

SOLOMON AIRLINE'S COMPLIMENTARY INFLIGHT MAGAZINE

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ISSUE 69

# Solomons



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**Ron Sumsum**  
*Chief Executive Officer*

#### Milestone - 53 years old and counting

It seems only recently that we celebrated our 50th Anniversary in 2012 with the arrival of our very own and first Dash8 aircraft and the opening of our new H.Q. built within our Freight Terminal. This year, however, makes us 53 years older and hopefully wiser as the challenges continue to write a new course in our chapter.

It is no secret that we have made some hard decisions of recent but when we look internally, these decisions were made so that our future is more assured and that safety continues to be our number 1 priority and yes....it has been hard but rest also assured that we will never let our customers and clientele down.

#### Nearer to thee - Sydney

Yes...Sydney will commence with new services on the 1st of June 2015 and by the time of this new edition of Solomons, we would have already launched the new service to/from Sydney direct to/from Honiara weekly.

The Team has been working tirelessly in the preparation for the launch and together with Solomon Islands Visitors Bureau (SIVB); we shall be spending circa AUD\$700k (or about circa SBD\$5m) in the promotion and marketing of our new Sydney launch and also vigorously pushing for that Tourism dollar that continues to evade Solomon Islands....we are trying and we will continue trying to ensure we meet the Governments & people's mandate to have Tourism replace timber as a primary income source and together with the agri-sector and our own natural resource in the fishing industry we want to assure the future of our Hapi Isles.

#### IATA-IOSA Safety Audit

In April 2015, we were again awarded our second IATA-IOSA Safety audit and this has given credence to the first issuance which we are mindful of and have continually "adjusted the way we do business" to cater for the more influential e-IOSA mandated to commence this year.

Aviation is a changing environment and as a multi-National company & Airline; we have to change with International trends to ensure our attention is focused on "doing what we say in our manuals that we do" and "saying in our manuals exactly what we are doing in application".

#### Partnerships

We have been continuing to have meaningful discussions with our new Melanesian Partners in Air Niugini and Air Vanuatu on either side of our borders and as many would know and read, it is the way to go for small airlines to work together to get the synergies and benefits of small carriers and small routes as is evident with bigger players in the world like Qantas and Emirates or even the Air New Zealand and Virgin relationships.... makes sense!!

We are hopeful now of a start to our new Tri-partite services linking PNG, Solomon Islands and Vanuatu from around the 17th June however, a few more steps need to be taken to ensure operational readiness.

WELKAM FRENS

## To all our valued customers

The MSG potential is vast but the sticky issues of Air Service Agreements continue to dog our future as is the case with no further discussions or meetings with our Fijian counterparts thus hampering real progress with two flights operating to/from Fiji from Solomon Island on a Saturday yet, if one adds Air Niugini's Fiji service also on a Saturday, one can quickly see that something needs to be done and we are still hopeful of all three Governments getting to some common ground and let common sense prevail.

We are also hopeful of a new partnership with an Australian carrier soon....more by the next issue.

#### Future of H4-BUS

Our current Airbus A320 registered under Solomon CAASI regulations is nearing a decision: should Solomon Airlines maintain this aircraft past February 2016 or replace it with a younger model of the same brand Airbus.

There are a lot of advantages to maintain our current BUS (as it is quaintly known), however, a full study and search for another Airbus in the A319 model (slightly smaller) or the same model A320 has been ongoing for the past 6-8 months and nearing a recommendation for the board and Government to consider.

The current BUS has been a faithful little 'airship' to our one aircraft fleet but the vintage means that there are many modifications (avionics) to be installed by the end of 2015 and into February 2016 in order to meet CASA (Australia) mandatory requirements of equipment on board when flying in Australian airspace. This takes time to review together with costs and finding another aircraft with all these modifications already installed and ready to fly is proving challenging to say the least. We shall, however, be making a decision soon so as to plan for the future.

#### Interesting read ahead

Includes the following-

Fascinating Shortland Islands near our neighbours Bougainville in Papua New Guinea.

The Bay of Plenty situated in the East of Guadalcanal and near Tavanipupu Resort, the resort of choice by Kate & William.

Diving the Marovo Lagoon.....a great destination and good read.

And whilst in the West....read about the Pain & Glory of Kolombangara by Laura Waters.

Heroes of Solomons cites a story of World War II-Lifting the Shame of Savo Island.

And lastly, you can't miss our key story of what a great Tourism visit to Sydney will entail....like we say for those visiting Sydney, Welkam to Sydney Australia and when coming to our shores, Welkam to the Solomons; and we would like to think....Our Hapi Isles and Hapi people!

One day when we are finally ready with more value and increased service to our clientele, we shall aim for a coveted brand of being the Best Little Airline in the Pacific.

We value and respect your business and do want to know what more we can do or value-add to ensure you are not only satisfied with the way we offer and deliver our business to you but also that you will feel comfortable in recommending us to your family and friends....let us know by sending an email to our marketing people under [hbae@flysolomons.com.sb](mailto:hbae@flysolomons.com.sb)

Tengiu tumas.

**Ron Sumsum**  
*Chief Executive Officer*



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# Solomons



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May/June 2015



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## CONTENTS

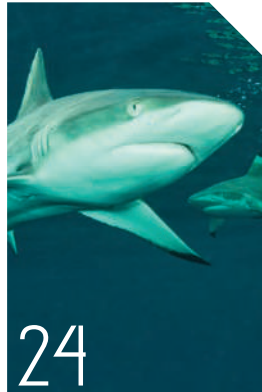
<b>Fascinating Shortlands</b> More than just remnants of WWII	12
<b>Bay of Plenty</b> The underwater treasures of Marau Sound	18
<b>Diving the Marovo Lagoon</b> A pristine shark sanctuary	24
<b>Pain &amp; Glory on Kolombangara</b> Hiking up the third highest peak in the Solomons	32
<b>Reviving Oral Tradition</b> Bringing back stories of the past	36
<b>Captain Frank Getting RAN</b> Lifting the shame of Savo Island	38
<b>Sydney Rocks!</b> Sydney, an all-season destination	42
<b>Solomon Airlines Fact Sheet</b>	48
<b>Route Maps</b>	51
<b>Contact Information</b>	52
<b>Airline News</b>	52
<b>Solomon Star Guide</b>	54



12



18



24



42

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# OUT & ABOUT



THERE aren't many restaurants (hotels excluded) in Honiara where pizza is on the menu. And when you locate one, like Pete's Pizza in Kukum, it's worth checking out. Due to limited sitting, it's best to pre-order any one of Pete's 13 pizzas. Choose from BBQ meat feast, BBQ chicken and ham, classic Hawaiian, King Solomon, Aussies, and even a pizza called cheese burger. Also available are light snacks, pastas (spaghetti & fettuccine), burgers (actual burgers), beverages, and ciabatta. If you're based in town it's a short \$3-jaunt on the KG bus or Ropiko Express.

Location – Shop 27, Supreme Plaza, Kukum (near Pacific Casino) | Open 10:30am – 9:30pm Monday – Sunday | T: 21993



## International Museum Day

VISIT the Solomon Islands National Museum 18th May and celebrate International Museum Day. Theme for 2015 is 'Museums for a sustainable society'.



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## The Bakery

IT is also a café – a café bakery. Owner Gol Khadem treasures her unsweetened breads: “Breads aren’t meant to be sweet unless they’re a particular type of sweet bread. We have healthy breads because there’s no sugar in them. We even use filtered water in everything we serve.”

Opened January 2015, The Bakery is big on teas but also serves coffee (Papua New Guinea Goroka Coffee). While you’re there, grab a tart (coconut, pineapple, lemon, mango – depending on fruit in season), doughnuts, savories, rotis, chocolate twists, or cinnamon twists.

Location: Town Ground, Rugby Stadium (opposite Ministry of Finance) | Open 7am – 7:30pm Monday – Saturday | T: 8884888 | [gkenterprisesltd@gmail.com](mailto:gkenterprisesltd@gmail.com)



## Rekona Flourish Lodge

REKONA is a decent, budget accommodation suitably located high and away from Honiara traffic yet walking distance to town. Each of the six rooms has ocean view. The only thing guests share is the spacious common room equipped with a kitchen and television. There aren’t many lodges within Honiara that offer a secure stop for half the cost; Rekona does and worth referencing.

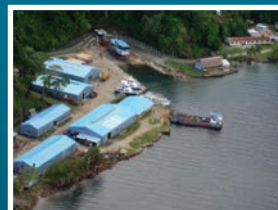
Location: Lower Vavaya Ridge (5-minutes from CBD) | T: 21082 or M: 7832085 | [rekona.flourish@gmail.com](mailto:rekona.flourish@gmail.com)

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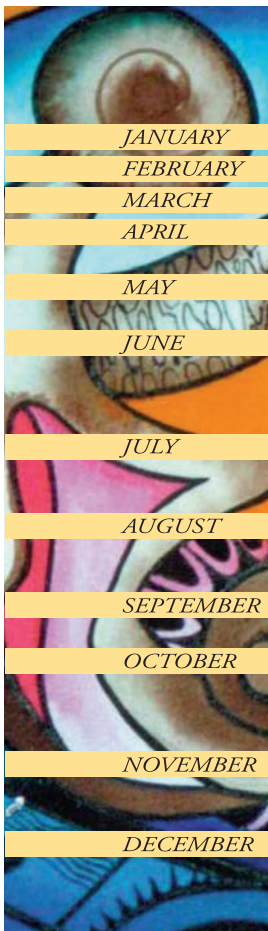


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# 2015 CALENDAR OF EVENTS



JANUARY

FEBRUARY

MARCH

APRIL

MAY

JUNE

JULY

AUGUST

SEPTEMBER

OCTOBER

NOVEMBER

DECEMBER

*Papatura Surf Comp (Isabel Province Between 6-16th Jan)*

*Dolphin Migration (Honiara)*

*Isabel Second Appointed Day*

*Reef Booming (Beginning of best Snorkelling Season)  
Eastern Fun Run*

*Spear Festival (Makira Province)*

*Vaka Tepe (War Canoe Festival/Western Province)*

*Central Province 2nd Appointed Day*

*Temotu Province 2nd Appointed Day*

*Banana (Huki) Festival, Makira*

*Akuila Talasasa Arts Festival, Gizo*

*Independence Day (National Day)*

*Thavinago (Harvesting of Food & Fruit/Isabel Province)*

*Renbel 2nd Appointed Day*

*Malaita 2nd Appointed Day/Cultural Week*

*WWII Commemoration - 70th anniversary*

*Gizo Half Marathon*

*Flysolomons Marathon (Guadalcanal)*

*Chief Festival (Isabel Province)*

*Stunt Mullet Fishing Competition (Lola, Western Province)*

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

*Birdwatching Season (Oct - Nov/Malaita Province)*

*Flysolomons Marathon*

*Surfs Up*

*Land Crabbing Migration*

*Lagoon Festival (Munda, Western Province)*

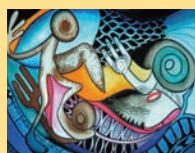
*Miss South Pacific Pageant (Dec 1-7th)*

*Carol in the Islands (Honiara)*

*Gizo Mile Run (Western Province)*

*Western Province 2nd Appointed Day*

## ... and connect with Solomon Islands on the Internet



The excitement of Solomon Islands is now on the Internet. Sites featuring diving, fishing, holidaying and travelling in our islands are appearing on the World Wide Web. Here's a sample, not in any particular order.

If you've any sites you recommend we add to this list, e-mail editor@ibi.com.fj with the URL for the site.

*Share the excitement of the Solomons*

### Solomon Islands Web Directory

#### GENERAL

Solomon Airlines  
www.flysolomons.com  
Solomon Islands Visitors Bureau  
www.visitsolomons.com.sb  
Immigration – Entry Requirements  
www.commerce.gov.sb/Divisions/Immigration/Immigration\_Requirements.htm  
Customs – Duty Free Allowances  
www.visitsolomons.com.sb/travel-infor/customs

#### ACCOMMODATION

**HONIARA**  
Heritage Park Hotel  
www.heritageparkhotel.com.sb  
Solomon Kitano Mendana Hotel  
www.kitanomendana.com  
King Solomon Hotel  
www.kingsolomonhotel.info  
Pacific Casino Hotel  
www.solomon-hotel.com  
Raintree Cafe Bed & Breakfast  
www.raintreehoniara.com

#### GIZO

Gizo Hotel  
www.gizohotel.com  
Sanbis Resort  
www.sanbisresort.com

Fatboys Resort  
www.fatboysgizo.com

#### MUNDA

Agnes Lodge  
www.agneshotel.com.sb  
Zipolo Habu Resort  
www.zipolohabu.com.sb  
Tetepare Eco-Lodge  
www.tetepare.org

#### MAROVO LAGOON (SEGHE & GATAKAE)

Uepi Island Resort  
www.uepi.com  
The Wilderness Lodge  
www.thewildernesslodge.org  
Matikuri Lodge  
www.matikuri-lodge.com

#### ISABEL ISLAND (FERA & SUAVANAO)

Papatura Island Retreat  
www.papatura.com  
Kagata Village Stay  
www.kagatasurfingfrens.com

#### MARAU

Tavanipupu Private Island Resort  
www.tavanipupupu.com

#### ACTIVITIES/TOURS

##### HONIARA

Tulagi Dive – Honiara Diving  
www.tulagidive.com.sb  
Travel Solomons – Tours  
www.travelsolomons.com  
Extreme Adventures – Diving and Day Trips  
www.solomonadventures.com

##### GIZO

Dive Gizo – Gizo Diving & Tours  
www.divegizo.com  
Kolombangara Island - Birdwatching  
www.kolombangara.org

##### MUNDA

Dive Munda – Munda Diving  
www.mundadive.com  
Go West Tours – Tours  
www.agneshotel.com.sb

##### MAROVO LAGOON (SEGHE & GATAKAE)

Kayak Solomons – Kayaking Uepi  
www.kataksolomons.com

Solomon Dive Adventures – Diving Gatakae  
www.solomondiveadventures.com

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Bilikiki Cruises  
www.bilikiki.com

#### OVERSEAS TRAVEL AGENTS

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Dive Adventures  
www.diveadventures.com.au  
Go Tours  
www.gotours.com.au  
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www.adventureworld.com.au

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www.coralseas.com.au

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##### DIVERSION DIVE TRAVEL

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##### WOTIF GROUP

www.wotif.com" www.wotif.com

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www.solomonislands-hotels.travel

##### NEW ZEALAND

##### DIVE FISH SNOW TRAVEL

www.divefishsnow.co.nz

##### ADVENTURE WORLD

www.adventureworld.co.nz

##### WOTIF GROUP

www.wotif.com

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www.solomonislands-hotels.travel

#### OTHER SERVICES

##### Foreign Investment Board

www.commerce.gov.sb/Divisions/Investment/default.htm

##### Solomon Islands Business Directory

www.businessadvantagesolomons.com

##### Solomons Telekom – phone & internet services

www.solomon.com.sb

##### Bemobile – mobile phone services

www.bemobile.com.sb





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# Fascinating Shortlands

By Mere Tuqiri

**TWO HUNDRED AND TWENTY SEVEN YEARS** ago in the era of land ‘discoveries’ and European voyaging Englishman John Shortland saw a landmass northwest of the Solomons. Like a 21st century selfie the navy officer stamped his name on the islands that now form part of the Western Province.

The British, Japanese, Germans, Americans, Australians, French, Italians, of course in different capacities and intent, have all claimed presence in the Shortland Islands through four centuries (1700s to now). Two groups that have left indelible traces are perhaps the Americans and Japanese; remnants of fighter plane fuselage, detached wings and rusted weaponry are fascinating blemishes on the beaches, forest undergrowth, ocean depths, and (who knows what’s) underground.





## Remnants of World War Two

As we circled the bend leading downhill to the beach, Mark sighted a cylindrical shape about a forearm length amidst the grass. It was rusted with a green band around its base. A corroded bomb. It looked heavy, exciting even. An American air raid bomb or Japanese artillery? Not an appealing scenario if you know the history, but I can see the allure for war relic enthusiasts. Is there a world heritage category for war relics?

Seventy-plus years after the Japanese occupied Nila on Shortland Island, their bulky, steel possessions of war remain permanent fixtures along the well-kept roads they built through the bushes and under thick forest cover. I'm trekking with local guide Mark and Dominican Sisters Cris and Mary (explanation below).

On the inhabited part of Nila are three concrete bunkers. The interiors feel claustrophobic, doors narrow and low, drain pipes for ventilation. The forest road reveals one search light, several heavy-duty firearms, some with ammo boxes, two metal bunkers with no windows perhaps used as storage, a sky-blue bowl, two rotating machines (locals call it the merry-go-round) that look like you could attach guns at strategic points, and a two-tank motorcycle registration number M0256 with side car. At this point, it's the second wheeled vehicle on Shortland, the other a functioning tractor belonging to the Italian Salesian volunteers.





at the Nila Clinic with an on-call schedule that's as prompt as the resident convent rooster that crows at five each morning. Sister Mary teaches basic agriculture at St. Anne's Rural Training Center and Sister Antonia is the school principal.

The convent is also where you buy mobile credit, fish hooks, napkin pins, baby napkins, razors, and potentially a lot more if supplies aren't quickly depleted due to demand. Sister Cris would deliver a baby at the clinic and almost immediately a family member would be at the convent to purchase a napkin. The convent, other than the church, is central to Nila residents.

### Catholic Mission Station

Nila has been a Catholic Mission Station since French Catholic missionaries first occupied Nila's Poporang Hill in 1898. They arrived via Bougainville. Before them were French Marist missionaries. Australian Dominicans came in 1956.

Soon, if not already, Shortland/Nila will also become a mission station for the Salesians, second to the Dominicans. Sister Cris heads the convent; she is also a mid-wife

### Onua

Ask John Kotaru (see Fact File) about Onua Island. This is where cruise ships stop over in May, September, October. It's a sandy stretch with clear, snorkel-friendly waters belonging to the chiefly Silakanegana tribe.

On the passing of Shortland Island paramount chief and former Solomon Islands governor general Lala'aha Sir George Lepping in December 2014, islands Onua, Olofi, and Faisi were slapped with a fishing ban as a mark of respect. This is now likely lifted.





## Paddle to Kangu

Pam derailed my planned Saturday boat trip to Buin market (FYI, I had a valid PNG visa). But even a hovering low depression that escalated into a tropical cyclone called Pam didn't deter Shortlanders from making the weekly market pilgrimage to Bougainville in rough seas. So I've resigned myself to experience vicariously what a day trip is like today and five decades ago through Sevina Pauline and Joachim Evo.

The geographical proximity between Solomon Islands via Shortlands and Papua New Guinea via Bougainville is incredibly close. I'm told from the Shortlands, depending which island you're on, boat time is 15 minutes to one hour. Country to country legalities aside, this is one border crossing that pushes the boundaries governed by paper agreements. The border means family ties (Shortland/Choiseul and Bougainville), intermarriage, Wantok trade (highland-coastal), and basic survival.

Guided by calm trades, sometimes strong north-west winds, to Kangu (a Bougainville landing point), Joachim recollects what it was like paddling an outrigger canoe as a 12-year-old in the early 1950s with his grandfather. Joachim is now 74. Paddle time – About four hours with sail. World War Two had ceased not long before, indigenous seafarers were safe to plunge their paddles again into waters blue.

“Today weather changes often and suddenly. But when I was a young boy it was predictable; we could tell what the weather would be like this month, next month. I think this climate change is true yia.”

“When my mother was in hospital in Bougainville I would paddle from Shortland with my grandfather, visit her, return. I went to school in Bougainville. I also remember paddling to Bougainville for Christmas shopping; if your outrigger had a sail, even better, go faster. People made sails from old ships' canvas or used parachutes.”



“Only one Chinese shop on Kangu beach in the 1950s; name of shop owner was Mr Tong Lap. Five to six canoes would go same time; long canoes with outrigger; one canoe could take three to six people. We don’t take many things when we leave because of shopping load coming back.”


“That shop was gone before Solomons gained independence. Now there’s Buin town. We traded in the same currency then – pounds and shillings [not Kina or Solomon dollar]; small tin mackerel cost 20 cents then; one loaf bread 10 cents; buns 10 cents trifala (three). Towards end of 1950s cargo boats started coming monthly from Gizo.”

“It was exciting for us kids because we were paddling to another country just for shopping; at Kangu people from the highlands would shop there too. Tong Lap shop was like a meeting place for relatives from the highlands and Shortlands. Sometimes they would return with us. Inter-marriage between Bougainville and Shortlands is common that’s why blood relations between Shortlands, Choiseul and Bougainville people are strong. It won’t be easy to make a formal boundary.”

Meanwhile, Sevina wouldn’t dare paddle out to Kangu, especially when weather patterns now aren’t consistent. It’s a 40-horsepower engine boat for Sevina and many other Shortlanders (and Choiseulese). Every Saturday

people go across to Bougainville to sell smoked fish in exchange for high-value kina to buy goods from the store.

Sevina took 100 smoked fish and made 100 kina by selling one fish at one kina each. With the day’s takings Sevina said she was able to restock her canteen with enough for household shopping. Compare that to 100 Solomon dollars that would get her, perhaps, only one bag of rice. Her motor boat leaves 4am, returns 3pm. Irregular cargo boat stops to Shortlands compel Shortland islanders to make hour-long, fuel-guzzling ocean trips to Kangu just to buy needs and wants.

As for you wanting to visit Buin market through the Shortlands, well, that’s your decision. 

## Fact File

- Solomon Airlines services Shortland Islands once per week (airstrip at Ballalae). Contact T: 20031 | Online reservations at [www.flysolomons.com](http://www.flysolomons.com)
- Accommodation on Nila: Call St. Anne’s Principal Sister Antonia, M: 7430205. Catholic Convent runs two visitor lodges.
- General boat transfers: Call John Kotaru, M: 7934498. Snorkel at Onua? Also contact John as landowner permission required (an essential but no-frills formality).
- Boat from Ballalae Airstrip (BAS): Check with BAS Solomon Airline agent Angeline (M: 7416450) on arrival or prior. Airline boat does boat transfers from airstrip at minimal cost.
- Available on Nila: Telikom mobile service; power via solar/generator (enough to charge camera batteries, mobiles, tablets); Good Samaritan Mini Hospital (open February 2015, built by Italian volunteers of the Salesian Society of Don Bosco).
- Well stocked canteens are scarce due to irregular cargo boat call-ins; goods are pricey comparative to Honiara. Solution - Take essential food, toiletries (incl. toilet paper), and mosquito repellent. No need to take drinking water.
- Abundant spring water on Shortland Island, sourced and used by the Japanese in WW2.
- If you need a guide, ask Sister Cris for Mark. Pay courtesy call to resident Catholic priest on Nila.



## ABOUT THE SHORTLAND ISLANDS

- Shortland Islands is a group of islands divided into inner and outer. Mainland is Shortland Island (singular), traditionally called Alu. Around it are smaller landmasses. This is inner Shortlands.
- Outer Shortlands – Includes Treasury, Fauro. Inner and outer Shortlands collectively are also known as Famo – Combined abbreviated letters of the group’s three big islands Fauro, Mono, and Alu.



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# Bay of Plenty

By Mere Tuqiri

**ON THE EASTERN END** of Guadalcanal lies Marau. Less than one hour by Solomon Airlines' domestic carriers and a few more by outboard motor from Honiara, Marau gets its share of visitor traffic, people on a mission to unwind and be unwound by unhindered views of Marau Sound and its underwater treasures.

Two tourism properties with different appeals stand out – the extravagant Tavanipupu Resort and the earthy Conflict Bay Lodge, the latter just a 15-minute walk from Marau airstrip. Conflict Lodge offers excellent snorkelling opportunities in the locally managed marine area (LMMA) of Hatare located within Conflict Bay.

Ezekiel and Mike loaded the dugout canoe with snorkels and fins. These dugouts are as common as coconut trees in the Solomons; gets one from point A to point B, a recreational tool for children, loads goods, a fishing vehicle, and transforms into competition racers when required. Mike and Eezy sweetened me over with their sugar-coated speech of water clarity and quality of its marine life. As I found out, the sugar-coats were real and as some people would say – true story!



We paddled out within the confines of the reef. Mike jumped out on to a solid coral mound, adjusted his goggles and free dove. I snorkeled. Mike surfaced, dove, surfaced, and dove again. Each time Mike came up for air he held an edible adult sea cucumber (bêche-de-mer) of various shapes, texture, and size.


I'm familiar only with the miniature black/gray type that could fit in the palm of my hand. But these ones were mustard with spots, brown with bristles, black and round. Elongated ones measured from elbow to tip of middle figure. The lobsters are equally large.

This zoned marine area has been locally managed by the people of Hatere for several years. A community-imposed fishing ban is in place and a revocation of the ban would require consensus of village stakeholders. For tourism purposes, the community labelled the marine area Hatere Marine Park.





The adult bêche-de-mer Mike fished out - Black teatfish (*Holothuria nobilis*), White teatfish (*Holothuria fuscogilva*), Peanutfish/dragonfish (*Stichopus horrens* group), are of high monetary value in Solomon Islands fisheries per kilogram. For a community managed marine area, Hatare doubles as a worthy destination for quality rest and relaxation.

Unless you have an interest in coastal fisheries, the presence of a LMMA in any destination may not factor in your decision to visit. But zoned off marine areas not only serve their primary purpose - to improve the health of declining marine life, the sites eventually make for excellent snorkelling because of rejuvenated stocks. Diving is ideal, but equipment is unavailable. There's always snorkelling. 

*Solomon Airlines flies 3 times a week to Marau. Call +677 20031 or check [www.flysolomons.com](http://www.flysolomons.com)*

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# Diving the Marovo Lagoon

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**AFTER ALL THE MONTHS OF ANTICIPATION** and preparation I felt like the kid in the candy store as the Dash 8 taxied towards the runway - finally on the last leg of my journey to experience the rich waters of the Marovo Lagoon and deep blue of the Solomon Sea.

As we ascended over Honiara the pilot banked slowly to the north-west, heading towards New Georgia, and soon we were passing over the scenic Russell Islands group and I got my first real indication of the incredible beauty of the Solomon Islands as we flew over one rainforest covered island after another.

Soon we were starting our descent towards Seghe, the main airstrip for the Marovo Lagoon and the stopping off point for Uepi Island, my home for the next 10 days.

Out of the window I could see how the outer barrier islands of the Marovo form what is in fact the largest salt-water lagoon in the world, and an appreciation forms for its sheer magnitude!

Waiting for me at Seghe was my “driver” and five minutes later we were skimming across the lagoon on the 25-minute journey to Uepi where the indomitable Jill Kelly was waiting to greet me on the main jetty.

Jill, and her husband Grant, are partners in the small consortium that operates Uepi Island Resort where they are also the resident managers, but most importantly the island is their home and they are fiercely proud of it.



*Out of the window I could see how the outer barrier islands of the Marovo form what is in fact the largest salt-water lagoon in the world, and an appreciation forms for its sheer magnitude!*

They discovered Uepi (rather amusingly pronounced You Pee...) by a series of quite special coincidences in the early 1980s and took over the operation of the small resort on the island in 1987, running it remotely from Australia through resident expatriate managers, while they raised their two children.

In 2000 they moved to the island to take over direct control and have been there ever since, developing the operation into an integral part of the lagoon's cultural fabric.

The complete staff of Uepi is drawn from the villages of the lagoon and the Kellys have personally developed all of them - from the cooks in the kitchen to the dive staff!

#### **Diving the Marovo Lagoon**

The majority of the dive sites accessible from Uepi Island are on the New Georgia Sound side of it and the other barrier islands that form the northern rim of the Marovo Lagoon.

The Sound is the large body of water that runs through the middle of the Solomons, separating the two main island chains that make up the country, which was nicknamed "the Slot" by the Allied forces during WWII.



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The Slot was the route chosen by the Japanese for what became known as the “Tokyo Express” - blacked-out destroyers travelling at high speed through the night to try and avoid Allied attack, while they resupplied their base on the island of Guadalcanal.

In fact the Slot is actually a series of deep-water basins that are surrounded by the islands of the Solomons, which in turn are bounded on all sides by the incredibly deep trenches and troughs of the region.

All of which produces a strong flow of nutrients and bountiful marine life, including a very healthy shark population which are so common that after a few dives you start to ignore them!





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*Diving the sites on the Slot side of the Marovo Lagoon are heady experiences – think sloping walls dropping into the depths of the abyss with clear blue water and every chance of seeing large passing pelagics.*

Diving the sites on the Slot side of the Marovo Lagoon are heady experiences – think sloping walls dropping into the depths of the abyss with clear blue water and every chance of seeing large passing pelagics.

Then there are the “points,” where the geological fault lines have thrown up the islands and left the passages into the lagoon. Here there are ridges where rich coral gardens have developed along with their ecosystems, all nourished by the mixed nutrients from the depths of the Slot and those that come out of the lagoon.

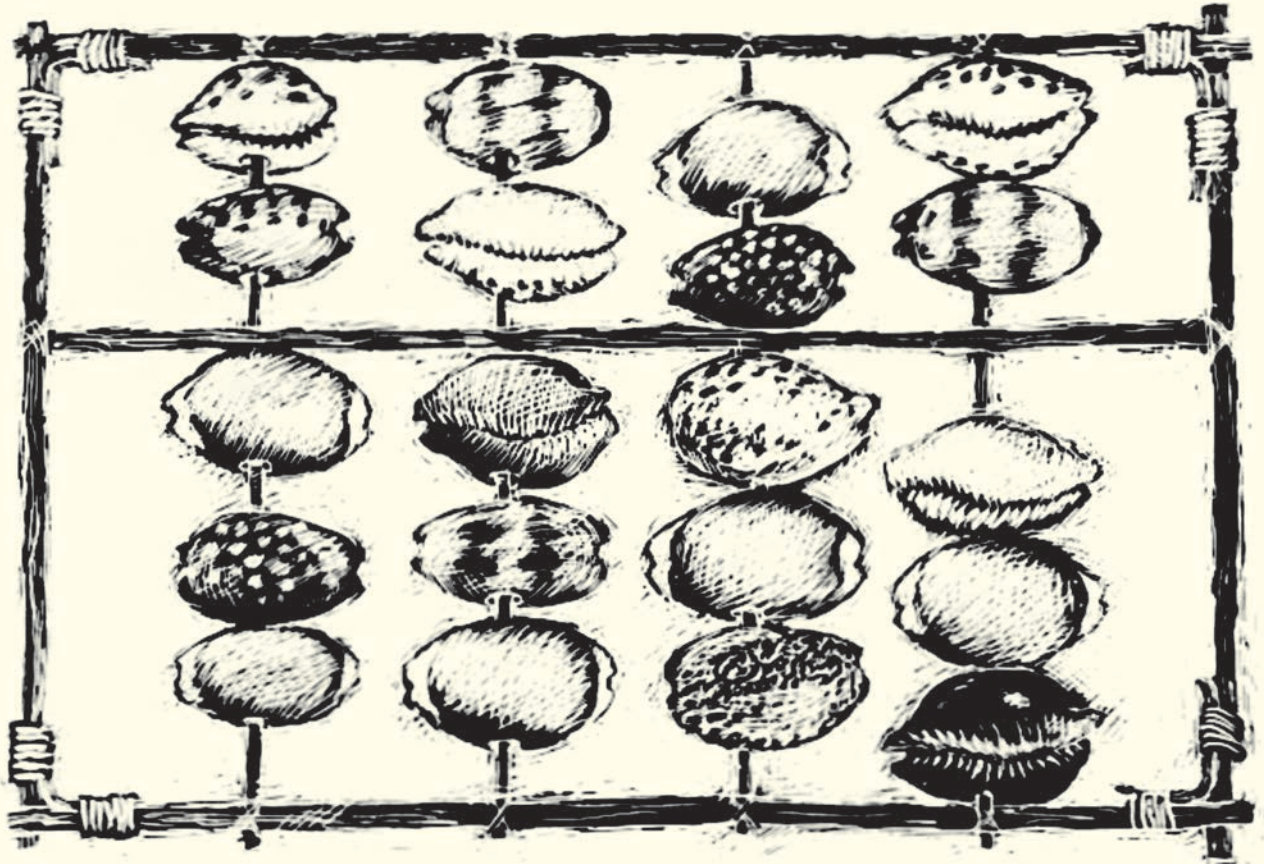
At the points, such as Uepi Point on the tip of the island and the main channel into the lagoon, you will see the underwater world as Mother Nature intended it to be – lush soft corals, superb fans filtering the nutrients and the full food chain of creatures all the way up to the cruising grey reef sharks.

Or its alter-ego Charapoanna Point on the other side of the channel, where the same intensity is concentrated on to the ridge as the currents sweep round the corner.



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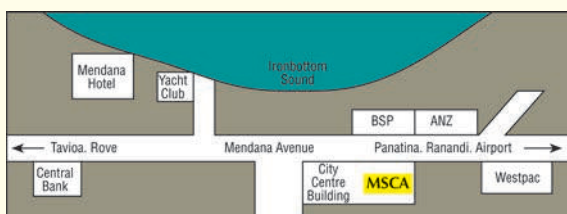
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**Uepi Welcome Jetty**

No visit to Uepi would be complete without experiencing the resident school of Marovo Lagoon grey reef sharks at the Welcome Jetty.

Located on the edge of the deep-water passage between the island and its neighbour Charapoana, the jetty and its guardians are literally world-famous and are truly a “must-do” experience!

Best dived on an incoming tide, the trick is to position yourself in front of the jetty at about 5-metres and wait... as the sharks are used to divers and quite curious, so if you are patient, they will come in and check you out.

Jill and Grant Kelly have been diving and snorkelling with the sharks of the Marovo for nearly 30 years and say they have never felt threatened by them.

In fact, the way Jill described it, the sharks are comfortable and curious around divers because they have never been threatened by them!

Is that not how it should be?



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**Don Silcock**

Don is a Bali based underwater photographer and writer whose principal focus is the diving and cultures of the Indo-Pacific region.

His images, articles and extensive location guides can be found on-line on his website [www.indopacificimages.com](http://www.indopacificimages.com)

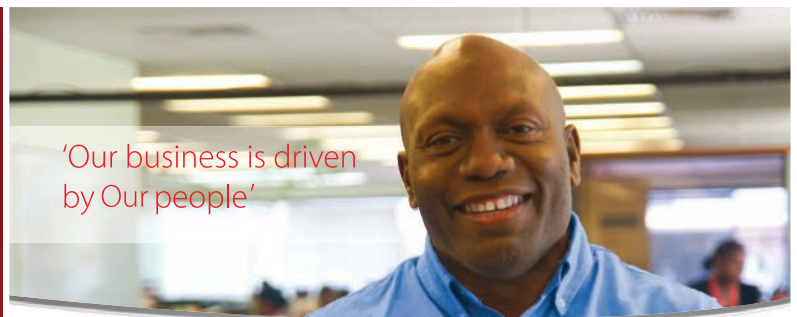
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# Pain & Glory on Kolombangara

By Laura Waters



**THE MOUNTAIN HAD BEEN CALLING TO US.** For weeks, from the deck of our Treehouse at Oravae Cottage, we had enjoyed a first-class view of its imposing bulk rising out of the sea, capped by a jagged crater peak. From afar we had watched captivated as sunrises and moonrises cast an ever-changing light over the extinct volcano. Our curiosity had been roused. It had to be climbed.

Located in the Western Province near Gizo, Kolombangara is an almost perfectly round volcano and the third highest mountain in the Solomon Islands, topping out at around 1779 metres. Having last erupted about 10,000 years ago, its flanks have long been covered in a dense blanket of thick forest making it a decent challenge for hikers wanting to climb its peak. Luckily we have two guides with a machete travelling with us.

There are many ways to enjoy Kolombangara but we opt for a two-day climb from Hambere Village, on the western shore just a 30 minute boat trip from our accommodation in Gizo, to the top of Mt Rano, one of the volcano's peaks.

The trail begins on easy flat paths, almost paved with the 'cobblestones' of rounded coconut husks half buried in the soil, but before long the mountain starts to show us why this trek is considered such a tough walk. The machete is put to work clearing ferns, vines and fallen trees that have encroached on the trail, and while our guides are busy slashing at the growth we have time to admire the many purple and white orchids bursting through the lush greenery. As the kilometres pass, my shins start to gather numerous scratches from the prickly undergrowth and the flexible vines that drape across the track, threatening to slice my ankles as I trip past them.

Climbing steadily, we cross three of the approximately 80 rivers and streams that gush down the mountain's flanks. The water is only ankle deep but I'm in no hurry to cross, the cooling water a welcome relief for bodies quickly overheating with exertion in the humid conditions. It's a perfect opportunity to fill up water bottles too as the water is pure and clean enough to drink straight from the river.



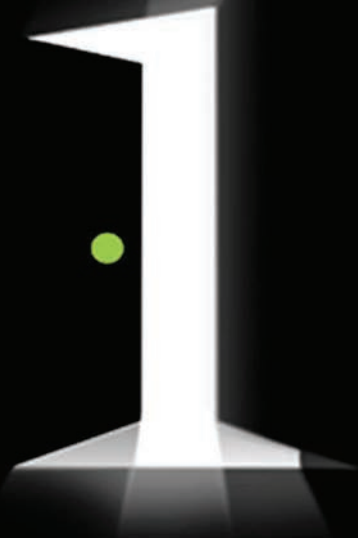
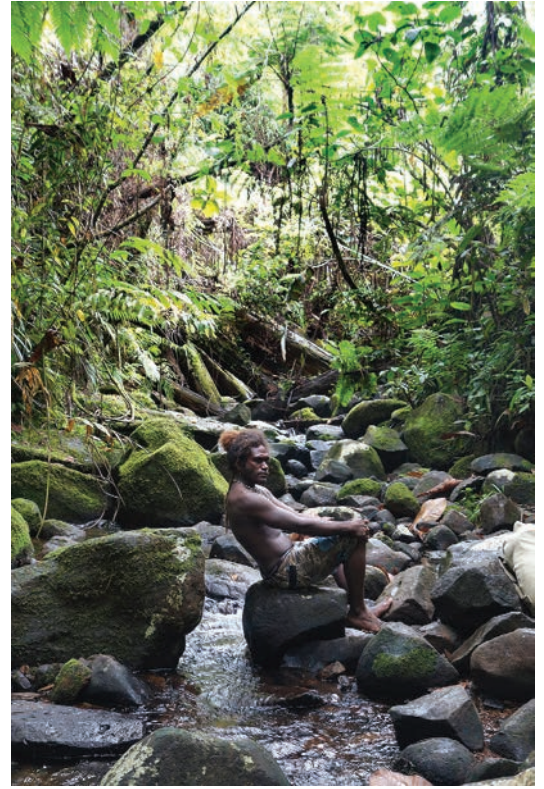
After nearly five hours of hiking our guides create a nest of fern branches on the ground on which we flop gratefully for a lunch break. The forked river next to us cascades over boulders under a lush green canopy, and from my viewpoint I gaze up at a tangle of vines and oversize leaves draping down from the huge moss-covered tree trunks.

It's a further two hours of climbing to Professors Camp, a small grass clearing cut into the steep mountainside with incredible views out to sea and the surrounding islands. A strong yet invisible force pulls on my hat as I try and make my way into camp and I'm suddenly aware of the mass of spider webs above and around me. Great thick strands of silk slash across the forest in swathes, dotted with dark bodies silently suspended. I'm no fan of arachnids but thankfully they are far enough from our tent to allow me a peaceful night's sleep.

The final few hours of trail the next morning ascend steeply through a furry

and damp moss covered wonderland that obviously spends much of its time immersed in clouds. The sudden increase in gradient requires considerable scrambling up rocks and slippery tree roots but eventually we reach the highest point, only to find our view masked by a thick cover of white mist. It's a disappointment not to be able to see the stunning crater and lake that apparently nestles in the top of Kolombangara, but the sense of achievement at having made the peak is ours no less.

The top is only half way though and after admiring the plush spongy forest capping the mountain we begin the long descent back down to sea level. The hiking poles that our guides had so deftly cut from trailside tree branches provide an invaluable source of stability for our tiring legs, despite regularly disappearing like a depth probe through holes in the ground thinly covered by soil and leaf litter.



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Suddenly a guide stops in his tracks ahead of me pointing at a grey and white mottled leaf on the ground. I stare at it blankly for a while wondering what he is on about before my eyes discern the vague outline of a frog, its angular shape and colour blending perfectly into the background. The flora and fauna on the mountain has been incredibly diverse adding an extra dimension to an already fantastic walk.

We've been descending for eight hours when my hot, tired and scratched body starts to reach its limit. Crossing the last river just half an hour before the coast, the temptation is too great and my hiking buddy immerses himself completely - clothes, shoes and all - in the cool clean water. I'm not far behind him and as I lay on my back staring at the huge trees overhanging the river I feel the water wash away my exhaustion, leaving only satisfaction at the challenge completed and wonder at the incredible scenery we've witnessed in the last two days.

Climbing to the top of Kolombangara is no easy venture but for those with the energy and a sense of adventure the rewards are well worth the effort. There are alternative shorter hikes on the volcano that will give you a taste of its pleasures, or if even that is too much effort you could always just admire it from the balcony of the Treehouse at Oravae Cottage with a glass of something cool. Enjoy. 



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 Our two-day trek was arranged through Dive Gizo ([www.divegizo.com](http://www.divegizo.com)) or a range of alternative itineraries can be booked through KIBCA ([www.kolombangara.org](http://www.kolombangara.org))





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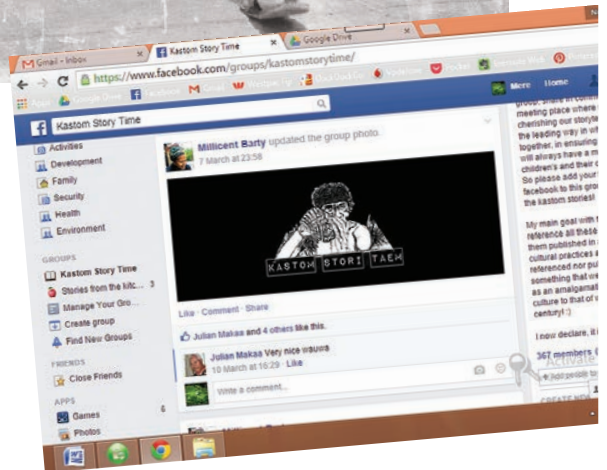
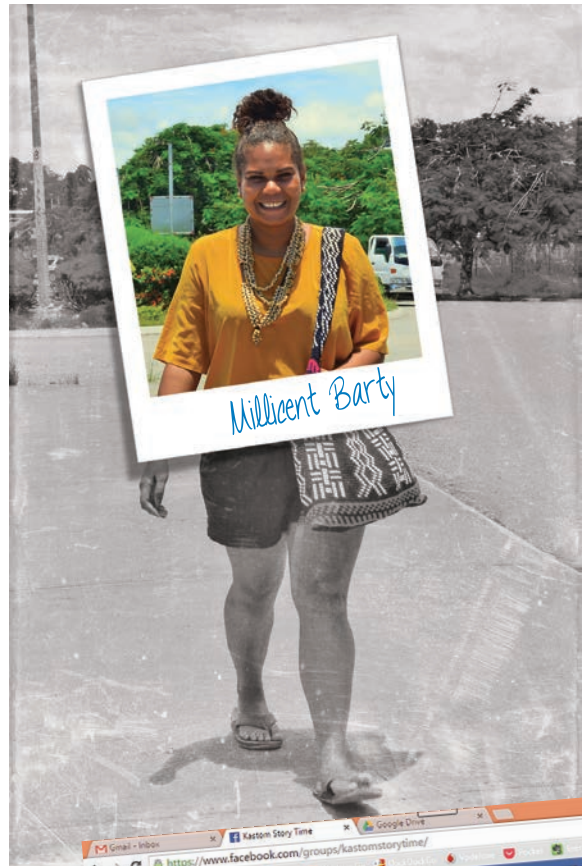
# Reviving Oral Tradition

By Mere Tuqiri

**IT IS SIX IN THE EVENING ON A SATURDAY.** Rewind to the 1990s; a group of children gather around the family radio ready for their weekend dose of custom story time broadcast on long-serving local radio station Solomon Islands Broadcasting Corporation. They giggle. They cringe. The stories were tales of mystical characters and faraway lands spanning the Solomon provinces.


It appears to be more than just animated story telling. One of those children is now 25 years old. Millicent Barty is keen to revive through communication mediums some of that oral culture and get young people interested in a small part of what once was a Solomon Island tradition.

What exactly are custom stories? Millicent says this was “how indigenous people interpreted the world before rationalism. To me it stands as valid information because at one stage in the history of Solomon Islands it was how people learned. It was how we rationalised the world around us at the time. It’s not just mystical stories, but oral culture and a way of learning.”



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“The story that stuck to me then was about an old lady with a special bird and magical mango tree. A group of little boys would strategise to steal her mangoes. But only she could give away her mangoes, you couldn’t take it. Eventually the boys stole the mangoes; the pack leader ate it and got really sick. The old lady had to sacrifice her bird to enable the kid to heal. That was my favourite story then because it told me not to steal.”

You could say Millicent’s project is a merging of old into the current and making it relevant to Solomon Islanders – young and elderly. She wants custom stories to regain their value in society.

“It doesn’t have to take over the ideologies we’ve been exposed to from Western culture, but at least it’s there so we’re proud of how our indigenous people thought of the world.”

You can contact Millicent Barty on her Facebook public group titled Kastom Story Time. 

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**HEROS OF THE SOLOMONS:**

# Captain Frank Getting RAN

## Lifting the shame of Savo Island



One of Australia's most experienced and capable naval commanders was struck down in his prime during one of the most ferocious naval engagements of WWII. Was he later a cruel victim of a historical cover-up? **Roderick Eime** investigates.

**THE US INVOLVEMENT** in the many battles of the Solomon Islands campaign are well documented through movies, documentaries and books. Yet, the substantial participation of Australian naval forces in that campaign is far less acknowledged.

When the Allied Forces began their landings on Guadalcanal and Tulagi on 7 August 1942, they were supported by a massive combined naval force which included the Royal Australian Navy (RAN) warships *Canberra*, *Hobart* and *Australia*.

*HMAS Canberra* was a British-built County class heavy cruiser of the Kent sub-class commissioned in 1928. At 10,000 tons and 180m in length, she was slightly larger than the more famous *HMAS Sydney* which had already been lost during her mutually destructive engagement with the German auxiliary cruiser *Kormoran* on 19 November 1941. Sydney's sister ship, the light cruiser, *HMAS Perth* was lost in the Battle of Sunda Strait in March 1942.

In command of *HMAS Canberra* was Captain Frank Edmond Getting. Born in Sydney in 1899, he was among the first cadets of the newly-established Royal Australian Naval College at Osborne House in Geelong. He graduated in 1917 with fellow officers Waller, Collins and others who would later rise to the highest ranks of the newly formed RAN.

Getting received his first commission on submarines in 1928 when he was the first Australian to pass the Royal Navy's submarine commander's course. With Australia's submarines 'gifted' back to the RN at the outbreak of WWII, Getting was given command of the armed merchant cruiser *HMAS Kanimbla*. In 1940 he was appointed Deputy Chief of Naval Staff, a post he held until 1942, when he was given command of *HMAS Canberra*.

Clearly, Getting, at 43, was a commander of considerable ability and promise and held one of the most prestigious posts in the relatively small RAN.

In a report dated March 1940, RN Admiral Percy Noble, wrote: "Although this officer has only served with me for a short time, he has so favourably impressed me with his ability, keenness and power of command... He has a fine physique and a good manner and appearance. His whole heart seems to be in the Service and I am sure he will do very well."

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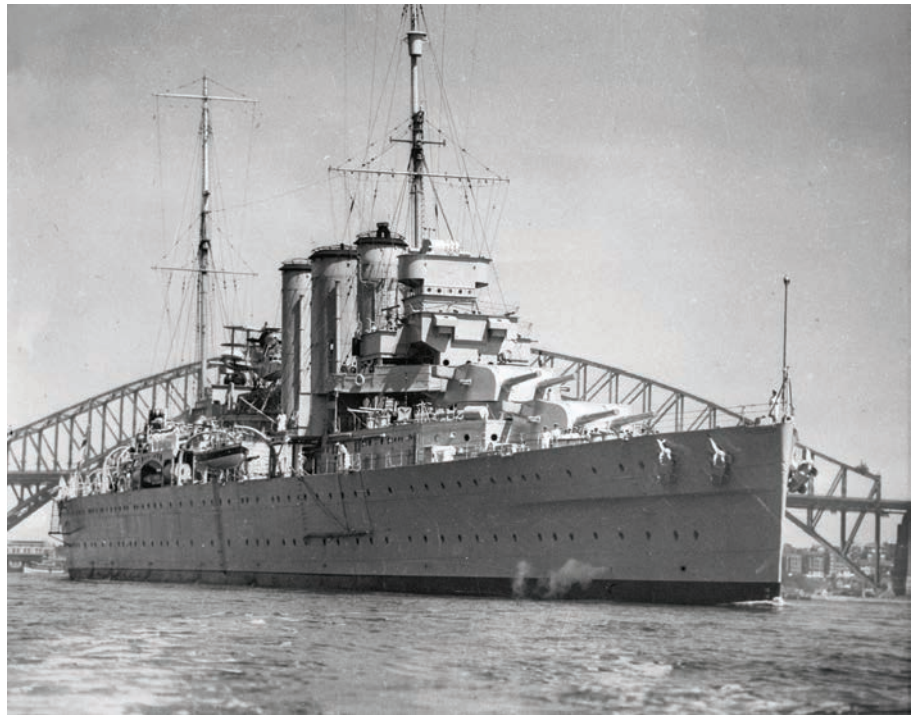
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Anyone who saw the seminal HBO television mini-series, *Pacific*, will remember the initial landings by US Marines were only lightly opposed but the Japanese, once aware of the US forces, made numerous concerted efforts to reclaim the airfield they had begun building near Lunga Point (later Henderson Field) after landing there and on Tulagi in May 1942.

One of those dramatic and courageous attacks was by a naval force on the night of August 8/9th that would become known as The Battle of Savo Island. While supporting the landing operations, the Allied naval ships were positioned in Savo Island Strait, the body of water directly offshore from Honiara, between Guadalcanal and Florida Island. The force had been divided into three sections to guard all possible entry points from the anticipated Japanese counterattack. The three RAN ships were divided between each group, with *HMAS Canberra* in the southern group, close to Savo Island itself.

The Allied crews on the 23 warships were fatigued from several days of ‘action stations’ and, by all accounts, were in a state of semi-preparedness with many of the sailors probably dozing or asleep when the Japanese force of seven cruisers and one destroyer came charging at full speed into their midst.

Led by Vice-Admiral Mikawa, a veteran Imperial Japanese Navy (IJN) commander highly skilled in night tactics, his force left Rabaul the afternoon of the Allied landings and skillfully (and luckily) avoided detection while approaching Savo Island from the west. This was despite the fact that a US submarine and two RAAF Hudsons medium bombers flying reconnaissance from Milne Bay had both spotted and reported the approaching



task force. In shades of Pearl Harbour, this failure of communication is the first part of the US cover-up that sought to conceal the catastrophe that was about to unfold.

Rear Admiral Samuel Eliot Morison was a Pulitzer Prize-winning naval historian who wrote lengthy and authoritative accounts of the glorious US Navy and its war-winning exploits.

Of the failure of communication, he wrote “first Hudson crew made no attempt to radio their sighting report, routinely and leisurely completed their patrol and then ‘had tea’ before submitting their report at Milne Bay.”

As a result, Morison claims, the Japanese strike force were able to take the Allied fleet

completely by surprise, which they did with disastrous results. *HMAS Canberra* was one of the first victims of the rampaging IJN vessels. And again, the historical accounts are murky.

While the Australian crew were at actions stations very promptly with turrets manned, the guns were not loaded and the couple of minutes it took to get ready to fire proved crucial.

According to Lieutenant Commander Mackenzie J Gregory RAN (ret) who was on the bridge that fateful night as a junior officer:

“I called the Navigating Officer and the Gunnery Officer; the P.C.O. sighted 3 ships on our starboard bow and gave the alarm and the order to load the 8” turrets. The Captain

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*“The fact must be faced that we had an adequate force placed with the very purpose of repelling surface attack and when that surface attack was made, it destroyed our force.”*  
 – RADM R. A. Crutchley, RN, VC.

quickly arrived to be first to reach the bridge. I sighted torpedo tracks approaching down the starboard side - the Captain ordered full ahead and starboard 35 to quickly swing the ship to starboard.”

*Canberra* managed to avoid the incoming ‘long lance’ torpedoes, but immediately started taking shell hits. In fact, *Canberra*, illuminated by star flares dropped from aircraft, would suffer a hail of some 24 direct hits at point blank range in the course of a few minutes. One struck the bridge where Gregory was stationed and killed or wounded everyone except himself, including Captain Getting.

Getting, despite being seriously injured, could not be persuaded to leave his station by the ship’s surgeon, insisting the doctor treat the other wounded first. Instead he continued to give orders and direct the battle, which from *Canberra*’s point-of-view was short and brutal. The ship, which was about to become the third major loss for the tiny RAN in the opening stages of the war, possibly managed just a few hurried rounds before being totally disabled by torpedo hits.

Some sources are critical of *Canberra*’s lack of readiness as contributing to the defeat of Savo Island, particularly Rear Admiral Gerard Charles Muirhead-Gould,

the pompous, English-born commander of Sydney’s defences and a pet of Churchill’s. He told the crew they should feel ashamed that their ship had been sunk by gunfire without firing a shot in return.

The subsequent RAN Board of Inquiry made no mention of torpedoes at all and much fuss was instead made of the prowess of our brave American ‘chums’ in rescuing survivors.

Such unjustified criticism naturally falls on Captain Getting himself who, supported by eyewitness accounts was quick to the bridge as soon as the action began.

Listing, battered and burning, *Canberra* was abandoned the next morning because she did not have propulsion to join the ships that were leaving the scene en masse and abandoning the partially supplied Marines ashore, an act that would later draw much criticism. Ever defiant, numerous shells and finally a torpedo from a US destroyer were required to scuttle her in the deep waters of what would soon be known as “Iron Bottom Sound.”

The final shame of this chapter was that not only did Australia lose a valuable warship with almost 200 casualties from an excellent crew of more than 800, the critical torpedo blow that sealed her fate may well have been a stray or misfire from the destroyer

*USS Bagley* that struck just as *Canberra* was preparing to engage the enemy with her 8” main guns.

As more documents are declassified and more thorough research is done, many of these slurs against Australian servicemen are finally being corrected.

Bruce Loxton, who was on the bridge with Gregory and Getting and seriously wounded himself, fought for years to clear the names of his fellow officers and men, ultimately publishing a meticulously researched book, “The Shame of Savo: Anatomy of a Naval Disaster,” where he asserts the *Canberra* was crippled by at least one torpedo from the *Bagley*.

Then, just last year, an apology was finally issued to the last surviving aircrew from the RAAF Hudsons, Eric Geddes, who had tried in vain to alert his naval comrades of the impending Japanese attack.

Greg Martin, the assistant director of the US Naval History and Heritage Command, in Washington wrote:

“A new generation of naval historians is questioning previous works, such as that of Rear Admiral Samuel Eliot Morison, often written too close to the end of a recently completed campaign ... RADM Morison’s criticism, in particular, was unwarranted.”



The apology is too late for the more than 1000 sailors who died that night. Captain Frank Getting, at his own insistence, was among the last eventually evacuated from the smouldering *Canberra* the following morning but succumbed to his wounds en route to Noumea and was buried at sea.

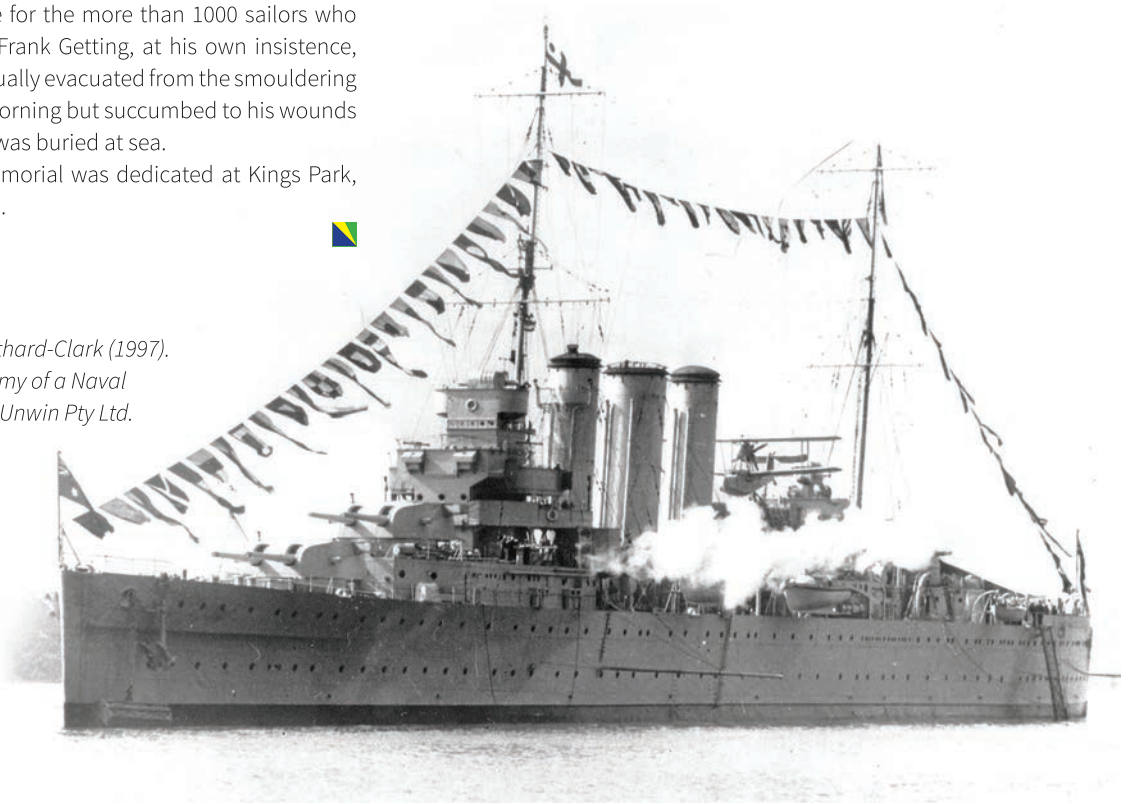
An *HMAS Canberra* memorial was dedicated at Kings Park, Lake Burley Griffin in 1981.

LEST WE FORGET



**Further reading:**

- Loxton, Bruce; Chris Coulthard-Clark (1997). *The Shame of Savo: Anatomy of a Naval Disaster*. Australia: Allen & Unwin Pty Ltd. ISBN 1-86448-286-9.



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# Sydney Rocks!

**As winter approaches, Sydney proves it is an all-season destination**

Compiled by Roderick Eime with assistance from Destination NSW

**YOU MAY HEAR ARGUMENTS** from her neighbours, Brisbane and Melbourne, but there is no disputing Sydney is this country's premier city. Solomon Airlines resumes flights to New South Wales after a break of 14 years.

Whether you are flying for business or pleasure, Sydney has a staggering variety of activities to occupy both the businessperson with a few hours to kill or the whole family for a solid week. There are festivals, galleries, special events and museums to satisfy every curiosity.

Here, thanks to Destination NSW, is a quick rundown of some of what Sydney has to offer.



## Vivid Music

From local and international acts performing at the iconic Sydney Opera House, to other large venues and small bars, Vivid Sydney 2015 will host a lively and eclectic range of live performances and ground-breaking musical collaborations.

At the heart of Vivid Music is Vivid LIVE, a programme of cutting-edge music which takes place at the Sydney Opera House, Australia's most famous building.

After the last lights of Vivid fade to black, Sydney continues to rock with any number of irresistible attractions and activities. Here's a few more:



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Located in The Rocks, The Langham reopened in early December after a \$30 million transformation. Luxury, opulence and the feel of a genteel private residence characterise The Langham's new look.

Guests can look forward to world-famous Langham high teas in its new Palm Court and delicious fine dining in Kent Street Kitchen.

### Wild Escapes tours

Wild Escapes will launch three new tours in 2015. Two of the new tours will be focused around Sydney events and will incorporate a visit to the famous Sculpture by the Sea exhibition on Bondi's famous coastline. The third will take guests out to the Blue Mountains and will include an optional two-hour, fully guided bush walk.



## Produce pop-up

Sydney's latest pop-up experience is The Farmed Table, from foraging chef Brendan Cato. Each week, Cato heads to a NSW region and unearths the best local produce he can find, then rustles it up into a meal on Saturday night at various Sydney venues. Cato's next offering can only be tracked down via Instagram or Facebook – but that's part of the fun: Cato hunts down the produce, then the foodies hunt down Cato.



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### DARLINGHURST'S NEW ARRIVALS

Nearby Darlinghurst is also enjoying a new nightlife boost, with a swing towards upscale cocktail culture mixed with an artsy vibe.

UK-inspired late night cocktail bar and eatery Henrietta Supper Club and its talented team are a magnet for lovers of skillfully crafted drinks. The neighbouring new Bar de Thé atop Salon de Thé from the uber-hip Ciroc Collective, (which includes Bondi Icebergs' Maurice Terzini and Ksubi designer Dan Single) is also well worth a visit to experience one of Darlinghurst's latest and greatest. Also new to the area is Apothecary, a tiny, 24-person cocktail bar with cocktail degustations masterminded by drinks guru 'Doctor' Phil Gandevia. A short stroll away from Stanley Street, the latest pop-up in the IconPark site is Rupert and Ruby, from a young, adventurous and award-winning team. The concept combines southern-style BBQ with New York City-style good times, finished with fresh flavours, locally sourced food and drinks from around Australia.

With the recent opening of the cabaret-focused Hayes Theatre in neighbouring Kings Cross, the new Eternity Theatre and a gallery space for leading contemporary artists in the luxe surrounds of basement cocktail and champagne bar Tatler, Darlinghurst is rich with stimulating and stylish after-dark experiences.

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- A refurbished Opera Bar – on Sydney Opera House's lower concourse, Opera Bar has celebrity chef Matt Moran helping a reopening after a renovation with a new look and direction at the Sydney icon
- Mr Tippyly – a big, bold and fabulous new CBD venue over two levels on Kent Street, so wittily themed that it feels like a scaled-up small bar
- Your Ex Lovers – a cool new Redfern dive bar with emerging art for sale on the walls
- Print Room – an old Hollywood style wine and cocktail lounge above Paddington boutique Irish pub Dirty Nelly's
- Parke Davis – the latest on the CBD's burgeoning York Street bar strip is a pharmaceutical-themed small bar
- Ramblin' Rascal Tavern – the latest from the unstoppable collective behind Shady Pines and Frankie's, Ramblin' Rascal Tavern is a lively CBD basement tavern on Park Street.

#### JUNE 2015

Hunter Valley Food and Wine Month

Location Hunter Valley

Date 1 – 30 June

Sydney Film Festival

Location Various venues across Sydney

Date 3 – 14 June

#### JULY 2015

Matilda the Musical

Location Sydney Lyric Theatre

Date From 28 July

Archibald Prize Exhibition

Location Art Gallery of NSW, Sydney

Date 18 July – 27 September

#### AUGUST 2015

Netball World Cup 2015

Location Allphones Arena & Netball

Central, Sydney Olympic Park

Date 7 – 16 August

The Bledisloe Cup Festival

Location Various venues around Sydney

Date 3 – 8 August

The Sun-Herald City2Surf

Location Hyde Park to Bondi Beach,

Sydney

Date 9 August

Sydney Motorsport Park Super Sprint

Location Sydney Motorsport Park

Date 21 – 23 August

Helpmann Awards

Location Capitol Theatre, Sydney

Date August

#### Full events calendar:

<http://www.destinationnsw.com.au/wp-content/uploads/2011/10/sydney-and-nsw-events-calendar-2015-1.pdf>

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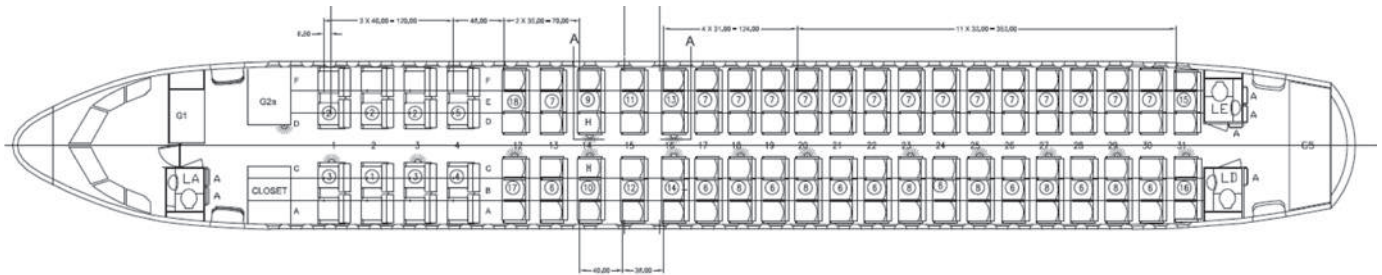


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<b>Crew:</b>	2
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<b>Aircraft in Fleet:</b>	1

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# International & Domestic Connections



## International Connections



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The Solomon Islands are divided into nine provinces as follows:

Province	Area	Population	Highest Point	Capital
Guadalcanal	5,336 km <sup>2</sup>	141,403	2,447m	Honiara
Central	1,000 km <sup>2</sup>	27,928	510m	Tulagi
Western	5,279 km <sup>2</sup>	81,214	1,661m	Gizo
Ysabel	4,014 km <sup>2</sup>	26,310	1,392m	Buala
Malaita	4,234 km <sup>2</sup>	159,923	1,303m	Auki
Makira	3,188 km <sup>2</sup>	40,386	1,250m	Kirakira
Temotu	926 km <sup>2</sup>	24,412	923m	Lata
Choiseul	3,294 km <sup>2</sup>	25,870	1,060m	Taro
Rennell & Bellona	276 km <sup>2</sup>	3,025	220m	Tingoa

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



# Domestic Connections

## Solomon Islands

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### 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)

For all bookings, ticketing and flight enquiries:

**AUSTRALIA**  
 Australia Cargo GSA  
 Aircraft Loaders & Packers  
 Unit 3c, 17 Sugarmill Road  
 Eagle Farm  
 Ph: 07 3260 2603  
 Fax: 07 3260 2959  
 Mobile: 0419796065  
 Email: rob@qldcargo.com  
 alp@qldcargo.com  
 www.aircraftloaderspackers.com

**NEW CALEDONIA**  
 Axxess Travel 22 Rue Duquesne,  
 Espace Moselle,  
 Quartier Latin, Noumea  
 BP 336, 98845, Noumea  
 Tel: (687) 286 677  
 Fax: (687) 274 050

**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@cargogsa.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

**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

### 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.



# Assisting TC Pam Victims



BY HAZEL BAE

**THE DEVASTATION CAUSED** by tropical Cyclone Pam to Vanuatu on the 13th of March 2015, claimed about 24 fatalities and almost 3,300 were displaced.

The cyclone crippled Vanuatu's infrastructure: an estimated 90 percent of the nation's buildings were impacted by the storm's effects, telecommunications were paralyzed, and water shortages plagued our nearest neighbour.

Solomon Airlines Management and Staff immediately responded helping a neighbour in its time of real need and in this instance firstly to assist the Air Vanuatu management & staffs who also took the full brunt of the disaster.

A committee consisting mainly of our commercial team quickly sprang into action hitting the road with the first of a series BBQ sizzles starting on the 20th of March 2015 at cooperate travel center point Cruz followed by another BBQ sizzle and drinks at the



Skaelaen Aero Club House in the evening till late.

Additional BBQ Sizzles continued with the final lunch time hit on the 26th March 2015 again at the point Cruz office. On the 27th of March 2015 a major BBQ Sizzle, Raffle draws and drinks at the Aero Skaelaen Club House concluded what was a very satisfying effort

and it was all worth it knowing fully well that our efforts will help our fellow brothers and sisters at Air Vanuatu recover and rise from this act of nature. We raised total of \$29,871.00 which has already been wired on 1st April 2015 to the Air Vanuatu Social Club who were tasked by their management to manage such assistance.

# BRISBANE OFFICE



**WHILE HUGE STRIDES** have taken place on Solomon Airlines in flight capability in recent times aimed at keeping its customers happy in the air, just as importantly, they need to be kept happy before they even step onto the airline's sleek Airbus A320.

And the people responsible for making sure that happens in Australia is the national carrier's five man ground crew headed by Regional General Manager Australia, New Zealand & Asia, Victor Sharan, all of whom are kept extremely busy handling every aspect of the airline's four-flights a week between Brisbane and Honiara International from its Brisbane Airport offices.

That workload is set to increase in early June when Solomon Airlines begins operation of its once weekly service between Sydney and Honiara but knowing Commercial Coordinator Australia, Raquel De Oliveira and her team, that shouldn't present any problems.

As Commercial Coordinator Australia Raquel De Oliveira's role is extremely multi-faceted as it needs to be when embracing all facets of an efficient sales service together with assisting with the effective management

of an office environment in a small team operation.

Key functions of the Brisbane office are to develop Solomon Airlines as the market leader and enhance its overall profile, develop key wholesalers and retail chain relationships and promote the airline's dual destination and circle fares throughout the Pacific.

Raquel is also very hands-on with the airline's Australian client base, both quoting fares to passengers and also following up on existing sales and ongoing business opportunities.

This includes interacting with a wide variety of contacts, both old and new, incorporating both the corporate world, the general public and very importantly, the travel industry which plays a critical role in helping the Solomon Islands build on its annual Australian visitor intake.


Raquel is ably assisted in her day to day activity by reservations consultant Louise Prasad who both play a vital role from the perspective of the airline's sales and reservations activities and who invariably are the voices clients get to speak to when they phone in for assistance.

A key part of their overall duty involves assisting with presenting travel quotations to customers and following up with existing prospects as well as creating new sales leads.

The team has also been heavily involved in learning how to work with the major operational developments taking place on the ground.

Mike Ridge whose varied duties range from flight planning, various aspects of load control and flight monitoring. The position also requires maintaining records for the aircraft and pilots.

Airport and Cargo Manager, James Chan's role is to manage the ground handling agents providing check-in and ramp handling and also oversee Solomon Airlines' cargo agents and catering services. He also has responsibility for ensuring excess baggage is charged and collected, sorts out any ticketing issues and ensures all passengers' immigration requirements for the Solomon Islands are met before they depart Australia.

Louise Prasad and Margaret Walne handles reservations and other enquiries in their capacity as reservations consultant. 



# 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.



**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.

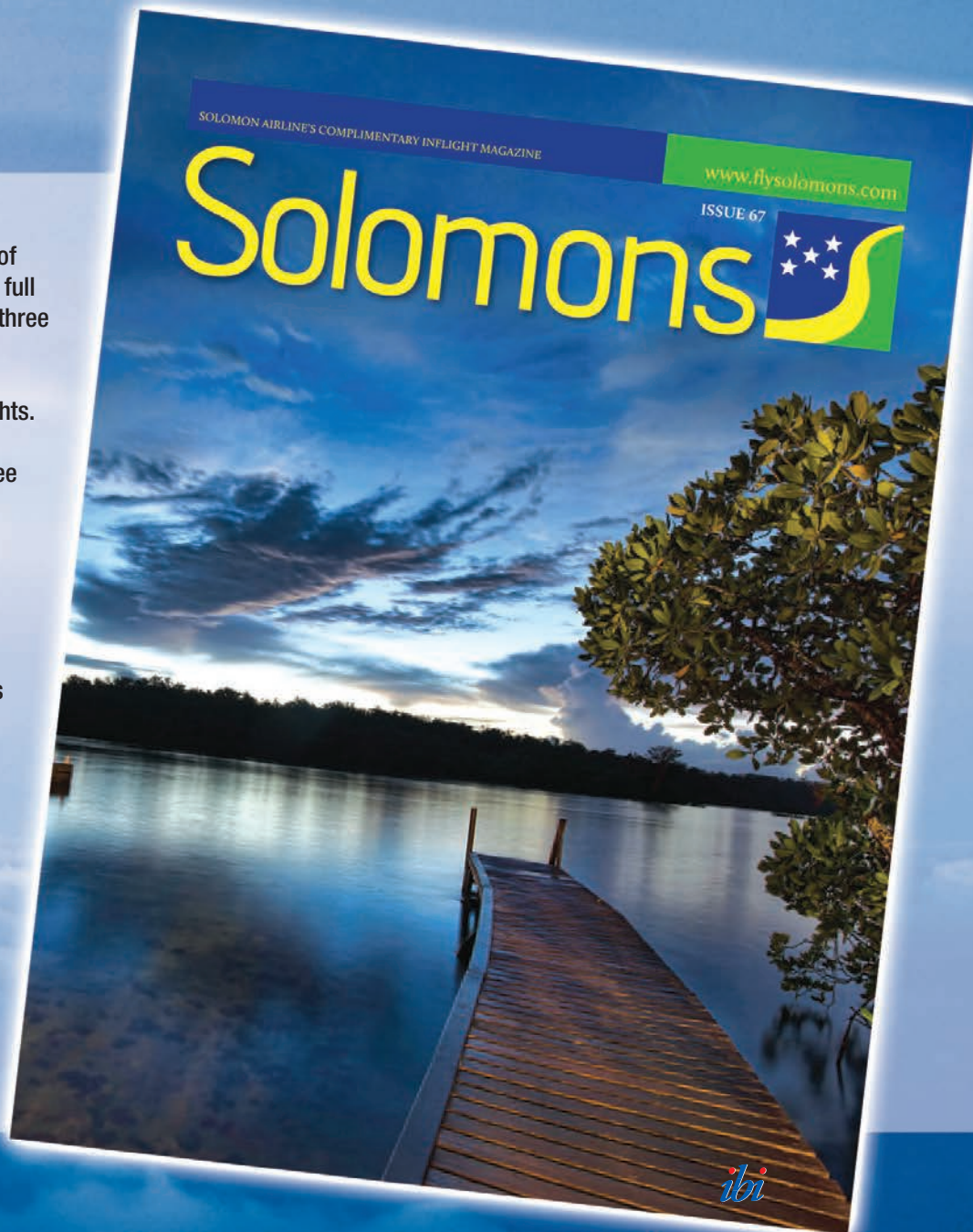


# Fly high with Solomon Airlines

Solomons, the in-flight magazine of Solomon Airlines, is a high quality full colour magazine published every three months and is the only magazine placed in every seat pocket on Solomon Airlines international flights. It is also available at all Solomon Airlines offices and given away free to major business houses in the Solomon Islands.

Each edition of the magazine is carefully designed to include a range of interesting articles about the Solomon Islands, personalities and developments of interest to both tourists and business travellers.

So if you want to become a high flyer with Solomon Airlines why don't you contact us today and guarantee your seat on the next flight by advertising in our inflight magazine.



**For all your advertising requirements contact:**

Abigail Covert-Sokia  
Advertising Executive

Islands Business International  
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**Lift your business with Solomons Magazine**



# Pacific Casino Hotel

Kukum Highway, PO Box 1298, Honiara, SOLOMON ISLANDS

Tel: +677 25009 Fax: +677 22880 Email: reservation@pacificcasinohotel.com Website: www.pacificcasinohotel.com

## CONVENIENT LOCATION

Located in the middle of Honiara CBD and from Honiara's International Airport – It's the perfect location with a mile-long compound for business and tourist travellers alike!

## WELL-SET FACILITIES

Pacific Casino Hotel offers 170 spacious, comfortable and fully air-conditioned rooms with Satellite TV and 24Hr movie channels, private refrigerators and coffee/ tea services, with all Suites Room boasting separate seating lounges and private balconies. Keeping with total comfort, convenience and ease of access in mind for the international traveller, International Direct Dialling (IDD) in all rooms and Internet hotspots are available in various locations. Other services extended are laundry, Internet Cafe, Car Rental and Conference room facilities. For the leisure facilities are Swimming Pool, Billiard Room and Gym & Fitness centre.

## VARIOUS CUISINES FROM WESTERN TO ORIENT - 6 RESTAURANTS CATERING TO ANY TABLE PALETTE!

The famous Ocean View Restaurant serves the finest of Western cuisine for breakfast, lunch and dinner daily, while on an outdoor dining balcony, taking in the spectacular ocean view backdrop. For the best authentic Asian cuisine, Jina's

Restaurant offers the best in Chinese cuisine, which is located between the hotel and the casino. Want more? Pacific Seafood Restaurant, the Korean Restaurant and Fun Cafe all host extensive wide range of international Asian cuisines – all at your choice.

## WONDERFUL ENTERTAINMENT – BARS, NIGHT CLUBS & KARAOKE LIGHTS UP YOUR NIGHT LIFE

Cowboy's Grill Bar & Restaurant newly established, specializing in Western cuisine, is all about convenience and fun for an unforgettable star experience. The very popular Captain's Bar provides a wide selection of cocktails, vintage wines, spirits and appetizers, located on the 1st floor of the Hotel which opens daily till late night. For more fun time, the Top 10 and Top Star Karaoke night clubs give the best in international and local beats for those not of the faint-hearted!

## FAMOUS & BIGGEST CASINO – CLUB SUPREME

As a guest, presentation of the room key allows a free entrance to the members-only Club Supreme, the biggest and the best Casino in Solomon Islands. It's that simple! So why not try your hand in Blackjack, Roulette, Baccarat or Pacific Poker? Or go for the Pokies Centre for a brilliant night with your luck.

Relax, enjoy and indulge at the Pacific Casino Hotel – a place where you can have it all !!!

