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Ron Sumsum
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WELKAM FRENS

To all our valued customers



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evriwan, Meri Xmas and
Prosperous and Safe New Year



Partnerships

WELKAM ABOARD - QANTAS; -our new codeshare partnership commenced on the 15th November 2015.

This is a major milestone for both carriers considering our history together now re-engaged.

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This is a mega partnership from our small and friendly Hapi Isles.

Furthermore, we expect to commence a renewed partnership with our Melanesian brothers in Air Vanuatu with whom we plan to commence our codeshare from Honiara to Port Vila and return each Saturday and Sunday each week.

Lastly, we are near finalisation of our Tripartite Melanesian partnership linking Papua New Guinea, Solomon Islands and Vanuatu through the national carriers of Air Niugini, Solomon Airlines and Air Vanuatu. We expect the new service to link Moresby, Honiara and Vila via a weekly service each Tuesday and returning Wednesday. Target is December but latest would be 1st January 2016.....Mifala hamamas tru (translated means we are very happy)

Christmas family gatherings

With Christmas upon us with something like 30 odd days from writing, we trust all our clients are considering safety as an important aspect of their Xmas festivities with family and friends.

Naturally by the time you read this issue, all your travel arrangements will have been resolved and you do not expect any hidden surprises that may disrupt your HAPPY XMAS with loved ones....book early and don't be disappointed.

Best reading ahead

Includes the following-

- Cultural Identity > the need to foster our cultures
- Love is in the Air > a great wedding story on the beautiful Papatara Resort in Santa Isabel
- The Lagoon Festival > the one Festival that should not be missed annually
- The Three Sisters Islands of Makira > with the Crocodile Whisperers
- Ace in the Deep > another WWII Heroes story in the Solomon Islands
- Lastly, the busy holiday destination in Queensland > The Gold Coast, an experience never to forget

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Tengiu tumas.

Ron Sumsum
Chief Executive Officer



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Solomons



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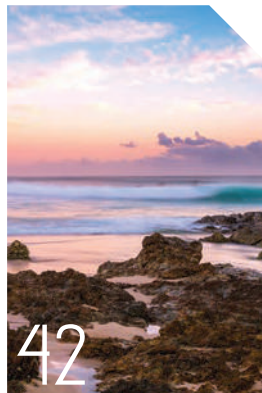
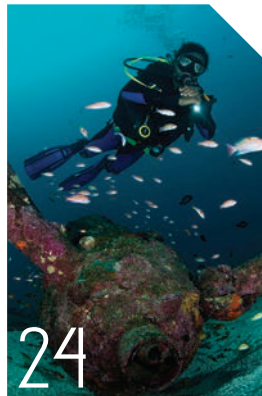
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WHAT'S ON WHEN & WHERE

2015

DECEMBER

*DECEMBER Carol in the Islands (Honiara)
Gizo Mile Run (Western Province)
Western Province 2nd Appointed Day
Christmas - celebrations and services in most churches. Sporting activities in all main centres and larger villages*

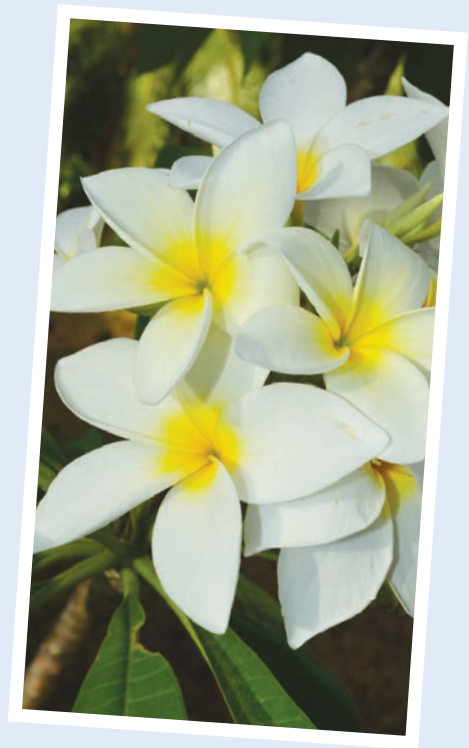
2016

JANUARY

*From December 31st -
New Year nationwide celebrations*

FEBRUARY

*Choiseul Province Second
Appointed Day*



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OUT & ABOUT



Museum Handicraft



It's virtually a mini museum and a place where you can purchase souvenirs.

The Museum Handicraft Shop is located within the grounds of the National Museum of the Solomon Islands (opposite Mendana Hotel).

Woven baskets, wood/shell carvings, bows and arrows, banana leaf mats, fishing floats and more are available at the Museum shop. Patricia George runs it and is very knowledgeable; she can talk you through the art pieces.

Patricia is constantly in contact with local producers and, given enough time, can arrange for customised pieces

Hours: Monday–Friday 9am – 4:30pm; Saturdays: 10am – 2pm | Email Patricia George solmnmgs@gmail.com





The Coffee Bar



@ANZ Building, Ranadi, opposite Marine School

The Coffee Bar Solomon Islands is the new, trendy café haunt in Honiara on the Ranadi side of town. Slogan: “Where time stops for coffee.”

It easily puts a smile and a skip back on a weary soul. And let’s not forget a pinch of convenience into routine life when all you want is a caffeine fix, a nibble, comfort from the sun

and the thought that you don’t have to travel x-kilometers into town just to get sorted.

Coffee Bar owner Cathleen Douglas Sikivou: “I wanted to introduce to Honiara an industrial, raw, retro theme. And this location is perfect because, from experience, whenever I wanted a light salad or coffee I’d have to travel to town and it would take ages just weaving through traffic. The location is convenient and I’m sure my customers think likewise.”

As of October, The Coffee Bar regulars’ smoothies of choice were – The Green Machine and Melon Mixer. The café serves breakfast, lunch and the essential nibbles you crave when time stops for coffee.

There’s a pulley, a real bicycle hanging from the ceiling, the exposed concrete look, and clocks that don’t work so if you’re stuck for conversation, start with the deco. The Coffee Bar Solomon Islands also caters for functions.

Hours: Monday-Friday 7am – 4pm; Saturday-Sunday 8am – 2:30pm | Contact Cathleen Sikivou | M: 8494149, T: 30300 | thecoffeebarsolomons@gmail.com

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YOUR WORLD
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Men from Makira don white markings on their bodies to show their warrior status.

Photo: SAMISONI PARETI

Cultural **identity**

By Mere Tuqiri

IN PACIFIC CULTURES, you can identify a person's province or island from their ceremonial wear, traditional dance costume, washable body paint for traditional occasions, and even permanent face

etchings and traditional body tattoos.

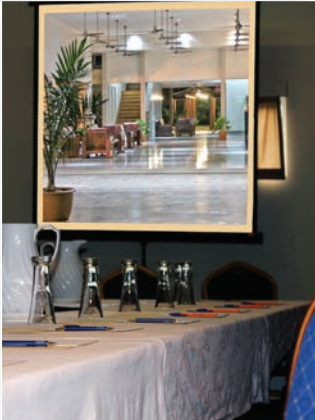
Elaborate or simple these identifications are as prominent as a person's face and name. Here are some images of Solomon Islanders showcasing their culture during the Melanesian Leaders meeting that was held in Honiara in July.



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Here's an example from Benzily Kasutava, spokesperson of the Choiseul cultural group of the young men and women representing Choiseul Province on that day.

- White streaks on face: Called 'gku' or 'guku' pronounced as 'zeku'. For men this is a symbol of warrior leaders of the tribe. Women - Identifies them as chosen ones to protect and guard the women and children in a village. The women assumed the role through status, as in first female born of chiefly line.
- White markings on chest: Identifies the man as a warrior; they are headhunting leaders; they also are the frontliners in times of tribal warfare. If a man is without the white streaks on his chest, he is considered not brave. The status of a male warrior was determined through birthright - first male born to a chief.
- White streaks on stomach: Indicates challenges during a journey.



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Love is in the air

By Nick Blanche

PAPATURA ISLAND RETREAT located in Santa Isabel Province has just celebrated its first international wedding and what a wedding it was!

Two lovely guests, Justin and Peta (now Thomas) both professionals from Ipswich, Queensland, were engaged at Papatara one year ago. They invited 24 valued friends to join them at Papatara for this special occasion. Justin said the hardest part was that so many great friends had to miss out due to the small number of guests allowed at the Retreat at any one time.

They also encouraged their registered celebrant and friend from Australia, Jeannette Winks, over to perform the marriage ceremony on the island where the marriage certificate was signed and witnessed.

Justin and Peta's group of friends and family had never been to the Solomon Islands; some not even knowing where it was! Therefore, it became a super anxious time for everyone involved.

Majority didn't know what to expect visiting somewhere so isolated as the Solomon Islands, once explored by famous Spanish explorer Alvaro De Mendana





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Retreat owner Peter Blanche said: “To reach these numbers of first time Solomon travelers in one group is quite fantastic for Papatara Island Retreat and tourism in the Solomons.”

“Their excitement and wonder was contagious and it was sad to see them go. The response from them all when leaving Papatara was – ‘We’re coming back’ and ‘See you at the first year anniversary’, which was backed up by their reviews on TripAdvisor once returning home.”

After much planning and preparation, the big day arrived and Mother Nature blessed us with good weather. The bride, in her white flowing wedding dress, arrived on the beach at Papatara in a war canoe paddled by two of our best paddlers. The paddlers wore nothing but loin cloths, while the Toeloegu Village Pan Pipers and dancers were in full cultural dress.





They played and danced to traditional Isabel and Solomon Island songs and were wonderful entertainment over the two days. Our guests were so pleased with the pan pipe performers and dancers they raised and donated over AU\$1,000 towards community improvements.

Our Chef Michael cooked a large pig on the spit with all the sides to accompany it. Most of the guests had never seen this style of cooking. But some say the dessert - Michael's croquembouche cake, was the best ever. The guests finished off the day-to-remember by dancing and singing the night away just 'hapi' to share these lifetime memories with a small group of friends.

Pete from Papatara sees huge tourism potential in the wedding market in the Solomons. It has everything to offer and more than its Pacific Island neighbors with the main difference being guests can hire a whole island resort and have it exclusive at a very reasonable rate. Imagine that! Your own private island for you and your friends to escape to for one week!

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Recently, Honiara and the Solomon Islands Visitors Bureau (SIVB) hosted the 2015 Our Telekom National Tourism Forum. SIVB special guest at the forum, managing director of Tour Managers Fiji, Damend Gounder had said the Solomon Islands government needs to reassess a Ministry of Home Affairs ruling to authorise registered celebrants have wedding papers legally signed and witnessed at island resorts destinations. Currently, marital papers are required to be signed and witnessed at the Magistrate's office in Honiara to deem it legal in the Solomons - an outdated law from 1907.

A celebrant living in the Solomon Islands could be flown to the island or resort or a paramount chief from a village could do the signing generating more income for the Solomons. Gounder said his travel company has performed 160 legal weddings so far this year in Fiji and predicts 250 in year 2016.





These wedding guest numbers would certainly boost tourism dollars for the Solomon Islands, and the flow on with repeat guests returning after seeing the beauty of the Hapi Isles, would be enormous.

We have good numbers of guests getting engaged at Papatutura Island Retreat and over in the Western Province resorts. They would all be wedding candidates if they knew that it can be

legalised in the Solomon Islands... just like Fiji.

There is a huge compounding tourism impact from two people deciding to have their wedding in the Solomon Islands. The flow on effects are tremendous – from accommodation in Honiara; guest transfers by car, taxi and plane; shopping for handcraft souvenirs; boat hire; fishing trips; to surfing, all benefitting from this new tourism opportunity.

Visit Papatutura Island Retreat

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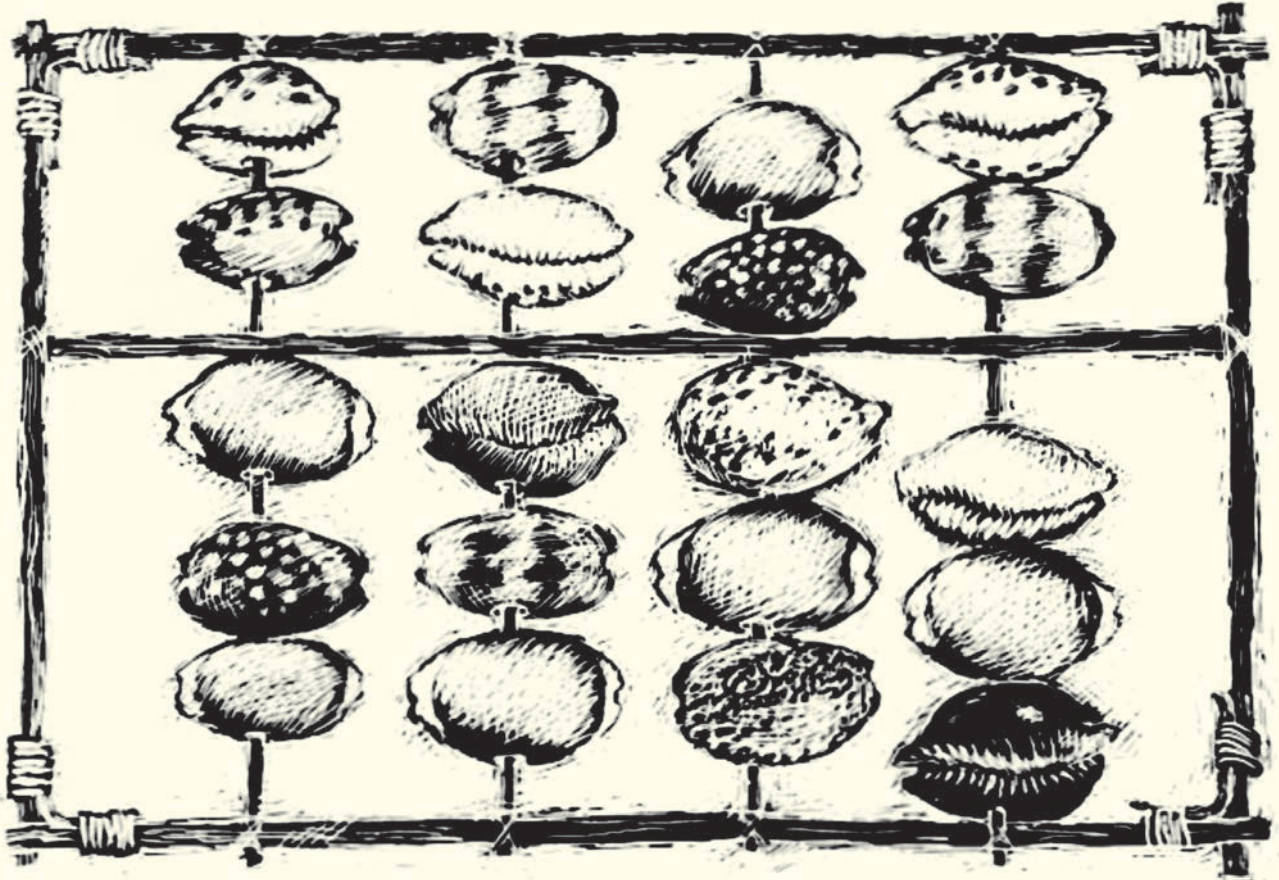
By Mere Tuqiri

MOST VISITORS TO THE SOLOMON ISLANDS know the allure of the Solomon seas and some have shared their experiences in the Solomon Airlines inflight magazine.

From wreck diving to personal 'discoveries' of marine life big and small in, beneath, and above soft coral clusters here are several dive spots that come highly recommended from those who have had the pleasure of exploring.

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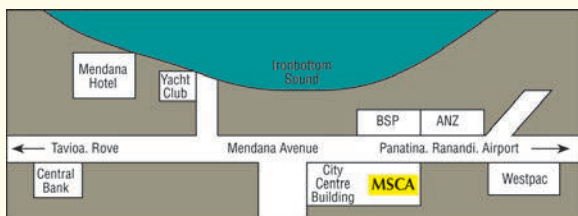
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Wickham Harbour

Divers: Nigel March & Helen Rose.

Location: South-west end of Marovo Lagoon.

Attraction: World War Two shipwrecks.

Depth: 40 metres.



Gizo

Diver: Nigel Marsh.

Location: Western Province.

Attraction: *Toa Maru*, a 136-metre-long Japanese transport ship and other wrecks.

Depth: 15 metres to 37 metres.



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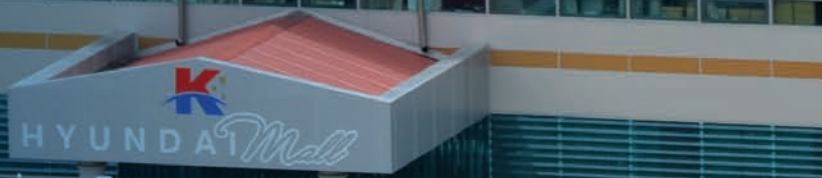
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Kicha

Diver: Tom Perry.

Location: Eastern end of Marovo Lagoon.

Attraction: Soft coral haven, bigeye jacks, yellowfin tuna, Spanish mackerel, trevally, hawksbill turtles and the rumbling sound of submarine volcano Kavachi.

Depth: 25 metres.

Marovo Lagoon & Roviana Lagoon

Diver: Don Silcock.

Location: Western Province.

Attraction: Sharks.





Florida Islands, Russell Islands, Western Province, Iron Bottom Sound

Diver: Joanna O'Shea (joshea.smugbug.com).

Location: Central Province, Western Province, Off Honiara.

Attraction: Soft coral, World War Two wrecks, marine life, Florida Islands' twin tunnels.

Depths: Varied

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Munda ready for another colourful Lagoon Festival



By Priestley Habru

RESIDENTS OF MUNDA TOWNSHIP in the Roviana Lagoon, Western Province are bracing themselves for the two days Lagoon Festival to be held in December.

Marvellous Vagi is himself already marvelled at the prospect of another fun-filled activity when the annual Lagoon Festival opens on Thursday 17 December 2015.

“Yes Munda is ready and we will welcome friends and visitors to our shores when the festival opens,” Vagi said.

He said the festival has always been the highlight of the year for the people of Munda and the surrounding communities.

The spectacular shows of traditional canoe races coupled with bamboo band, choir competition and other aquatic activities planned for the festival will no doubt marvel visitors alike.

Activities for this year’s Lagoon Festival will be the ‘Tie Va Rane’ triathlon of running, swimming and paddling, Tomoko (traditional war canoe) race during the day with choir and bamboo band competitions in the afternoon and into the late evening.

One of the main features of this festival since the inaugural Lagoon Festival in 2009 is the Alec Wickham Memorial Swim from Hobu Peka Island to Labete.

The late Wickham awed spectators in Sydney in 1897 with his swimming techniques from his childhood growing up in Munda. He was the swimmer who invented what became known historically as the ‘crawl stroke.’

In keeping his memory alive, the Lagoon Festival is the brainchild of the late Wickham’s relatives which has become a national event in the Solomon Islands Visitors’ Bureau (SIVB) calendar.

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The Lagoon Festival is somewhat a tribute to the Late Alec Wickham who has been described as the 'True Son of Roviana' by festival organisers.

And the 900 metres swim from Hobu Peka Island, outside Munda to the main entry into the township at Labete is paying homage to the legacy of late Wickham who developed his swimming skills gracing this very surreal saltwater pool during his childhood days.

Meanwhile venues for the festival have always been in Munda with game and sports fishing activities at Lola Island where the Zipolo Habu Resort is located, just 20 minutes boat ride from Labete.

This year's festival promises to be more colourful with people from the surrounding communities and islands converging at Munda to witness the two day event.

"This is a chance for local vendors to sell their arts and crafts like woven mats, fans, baskets and carvings and many more locally produced goods.

"Fresh vegetables, food crops and of course fish, shells, mud crabs and other marine




Teenage race winners in 2011

products would be in full supply at the Munda Market during the two days festival," Vagi the marvellous Munda chap exclaimed.

Major companies like Solomon Airlines, Our Telekom, National Fisheries Development (NFD) and Soltuna are major sponsors of prizes for winners in the festival competition.

Apart from local competitors, few expatriate have participated in the 'Tie Va Rane' race in past festivals.

"If you have nothing to do in Honiara or elsewhere in the Solomons and abroad, fly down to Munda and witness the 'Western Hospitality' on display in Munda during the Lagoon Festival. And we have no shortage of fun activities and you will leave in marvel before you even know it's over.

"But the good thing is that there would always be another Lagoon Festival next year," our friend Vagi from Munda said. 



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Crocodile whisperers of **Malaulalo**



By Mere Tuqiri

KNEE TO WAIST DEEP IN SWAMP MUD we waited for the four young men to rally in the crocodile. This was a special sort of rallying; a traditional gift passed through lineages of Ulawan men. Now the 21st century of 20-plus year olds are applying the age-old custom with level-headed coolness of real-life crocodile whisperers.



Preparing for the catch
... Men of Malaulalo
round in on a crocodile.
Photos: MERE TUQIRI

With me was three quarters of the household I stayed with on Malaulalo on Three Sister Island (John, Nigel, Tanya, Serem, Douglas, Rodney and Castly). Malaulalo (Lalo) is one of three in the trio of islands called Three Sisters in the Makira-Ulawa Province. Only Malaupaine (Paine) and Malaulalo are human inhabited. The third, Ali'ite, is home to crocodiles.

The island

Traditional ownership of Malaulalo lies with the Marita family who are from Ulawa. Dennis Marita, Director of Culture at the Department of Culture in Honiara is also chief of the Po'onapaina tribe on Ulawa. Only 10 of his immediate family members occupy Malaulalo.

Here's a slice of history – Dennis' great, great grandfather Douglas Pwaholo had sold the island in 1912 to English company Levers Pacific Limited. The company, which was trading copra, had fully withdrawn in 1979, one year after Solomon Islands gained independence. But it wasn't until 1990 that the land title was officially restored to its traditional owners. Levers left a legacy on Paine and Lalo of cleared bush pathways and four-sided concrete buildings once used for lodging, admin, and copra sheds.

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The adventure begins

It took me a while to process what I had experienced in the swamps of Lalo after midday 26th October 2015. I'm told the men on Three Sisters are known to tame crocodiles. I had no doubts about that, but I wanted to see it.

From the northern beachside of the island where hawksbill turtles nest, we detoured inland maneuvering through mangroves and slush. Note to self: It takes a lot of energy to pull feet/leg out of heavily water logged swamp soil. By end of day I felt like I had run a half marathon.

We reach open space. Serem, Douglas, Rodney and Castly head off to tall swamp grass while we pause for a breather. There is commotion. It seems they'd startled a crocodile among the reedy grass or it could've been the other way around. Either way, the boys were pumped.



Taming crocodiles is special to the people of Three Sisters.

Photo: MERE TUQIRI



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Croc talk ... Crocodiles on Three Sisters are different. They don't attack humans, they listen to them.

Photo: MERE TUQIRI

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How to tame a crocodile

Stunned, the crocodile slid its way into open space. We followed. I can't believe I followed too through open swamp that could've had a croc or two in it. At that moment I didn't think about it.

The boys had bush vines to assist them. Taming a crocodile involves talking to it/them as Dennis will explain later. Basically, the participants ask the animal to avail itself by turning belly up in a 360 degree motion in the process tying itself with the bush vines held by each of the boys. Two words are used often – Granny and 'hiru' (roll over). When talking to it, the crocodile vertically raised its head several times above water to allow the bush vine noose to fall around its mouth.

The boys were at four corners around the crocodile and it was Douglas and Serem who continuously spoke to it. The crocodile was advised that we wanted to take photos. The crocodile did turn belly up and around, it raised its head vertically, it did not lunge at the boys or any of the onlookers including me although there were ample opportunities.

I found myself saying: 'Thank you Granny'. I rubbed its belly; so soft and I thought of my pet cat at home.

Catch and release

Age-old custom dictates that once you rally in a crocodile, you bring it in for a feast. They were carrying it out of the water towards dry land and I couldn't do it. I requested that it be released. I think I disappointed Douglas and Nigel. Sorry guys.

When we left the scene, the crocodile did not swim away but lolled around in the mud shallows where the boys released it. Again, it indicated no interest to attack even without the bush vines.



Around the outdoor fire that moonlit evening Douglas and Serem talked about our adventure. This is what they said: There's no guarantee a crocodile will make itself available; generally photography is not encouraged; past experiences with guests have rendered blanks or very blurry photos of the activity; I thought it was an amazing experience and apparently we all had doubts it would happen.

What Dennis said

Here's the official take from Dennis Marita: "Three Sisters is focused on crocodile calling. Aspects of it might occur in other provinces but the taming of the crocodiles is special to us.

"They're like the guardians of the islands and in a sense a reincarnation of our ancestors, that's why they call it Granny. At the same time, they're like the pigs of the swamps because they are an important component of any big feast just as pigs may be the central meat of a feast.

"We have traditional boundaries around all the islands in the Solomons and they have their guardians. Some have sharks, others crocodiles. There's a traditional sea boundary around the Three Sister Islands. If a crocodile from another island tries to enter, it will meet the crocodile custodians of the Three Sisters at the boundary line.

"They will fight. In the process of fighting they are taming the foreign crocodile. When it is finally tamed, it is allowed to enter.

"Crocodiles on Three Sisters are different from other crocodiles – they don't attack humans and they listen to humans. On Malaulalo and Malaupaine the crocodiles always offer their heads first when you call them. On Ali'ite they offer their tails first.

"You also have to be like a woman when you tame a crocodile. You have to be calm not arrogant. The island is about opposites."

The initial idea for this travel came from a Bellonese tertiary student by the name of Morad 'Brandy Matakitea who said: "If it's culture you're looking for then you must visit Three Sister Island in the Makira-Ulawa Province." I'm glad I did.

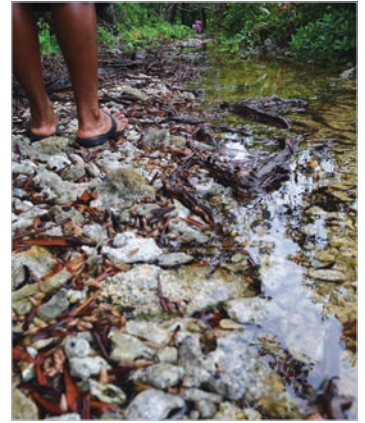
Accommodation

At the moment a home-stay, but a guest lodge is currently being built. Apart from crocodile taming activity you can take a site visit to the uninhabited island of Ali'ite to see the natural wildlife.

Getting There:

Solomon Airlines flies to Kirakira twice weekly. From Kirakira take a 45-minute boat ride to Three Sister Island (factor in ocean conditions). If you're in Makira-Ulawa and you need a skipper, ask for Douglas Hieu or contact Dennis to arrange. Douglas read the currents very well and handled the outboard motor boat responsibly.

For travel details to Three Sister Island and associated information contact Dennis Marita | dennismarita@gmail.com | M: 7487209 or O: 24895



WWII HEROES:



Is this sunken aircraft the most significant archaeological find of recent times. **Roderick Eime** dives the waters of Gavutu to investigate a discovery that was the ride of a famous American pilot



Ace in the deep

THE SEA is more like soup in this part of bay near Gavutu. It's warm and full of ingredients. The runoff from the surrounding islands keeps the water murky with sediment, like you're diving in the dark shadow of something foreboding.

But it's also full of lots more very interesting things.

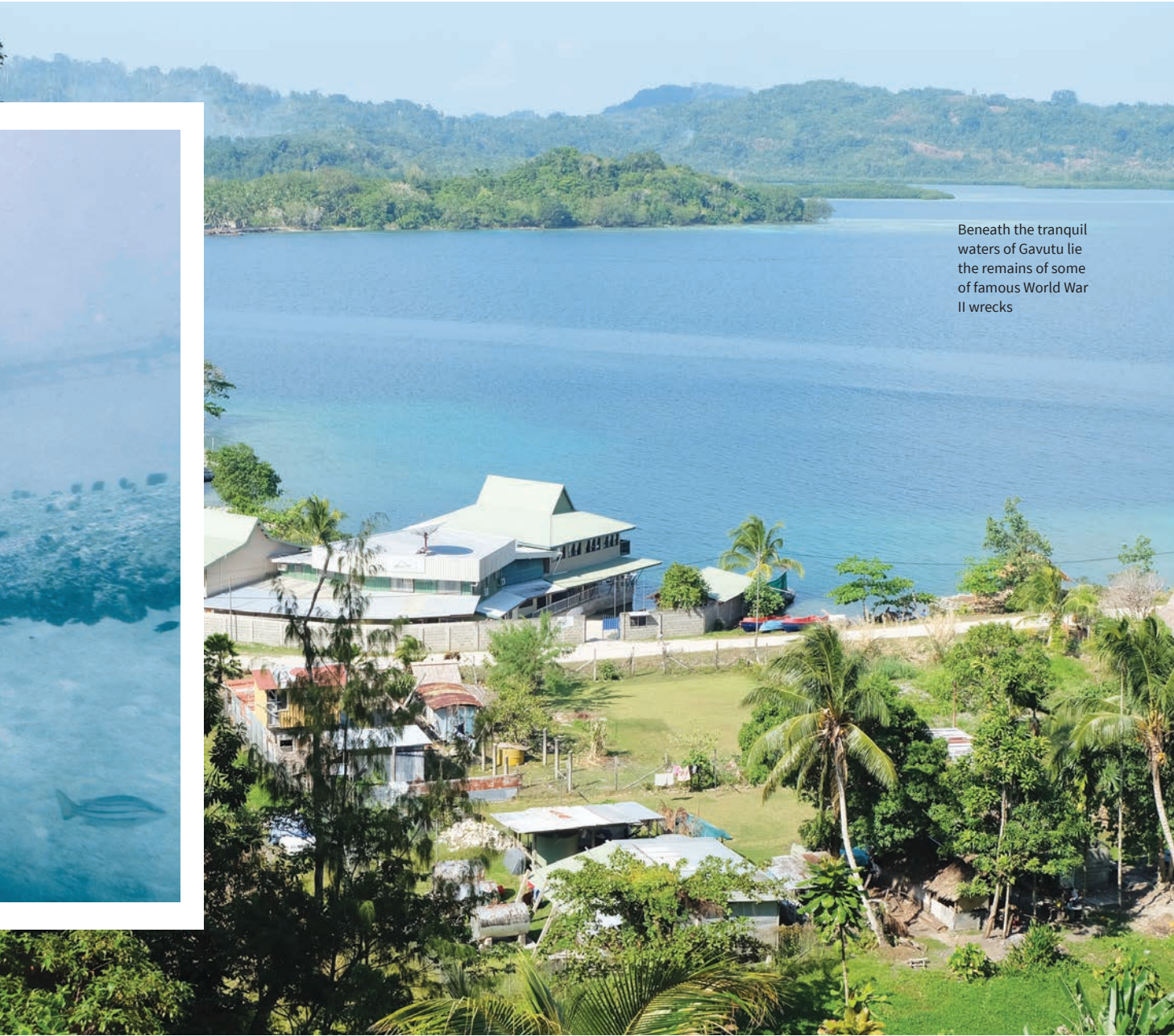
In May 1942, the Japanese landed on nearby Tulagi after a tiny force of British colonial and Australian troops had evacuated just hours before.

About 400 mainly naval troops then set up

a small command post and seaplane base as part of Operation Mo - the official Japanese military plan to invade and occupy territory around Australia and the South Pacific.

Allied forces began their attacks against the occupying Japanese even as they were unloading, heralding the start of the vicious Guadalcanal campaign that would last until February 1943.

Most of the wrecks near Gavutu, just over two kilometres to the east of Tulagi, are aircraft, the most prominent of these being six massive 'Mavis' 4-engine flying boats sunk



Beneath the tranquil waters of Gavutu lie the remains of some of famous World War II wrecks

at their moorings that August when the US Marines made their big comeback.

Today I'm returning to Tulagi to investigate something special: a new and intriguing find that was unknown when I last visited in 2010.

I meet Bob Norton, a Kiwi ex-serviceman and the new proprietor of the Raiders Hotel in Tulagi, a quaint and peaceful waterfront hotel in the little former British pre-war colonial capital.

The ideally located pub is sheltered from the nasty stuff out in the sound, but still has a tranquil view across the bay to little

Mokambo Island to the NE and beyond.

Attached to the Raiders Hotel, named after the force of US Marines who liberated the island in a fierce battle in August 1942, is his dive shop, with tender tied directly to the old wharf.

First off we dive the well-known wrecks of the large 'Mavis' flying boats.

These are well documented and frequently dived and the huge machines make for a satisfying exploration in just 25 metres of water.

But Bob is just warming me up for the best

bit. He is excited to show me a wreck of a US Grumman F4F-4 Wildcat fighter plane only recently discovered. Or re-discovered?

From pictures and model kits I recall as a kid, the stubby little aircraft was not a particularly pretty thing.

The flat radial engine, short square wings and bulbous fuselage were in stark contrast to the attractive lines of other contemporary planes like the British Spitfire or its main adversary, the Zero.

The pilot sat high up like he was riding a fat camel.



However, what is particularly noteworthy of this find, since dubbed ‘The Gavutu Wildcat’, is that it is believed to be the aircraft of 1st Lt James E. Swett, one of the US Marine Corps most decorated pilots.

Solomons-born WWII historian and shipwreck researcher, Ewan Stevenson, who was aboard the HMNZS Resolution when the sonar scan revealed the aircraft four years ago, told me via email that while the wreck is yet to be absolutely verified, he is confident his theory will be borne out.

The circumstances of the ditching are remarkable in themselves. On 7 April 1943, a massive Japanese air raid took place on US shipping on recaptured Guadalcanal and Tulagi. This was 22-year-old Swett’s first day of service and during the torrid 15-minute air battle, Swett shot down seven attacking ‘Val’ dive bombers making him an instant ‘ace’ and Medal of Honor recipient on day one.

As we descend down a coral encrusted mooring line Bob has set up, the shape of the little plane is slowly revealed through the gloom. I’m not just looking at sunken scrap metal, this is history and possibly one of the most famous surviving US aircraft in the Pacific Theatre.

As Bob and I swim over the plane, sitting



neatly upright in 40 metres of water, it’s clear that it has not received a lot of attention. A couple of missing instruments makes me wonder whether we are in fact among the first to explore the wreck, although there are no telltale rough efforts of brutal scavengers who often tear open the wings to get at the big 50-caliber machine guns and ammo.

And there are all the hallmarks of Swett’s 15 minutes of terror. The nose and engine is torn off from the water impact and the canopy is gone. Some gaping holes on the upper wing surface could be the AA hits Swett received from his comrades on the ground.

Swett recalls this exploit in a documentary made shortly before his death at age 88 in 2009.

“.. after the sixth one went down, I got overconfident and on the next one the rear gunner stuck his gun practically in my face and let me have it!”

The frantic Japanese rear gunner, staring death in the face, sent a burst of fire into the Wildcat’s cockpit, shattering the canopy and sending sharp fragments everywhere. Swett had also taken hits from his own anti-aircraft (AA) gunners on the ground, damaging a wing, such was the intensity of the battle.

“... when he put a bullet in my oil cooler and I knew it was time to get out of there. I thought I could get back to base but the engine seized, so I headed for the water.”

His ammunition expended and his plane shot up, Swett was forced to ditch and, stunned from the violent impact, he found himself trapped in the cockpit for a few harrowing minutes as the plane quickly sank. Finally afloat, he was rescued, recuperated and returned to service, surviving the war with 16 kills and passing away at the ripe old age of 88 in 2009.

After a few minutes at this depth I’m starting to feel the first pangs of nitrogen narcosis,



a common symptom for divers descending past 25 metres, so I'm doubly careful to watch my step and pay attention.

For a moment I am transfixed by a pair of massive trevally lurking beneath the port wing. I'm still mildly euphoric when we surface 20 minutes later, but I put this down to the excitement of the exploration, rather than any delayed effect of the gases.

The aircraft is now a site of considerable value and importance and Bob is careful not to disclose the precise location for fear of disrespectful divers helping themselves to souvenirs.

As a parting word of advice, Stevenson writes "This site requires utmost respect from divers to preserve the archaeological integrity. Please do not touch or tamper with this site. In particular, please do not remove any ammunition from the ammo bays, as this information is critically required for archaeological confirmation of the site."

Ewan Stevenson and his colleagues are adding to their tally of aircraft and shipwrecks all the time and the expedition of November 2014 was a particularly lucrative effort with numerous new finds added to the database. Few, however, would have the significance of this cute little sunken warbird.



Top, left: Camel ride ...
1st Lt James E Swett
was a master behind
the controls of the US
Grumman F4F-4 Wildcat
fight plane.

Above: The wreck of a
wildcat tells the story
of some fierce battles
against Japanese fighter
planes during WWII.

Photos: SUPPLIED

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LEST WE FORGET

For more information about wreck finding in the Solomons, see: www.archaeohistoria.org For detailed accounts of wreck finds and history, see www.pacific-wrecks.org

To dive any of these wrecks near Tulagi, contact Bob Nelson at Raiders Hotel - Tulagi www.rodei.me/raiders_tulagi
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For more tourist information, see www.flysolomons.com

All that glitters

The Gold Coast experience

By Roderick Eimes

AUSTRALIA'S GOLD COAST is a diverse city, offering action packed days and fun-filled nights enjoyed by more than 11 million visitors each year.

The 57 kilometres of sand and surf, 100,000 hectares of World Heritage listed rainforest, award winning dining, active pursuits and an ever-evolving events calendar and more than 300 days of sunshine annually confirm the Gold Coast as a year-round destination of choice.

As a holiday destination, the Gold Coast serves up more attractions and venues than any other in the Southern Hemisphere.

Whether on a solo adventure, travelling with a loved one or bringing the whole family the Gold Coast has an experience to suit.

Beaches

The Gold Coast boasts 42 golden beaches each with their own personality. Each is ideal in its own way, with a natural energy to revitalise the senses.

Southern Gold Coast is home to world famous surf breaks including Snapper Rocks, Duranbah, Coolangatta, Kirra and Currumbin Alley. Burleigh Heads is the complete package with barrelling waves, a scenic headland and a cosy, coastal setting.

For beginners, a learn-to-surf class is definitely in order.

For family fun, you can't go past the popular swimming spots of Main Beach, Surfers Paradise, Northcliffe and Broadbeach. While the sheltered Tallebudgera and Currumbin Creeks are favourites amongst the locals for stand-up paddle boarding.



Whether you fly in during the day or night, the majestic skyline of the Gold Coast never fails to amaze visitors to this city



Hinterland

Energise the body, mind and spirit while taking in the natural wonders of the Gold Coast's World Heritage-listed Springbrook and Lamington National Parks and the Tamborine Mountain township, all just a 40 minute drive from Gold Coast beaches.

Cascading waterfalls and spectacular views along winding rainforest tracks help visitors get back to nature and explore the ancient history of the delightful National Parks and reserves.



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Sun, surf &

Dining and Nightlife

The Gold Coast is home to more than 500 restaurants and cafes. The warm climate and inviting outdoor lifestyle are perfect for a 24/7 vibrant social scene with stylish lounge bars, surf clubs, pubs, cafes and alfresco restaurants.

The multicultural nature of the Gold Coast has brought about a deliciously successful food and wine industry, cultivating everything from soft-shell crabs and goat cheese to locally bred Wagyu beef and award-winning boutique wines.

Events

Spectacular venues, stunning weather and a serious sense of fun - it's no wonder the Gold Coast is home to some of Australia's most iconic events.

Since winning the bid to host the 2018 Commonwealth Games, the City is buzzing with energy and excitement. And rightly so, because if there's one thing Gold Coasters know, it's how to host a party.

Each year, lovers of sport, food, wine, fashion, music, and the arts flock to our sun-drenched city to find their kind of fun in a calendar brimming with fantastic events. Whatever your passion, the Gold Coast has an event that celebrates it.

Wellness

Australia's Gold Coast has developed an undeniable reputation for its first class day spas and health retreats offering an extensive range of signature treatments. Attention to detail, personalised service and an overall commitment to excellence are offered within soothing and tranquil surrounds.

Gwinganna Health Retreat has redefined the

Natural mystic the Gold Coast is also known for its natural beauty inland (left) apart from its world-famous beaches.

Right: A bridge forms from rocks at Springbrook



fun is part of your holiday deal



parameters for which day spas are measured both within Australia and internationally.

While O'Reilly's Lost World Spa set amidst the Gold Coast hinterland prides itself on treatments that utilise local indigenous plants plus the healing properties of vino-therapy, making use of extracts from grapes grown in O'Reilly's own vineyard.

Closer to the beach, Palazzo Versace Spa, Q1, L'Aqua Day Spa at the Watermark Hotel and the eforea Spa at Hilton Hotel guarantees

there is a spa treatment to suit all tastes.

Shopping and Retail

Australia's Gold Coast continues to evolve as a haven for retail enthusiasts with a vast array of shopping options headlined by signature fashion boutiques and larger iconic department store brands.

With some of Australia's largest retail centres and most stylish fashion precincts, the grand assortment of Gold Coast retail experiences

has something for everyone.

The two major shopping malls are at Broadbeach and Robina as well as smaller retail precincts across the Gold Coast in areas including Southport, Harbour Town, Main Beach, Surfers Paradise, Burleigh, Coolangatta, Labrador, and Sanctuary Cove.

Accommodation

Australia's Gold Coast allows you to choose the style, location and level of accommodation to suit your holiday needs.



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January 9, 2016 Jeep Magic Millions Race Day

January 29-31, 2016 Burleigh Pro 2016, Burleigh Heads

February 5-28, 2016 Sand Safari, Surfers Paradise

Mesmerising sight at Currumbin



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The region's year round weather ensures an unforgettable stay whether basking in secluded opulence, pitching a tent on top of a mountain or taking a houseboat to a myriad of island getaways. As Australia's favourite holiday destination, there are literally thousands of places to stay, it's just a matter of deciding upon your own special space.

Hot and Happening

(NightQuarter Opening Night – 28 Nov)

NightQuarter is the Gold Coast's newest culture and entertainment precinct, featuring night markets, micro-restaurants, emerging fashion and a unique live music space.

The shipping container city will provide 120 local speciality food purveyors, designers,

musicians and craftspeople with an opportunity to bring their concepts to life.

Spread out across different precincts such as Tapas Street, Hawker Street, High Street, The Paddock and others, NightQuarter is a festival celebrating food, music and culture. Located at Helensvale, the new precinct will be open every Friday and Saturday night from 4-10pm, following the opening night on 28 November. www.nightquarter.com.au

Commonwealth Games HQ officially opened

More than 1000 Games staff will eventually fill the Gold Coast 2018 Commonwealth Games (GC2018) headquarters officially opened at Ashmore on Thursday 22 October.

The offices are located at the TAFE Queensland Gold Coast Campus and will continue to expand during the lead up to the Games in April 2018. The headquarters are a hub for the planning and roll out of the Commonwealth Games with the fit-out representing the optimism and positive energy

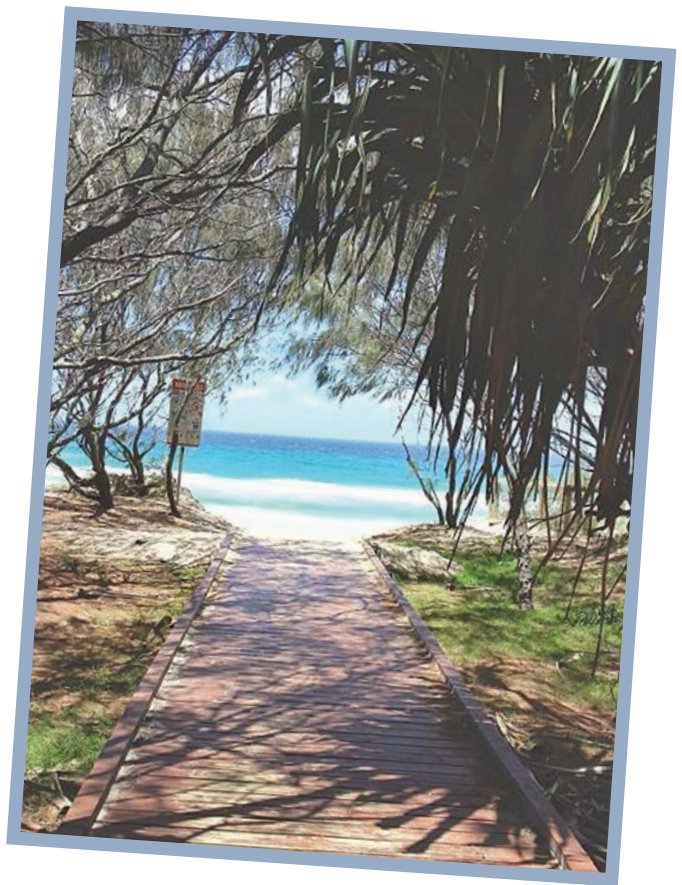
of the Gold Coast.

The opening was also attended by GOLDOC staff and indigenous artist Chern'ee Sutton who presented a painting Ajarku Muruu which in the language of the Chern'ee's Kalkadoon people means All One Country. GC2018 will be staged from 4-15 April 2018. www.gc2018.com

New Guided Walking Tours with City Adventures

Discover some of the hidden treasures the Gold Coast has to offer on a guided walking tour or self-guided scavenger hunt with City Adventures. Stroll through Surfers Paradise and along the beautiful beachside and get to know the iconic landmarks, 'must see' attractions and the hidden gems. With photo challenges, taste testing and daily prizes on offer, there is no better way to get to know this city. For the launch of City Adventures, the team is offering free City Scavenger Hunts during the months of November (conditions apply). www.cityadventures.com.au

Researched and compiled by Roderick Eime



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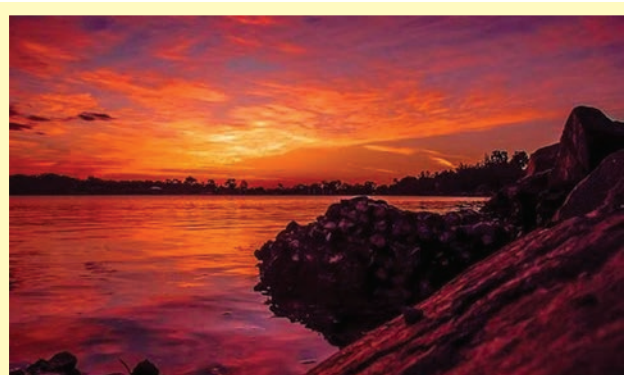
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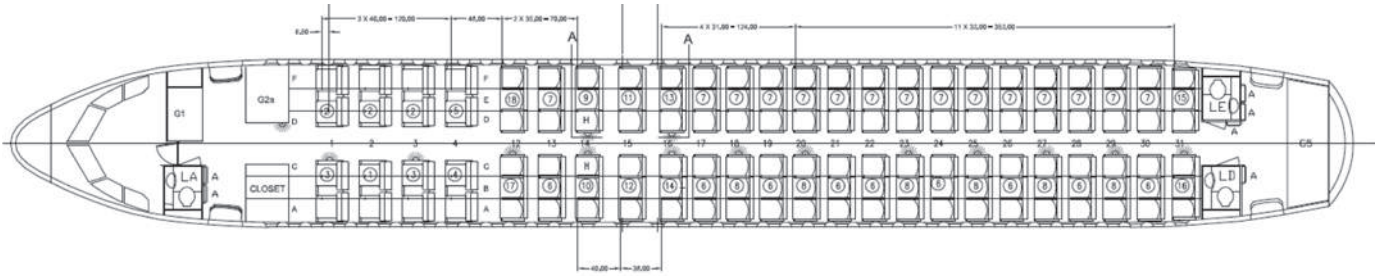


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AIRCRAFT: Dash 8-102



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

AIRCRAFT: Twin Otter



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

BNI: Islander



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

**SOLOMON AIRLINES
GENERAL INFORMATION**

Head Office

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

Travel Centre

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

Australia

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

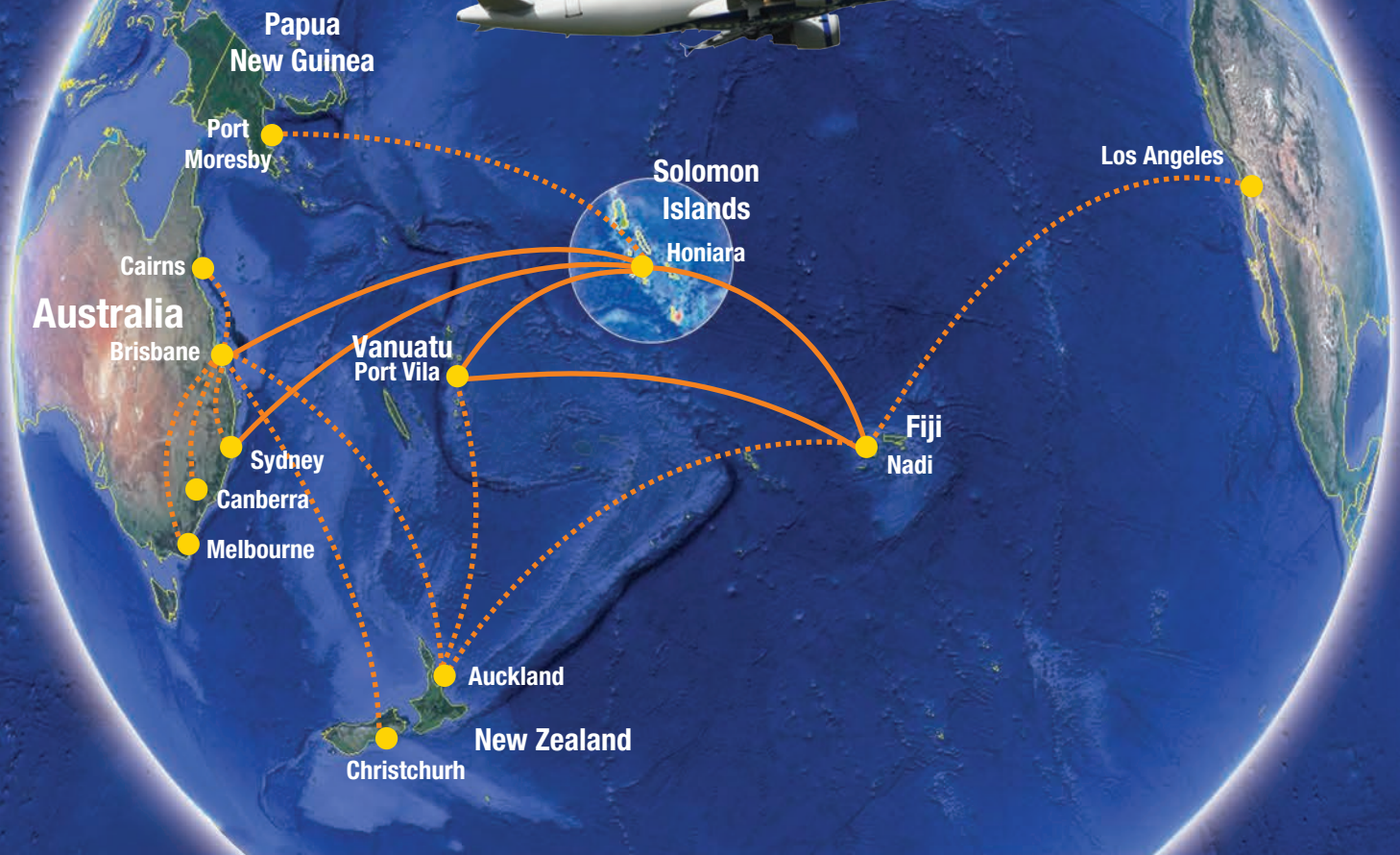
Fiji

Nadi Airport

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

WEBSITE: www.flysolomons.com

International Connections



For all bookings, ticketing and flight enquiries:



flysolomons
Solomon Islands National Airline
www.flysolomons.com

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, or
alp@qldcargo.com, or
www.aircraftloaderspackers.com.au

NEW CALEDONIA
Access 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

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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.

Domestic Connections



Solomon Islands Offices

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

Airport Offices

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

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

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
Renbell/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 Administration Offices

AUSTRALIA - Brisbane Airport

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

Operations

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

F I J I - Nadi

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

The Solomon Islands are divided into nine provinces as follows:

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



flysolomons



Equal opportunity pilots



Reach for the skiesClaudia Walding in the cockpit of the Airbus

HONIARA, SOLOMONS AIRLINES - Solomon Airlines has congratulated its newly upgraded Captain on its Airbus A320 (BUS) Claudia Walding for a great achievement in leading the airlines' equal opportunity development of female pilots.

Claudia has been with Solomon Airlines since early 2000 and has been dedicated in progressing from flying the Islander aircraft and Twin Otters in the National Carriers fleet to the ultimate goal of now being released as the airlines' own product in developing pilots all the way to the top.

Back in our Solomons' Magazine issue no.65 around FEB 2015; we announced our equal opportunity female achievements of Twin Otter Captain Linda Tito and Co-Pilot Claudia Walding who was upgraded from our

Islander and Twin Otter aircraft to our Airbus A320.

As was intimated then, in a male dominated society especially in the Melanesian context, rising up each day to meet the daily challenges normally would lead one to initially pointing to kitchen or laundry chores as something only meant for a woman.

Quite to the contrary, a 5am pick up for the first flight to one of the outer ports on the Islander or the Twin Otter had been the daily routine of the only two female pilots currently flying for Solomon Airlines.

Claudia Walding, who initially joined Solomon Airlines immediately after completing flying school in Fiji in 2000, has never looked back and is an inspiration to her fellow female gender in that if she can do it,

having the right mindset to achieve what may have appeared to be a long-term potential goal into a reality for Claudia ... she is now a Captain on our Airbus.

Congratulations must go to her for her determination to rise to the occasion and lead from the front (literally the front of the cockpit) in her quest for high achievement.

As a close friend with Linda, Claudia will inspire and already Linda has been doing additional studies in Australia for a degree in Aviation whilst seeking to achieve the highest license rating with an ATPL (Airline Transport Pilots License) which will eventually mean she can also take command of bigger aircrafts including our Dash8 and the Airbus.

We wish these inspirational pilots all the best in their flying career and look forward

reach new heights

We are now seeing with confidence that as regulators, Solomons Airlines is putting in place a much improved structure for the airline's training regime for its domestic operation thus better performing their duties of responsibilities, led by Chief Pilot Captain Geoff Posala

- George Satu, Director of CAASI



Claudia Walding and her crew have achieved another milestone

to their continued development and contribution to our National Airline.

Captains Cornelius Vonseu and Steven Aumanu completed their Instructional Techniques Course in the past week through the assistance of CAASI Instructor Captain Gerard Rea.

The course was conducted in the Solomon Airlines training facilities at Henderson Airport and this course will be instrumental for Captain Vonseu to achieve his D category Flight Check approvals for the Twin Otter, meaning that he will be a Twin Otter training Captain to assist the Chief Pilot Captain Geoff Posala in his role as the only Check & Training pilot in the airlines' domestic fleet currently.

On the other hand, Captain Steven Aumanu will achieve the same category but will

eventually qualify him to be the second Check & Training pilot for both the Twin Otter and the Islander aircraft in the company's current fleet.

The Director of CAASI (Civil Aviation of Solomon Islands), Mr George Satu, said at a small ceremony marking the occasion that "we are now seeing with confidence that as regulators, Solomon Airlines is putting in place a much improved structure for the airline's training regime for its domestic operation, thus better performing their duties of responsibilities, led by the Chief Pilot Captain Geoff Posala."

The CEO of Solomon Airlines Captain Ron Sumsum commented that "we are proud of our newly up-skilled Captains and whilst it has taken a while to finally plan and achieve this Instructional Techniques course and review

our current strengths within the ranks, I am especially happy with the outcome and this is only the beginning of rebuilding our Domestic pilots operational capabilities.

Naturally, we all want to see further upgrades of our Solomon Islands pilots and we are working with the regulator to find some solutions to the upgrades required in order to move from a Part 135/125 aircraft (Islander and Twin Otter aircraft) to the Part 121 fleet of the Dash8 and Airbus but we are on the right trajectory and hopefully, within a medium period of time, we will see more achievements by our team.' The CEO reinforced.

The CEO also intimated that more announcements are expected regarding engineering achievements in the coming week or so.



Solomon Star

Your Solomon Star Guide to the Solomon Islands

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



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



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

HONIARA: The capital is eight kilometres from Honiara International Airport.

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

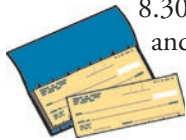
HEALTH: Malaria is a problem. Take anti-malarial medication a week before arrival, once a week during your stay, and for four weeks after departure. Consult your chemist or doctor about an appropriate brand or tablet. Maloprin is usually recommended.



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

BUSINESS HOURS: Government and some business offices open Monday to Friday 8am to 4.30pm with a one-hour lunch break normally beginning at noon. Shops and some offices open Saturdays 8am - noon.

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



TELECOMMUNICATIONS: Local and international calls may be made from Our Telekom public card phones which are in prominent locations in Honiara and provincial centres or GSM Mobile services. Telephone and Internet cards are readily available through shops, hotels and Our Telekom offices. GSM prepaid and postpaid mobile cards are available in Honiara, Gizo and planned deployment to all other provincial centres. Breeze Rifil cards are available for prepaid mobile top-ups. Our Telekom also provides ADSL broadband Internet service through landlines or you can access the Internet through

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

TIPPING: Not expected and not encouraged.

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

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



DOMESTIC: Solomon Airlines operates services throughout the country.

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



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

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



NEWSPAPERS:

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



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



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

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





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Pacific Casino Hotel

Solomon Islands

www.pacificcasinohotel.com

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

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



Paradise Warmth Adventure

- . Ocean View Restaurant
- . Captain's Bar
- . Canoe Bar
- . Supreme Car Rental
- . Supreme Casino



P O Box 1298, Kukum Highway, Honiara Phone No. (677) 25009 Email: reservation@pacificcasinohotel.com

