze in a massive fireball.

Two men died instantly in the violent collision. The stern section sank quickly, leaving the forward section afloat with the surviving crew clinging on for dear life amid a sea of flames.

Such was the ferocity of the impact, that the rest of the flotilla left *PT109* for dead and headed full speed for base.

With rescue fast becoming a forlorn hope, Lt. Kennedy and the survivors abandoned the sinking bow section and swam and drifted toward Kasolo – which locally means Gods of Paradise, and it must have seemed like salvation to the exhausted and hapless sailors.

In an extraordinary feat of endurance, the injured Kennedy had towed one badly injured seaman the entire four kilometres with the strap of his life vest clenched in his mouth.

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Some accounts suggest that the *PT109* crew were 'caught napping' when the *Amagiri* sliced her in two.

Other accounts suggest that *Amagiri* was only aware of the collision after the fact, but witnesses also say that her commander, Lt. Cmdr. Kohei Hanami, made a deliberate effort to ram the allied patrol boat.

After a week of foraging the tiny atoll which offered no more water or food, the group then swam two kilometres south to Olasana Island, from where Kennedy and crewman George Ross swam another kilometre south to larger Naru Island in the hope of finding American troops.

But they were surprised to be met instead by two villagers who were working secretly behind enemy lines alongside the Australian Coastwatcher, Reg Evans, who had seen the collision days earlier and been searching for survivors.

Kennedy needed to get a message to his base on Rendova, now 60 kilometres away, and one of the villagers, Biuku Gasa, came up with an ingenious idea.

He found a green coconut and showed Kennedy how to scratch a message into its surface with a piece of sharpened sea-shell.



Top right: A US motor torpedo boat similar to the *PT109* which split in two during the skirmish off Gizo. Right: A side and aerial view of the boat, which was made from wood and steel and could travel at speeds of up to 41 knots. Photos: Naval Historical Center

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Eroni Kumana, known as the man who rescued JFK, pictured with Gizo-based dive operator Danny Kennedy.

Photo: FILE

Kennedy engraved: NAURO ISL / COMMANDER / NATIVE KNOWS POS'IT / HE CAN PILOT / 11 ALIVE / NEED SMALL BOAT / KENNEDY

Gasa and his teenage offsider, Aaron (Eroni) Kumana, then paddled their canoe all the way through dangerous waters to Rendova with the unusual coconut message and, under cover of the next night's darkness, a PT was summoned by Evans to come rescue Kennedy and his crew.

American dive-holiday operator, Danny Kennedy (no relation) has lived in Gizo for more than 30 years and joined the National Geographic team led by Dr Robert Ballard, famous for finding several long-lost wrecks including the *Titanic* and *Bismarck*.

The team finally found the few remains of *PT109* in 2002.

Danny told us when we visited him in Gizo



The SOS message that was carved on coconut husk.

Photo: JFK Library

that despite all the claims by others, all that was sighted by Ballard's ROV (Remotely Operated Vehicle) was a brass torpedo tube in 374 metres of water, and possibly a torpedo.

Being of timber construction all else had succumbed to the sea, or disappeared under sand and coral debris.

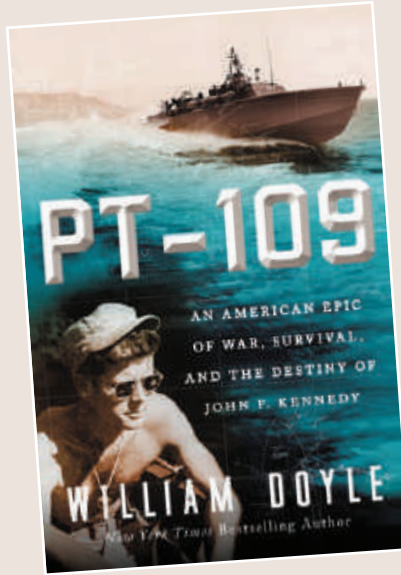
The ROV had nudged the torpedo tube but was unable to move it, suggesting it was still attached in some way to the wreck of *PT109*.

Neither Ballard nor Kennedy will reveal the exact location of *PT109*, saying they respect it as a war grave.

In any case, it's way too deep to for scuba divers. In a heartwarming footnote, Kumana appeared in the National Geographic documentary and had his house paid for by the Kennedy family, National Geographic and other benefactors.

He passed away last year at the ripe old age of 96. 

For information about Gizo diving, fishing, WWII wreckage tours visit www.divegizo.com




To be released in October, this thrilling, moment-by-moment account describes in fresh detail the famous WWII events and John F. Kennedy's heroic actions that saved his crew and is also a fascinating examination of how that extraordinary episode shaped the future president's life.

Drawing on new information from the American rescuers and recently released archives in both Japan and the U.S., *PT-109* recounts this event in breathtaking detail and explores the incident's remarkable aftermath on JFK's life and legend. The author, William Doyle reveals that, while the incident transformed JFK into a "war hero" and helped propel him to the U.S. Senate and the White House, the wounds he suffered during that harrowing week continued to haunt

him, physically and psychologically.

William Doyle will revisit the Solomon Islands in July to see first hand many of the significant WWII battle sites while on assignment for the New York Times.



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YOUR WORLD
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Marvelous Melbourne

Intriguing City Precincts

By Roderick Eimes

JUST AS THE GREAT SPORTING NATIONS enjoy a healthy rivalry, so too does Melbourne enjoy a respect among the great city destinations of the world.

With her annual Formula One Grand Prix engaging many millions of television viewers from around the globe, the fast-paced, cosmopolitan face of Melbourne is front-and-centre on the world stage. However, so much of what Melbourne has to offer will always remain hidden from cable channel surfers and TV sports fans. Even Melbournians themselves are only now beginning to uncover some of the secret nooks and crannies of their own city.

To get an idea of this unseen urban terrain, hold your breath as you dangle almost 300

metres above the streetscape from Skydeck on Level 88 of the awe-inspiring Eureka Tower.

It's the highest viewing platform in the Southern Hemisphere and the Edge Experience, where visitors enter a glass-floored chamber, is one of the Melbourne's home-grown heartstoppers.

Almost straight down and to the immediate north and northwest, you'll see one of the oldest and least-developed parts of the city starting across from busy Flinders Street Station. Ornate 19th Century Victorian buildings, old warehouses and little shopfronts call back to a time before the growth of the mighty glass and marble monoliths just up the street in the big end of town.

To properly explore this historic sandstone-walled, mini-jungle, you can pop into any



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of the information centres and collect a Melbourne Walks No.4 leaflet.

Take a 90-minute self-guided tour into the narrow back-alleys of Degraives Street and into the myriad lanes and arcades, or join the popular Hidden Secrets Tour for a full three hour exposé.

Stylish and vivacious, born-and-bred Melbournian, Fiona Sweetman, owns and operates Hidden Secrets Tours, a specialist ‘insider’s guide’ to the best haunts and lesser known attractions of Melbourne’s backstreets. Fiona and her growing team of guides have been enlightening visitors to Melbourne for more than a decade now.

Follow her as she swirls and glides along the narrow courtyards and alleys pointing out the history and significant architectural features of

the old buildings and shops now transformed into trendy boutiques and irresistible cafés.

“This started a few years ago as a shopping tour for the girls,” says Fiona, “but it’s just grown as people want more. We also do an Art and Design tour that attracts couples and a few single guys too. Everyone seems to have great fun.”

The tour group assembles in Federation Square, the new arts and entertainment hub across from Flinders Street station. Anything but secret, Federation Square was completed in 2002 to celebrate the Australia’s “coming of age” in 1901. It houses the Ian Potter Centre: NGV Australia, the state-of-the-art Australian Centre for the Moving Image plus 20 bars, restaurants and cafes centred around the city’s most vibrant public space.

But we’re about to go underground with Fiona, figuratively and literally. She guides us down a set of stairs that takes us below the pavement of busy Flinders Street into Campbell Arcade. Once virtually abandoned, this pedestrian tunnel is part art-space, part funky retail.

“After languishing for many years, these shops have been reclaimed by some innovative designers and retailers,” says Fiona pointing to racks of racy vintage and recycled wear in the memorably named boutique, Some Like It Hot.

We surface in Degraives Street proper, a typically rejuvenated alleyway, now overflowing with cool chic and the unmistakable aroma of freshly ground coffee. A healthy throng of patrons fills the seats,



engaged in animated chatter and obviously enjoying the ambiance. Melbourne is a social city, where people eat out, promenade and engage with a sense of community not so common anymore. Fiona waves and throws kisses and greetings to the shopkeepers and staff like a flower girl throws confetti at a wedding.

Our group ogles shoes, handbags and frocks; many are totally one-off creations, handmade by the budding designers and fashionistas that make Melbourne famous. Il Papiro, on the other hand, sells an exquisite assortment of stationery and specialty paper products. This delightful store could be just as much at home in the lanes of Venice.

Beyond Degraves is Union Lane. Upon first inspection, you may recoil at the vast graffiti murals, but in this lane at least, the spraycan artform is celebrated. Artists tag their vivid, oversize and abstract portraiture with their street personas: EFC, FT, Trance, SWB TGC, ID Boys, Siloe, Na, Sub rock and Deb.

Homegrown stores with such evocative names as Aesop, Shag, Sugar and Clementines perfectly capture the ingenious and irreverent style that gives their products unique flair. Be sure to stroll through elegant Block Place and Arcade for style and grace, then cross over to the elegant 19th Century Royal Arcade – Australia’s oldest. In the ceiling are Gog and Magog, two giant mythological Britons who have struck their gongs every hour since 1892.

Morning tea is a special event in

Melbourne. Rest your tired feet and put down those shopping bags, you’ve earned a treat. We’re heading for Koko Black in the Royal Arcade for a hot chocolate that transcends the senses. Want something to talk about? Try the Chilli Hot Chocolate, perfect for a cold winter’s day. Or true ‘chocophiles’ can indulge themselves with the Traditional Belgian Blend. Those on a diet can watch the resident chocolatier through the window as he sculpts the latest creamy creations.

Fiona’s tours culminate in a bistro lunch at Caboose in City Square. Choose a scrumptious tortellini or risotto, or if you’ve really worked up an appetite, go the steak sandwich. There’s a glass of great Aussie wine on offer too. Oh, my!

Melbourne rejoices in its many cosmopolitan flavours as much as it does its “dinkum” Aussie fare. There’s a lively Chinatown in Little Bourke Street and a little Athens in Lonsdale Street, while a distinctly Parisian feel pervades the designer boutiques of Collins Street.

Café culture is another highlight of Melbourne and its inner suburbs. With strong Italian and Greek influences throughout the city, great coffee was always a part of life.

Maria Paoli, an accredited barista, coffee judge and trainer, runs coffee tours through central Melbourne, visiting the premium coffee houses and cafés. What’s a perfect extraction? How do you tell a top crema? Spend two hours with Maria and you’ll never drink instant coffee again.



Solomon Airlines enjoys good connections to Melbourne through its airline partner QANTAS from Brisbane and Sydney airports.

Visit Melbourne

For more information:
www.hiddensecretstours.com and
www.thatsmelbourne.com.au



Photo: ONOC



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Solomons excellence at Pacific 'Olympics'

By Priestley Habru

IF THE 15TH PACIFIC GAMES was dubbed the best when Port Moresby hosted it in July this year, then it was equally the most outstanding performance ever for Solomon Islands since the premier regional sporting event started in 1963.

Solomon Islands came eighth in the total medal tally out of the 24 participating countries and for the first time Australia and New Zealand participated in the Games.

Team Solomons snatched 28 medals – the highest medal haul so far in the history of the ‘Happy Isles’ in the Pacific Games with seven gold medals, six silver and 15 bronze medals.

History was also made when Team Solomons collected its highest number of gold medals with seven won by only three individual athletes.

Sharon Firisua, left, snatched three gold medals while Rosifelo Siosi (right) took out the 10,000m. Weightlifter Jenly Wini (below) kept her number one spot.



Photo: ONOC

Photo: CHARLES KADAWIA

Even more intriguing was the fact that two of the three gold medal winners were female athletes.

Weightlifter and current Pacific Games record holder in the 53kg weight category Jenly Wini claimed three gold medals in the snatch by lifting 83kg, clean and jerk (110kg) and the overall total of 193kg.

Long distance runner Sharon Firisua also claimed three gold medals. She won the 5,000 metres setting a new Pacific Games record of 18.20.00 after 12 laps, the 10,000 metres with a personal best time of 38.35.06. Her third gold was in the half marathon race.

Male long distance runner Rosifelo Siosi grabbed gold in the 10,000 metres and backed it up with a silver medal in the 5,000 metres.

All three golden athletes were handsomely rewarded with SB\$10,000 cash each for the golden silverware by the Solomon Islands Government.

Those who got silver got SB\$7,000 and SB\$5,000 were presented to the bronze winners. It was also the first time the national government

showed appreciation for its national athletes.

Prime Minister Manasseh Sogavare in rewarding medal winners in Honiara after a successful Pacific Games promised local athletes would be training in world class facilities before the 2019 Pacific Games in Tonga.

Having spent SB\$5.4m for Solomon Islands participation in the Games, the government is serious in preparing athletes for the future.

It was evident that individual sports as opposed to team sports are winning medals for Solomon Islands and as such, facilities should be prioritised and built for these targeted sports.

Out of the 24 sports Solomon Islands competed in, only seven came back with medals, namely Athletics, Boxing, Taekwondo, Weightlifting, Karate, Body Building and Paralympics.

Solomon Islands has also indicated its interest to bid for the 2023 Pacific Games.

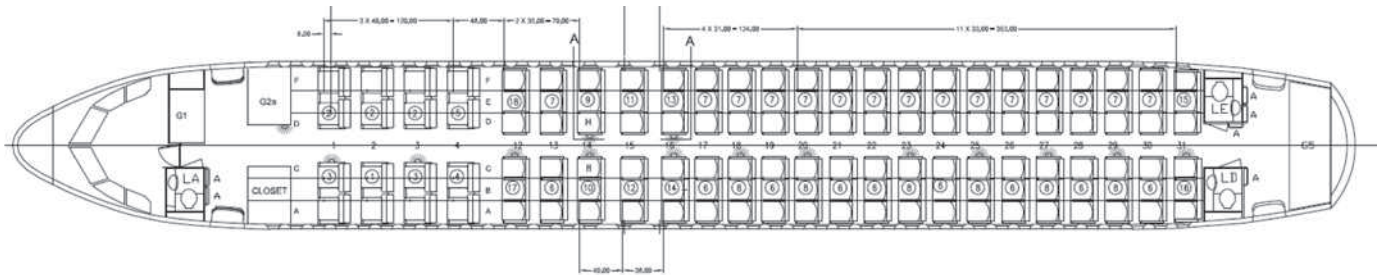


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SOLOMON AIRLINES FACT SHEET

Aircraft: A320

Registration: H4 -BUS
Length: 37.57 m
Wing Span: 34.10m
Range: 3,000 nm
Cruising Speed: 830 kpm
Seating capacity: 136
Configuration: Business:16 Economy: 120
Current Routes: Brisbane, Nadi, Port Vila



With an elegant leather finish, our luxurious cabin is specifically configured for space and comfort. Our 16 business class and 120 economy seat configuration provides all our customers with more personal space and privacy. Our traditional in-flight full service is second to none and allows customers to enjoy simplicity in a sophisticated modern setting.

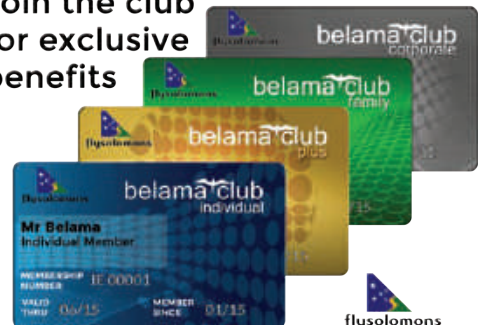


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AIRCRAFT: Dash 8-102



Length:	22.25 m
Wing Span:	25.91 m
Range:	2040 km
Cruising Speed:	490 kph
Seating capacity:	36
Crew:	3 Crew including 1 cabin crew
Current Routes:	Honiara; Seghe: Munda; Gizo; Kira Kira; Santa Cruz
Aircraft in Fleet:	1

AIRCRAFT: Twin Otter



Length:	15.77 m
Wing Span:	19.81 m
Range:	4 hrs 10 minutes
Cruising Speed:	338 kph
Seating capacity:	16
Crew:	2
Current Routes:	All Ports in the Solomon Islands
Aircraft in Fleet:	2

BNI: Islander



Length:	10.86 m
Wing Span:	14.94 m
Range:	5 hrs
Cruising Speed:	257 kph
Seating capacity:	9
Crew:	1
Current Routes:	All ports in the Solomon Islands
Aircraft in Fleet:	1

SOLOMON AIRLINES GENERAL INFORMATION

Head Office

Henderson Airport
P.O.Box 23, Honiara
Solomon Islands
Ph: +677 20031
Fax: +677 20232

Travel Centre

Hibiscus Avenue
Ph: +677 20152
Fax: +677 23992
Email: corporate.travel@flysolomons.com.sb

Australia

Brisbane International Terminal
Level 1
Tel: +61 7 38605883
Fax: +61 7 38604351
Toll Free: 1300 894311 (Aus)
0800 424980 (NZ)
Email: reservations@flysolomons.com

Fiji

Nadi Airport

Office 27, First Floor
Tel: +679 6722831
Fax: +679 6722140
Email: solomon@connect.com.fj

WEBSITE: www.flysolomons.com

International & Domestic Connections



International Connections



flysolomons

Solomon Islands National Airline

www.flysolomons.com

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	5,279 km ²	81,214	1,661m	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

Country	Land	Population	Capital	Products
Solomon Islands	29,785 km ²	530,669	Honiara	Agriculture, fisheries and forestry
Australia	7.6 million km ²	19.6 million	Canberra	Agriculture, mining, manufacturing, services and tourism
Fiji	18,300 km ²	850,000	Suva	Agriculture, clothing, fisheries, sugar and tourism
New Caledonia	18,576 sq km ²	200,000	Noumea	Nickel, agriculture, fishing
New Zealand	264,000 km ²	3.8 million	Wellington	Agriculture, forestry, services, manufacturing and tourism
Papua New Guinea	463,000 km ²	6.1 million	Port Moresby	Agriculture, fisheries, forestry and mining
Vanuatu	12,180 km ²	204,000	Port Vila	Agriculture, fisheries and tourism



Domestic Connections

Solomon Islands

Solomon Islands Offices

Head Office P O Box 23, Henderson Airport Honiara, Solomon Islands
Administration Tel: (677) 20031 • Fax: (677) 20232
Finance Tel: (677) 20031 • Fax: (677) 20232
Sales & Reservations Tel: (677) 20031 • Fax: (677) 23992
 Reservation - 177 (Local calls)

Airport Offices

HONIARA
 Operations Tel: (677) 36048 • Fax: (677) 36244
 Engineering Tel: (677) 36104 • Fax: (677) 36040
 Cargo Tel: (677) 36071 • Fax: (677) 36372
 International Terminal Traffic Tel: (677) 36077 • Fax: (677) 36076
 Domestic Terminal Traffic Tel: (677) 36048/36251 • Fax: (677) 36244

SANTA CRUZ Sales & Reservations Tel: (677) 53159 • Fax: (677) 53092
GIZO Sales & Reservations Tel: (677) 60173 • Fax: (677) 60202
MUNDA Sales & Reservations Tel: (677) 62152 • Fax: (677) 62152
KIRAKIRA Sales & Reservations Tel: (677) 50070

Overseas Administration Offices

AUSTRALIA - Brisbane Airport
 Administration 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@flysolomons.com

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@flysolomons.com

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

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

Overseas General Sales Agents (GSA)

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 Australia Cargo GSA
 Aircraft Loaders & Packers
 Unit 3c, 17 Sugarmill Road
 Eagle Farm
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 BP 336, 98845, Noumea
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NZ PASSENGER GSA
 Airline Marketing New Zealand
 Steve Rice | General Manager
 Level 10, 120 Albert St | P O Box 6247
 Wellesley St. Auckland 1010
 Ph DDI: (64 9) 969 7477
 Fax: (64 9) 969 7474 |
 Email: steve.rice@airlinemarketing.co.nz

NZ Cargo GSA
 GSA Cargo Services New Zealand Ltd
 Carolyn Evans | Director
 PO Box 107 027, Auckland
 International Airport, New Zealand
 2154
 Phone: +64 9 2758767
 Fax: +64 9 2758707
 Mobile: +64 21757400
 Email: carolyn@cargogs.com

UNITED STATES
 Solomon Airlines
 North America Sales & Marketing
 5000 Birch Street -# 3000
 New Port Beach
 California 92660
 Tel: (949) 752 5440
 Fax: (949) 476 3741
 Email: flysolomons@gmail.com

UNITED KINGDOM
 Solomon Airlines
 Flight House
 Fernhill Road, Horley
 Surrey, RH6 9SY
 United Kingdom
 Tel: +44 (870) 443 0757
 Fax: +44 (870) 240 2208
 Email: web@solomonairlines.co.uk

International Airport Information and Allowances Guide

Airport	HONIARA Solomon Islands	BRISBANE Australia	PORT MORESBY Papua New Guinea	PORT VILA Vanuatu	NADI Fiji
Distance to City	10km	10km	8km	6km	8km
Bus Fare	SBD10.00	AUD6.00	PGK10.00	VUV100	FJD1.00
Taxi Fare	SBD70.00	AUD30.00	PGK30.00	VUV800	FJD20.00
Duty Free	2 litres	2.250 litres	2 litres	1.5 litre	2.25 litres
Allowance	200 cigs	250 cigs	200 cigs	250 cigs	200 cigs
Exchange Rate	1 USD=8SBD	1AUD=7SBD	1PGK=3SBD	100VUV=7.48SBD	1FJD=5SBD

*Airport Tax for Honiara SBD100.00

*Information as shown is to be used as a guide only and is subject to change without notice.

Thumbs up for pilots



Captain Cornelius Vonseu (from left to right), CAASI FOI-Flight Operations Inspector and trainer, Captain Gerard Rea and Captain Steven Amanu.

Photo: FILE

SOLOMON AIRLINES has congratulated Captains Cornelius Vonseu and Steven Aumanu following the successful completion of both pilots Instructional Techniques Course via the assistance of CAASI Instructor, Captain Gerard Rea.

Conducted in the Solomon Airlines training facility at Henderson Airport, the qualification is seen as instrumental in Captain Vonseu achieving his D category Flight Check approvals for flying the carrier's Twin Otter aircraft.

This means he will now be qualified to act as a Twin Otter training Captain, assisting Chief Pilot Captain Geoff Posala in his role as currently the only Check & Training pilot in the airlines' domestic fleet.

Similarly, Captain Aumanu will achieve

the same category and as a result eventually qualify as the second Check & Training pilot for both the airline's Twin Otter and Islander aircraft.

Speaking at a ceremony to mark both captains' achievements, CAASI director, George Satu said it was gratifying to see Solomon Airlines putting a much improved training regime in place for its domestic operation and as a result, see pilots better performing their duty of responsibility under the guidance of Chief Pilot, Captain Geoff Posala.


Solomon Airlines CEO, Captain Ron Sumsum said the airline was extremely proud of its newly up-skilled Captains.

"I am especially happy with this outcome," Captain Sumsum said.

"While it has taken a while to plan and finally implement this Instructional Techniques course and as a result, review our current strengths within the ranks, this is just the beginning of a rebuilding of our domestic pilots operational capabilities.

"Naturally, we want to see further upgrades of all our Solomon Islands pilots and in order to achieve this, we are working with the regulator to find solutions to the upgrades required.

"This will enable us to move from a Part 135/125 aircraft (Islander and Twin Otter aircraft) to the Part 121 fleet of the Dash8 and Airbus.

"We are on the right trajectory and hopefully, within a medium period of time, we will see more achievements by our team." 



ENGINEERS

pass with flying colours

SOLOMON AIRLINES Solomon Airlines is pleased to announce that the first three Aircraft Engineers from Solomon Islands have attained their Dash 8 License Ratings. They are also the most Senior LAMEs (Licensed Aircraft Maintenance Engineers) in the department.

Their achievements were a culmination derived from 5 years of classroom training with ground courses followed by on-job training with Airlines outside of Solomon Islands and also under the leadership of our now Manager Maintenance & Airworthiness – Julai Tomadek.

1. Clement Ramoi has achieved - Dash 8 Airframe and Engine License

2. William Talua has also achieved- Dash 8 Airframe and Engine License


3. Whilst William Devesi has achieved- Dash 8 Electrical, Instruments and Radio

The added Ratings were approved and awarded to them by CAASI (Civil Aviation Authority of Solomon Islands) and enables them to sign off the Dash 8 Aircraft after Maintenance or Component replacement on the aircraft. They will now be responsible for daily maintenance and up keep of our only Dash 8.

Initially all three Engineers had to do an intense 6 weeks Type course (Theory) in Brisbane, Australia to attain a World recognised certificate. Following that the Three Engineers were sent away at various times for work attachment with Airlines PNG in Port Moresby. This gave them valuable experience and extended knowledge on the

aircraft type.

After our Dash8 registered as H4-SOL was brought in to the Country in 2012, the engineers continued to work under Expatriate Dash 8 Licensed personnel to continue their build-up of experience to achieving their goal. They have now achieved the final assessments under the watchful eye of Solomon Airlines and CAASI which has given the privilege of being qualified experts in their field.

The airline CEO Ron Sumsum thanked the engineers noted above in addition to their team leader Julai Tomadek, an ex Air Niugini LAME; as well as the Director of CAASI Mr George Satu for his deliberation in awarding this milestone to the companies total licence coverage in Solomon Islands. 



Solomon Star

Your Solomon Star Guide to the Solomon Islands

CLIMATE: Tropically warm and humid with coastal day temperatures averaging 28C. April to November tends to be drier, and November to April wetter.



WHAT TO WEAR: Light and casual. Keep brief beachwear for beaches.



IMMIGRATION: Commonwealth, United States and most West 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 from Honiara International Airport.

AIRPORT TAX: SB\$100 payable by passengers (12 years and over) boarding international flights.

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 or tablet. Maloprin is usually recommended.



CURRENCY: \$100, \$50, \$20, \$10, \$5 and \$2 Solomon Islands notes; coins are \$1, 50c, 20c, 10c, 5c coins.

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 Saturdays 8am - noon.

BANKS: Bank South Pacific opens Monday to Friday 8.30am to 3pm; and ANZ Banking Group and Westpac open Monday to Friday - 9am to 4pm. Pan Oceanic Bank Limited opens 9am to 4pm Monday to Friday. Its Panatina Plaza branch opens from 10am to 1pm on Saturdays.



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 GSM Mobile services. Telephone and Internet cards are readily available through shops, hotels and Our Telekom offices. GSM prepaid and postpaid mobile cards are available in Honiara, Gizo and planned deployment to all other provincial centres. Breeze Rifil cards are available for prepaid mobile top-ups. Our Telekom also provides ADSL broadband Internet service through landlines or you can access the Internet through

Bumblebee wireless broadband hotspots located at major hotels, International terminal and Panatina Plaza.

TIPPING: Not expected and not encouraged.

TRANSPORT: Taxis and buses are readily available in Honiara. Rental cars: Avis, Economy, Travel Car Solomon, Zome.

INTERNATIONAL AIR: Solomon Airlines, Air Pacific, Air Niugini, Our Airlines, Pacific Blue and serve Honiara International Airport.



DOMESTIC: Solomon Airlines operates services throughout the country.

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



RADIO: PAOA FM broadcasts from transmitters at Honiara, Guadalcanal (97.7) and Malaita (101.7), Solomon Islands Broadcasting Corporation has medium wave and FM services. ZFM and religious stations broadcast in

Honiara area. Radio Australia and BBC local relays are on FM in Honiara. Television: Our Telekom relays BBC and Australia Network services in the Honiara area.



NEWSPAPERS:

The English-language Solomon Star is the only daily newspaper and covers local, regional and international news. The National Express and Island Sun are other newspapers.



HONIARA ACTIVITIES: Golf, tennis, scuba diving, walks, battlefield tours, swimming, sailing, bush walking and fishing.

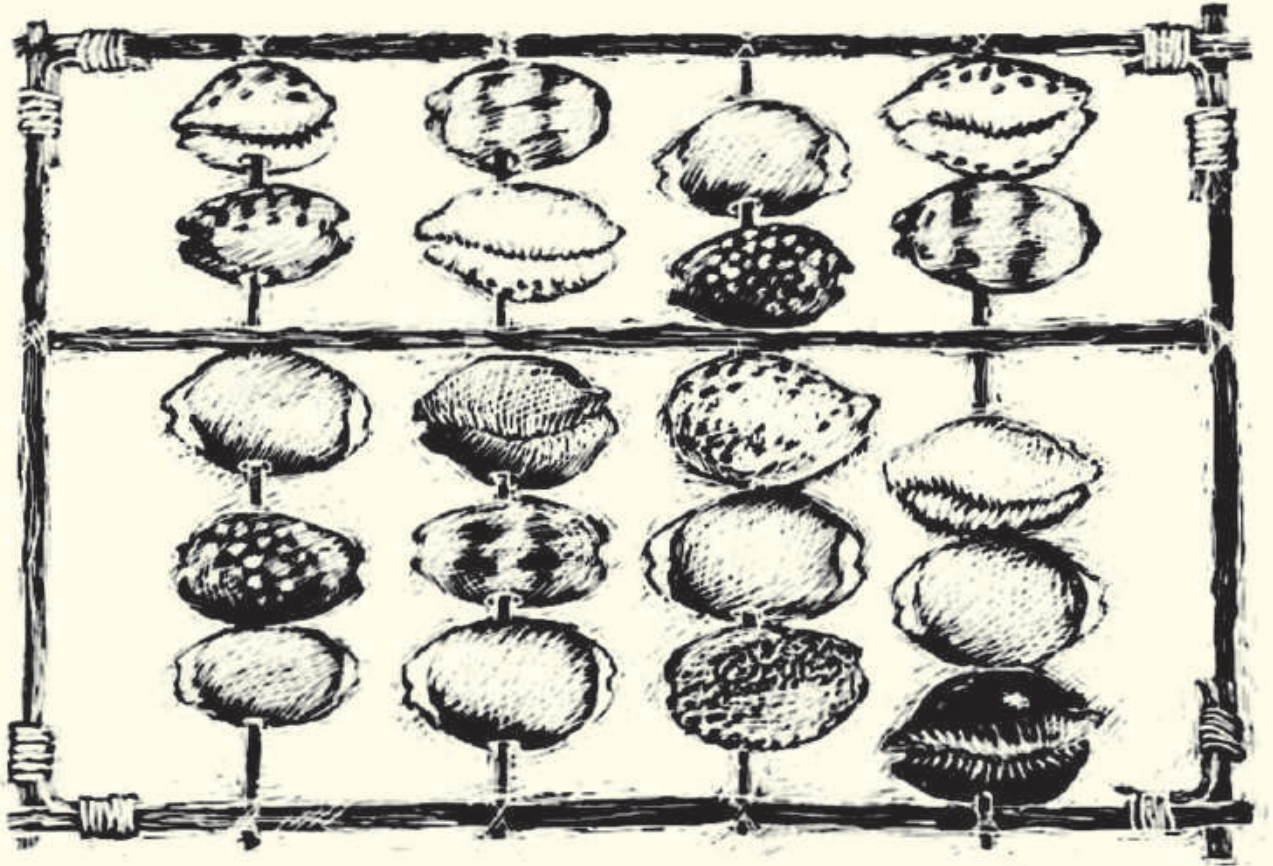


SOUVENIRS: Solomon Islands law forbids unauthorised export of war relics retrieved from land sites or sunken wrecks. Consult the National Museum of the Solomon Islands for advice.

COMMUNITY SERVICE: Rotary Club meets at the Flamingo Lounge, Honiara Hotel, at 5.30pm every Tuesday. Soroptomist International of Solomon Islands meets on the first Mondays of each month at the Mendana Hotel at 5.15pm.



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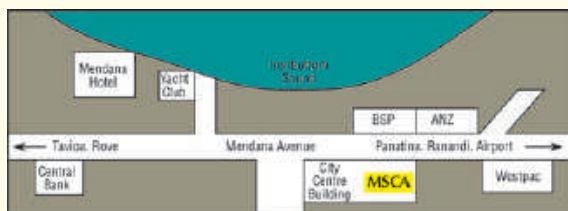
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Website: www.pacificcasinohotel.com Email: reservation@pacificcasinohotel.com

Situated on the picturesque Honiara seafront and set next to the largest and renowned casino in the Solomon Islands, Supreme Casino. Pacific Casino Hotel is ideal for business and leisure travellers alike. It is conveniently located approximately five kilometres from Honiara International Airport and the Honiara CBD. The hotel offers 173 spacious, comfortable and fully airconditioned rooms. Suites boast separate lounge areas and private balconies.

Keeping the comfort, convenience and ease of access in mind for international travellers, modern amenities includes IDD telephone, satellite TV with 24 hours in-house movie channels, refrigerator and coffee/tea service. Internet hotspots are available around the hotel and a wide range of services and facilities includes swimming pool, billiard room, fitness centre, laundry, internet cafe, car rental and conference room facilities.



Paradise Warmth Adventure



Western Cuisine



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- . SUPREME CAR RENTAL
- . SUPREME CASINO
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- . CAPTAIN'S BAR

