

ISSUE 74

# Solomons



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**Gus Kraus**

WELKAM FRENS

To all our valued customers

### Happenings

Our e-IOSA IATA audit program commenced on 15th November and was completed on 19th November. This was a major exercise as an adjunct to our already past four years of being certified as an IOSA Approved International Airline.

Yes, we need to comply to international standards and world's best practices in the main to entice further Code-share partners as well as being accepted by worldwide airlines with whom we have interline relationships with.

It's not only for this reason but also to ensure WORLD'S BEST PRACTISE in Safety is not only achieved; but maintained as a spin-off from International standards into our Domestic standards.

We did very well considering...we cannot divulge the outcome till April 2017 when we expect to close some of the findings prior to being re-certified as an Approved IOSA airline.

### Qantas Partnership

We are proud to say that our partnership with Qantas is growing and passenger numbers continue to increase with Qantas onboard and will hopefully contribute fully to our bottom line and increase potential to add other benefits at some later stage.

### Sydney Re-Start

Our Sydney services have recommenced after a break when our BUS went in for heavy maintenance in late February this year.

As an airline with the mandate to review our total operational viability of routes, it was considered prudent to apply our Sydney services only during high travelling seasonal months being the Christmas period and mid-year. So the plan is to seek a Government subsidy/contribution whilst developing Sydney to its full potential as a Tourism Gateway. Should this subsidy be approved, the services to/from Sydney will remain as part of the mainstay in our route structure year round.

Failing the subsidy, we shall review the Sydney route ending in late January 2017 and recommencing in June to August of 2017. We believe the Sydney service has the potential in the longer term to earn its way and we are working with Government to favourably consider our plight and that of our Tourism development.

### ASA Kiribati & Solomon Islands

The Solomon Islands Government and the Government of the Republic of Kiribati have recently penned a first in signing of a new Air Service Agreement (ASA) together with an MOU.

Permanent Secretary Virivolomo said "while the ASA was the culmination of several months of negotiation between both countries, **steps were already in place to commence a new extended service by Solomon Airlines in association with Air Kiribati from Honiara to Tarawa.**

"This new service will commence as soon as 'visa-on-arrival' procedures for Kiribati passport holders has been approved by the Solomon Islands Government," Mr. Virivolomo advised.

As can be seen, we are working towards an exercise to assist our Micronesian brothers in developing their future goal of becoming an International player in Aviation. More news to follow in the future.

**We commend the following read in this issue for your pleasure-**

**Including the following-**

- Folklore about a giant who used to live by a lake in Malaita that will particularly interest our younger travellers
- Revival of rare dances and rituals at the first Kodili Cultural Festival in Isabel Province
- Step-by-step guide on the intricate production of shell money in Busu, an artificial island in the heart of Langa Langa Lagoon
- Showcasing the beautiful coastline of Saeragi on the west coast of Gizo Island in West Province
- Story behind all those thirst quenching fresh coconut juice in Honiara
- Wrecks of Iron Bottom Sound, a reprint from our 1998 edition, mapping the war wrecks in waters off Honiara
- Going to beautiful Sydney, where choices are vast and the places all so wonderful

We value your business. ....and trust your flying experience with Solomon Airlines and that of visiting our country in all its goodness will assist us to grow and become a better contributor to our country's future development.

As this is my last contribution to the Solomon's Inflight Magazine, I wish all our travellers, readers and all their families as well as the good people of Solomon Islands a very warm and safe Christmas as well as a prosperous 2017.

Tagio tumas.

**Gus Kraus**  
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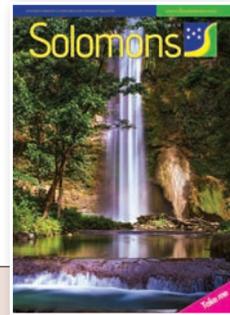
# Solomons



INFLIGHT MAGAZINE ISSUE 74

Dec 2016 - Feb 2017

Cover photo: David Kirkland



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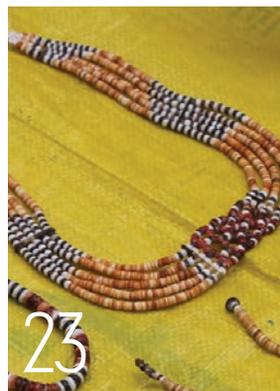
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## WHAT'S ON WHEN & WHERE 2016, 2017



DECEMBER

MARCH

MAY

JUNE

AUGUST

### DECEMBER

*Western Province 2nd Appointed Day (7th)  
Roviana Lagoon Festival (12-16),  
Munda, Western Province Christmas Day (25th)*

### MARCH

*Festival of Praise (17-19) Honiara*

### MAY

*Tuna Festival (1-4), Noro & Munda, Western Province*

### JUNE

*Wogasia Festival (5, 6) Santa Catalina, Makira Province  
Malamwei mwei Yam Festival (25-30) Afio, Malaita Province*

### AUGUST

*WW2 commemoration & JFK 100th Anniversary (7th),  
Shell-Money & Artificial Islands Festival (13-15) Langa Langa  
Lagoon, Malaita Province*

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# OUT & ABOUT

## Solomon Islands Carnival

### Camilla, fairest of them all

Fairest of them all is Camilla Grossmith, crowned Miss Solomon Islands in October in what is now a permanent feature of Honiara's social calendar.

Camilla, 23, beat five other contestants to win the crown, styled made naturally from shellmoney.

She is originally from Munda Town in Western Province, currently a university student at the Honiara Campus of the University of the South Pacific.

"Believe in yourself, you never know what potentials, what values and roles that are submerged in you," was Camilla's word of advice after her crowning at the Coral Sea Resort.

Camilla went onto represent Solomon Islands in the annual Miss South Pacific pageant that Samoa hosted by the year's end.



Camilla Grossmith after being crowned Miss Solomons

Photos: Island Sun



Miss Sunny Calros Rice, Ruthina Koroa



Traditional panpipers lead the float of Miss Anolpha Limited, Zinne Leamana.

## Gallery in art

### Top artists exhibit work @ National Art Gallery

Works of some of the country's top artists went on exhibition at the National Art Gallery in Honiara. Exhibitors include Nelson Horipua, Selwyn Do'oro, Campion Ohasio, Fred Oge and Alisa Vavataga.

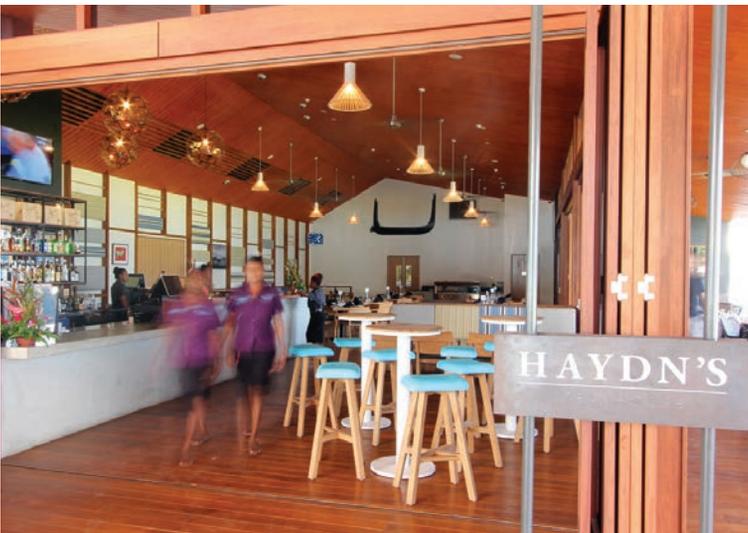


## Honiara's latest delight

Greater choices on where to dine or stay in the capital will increase when Coral Sea Resort & Casino opens its first five luxurious villas in early 2017.

Located on Honiara's prized waterfront in the city's CBD, the resort intends to have its new Boardwalk bar and restaurant opening its doors by that time as well. Thirty more hotel rooms are nearing completion while plans are afoot for the construction of a small marina and a beach at the resort's frontage.

Coral Sea Resort & Casino was also the venue of this year's Miss Solomon Island Pageant.

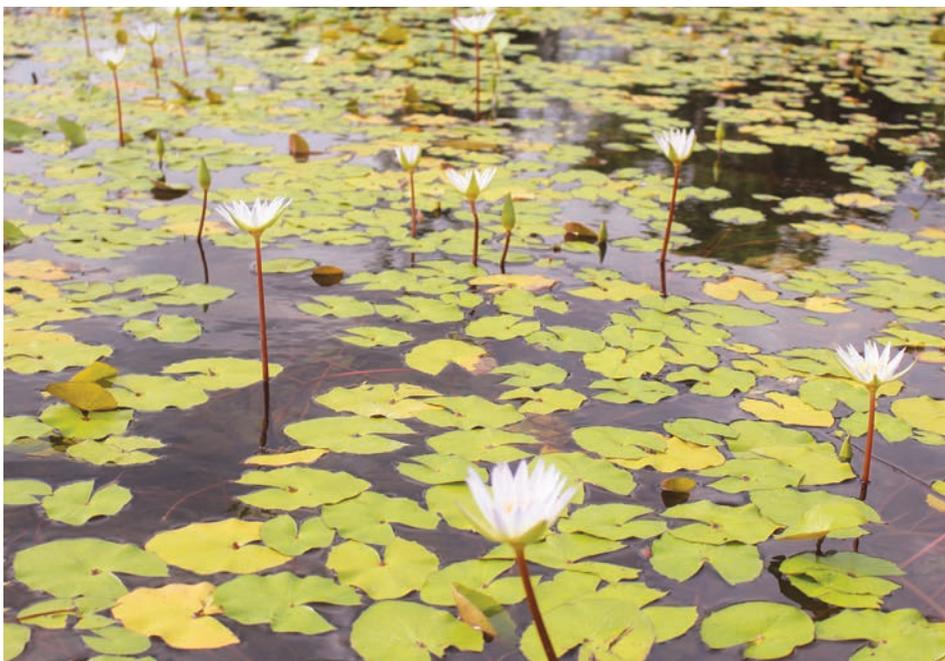


# Fafaga by the lake



Words and photos by Samisoni Pareti

**Once upon a time, long, long time ago**, way before head-hunters roam the Coral Sea and the white man set sail into the Pacific Ocean on their great 'discovery' voyages, there lived a fafaga, a giant in Kelakwai outside Auki.



'Proof that it is a freshwater lake is the huge swath of waterlilies.'

He was the guardian of the Osi (lake), a long body of freshwater lake that runs parallel to the coastline. It was a bad giant, who had taken a liking to human flesh. He would hunt for his next meal using pebbles, the only thing is, what is pebble to him is like good size boulders to us normal people. So ferocious was this fafaga that locals along Kelakwai Osi fled in their canoes across to the Central Islands.

All fled for their lives except a widow called Yoingwalulu, made such by the monster giant who killed and consumed her husband. No one wanted to take her because she was heavily pregnant. So to hide from the giant, Yoingwalulu picked a small cave to live in, one that the giant would be too big for. Cutting a long story short, the woman gave birth to a twin son, Gwenebulu and Gwenebala, who when they grew older fought and killed the giant.

Today you can visit the giant's lair, a limestone cave that is located not far from the shores of Kelakwai Osi. The immediate proof that the osi is a freshwater lake is the huge swath of waterlilies on it. On the day of our visit, local boys were busy spear fishing for tilapia, a freshwater fish that is found in the lake. 'But don't you have crocodiles in there?' I asked as I take on the beautiful

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view of the lake. "Yes, the lake has crocodiles but that is another story," Silas said smilingly. He had just recounted the giant story.

Silas enjoys the rare honour of having the tribes of both his father and mother sharing ownership of the land the lake sits on. Through their custom of bibi, none of their tribe members have been attacked or killed by crocodiles in the lake. 'We don't trouble them, neither do they,' says Silas.

Their bibi custom he explains is the use of magic pebbles. To appease the mother crocodile (which are usually the man eaters), the magic man will speak to a bibi (pebble) then place it at a strategic place. This appeases the mother crocodile, and the result speaks for itself. No one has been attacked when out swimming or fish diving in this osi.

Well no one until one rare incident in 2010 when a local man was attacked by a mother crocodile while paddling his canoe in the lake. Silas said the man's 'sin' was that he had disturbed the bibi when he was clearing land on the island inside the lake.

"We also have a bibi for the harvest of a certain species of fish in the lake. We also have a bibi for crabs. Even if its not the crab season, once a bibi is placed by the magicman, crabs can be fished in large numbers."

Landowners of Kelakwai have big plans about the area. When Solomon Islands hosted the Festival of Pacific Arts in 2012, a performance village was built by the lake side. It proved to be a very popular site, where locals and visitors alike were treated to Pacific island dancing and singing. 🇸🇻



A boy plays in the shallows of Kelakwai Osi (lake).

**For tours and legends of Kelakwai Osi, contact Silas Diutee Malai, of Discover Malaita Tours, Mobile +677 7458201.**



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# Kodili - Isabel's culture festival

By Priestley Habru

The unique arts and culture of Isabel Province are very much alive as displayed in the weeklong Kodili Festival at the provincial township of Buala. Isabel Provincial Government hosted this first

ever festival which it now plans to host every two years with the 2018 festival promising to be much bigger and better.

The festival gets its name from a musical instrument made from a thin reed with a fishing line string attached at both ends. A Kodili player attaches one end of the instrument into his or her lips and



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Kodili performer Annie Sorumana (above), as chiefs of Isabel Province arrive at the festival venue in their traditional outfit (left). Performers of the famous 'sale olo' dance from Buala are pictured below left.



strums the strings with the fingers where melodious tunes are created from the movement in opening and closing of the mouth.

Playing the 'kodili', custom dancing, singing, traditional sports and entertainment, showcasing the unique Isabela arts and crafts and scores of other local and modern activities were on show day and night from September the 26th to the 30th at Buala Town.

A local journalist who covered the festival Ben Bilua of the Island Sun Newspaper said he was mesmerised by some of the traditional dancing and singing that as an Isabelian himself, had never seen or heard before.

"The women dancers from Togasalo Village in the Highlands of Isabel and men and women from Zabana were the first time ever I've seen them perform," said Bilua.

He said the participation of young boys and girls as young as six years old in performing the famous 'sale olo' dance unique to Isabel Province was encouraging.

"The festival really lives up to its theme of 'embracing custom and culture in harmony' and that Isabel's culture and custom is truly alive."

Isabel Premier James Habu said the festival was a provincial platform for tourism, encouraging business development and partnership with the government and the private sector.

Hundreds of people from Honiara and around Isabel flocked to the festival venue each day without any hassle where three ministers including the Minister of Culture and Tourism Honourable Bartholomew Parapolo were enjoying a few days holiday in Buala.



A traditional canoe was part of activities to mark Kodili Festival in Buala, capital of Isabel Province.

Isabel’s hospitality and humour filled the atmosphere as it was the first ever major festival to be hosted in Buala.

It was definitely a ‘success’ but for now we will have to wait until 2018 before another Kodili Festival comes alive again in Isabel, dubbed the longest island in the Solomons archipelago. 



**Solomon Airlines offer regular flights to Fera, Isabel Province from Honiara's Domestic Airport. Log onto [www.flysolomons.com](http://www.flysolomons.com) for travel information and bookings.**

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# *bustling* HONIARA

The views of Honiara from the American War Memorial show the layout of the city.

## Words and photos by Ken Hoppen

**Just landing at the international airport in Honiara**, the capital city of the Solomon Islands, is like taking a step back into modern history, and thoughts return to turbulent times some seventy years ago.

The Honiara International Airport was once better known as Henderson Field, built by the invading Japanese forces during WWII, and liberated by the Allied forces in 1942, in the midst of heavy fighting.

Now far more peaceful, it acts as the gateway to this tropical, idyllic archipelago.

Honiara is a city of around 65,000 people, located on the north-eastern coast of the island of Guadalcanal. The city is spread along

the coastline, just a short distance to the west of Henderson Field, and is the gateway to all of the country's island destinations. A hive of local industry, it is the country's main port, as well as the seat of national government.

Though many modern buildings have sprung up in the years since, reminders of turbulent times are everywhere in Honiara when you start to look. WWII Nissan huts are scattered about, used then left by the American forces. Down the road some fifteen kilometres to the west of the town are two large shipwrecks, known as Bonegi I and Bonegi II. These Japanese transport ships were destroyed as they ran up to the beach, landing soldiers and supplies. Under heavy fire, they slipped back a few metres from the sandy shore and sank down the slope here, forming natural reefs that are now two of the best dive sites in the Solomons. Bonegi I is totally underwater, with the



Japanese guns still stand guard at the Vilu War Museum.



An American fighter plane, a Hellcat, resides at the museum too, just one of several plane wrecks here.



The American War Memorial is a poignant reminder of times past, which hopefully will never return.

bow some 10m down, and the stern of this large vessel being more than 50m underwater. With massive superstructure and lots of open hatchways, it stands as not only a marine wonderland, but as a visual reminder of a time now past.

Bonegi II is a similar ship in size and shape, but part of her superstructure is still visible above the waterline, making her a prime location for swimmers and snorkelers who are not qualified on scuba. As with all wrecks, be aware that the metal here will have some sharp edges, and that marine life such as the lionfish that inhabit the wreck should be treated with care and caution. That shouldn't stop you from going in to look though, and imagining the horror that would have been here all those years back. The silver lining is the story of these two ships is the prolific marine life that now resides here.

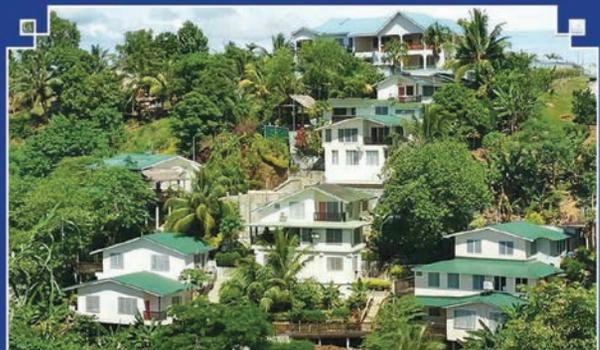
Close by Bonegi Beach is the Vilu War Museum. This museum is home to the remains of Japanese and American planes, guns, tanks and more. Set in well kept gardens, with the mountains of Guadalcanal in the background, this is a fascinating place to spend time in.

The American War Memorial is located on one of the hills overlooking Honiara, and has views to several of the main battlefields, including Galloping Horse and Seahorse Ridges. This poignant memorial brings home the many people that were killed in engagements in this relatively small area, which proved to be the turning point of the War in the Pacific. Battlefield guided tours are available.

The many Solomon Islands are situated in two roughly parallel lines that run from the north-west to the south-east, with the narrow area in the middle of the islands known as 'The Slot'. The naval battles

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Divers traverse the hull of the Bonegi I wreck. This large troop transport lies on its starboard side twenty minutes down the coast from Honiara.



Longnose butterflyfish are often spotted swimming in pairs on the Honiara dive sites.



Nudibranchs of many sizes and colourations litter the reefs here.

that were fought to the north of Honiara have given this area its name. Now known as ‘Iron Bottom Sound’, there are a large number of shipwrecks in the area. Tulagi Dive is based next to the Point Cruz Yacht Club, and takes visiting divers out to the local dive sites. Many of the deeper wrecks such as the USS Aaron Ward, the USS John Penn, and the USS Atlanta are best reserved for those with mixed gas (deep diving) qualifications, and the area has become a must-do experience for both wreck and technical divers.

The best live-aboard boat in the Solomons leaves from Honiara too. Taka is run by Solomon Islands Dive Expeditions, and regularly ranges to the Russell Group, the Florida Islands, and further west to New Georgia.

A wide range of accommodation is available in Honiara, from the luxurious Heritage Park Hotel, to the Solomon Kitano Mendana Hotel, the mid-range King Solomon Hotel, and to cheaper backpackers. The Coral Sea Resort & Casino is currently under construction, though the gaming rooms and restaurants are already completed, giving this island capital a new focal point.

Honiara is not just the entrance to this island archipelago; there is plenty to see during your time here as well. 



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# Minting shell money in Langa Langa

**Words & Pictures:**  
**Samisoni Pareti**

**Shell money making** is a fascinating process. Out on an artificial island in Langa Langa Lagoon, the women and men of Busu Village hold demonstrations for visitors for a small fee. On this western coast of Malaita, shell money is still the currency of choice, especially when it comes to bride price. You get to watch a bride price ceremony at the Busu Village demonstration too, a real live example of how shell money is used and why it is still a culturally prized

Beautiful Caroline Bataiasi plays the bride role in the Busu Village demonstration. She wears a dress laced with shell money. Shell money is also draped around a mature coconut Caroline is holding, coconut being a symbol of fertility.





Lengthy strings of well-rounded sea shells, in assorted colours are well sought after in traditional ceremonies. From diving for shells to threading them into six to seven feet of shell money, the process can take up to three long weeks. In her paper, Taiwanese researcher Pei-yi Guo said men and young boys also helped out in shell money production, although bulk of the work are done by women and girls. Her research identified the six step process in minting shell money.



## 1 Collecting

Men and young boys usually dive for these shells to be produced into shell money. Men of Buku Village say they now have to travel some distance to collect shells.



## 2 Shaping

From the sea, the shells are dried then with the help of a stone, smashed into little pieces and sizes. Researcher Pei-yi Guo identified this process as the u'ui.



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**3 Drilling** This is the oga process, drilling a hole at the centre of each shell bead using a home-made drill.



**4 Colouring** Using a hot stone, beads are coloured in the heating process.



**5 Polishing** Men and boys take over the process again by polishing the almost finished beads, using grinding stones.



**6 Threading** After shaping, holing, colouring, and polishing, Tania now threads the shell beads into various patterns.

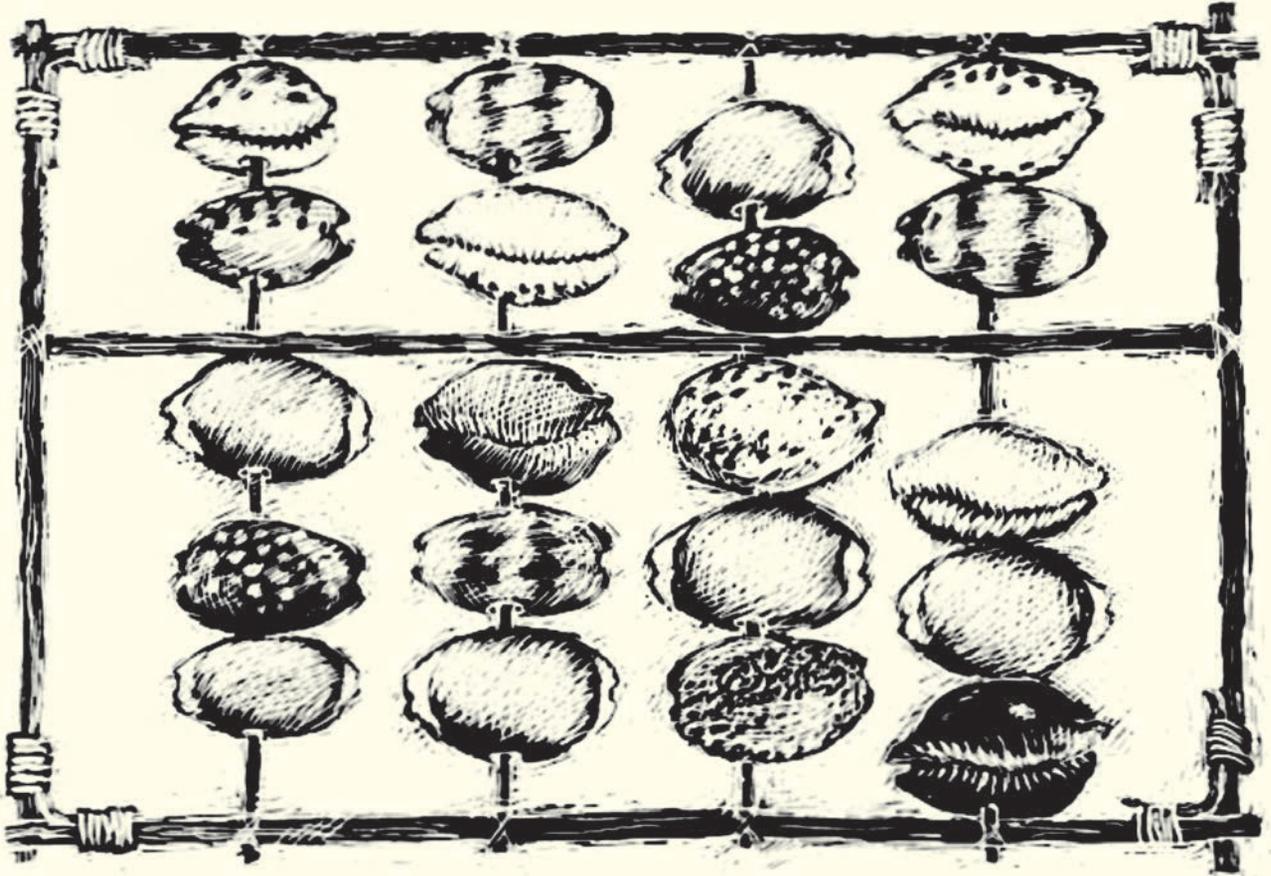
For shell-money making demonstration in Busu Village,  
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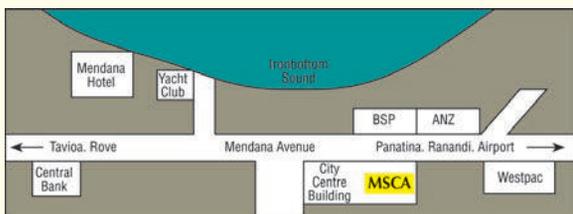
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# URILOLO LODGE

*For that therapeutic, authentic holiday*

Words and photos by Samisoni Pareti

**Sitting on the jetty-like platform out on the beach**, feet playing with the water as schools of tiny fish play on the sandy sea bottom, I can't help but shy, this is the life! The lagoon is flat as a TV screen, mirror-like in the early morning sun, no ripples in sight, just a huge sheet of reflexes. I watch John in awe, diving for fish in his dugout canoe, some distance from shore. How on earth is he able to get out and back into his little dugout, without sinking it? He is diving near the submerged reef, easily marked by the crashing surf not far beyond him and his canoe.

Further afield, to the left of the horizon is the blue outline of Simbo Island, home to megapode birds and sulphur lakes. Greener, bigger and way much closer and directly in front of me is Ranongga Island, home to stone carvers. It's just 40 minutes across by motored canoe, Chief William Giroi tells me. Vella Lavella is to my right, also greener and bigger. Its 30 minutes by boat.

The timber platform I am sitting on has become my favourite spot since my arrival here at Urilolo Lodge on Gizo's west coast. It was built to be the performing stage for island dancers and performers of the Festival of Pacific Arts Solomon Islands hosted in 2012. Fancy that. Just a few days before this I had visited a





Setting sun casts a ball of yellow and orange glow over Rangonna Island as a lone fisherman paddles home in Saeragi coast.

performing stage near Auki in Malaita. Now it's another performing venue in the Western Province.

Urilolo Lodge sits on a cove with the most amazing soft white beach. It's part of Saeragi Village, about 30-minutes ride on dirt road from Gizo town. Chief William Giroi is the owner and operator of Urilolo, comprising two beach bungalows that each can sleep two people, and a spacious recreational leaf house. Two more bungalows are under construction.



Chief William Giroi

Obviously, more and more people are beginning to learn of the complete peace and tranquillity Urilolo offers.

"Urilolo Lodge far exceed my expectations," wrote Nicole Archen from Sioux Lookout in Ontario, Canada. "This is a very clean and well equipped bungalow. It was especially nice to have the convenience of a shower, McLuhan toilet and solar lights."

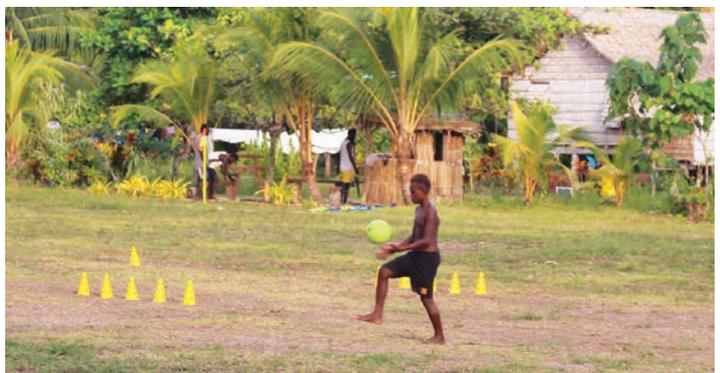
Nicole was a guest here on 4 March, 2015.

Cleanliness is big with Chief William and his equally hardworking wife, Serelyn. You wake up each morning with your sandy lawn nicely raked clean. No matter what the time of the day is, the toilet is forever clean. I did wonder sometimes whether Serelyn had cleaning fairies in her employ.

Guests have the choice of cooking their own meals or paying for Serelyn to be their personal chef. With such a heavenly location, soft sound of the waves on the beach a stone throw



Frolicking by the beach is a favourite past-time of children in Saeragi.



A new 'Pele' in the making ... afternoons will see young boys out on the village playground.



Two uninhabited islands off the Saeragi coastline. Looming behind them is Vella Lavella.



A Saeragi woman cleans her harvest of sea grapes.

away, who would want to cook? I refused to and I was glad I didn't as Serelyn's cooking was wickedly delicious.

"We had a lovely relaxing stay here at Urilolo Lodge," wrote Vidushi and Rachel, visiting medical students from the UK. "It is in a perfect like location overlooking the crystal clear turquoise waters! We enjoyed our time

lying the hammocks, reading and playing on the beach."

In Chief Williams' paradise, you decide whether to do something or do nothing. I opted on the second day of my stay to take a hike to a taboo site, one of the old village sites up the mountain. When the brochure says it's an "energetic" hike, believe it. I think Chief William felt so sorry for me, as we made our way down to Urilolo. It was raining, and the trek was slippery and I had only my slippers on. But I made it and boy was I so glad to see the beach at the end of the hike!

Other activities include fishing, kayaking, snorkelling, or island visit to neighbouring Vella Lavella, Ranongga or Simbu. All in a day's tour, Chief said.

"William and his family have embraced the meaning of their lodge," says Molly from Australia. "I was definitely out of my normal comfort zone, no power, Wi-Fi, but what memories and friendship we take on far exceeds those little concerns."

For me, nothing beats waking up each morning and taking on the view as you sit on the beach platform, feet dangling in the water, and the sea being glassy calm. It's hard to explain it but just somehow, your surrounds and the view bring on that cleansing, therapeutic effect, exactly what I need before its time to head back to the chaotic rat race that the office offers. 

**To contact**  
**Chief William and Serelyn Giroi at Urilolo Lodge,**  
**West Gizo, call: +677 8624768**



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# Munda Divers Go Pro

Words by Andrew Trahair

The Solomon Islands is one of the premier dive destinations in the world. The pristine coral reefs and spectacular variety of marine life is rarely equalled anywhere in the Pacific. The warm and crystal clear waters beckon diving enthusiasts from around

the globe to immerse themselves, quite literally, into an earthly paradise. Diving tourism has been established for some time in the Solomons, and while it is still quite modest in size, most experts anticipate significant growth in this sector.



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# Local Destination



Another dive lesson completed ... Belinda Botha (4th from left) with Dive Munda Dive Guides and staff.

In the small town of Munda in the Western Province, where some of the best diving in the Solomons is found, a recent initiative has germinated that involves training six young Solomon Islanders to work as fully qualified Dive Guides, to meet the growing demand for Dive Professionals.

Belinda Botha is the Operations Director of Dive Munda, and also a qualified SSI Instructor Trainer. She has been able to garnish support from the Ministry of Culture and Tourism, and SIVB (Solomon Islands Visitors Bureau) to provide a training internship to a number of young locals, with the goal to fully qualify them as International Dive Guide Professionals through SSI (Scuba Schools International).

Dive Munda is a multi award winning dive operation, having recently been awarded the 2016 Dive company of the year by Luxury

Travel Guide, and was the recipient of the Social Media Award at the South Pacific Tourism Exchange. Belinda was also recognised at the Solomon Islands Chamber of Commerce and Industry 2016 Business Excellence Awards as runner up entrepreneur of the year.

Belinda is a former Human Resources executive and has worked for many years in the international diving and tourism sector.

She says: "I believe Solomon Islanders are the country's greatest resource, and I aim to deliver a holistic level of training, not just as Dive Guide Professionals, but also in tourism, customer service and relations and general life skills".

"This has been such an exiting project, full of cultural sensitivities and plenty of laughter. It's so much fun seeing such happy faces, and it's heartwarming watching people grow and develop on a fast track



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programme. It's just phenomenal!"

One of the trainees, Junior Ziru, 25, is enthusiastic about the training: "Training to be a Dive Guide makes me feel proud of myself and my family. I love to dive in the sea and I look forward to completing the course, when I will have my first experience of working as a Dive Guide. I feel lucky to have a good instructor who has taught me many skills."

Janita Kuangan, 29, looks forward to working in the dive industry. "I look forward to having a professional job. I am really happy and proud to be one of the trainees. I'm looking forward to being with the guests on every dive, and exploring the underwater with them. We have shared a lot of knowledge and gained a lot of skills. We share love and respect for each other and the guests, and take care of one another. I understand how important it is to look after the dive sites very carefully. A huge thanks to Belinda."

Another trainee Zaza Bedford, 18 adds: "It has been a great experience to learn new stuff, being underwater and learning about the fish and other life. Learning professionalism in diving, learning about the environment and the importance of teaching the communities about taking care of the reefs. And a big thanks to Belinda!"

Dive Munda's existing Dive Master is Brian Daga, and he has been working as a guide for twenty years. He has observed changes in the young people in his community who have enrolled in the Dive Guide programme: "I've noticed how excited they are to see things

under water that they have never seen before. They are meeting people from all around the world. I've noticed how they have learned to be punctual and on time for work, and now they have greater opportunities for work around the Solomons."

Once qualified as Dive Professionals, the guides will be able to apply for a position at any of the dive operators in the Solomons, including Dive Munda's sister company, Solomon Island Dive Expeditions (SIDE) operating the Dive Liveboard boat MV Taka.

Belinda hopes to be able to expand the Diveguide training programme to other provinces of the Solomons as she envisions securing further funding from stakeholders to help meet the growing demand for well trained professionals in the dive tourism market. 



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## Monu - Honiara's coconut baron

By Priestley Habru

**John Monu is an expert in fresh coconut fruit** who supplies road-side sellers and restaurants in Honiara with the juicy tropical drink.

If you buy a \$5 coconut for its juice at any roadside cooler between Honiara City and Henderson International Airport, Honiara Central Market or in a cafe in town, it could have been straight from Monu's backyard.

Based at his tribal land just east of Henderson International Airport, turn left down straight to the seaside on the same road leading to the Anglican Christian Care Centre for victims of domestic violence, is Monu's family home.

He is surrounded by coconut trees and his family depends entirely on this tropical fruit tree of life for extra income. So much so, that he becomes an expert on the right time to harvest and how to prepare the nuts for sale

"When you have three full bunches of mature fruits in a coconut tree, it is ready to be harvested," he explained in Solomon Pijin accentuated by his Central Solomons' accent.

The father of six said each bunch can have 13 to 15 fruits, so a single coconut tree can produce up to 45 fruits of three bunches.



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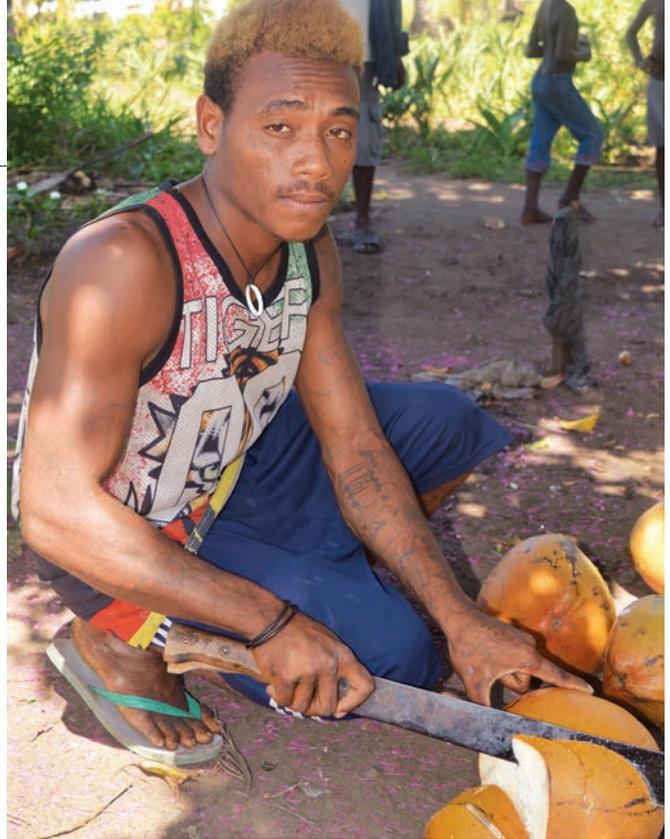


John Monu

“As soon as you see three full bunches in a coconut tree, you wait for three weeks before the first bunch is harvested. Then after one week, we harvest the second bunch and after two weeks, the final and third bunch.

“By the time you harvest the third bunch, that same coconut tree would have bear two more young bunches which would be ready to be harvested in three or four weeks’ time and the cycle of harvesting continues all year round.”

Monu said if harvesting continues consecutively one week after the other, then you are over-harvesting and not conserving for ‘rainy days’ and will run into irregularity of supply for



Son James Pengoa chops prepares the coconuts for the market.

your customers.

The 52 year old Monu oversees the operation and no longer scales the coconut trees these days. That duty has gone to his sons, more so a grandson, Stephen Pengoa who is an expert in climbing without any aid of a rope tied around his legs as is common for most Solomon Islander tree climbers.

“My sons climb the coconuts and harvest the fruits each afternoon before we cut out the outer husk, put them inside a bag and ready to sell them to our customers. The selling price to roadside coconut vendors is \$2 each.

“The selling price for restaurants is \$3 with King Solomon Hotel buying at \$4 per coconut.”

The roadside vendors after buying Monu’s coconuts, clean out the thick husk put them inside a cooler to retail at \$5 each.

He noted that supplying fresh coconut fruit juice is good business but sometimes hardwork, however it is one of the few options his family can earn extra income.

“Our only expense would be transport to carry the coconuts from our plantation into town where vehicle charges are 50 cents per nut. If we are late to transport our coconuts to our customers, then we will go straight to the Honiara Central Market to sell our coconuts as there are many like us who also supply coconuts to Honiara customers.

“Then you also need to pay a \$25 market fee to sell your coconuts at the Honiara Central Market which is an extra expense,” Monu lamented.

Overall, his family enjoyed the small joys of life in the simple hamlet by the seaside surrounded by the tropical tree of life and in supplying fresh coconut fruit juice for Honiara city customers from vendors to restaurant owners.

So next time you stop to buy a cool coconut fruit juice by the roadside or sip a sweet juice of coconut in one of the cafeterias in town, its most likely Monu and his family are your ever-industrious supplier of that freshly prepared coconut juice.

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Photos by Priestley Habru

# Gone but not Forgotten

## The wrecks below Ironbottom Sound

- Republished of Issue 26, 1998.

On most days of the week the expanse of the Pacific Ocean from the shores of Honiara town to the Ngela islands, on the east horizon, and to the distinctive hump of volcanic Savo, to the north is just as the Pacific is supposed to be: a blueness of calm and peace.

Yet years ago this area was one of naval history's fiercest battle grounds and the scene of one of the United States Navy's worst defeats.

Between August 1942 and mid 1943, ships and aircraft of the United States and the Japanese navies fought in actions that brought their

crews almost eyeball to eyeball.

As ashore on Guadalcanal US marine drove northwards along the coast from Henderson airport, Japanese destroyers and transports sped at night close along the shore to deliver men and supplies to the defending Japanese forces and shell American positions on the fast passage back to their northern bases.

Japanese ships were so regular that the Americans called them the "Tokyo Express." The channel between islands they took on the run down from the north became The Slot. And today the normal placidity of the seascape off Honiara is still called Ironbottom Sound. It is the seabed graveyard of more than 40 American and Japanese



US memorial at Skyline Ridge in Honiara.



Memorial for the scouts and coastwatchers in Honiara

warships and transports sunk in the fighting.

Ashore at Guadalcanal, and at numerous other regions of the Solomon Islands, dangerous relics of the Pacific war between the Allies and Japan still lie hidden in the bush or under a thick covering of soil. One estimate of finally clearing the Solomon Islands of tens of thousands of unexploded bombs, grenades, shells and bullets left by the war is another 30 or 40 years; perhaps really never, since to rid all the islands of all that still deadly refuse is really an impossibility.

Now another worry is beginning to seep from the wrecks of the warships at the bottom of Ironbottom Sound. Shattered by shells, bombs, torpedoes and internal explosions, and corroded by years of time the wrecks are beginning to give up their fuel oil.

Traces of oil seepages began to be noticed several years ago. Particularly noticeable is oil from the Atlanta, an American cruiser lying about 130 metres down several kilometres off the shore of Honiara. Collectively, the fuel tanks of the sunken fleet hold thousands of tonnes of bunker oil.

In Vanuatu more than a decade ago a salvage company was hired to drain more than 600 tonnes of bunker fuel from the wreck of a 30,000 ton troop ship, the President Coolidge, which sank at Santo after hitting a mine. The job was done successfully and the oil, pumped to the surface into a tanker was sold as perfectly usable fuel to a shipping company. But the Coolidge's bunkers are at less than 100 metres, within easy reach of diving. Most of the ships at the bottom of Ironbottom Sound lie in depths measured in hundreds of metres. The retrieval of oil from them would technically be difficult and very costly. Whether such a salvage job is financially and technically feasible remains to be seen.

Although now more than half a century in the past, memories of World War II are ever-present in the Solomon Islands. For most visitors the reminders begin as they arrive at the nation's main airport at Honiara – Henderson Field. It is named after marine Major Lofton R. Henderson, a dive-bomber squadron commander killed in the Battle of Midway. Throughout the country lie rusting relics from the war and everywhere, for those who know their history, are reminders of the sacrifice and valour that were an integral part of the fighting that took place there during the Battle of Guadalcanal.

As time marches on, more and more of the reminders of this momentous period in the Solomon's history crumble away. But a small group of influential people are determined that the memories of the War, and of other important periods in the nation's history, won't fade completely. The Government has set up a special group (in the late 1990s) to help preserve the past and protect remaining relics and monuments.



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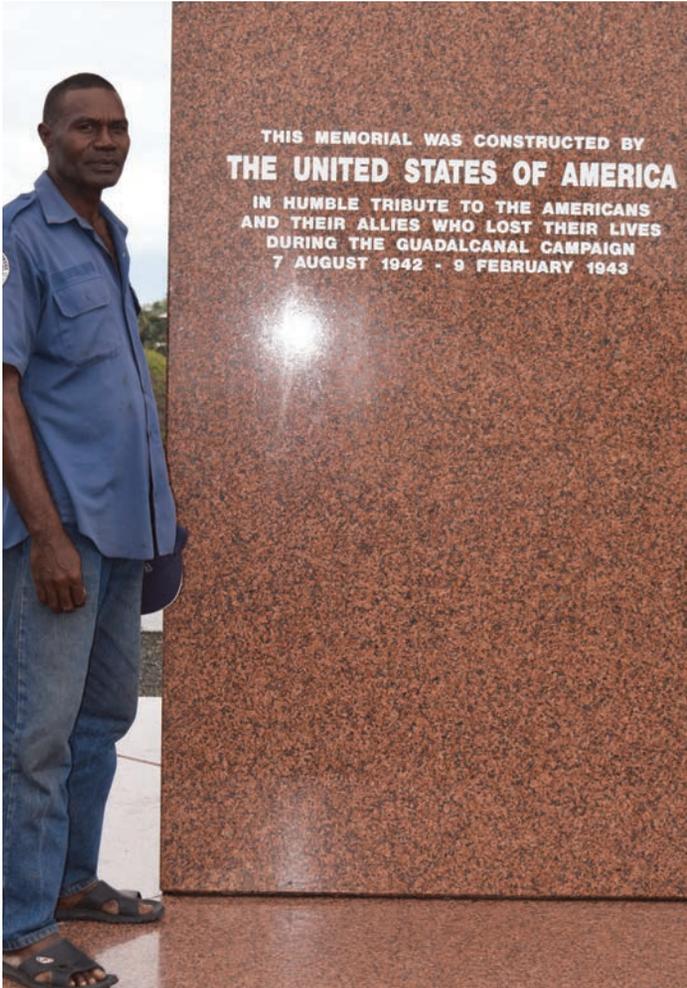
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A security guard manning the US memorial at Skyline Ridge

The Historic Sites Preservation Committee has been charged with devising means to preserve a range of historical sites, including but not exclusively those from the War. The Solomon Islands house a range of mementoes from the past, relics from earlier contacts with outsiders, including the early Spanish, French and German explorers and the British from the colonial period.

The Committee comprises representatives from the National Museum, the Visitors Bureau, Guadalcanal Provincial Government, relevant central Government ministries and private enterprise, including Solomon Airlines and tour operators. Its brief is to preserve and enhance significant sites and to make them accessible to those who wish to see them.

The first major project undertaken by the Committee centered on the Skyline Ridge Monument. This monument, built at a cost of SOL\$1.5 million and dedicated during the 50th anniversary of the Guadalcanal campaign in 1992, features marble panels which tell the story of the battle and is intended to be a memorial for all those who died during the conflict. Underlining the bloody fighting that took place in the area, the remains of a United States marine were found on the site while it was being built.

At the beginning of this year (1998), the Historic Sites Preservation Committee signed an agreement with the American Battle Monuments Commission that will see finance assured for ongoing maintenance at the monument. The Commission has agreed to provide SOL\$1000 per month for the purpose. The money will be paid to the Koa Hill Community, located adjacent to the monument, whose members will provide the labour to maintain the site.

Last month representatives of the Battles of Guadalcanal and Solomon Islands Foundation visited the country from the United States to liaise with the Committee on further proposals



A war relic now being kept at Cenotaph Area inside the Central Police Headquarters in Honiara - site of the annual ANZAC dawn service



Coastwatchers and scouts memorial at the Commonwealth Street in the heart of Honiara

to protect battle sites. This foundation, founded by veterans of the Guadalcanal campaign, also provide assistance to Solomon Islanders in the form of the annual Vouza Scholarship which helps outstanding students attend secondary school. The scholarship is named after Sergeant-Major Jacob Vouza, a Solomon Islander scout whose heroism during the campaign won for him both the George Medal and the American Silver Star. Discussions between the Committee and the Foundation are continuing, but the thinking at the moment is to extend the concept introduced at the Skyline Monument to other battle sites, especially those around Henderson Field. In this way, local communities can become actively involved in the efforts to protect and preserve their own past. 



US memorial

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Our Destination

***Delightful***  
**SYDNEY**

***So vast and ever so beautiful, you will never run out of places to visit and things to do in this amazing Australian city as our travel editor Samisoni Pareti finds out.***



**Left:** Sydney Opera House. **Above:** Scenic view of Sydney Harbour Bridge with the famous Sydney Ferries on the foreground.

**One of the greatest delights** of visiting Sydney for me is the wide array of choices this beautiful city of four million people offers residents and visitors alike. One of the best thing my wife and I did in one of our visits was to drive from Eastwood in west Sydney, park the car at the ferry stop in Meadowbank on the Parramatta River ferry line and hop into one of the many fast catamarans that stop there that

takes you on a largely smooth, scenic bay cruise right to Circular Quay on Sydney's waterfront, with the majestic Opera House to your left and the iconic Sydney Harbour Bridge behind you.

If it is a clear, sunny Sydney day, nothing beats exiting the ferry's air-conditioned lounge, to stand near the bow to feel the sea infused breeze on your face. Always my favourite spot, especially when the





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 P.O.Box C148, Commonwealth Street,  
 Point Cruz, Honiara. P: +677 23064





# Our Destination



Three Sisters, Blue Mountains

Kristen Greaves; Destination NSW

Harbour Bridge looms, and as we go full speed underneath, I will gaze up to marvel and soak up the 52,800 tonnes of steel and six million rivets that hold up this massive piece of engineering. Always gives me goose bumps no matter how many times I have done it.

If you are lucky, you may even spot climbers up the steel archers of the bridge as there are now tour companies offering Sydney Bridge climbs. Such climbs can take between 1.5 to 3.5 hours, depending on the route you take. You have to be fit of course to make the ascent to the 134 metre (440 foot) summit, but they say the effort is rewarded handsomely with a great vista of what makes Sydney one of the world's beautiful cities as you take in Sydney Harbour, the Opera House, and the famous Blue Mountains beyond.

They are choices when it comes to climbing the Sydney Harbour Bridge too. There is dawn bridge climb, the morning or afternoon climbs, the twilight climb, night climb, express bridge climb, a bridge climb sampler, The VIVID climb (during VIVID Sydney Festival) and the Mandarin Climb for Mandarin (Chinese) speakers.

Of course you can just drive to the city, if you don't want to hop on the ferry. The only other challenge you may have to deal with is finding parking in the CBD. The other choice you have is to take the train, which runs on schedule with very affordable fares. Like the Sydney Ferry option, going by train to the city will mean a fair bit of walking, which is really not bad when you think about it as it offers sightseeing while doing some physical exercise at the same time.

It began to rain while we were getting off the Sydney Ferry at Circular Quay one morning. Caught without our umbrellas, my wife, and friends Greg and Rosie ran up George Street, trying to find shelter along the way. Our destination was the Sunrise Studios of Channel 7 up on Martin Place. We had watched from our friends' Eastwood home how people could line up outside the glass walls of the TV Studio during the show and wave to the camera or even hold up placards on live TV.

Like other cities in Australia, you go out of the CBD if a good bargain is what you are after while shopping. Sydney City offers Haymarket and Chinatown. When on business travel, I prefer those small souvenir shops along George Street. I read somewhere that it was once called High Street. The Big Apple store is also located on George Street, an added reason why it is one of my favourites.

For dining or a drink, Darling Harbour and The Rocks along Sydney Harbour is a must stop. There's everything to suit everyone's tastes



James Horan; Destination NSW

Scenic skyway, part of Scenic World at Katoomba, Blue Mountains



Tobias Rowles; Destination NSW

Bondi Beach, Sydney

and the most difficult job is yours deciding where you should stop to eat or to enjoy a draught or two of the local brew.

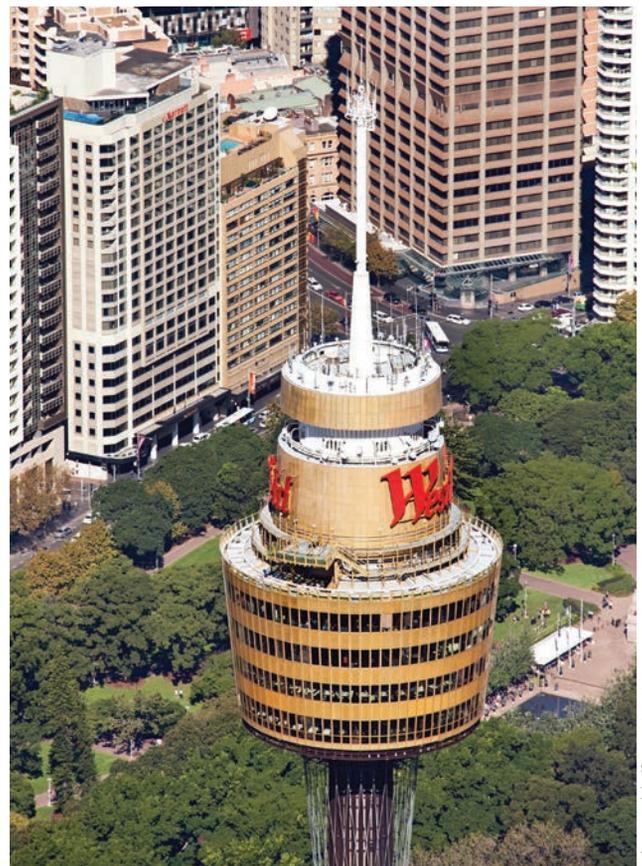
If venturing out of the city is your thing, Sydney offers a lot more. A favourite of mine is driving by Bondi Beach, or taking in the sights of the Three Sisters rock formation at Katoomba in the beautiful Blue Mountains. Here, you can even take the world's steepest railway at Scenic World. Or, if you are game, take the gondola (cable car) for breathtaking views of the Blue Mountain valley. I did it once, and it was ok, to put it diplomatically.

You can also treat your wife or family to a dinner cruise on Sydney Harbour, or go for a picnic in New South Wales' wine country of Hunter Valley. It is well worth the drive, as my wife and I discovered one time when we included a stop at Hunter Valley while driving up to visit family in Newcastle. You will love it, even if you are not a keen wine lover as wineries offer visitors tours as well as wine tasting sessions. 



**Solomon Airlines offers direct flights to Sydney from November, departing Honiara on Mondays, and returning the next day. With our codeshare partner QANTAS, we also offer attractive onward connections from both Sydney and Brisbane airports.**

**For more information or bookings, log onto [www.flysolomons.com](http://www.flysolomons.com)**



Sydney Centrepoint Tower

Ethan Rohloff; Destination NSW

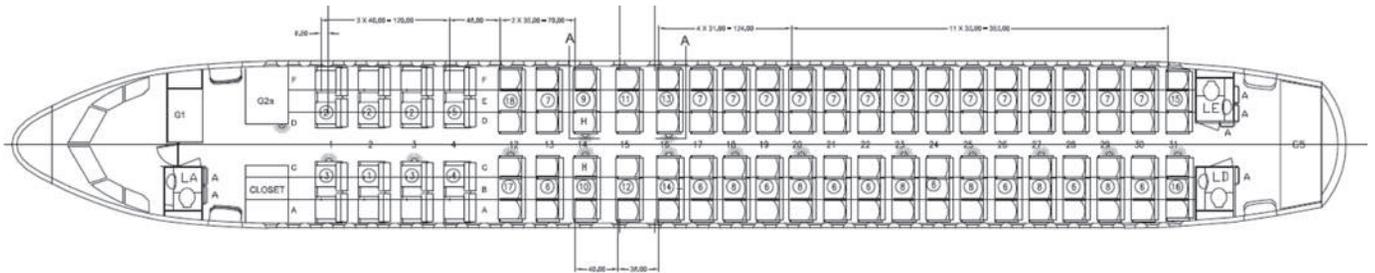


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# SOLOMON AIRLINES FACT SHEET

## 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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[www.flysolomons.com](http://www.flysolomons.com)

**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](mailto: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](mailto:reservations@flysolomons.com)

**Fiji**

**Nadi Airport**

Office 27, First Floor  
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**WEBSITE: [www.flysolomons.com](http://www.flysolomons.com)**

# International Connections



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Solomon Islands National Airline  
[www.flysolomons.com](http://www.flysolomons.com)

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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](mailto:rob@qldcargo.com), or  
[alp@qldcargo.com](mailto:alp@qldcargo.com)  
[www.aircraftloaderspackers.com.au](http://www.aircraftloaderspackers.com.au)

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Espace Moselle,  
Quartier Latin, Noumea  
BP 336, 98845, Noumea  
Tel: (687) 286 677  
Fax: (687) 274 050

**NZ PASSENGER GSA**  
Airline Marketing New Zealand  
Level 10, 120 Albert St, P O Box 6247  
Wellesley St, Auckland 1141  
Ph: (64 9) 969 7602  
Fax: (64 9) 969 7474  
Email: [flysolomons@airlinemarketing.co.nz](mailto:flysolomons@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  
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Email: [flysolomons@gmail.com](mailto:flysolomons@gmail.com)

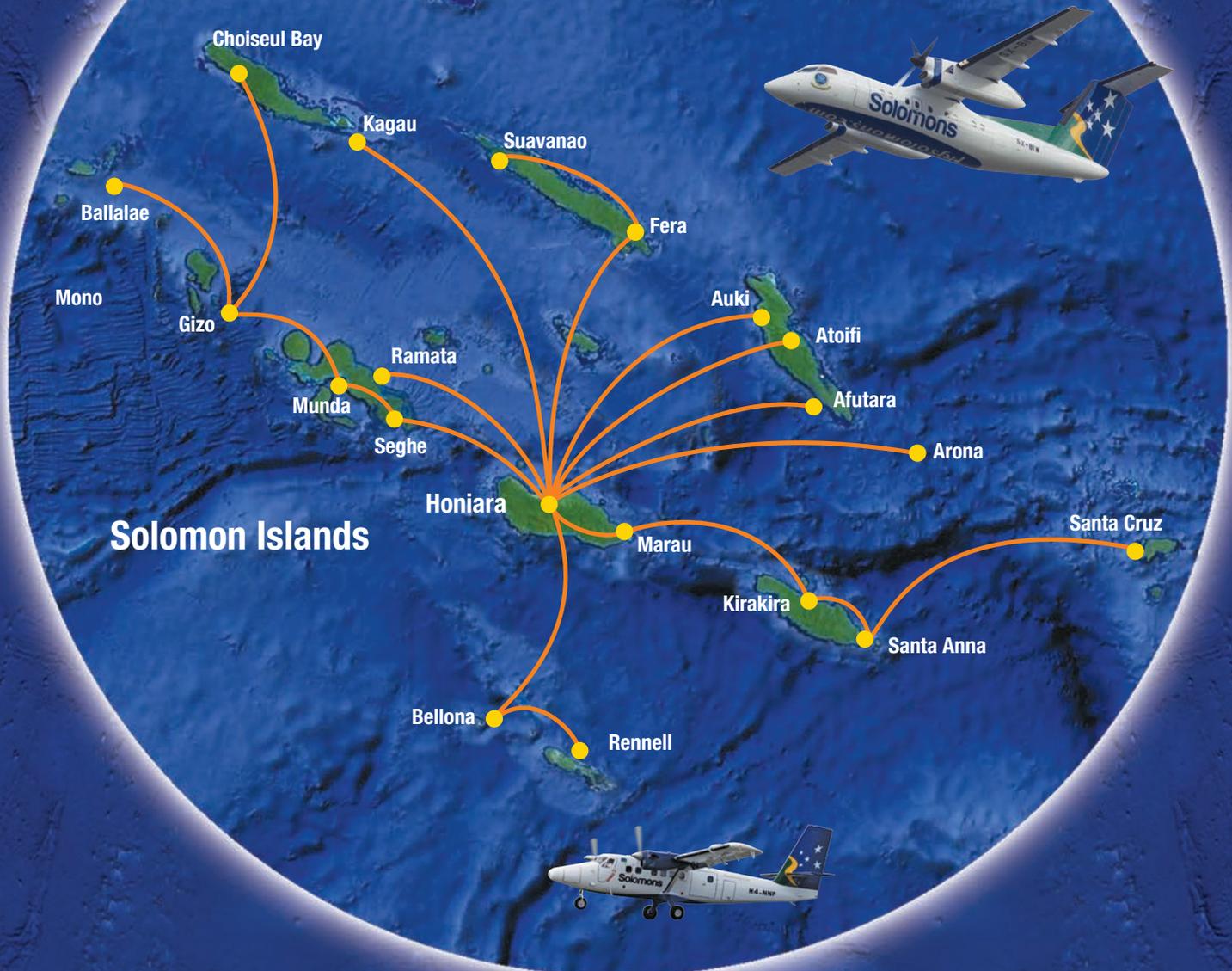
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Fax: +44 (870) 240 2208  
Email: [web@solomonairlines.co.uk](mailto:web@solomonairlines.co.uk)

**VANUATU**  
*Surata Tamaso Travel Limited*  
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Lini Highway, Port Vila  
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Fax: (678) 24275  
Email: [tamaso-tours@vanuatu.com.vu](mailto:tamaso-tours@vanuatu.com.vu)

**VANUATU Cargo GSA**  
Ridley Daniel  
Right Freight Services  
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Phone: +678 24690  
Mobile: +678 7744690  
Email: [rfs@vanuatu.com.vu](mailto:rfs@vanuatu.com.vu)

For all bookings, ticketing and flight enquiries:

# Domestic Connections



## Solomon Islands Offices

**Head Office**  
**Administration**  
**Finance**  
**Sales & Reservations**

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

## Airport Offices

### HONIARA

Operations  
 Engineering  
 Cargo  
 International Terminal Traffic  
 Domestic Terminal Traffic

Tel: (677) 36048 • Fax: (677) 36244  
 Tel: (677) 36104 • Fax: (677) 36040  
 Tel: (677) 36071 • Fax: (677) 36372  
 Tel: (677) 36077 • Fax: (677) 36076  
 Tel: (677) 36048/36251 • Fax: (677) 36244

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

Tel: (677) 53159 • Fax: (677) 53092  
 Tel: (677) 60173 • Fax: (677) 60202  
 Tel: (677) 62152 • Fax: (677) 62152  
 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@fysolomons.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@fysolomons.com

### F I J I - Nadi

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

# A legacy retires

Captain Darryl Toepfer has been around the skies for a long time and as our first Chief Pilot (Manager International Flight Operations) of the Airbus A320 affectionately known as 'The BUS', he mastered this "little ole French Lady" until his retirement in November 2016.

Darry is 'one of a kind' and after doing stints in CASA Australia and then with Air Vanuatu and Fiji Airways; he moved to the enticement in those times, of joining Solomon Airlines when they selected (rightly or wrongly) the Embraer 170 for a new start into reviving their AOC (Air Operators' Certificate) which was then later turned into Foreign Air Operator's Certificate (FAOC) which allowed the Embraer to fly to International destinations such as Australia; Vanuatu and Fiji.

Darryl was given the honour of a formal farewell by the company at our "LeafHut" club-haus at its H.Q. at Henderson Airport when completing his final flight as commander of the BUS prior to returning to Brisbane and retiring.

We salute Captain Darryl Toepfer for his masterful application in carrying out his duties diligently and meeting all Compliance and Safety requirements as the key figure in the introduction of our French Lady as he so commonly and affectionately quipped and wish him the very best in his health and his family and as we all know, retirement is not for all of us but seeing Australia in his new Toy....a designed and built Campervan with his lovely wife was a fitting end to ensuring he kept busy in his latter years....

**ALL THE BEST DARRYL ...from your friends and colleagues at Solomon Airlines.**



Presenting Captain Toepfer (centre) with a parting gesture of appreciation at the Leaf Hut Henderson Airport are Cabin Manager Angie Kaikai and Gus Kraus.



Captain of our 'French Lady' Captain Toepfer (left) inside our Airbus 320 with our cabin flight crew and a famous musician based in Fiji with Solomons heritage, Filimone (Tukai) Dakei.

# Pilot upgrade continues

We continue to be proud of our training programme and the efforts and skills set of all our trainers for the upgrades that have been completed to date and those that are in the wings to complete their "Pilot in Command" - release to service wings."

We have finally completed the upgrades of Captain Jonathan Yaxley, a 'veteran' with Solomon Airlines for the past ten years who has made his way from the Brittain Norman Islander and the Twin Otter to now be in control of our Domestic 'mother ship', the Dash 8 aircraft.

Jonathan, a "Kiwi" by heritage has done the hard yards and is confidently in command of the Dash 8 and is a product of the airline's commitment to its human resource development programme.



At the cockpit of our Dash 8 aircraft are Captain Jonathan Yaxley (left) and co-pilot, Cornelius Vonseau.



New Twin Otter Commanders .. Captain Alex Takola (left) with Captain Daniel Leong

In addition, Captain Daniel Leong has added to his "wings" the command title that all pilots strive to achieve and he has been upgraded to command of our Twin Otter after two years on the Brittain Norman Islander and we are proud of his achievement as well.

Just released too to line for command on the Twin Otter is Captain Alex Takola who is our first upgrade from the right seat of the Twin Otter to the left seat as commander considering our company's decision to dispose off the Islander aircraft by early next year. Takola has completed his final stages of training prior to adding another Gold Bar to his epaulets and we welkam his continued contribution to the company.

### Things to know as visitors to our shores:

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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



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

**Tipping ...** Not expected and not encouraged.

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

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

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

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

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

### Provinces

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

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

• **Isabel** - Provincial capital: Buala

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

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

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

### 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	5279 km <sup>2</sup>	81,214	1661m	Gizo
Ysabel	4,014 km <sup>2</sup>	26,310	1,392m	Buala
Malaïta	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

P.O. Box 1170, Honiara, Solomon Islands

P: (677) **28070 / 28091/28077** / F: (677)**26212**,

Email: [islandsun@solomon.com.sb](mailto:islandsun@solomon.com.sb)

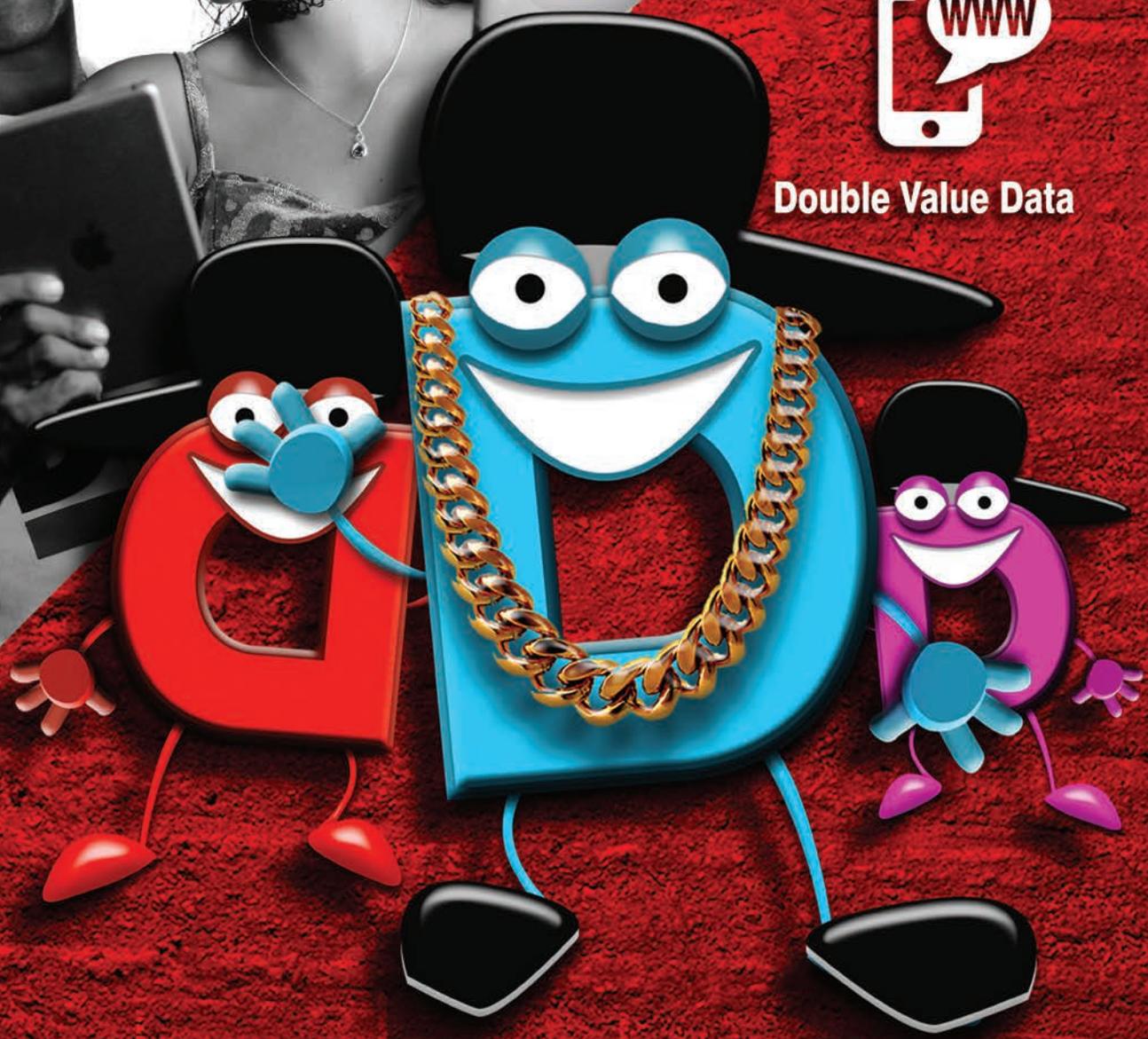
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Graphic Design by NitroMitar@gmail.com



# PACIFIC CASINO HOTEL

*Solomon Islands*

[www.pacificcasinohotel.com](http://www.pacificcasinohotel.com)



Located right beside the Solomon Sea with amazing views and a cool sea breeze, the hotel offers 173 spacious, comfortable and fully air-conditioned rooms. It is conveniently located approximately 5kms from both Honiara Henderson international airport and the Honiara CBD (Point Cruise). Suites boast separate lounge areas and private balconies. Rooms include satellite TV with 24 hours in-house movie channels, IDD telephone access, tea/coffee and a mini bar fridge. Wi-Fi hotspots are available throughout the hotel.

### Hotel Facilities

- Gym
- Free Wi-Fi
- 24 Hr Reception
- Guest Laundry Service
- Airport Pick Up
- Pool
- Internet Café
- Supreme Car Rental
- Supreme Casino
- Safe & Free Parking
- Rooms
- Restaurant (Ocean View Restaurant)
- 24 Hr Patrolling Security
- Standard Room
- Penthouse
- Suite
- Semi Contained Apartments

*Lobster Thermidor  
Ocean View Restaurant*



*Suite Sea View*



*Canoe Bar  
(Pool Side Bar)*



*Map*

