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ISSUE 81



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Welkam Frens



Mr Brett Gebers

Another busy few months has flown by since the last magazine was issued, and we are suddenly approaching the end of the year.

I am delighted to report good progress at Solomon Airlines and further improvements ahead for our fleet and the comfort of our passengers.

Our flights from Brisbane to Munda on a Saturday are becoming more popular and several resorts have remarked on the fact that their forward bookings have increased since the introduction of the flight in March this year. I look forward to the day when the number of passengers justifies turning around in Munda and returning straight to Brisbane.

We continue to work with everyone we can to make the Solomon Islands more popular as a tourist destination. On this subject, we recently launched our first TV advertising campaign in Australia in collaboration with Tourism Solomons. The general feedback from people I know in Australia is that they enjoyed seeing a short video on the amazing Solomon Islands and the associated activities.

As reported last time, we have spent a large amount of time, effort and money on refurbishing some of our aircraft. The last Twin Otter to be refurbished started flying again after five months of intensive work. The job turned out to be considerably bigger than anticipated and we supplemented our engineering team with four engineers from Ikhana Aircraft Services in the USA and two engineers from Air Niugini. I am very pleased with the resulting aircraft and congratulate our team. With H4-NNP flying again, we will now refurbish one of the leased Twin Otters. The other leased Twin Otter will be returned to its owners and will be replaced by a completely rebuilt zero flight time Twin Otter from Ikhana Aircraft Services.

Solomon Airline's Dash 8 aircraft has just returned

from a major check, which was completed on time and on budget by Air Niugini in Port Moresby. Whilst this was only a limited refurbishment, the aircraft now looks much cleaner and neater than it did.

As was our aim, we purchased our Airbus A320 from the leasing company in September and will be selling it soon in order to maximise the value of the engines currently fitted to it. As many of you will remember, we struggled to find parts for this particular engine type last year and we don't want to have that problem in the future. There are numerous A320s fitted with this older engine still in operation all over the world and because of the shortage of parts, the engines are in great demand.

As I pen this foreword, I am pleased to say that we have signed a lease contract to replace our A320 with a much newer one early in 2020. This may necessitate using a different aircraft for a few months, to bridge the gap between the sale of our current aircraft and the delivery of our new A320, as we move forward to a more modern aircraft for our international operations.

In addition to managing the operational aspects of our business, as we are first and foremost in the service industry, we have a responsibility to do the best we can for everyone we interact with, be they our passengers, staff, suppliers, our shareholders or simply people that need help. At Solomon Airlines, we take our social responsibility very seriously and attempt to help those in need in as many ways as we can. For instance, most of the people trying to raise funds for various charities start by approaching Solomon Airlines. We help as much as we can with sponsorship and donations of tickets.

We are also founding signatories to the IFC-sponsored Waka Mere initiative which is aimed at improving gender equality as well as promoting women in business and leadership positions. Several of our star performers are women who have taken up the challenge given to them and are proving to be great role models to all of us in our business. Thank you ladies, we admire you!

Another area of concern to me, is the limited employment opportunities available to people with disabilities in the Solomon Islands. We are committed to addressing this issue and over time plan to fill appropriate positions, where we can. We will also modify our buildings as best we can to accommodate these keen workers.

Thank you for flying Solomon Airlines.
Tengiu tumas.

Mr Brett Gebers
Chief Executive Officer

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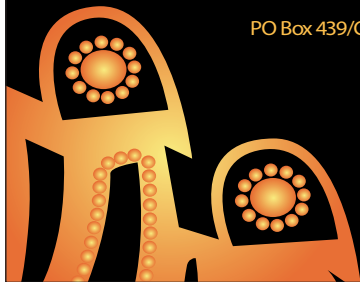
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Out & About

Surfing and sharing tourism's benefits

The Western Solomons Surfing Association has launched a new initiative to bring tourism opportunities to rural areas, and it's perfect for surfers with a sense of adventure and altruism.

The Ocean Waves initiative offers guided surf tours, water sport activities and day trips. Under the program, young Solomon Islanders will also have the opportunity to do clean-ups and site setups for the local cruise ship industry.

The longer term plan? To set



Western Solomons Surfing Association

up small centres in rural villages to promote surfing and tourism opportunities.

The service is set up to train and inspire young people to participate in meaningful, healthy and fun activities. All

profits go back into community development and environmental awareness projects.

Visit the Western Solomon Surfing Association's Facebook page to find out more.

To market, to market



Australian Department of Foreign Affairs & Trade

Gizo has a spectacular new market, and it's set to become a tourist attraction in its own right.

Bountiful fruit and vegetables will not be the only drawcard of the market; it will also give vendors space to showcase their art, carvings and artefacts.

Prime Minister Manasseh Sogavare did the opening honours in August. The new market was made possible through the funding of the Australian government.

Four years out, full steam ahead



Team Solomons at this year's SPG in Samoa.

Solomon Islands is hosting the 2023 Pacific Games and organisers have identified five locations to host different sporting events: Panatina/KGVI, Lungga, Lawson Tama, Ranadi and Kukum. The centrepiece facility will be a national stadium.

It's the first time the Solomon Islands will host the Games. The Games logo has been released and features the Solomon Islands' national colours, three paddles and shell

money.

"[The] Paddle signifies a journey that has a starting point and ends at an intended destination," Solomon Islands 2023 said while launching the logo. "To be able to get to your journey through the waters you need a direction, navigational skills, planning, teamwork, management skills and determination to arrive safely at your expected destination.

Mi Save Solo

This year's Mi Save Solo tourism exchange was a great success, with 28 local tourism operators and 43 international wholesalers and media converging on Honiara to promote new tourism products and exchange ideas as to what experiences visitors to the Solomon Islands are seeking. International partners also had the chance to visit Gizo, Munda, Auki and Marau to familiarise themselves with provincial tourism products and services. Overseas buyers this year included representatives from Australia, Denmark, Germany, Fiji, Japan, Kiribati, Korea, Nauru, New Zealand, Papua New Guinea, Taiwan and the United States

Getting connected

Two big steps towards better digital connectivity have been taken with the landing of the Coral Sea submarine cable in Honiara and on Tamarama beach in Sydney. Cable laying vessel, the Ile de Breat will soon return to the Solomons to lay a separate 730 km submarine cable linking Honiara to Auki, Noro and Taro.

Once complete, the submarine fibre optic cable will bring faster, cheaper and more reliable communications infrastructure to the Solomon Islands.



Solomon Islands Prime Minister, Hon Manasseh Sogavare (far right) was presented with a symbolic 'golden buoy' to mark the beginning of the Coral Sea Cable being laid between Honiara and Sydney. Also represented at the ceremony were (left-right) Vocus Program Manager, Simon Harriss, Acting Australian High Commissioner, Sally-Anne Vincent, Chairman of Solomon Islands Submarine Cable Company, Chris Hapa and representatives of the traditional landowners, including Hilda Kii. (Photo: Australian Department of Foreign Affairs & Trade)

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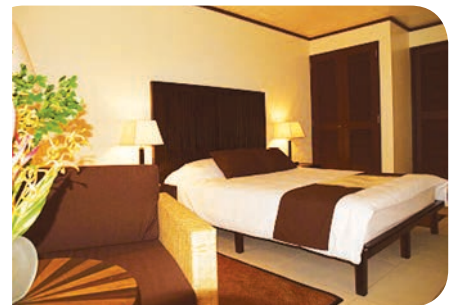
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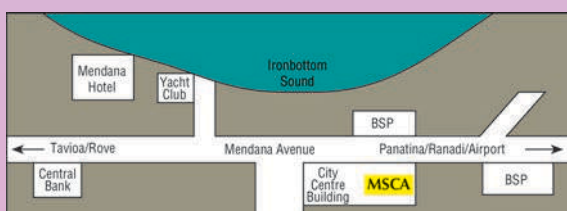
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Destination



Wetkam to the Hapi Islands, Ulawa

*Words by Gabi Steindl
Photos by Stephan Kleinlein*

Ulawa or “Spider Island” is a tiny island untouched by tourism in the Ulawa-Makira Province. Garedd Porowaii, my fixer and “travel agent angel” of Solomon Island

Travel and Tours, had organised for me to stay in Ripo village with his tribe, the Ahetola, as the first ever (and first white!) homestay visitor in their village.

My gear was too heavy, so it went with one plane and Stephan and I had to wait for the next flight. Two stop-overs later, my kites and boards



were already waiting for me outside Ulawa's Arona airport terminal—one small wooden hut and the coolest airport terminal I've ever seen—when our Twin Otter finally touched down on the grassy, coral airstrip.

My hosts were toothless 67-year-old Uncle Aaron, his wife Florence, their son Yanni and Great Auntie Harriet, who was about 100 years old, nobody knew exactly. A mattress with a fly net was made up in Aaron's wooden shanty on stilts, constructed of ngali nut wood, bamboo tied up with loya cane rope and a hand woven roof of sago palm leaves. Aaron would sit on the front deck for hours telling stories in broken English, joking — his high-pitched laugh was infectious — singing, smashing betel nut into a paste (which is normally done with your teeth) in his little portable mortar to then happily sticking it in between his bright red lips.

My days began with a "Ha'Hu-Le'e-Chi-ne" (good morning), the crow of a rooster and the sound of the big church conch, each turning into a collection of moments of life that none of my travels anywhere else in the world can compare.

The white brick church building was just opposite Aaron and Florence's home. Each morning and

evening between 6 and 7 ("Solomon time" isn't so strict) people of the tribe were taking care of church duties on a rotating roster basis, which involved blowing a big conch shell three times, each time with 10 minutes in between, then ringing the bell to start mass. I went to church several times, praying and singing with the people of Ripo.

The kids were shy at first; after all, many of them have never seen a white person before, let alone a 178cm tall, muscly, pretty wild blond girl. It didn't take long before I had a whole troop fighting to hold my hand wherever I went. Most fascinating was my blond hair. They stroked it, they brushed it, they just loved it and I loved their company.

The coast of the West side of Ulawa, where Ripo is located, has only sharp coral and volcanic rock, no beach. Every day I rented the only flatbed truck on the island to head over to the Eastern side, where we found a pristine palm-fringed beach with snow-white squeaky sand and little waves in transparent turquoise, hoping for wind. Every day more kids squeezed into the back of the truck to come along. We body surfed and played on the beach for hours. The majority of kids from Ripo had never been to this side of the island, nor

Destination



have they ever been on a truck, and as they told me these were “the best days of our lives”.

There was always something going on in the kitchen with delicious smells luring me inside to hang out with Florence, who cooked yummy, unforgettable food. With a special tool (a sau-kai or coconut scraper) she prepared fresh coconut milk. The culinary highlight was Florence and Auntie Christina’s “stone oven baked flying fish taro coconut pudding”, wrapped up in ti leaves, which turned into a cooking ritual of almost 15 hours. In the morning, crazy good flavors wafted through the dark kitchen. Still steaming hot, I started drooling waiting for the parcels to cool down before I could dig in and experience the explosion of tastes.

With Christopher, the school principal, I ar-

ranged to come by Ripo’s school to hand over the presents (balls, pens and notebooks) that I had brought from Australia. It was heart-warming to arrive at the two storey wooden, red and white building, and be welcomed by students lined up according to their grade, outside on the sports field. Wide-open, sparkling eyes were staring at me in the little classrooms as I gave motivational speeches as requested by Christopher to inspire the kids to go to school, to study hard, to learn English and to make something out of their lives.

Although I never went kiting on Ulawa, the smiles and joy of the kids there made up for not kiting a million times! 🇯🇵

This is the second part of a series on Gabi and Stephan’s travels in the Solomon Islands.



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A remarkable wreck The Toa Maru

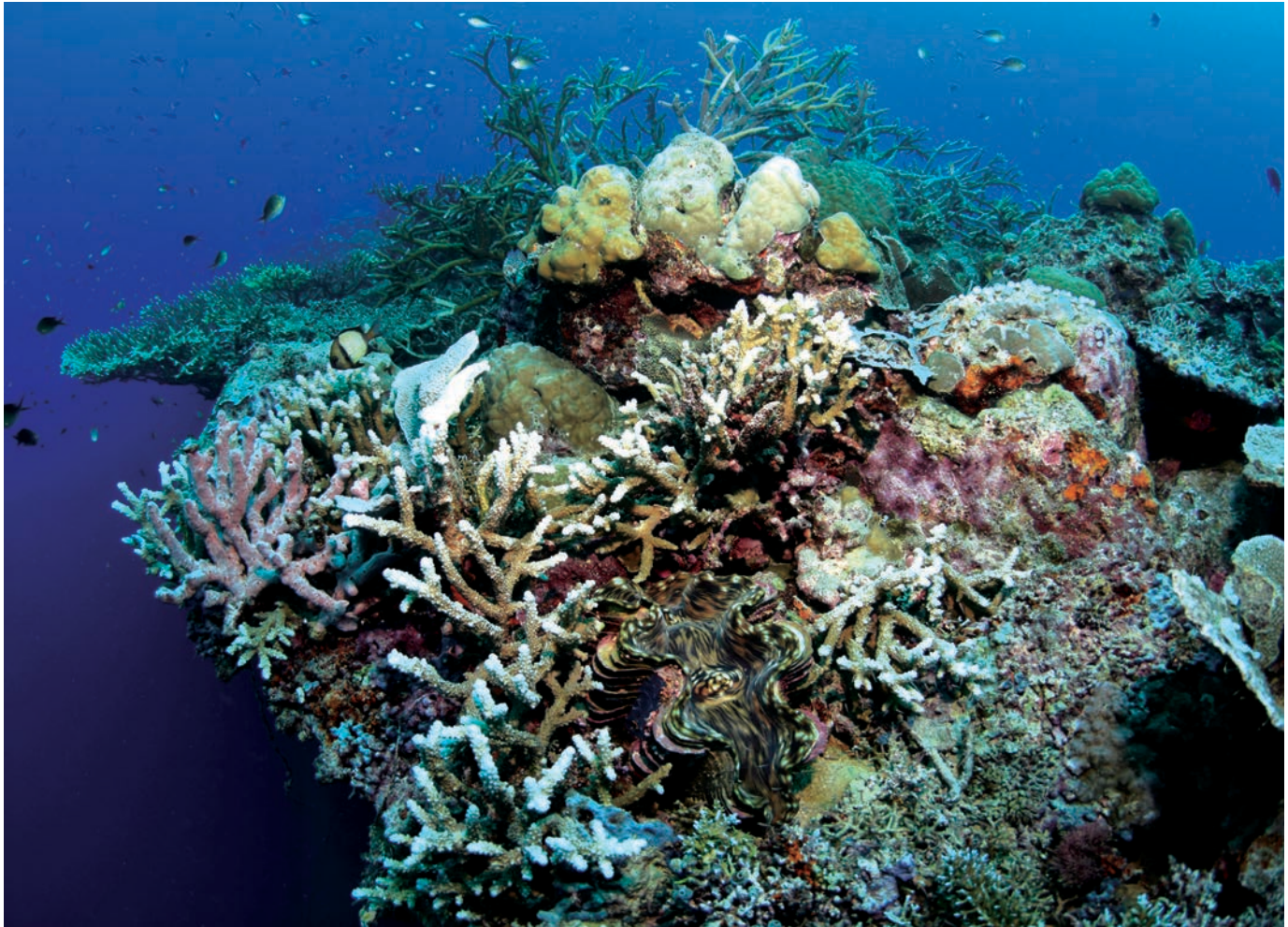
Danny Kennedy of Dive Gizo uses his torch to light up one of the brass lanterns.

*Words and photos by Nigel Marsh
www.nigelmarshphotography.com*

Jwas once told by an old diver, – ‘the reason the Japanese lost World War II was because they drank too much beer and sake, while the Americans only drank coke’. Of course it was only a joke, but when you see the amount of beer and sake bottles that litter the Japanese ship-

wreck Toa Maru you could almost believe it.

Located north of the town of Gizo, in the Western Province of the Solomon Islands, the Toa Maru was a 134 metre long passenger/cargo ship that was launched in 1938. With the outbreak of war the ship was called into service delivering supplies throughout the Pacific Ocean until it was sunk by American dive bombers on 31 January 1943. Now lying on its starboard side in depths from seven



The Toa Maru is now an incredible artificial reef covered in corals and fish life.

to 37 metres, it is one of the best dive sites in the Solomon Islands.

Taking divers to explore this remarkable shipwreck is local dive operation Dive Gizo. Owned and operated by Danny and Kerrie Kennedy since 1985, Dive Gizo has dozens of wonderful dive sites to explore, including colourful coral reefs, spectacular walls and even a few plane wrecks. But their most popular dive site would have to be the Toa Maru.

Although the ship was salvaged after the war, enough remains to be seen on the Toa Maru that it takes several dives to thoroughly explore every nook and cranny. More experienced divers start their exploration of the ship at the stern, dropping to 37 metres to view the rudder and prop shaft, minus the prop that was removed by salvage divers. Less experienced divers will generally stay between the bow and bridge areas in depths above 20 metres.

From the stern, divers follow their Dive Gizo guide to investigate the stern gun mount and several winches. On the sand below this area sits a large gun and other debris. Passing along the ship's deck, which is now on its side, divers swim

pass three large holds, a king post, derricks, and the remains of a jeep and truck on the sand. These rear holds are worth a look, as they contain fuel drums and timber logs.

Continuing towards the bow, divers next arrive at the bridge. Unfortunately, this area collapsed several years ago and now looks like a pile of twisted metal. Because of this, the engine room is easily accessible. A good torch is required to explore the engine room to see the diesel engine, gauges and a telegraph. Following a guide you will next be led down a few dark passageways to see a collection of brass lanterns and many other artefacts.

Three more holds await exploration as you head towards the bow. Hold two is the most interesting as it contains munitions, steel beams, sake bottles, beer bottles and many other items. Resting upside-down on the edge of the hold is a type 21 two-man tank. This war machine is in remarkable condition and it is amazing that it has remained in this precarious position for so long.

Before reaching the bow, divers can explore hold one to see thousands of cement bags, or

Adventure Islands



Beer bottles and other debris in the holds of the Toa Maru.

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inspect the kingpost, mast and derricks. The bow is another area of interest, with another gun mount, bollards, winches and the anchor. Divers can also swim through a large torpedo hole left by one of the dive bombers.

After a thorough investigation of the ship, all that is left to explore are the wonderful coral gardens that now cover the side of the ship, which is now its top. Here are stag-horn and other hard coral varieties, sponges, sea whips, ascidians, soft corals and gorgonians. Calling this coral garden home are a great assortment of reef fish, such as butterflyfish, angelfish and damsels. Larger fish also visit the wreck, including trevally, batfish and mackerel, and a close inspection will reveal more camouflaged species like scorpionfish, lionfish and crocodile fish. Other marine life seen on and around the Toa Maru include turtles, sting-rays and the occasional reef shark.

Located in a sheltered bay, the Toa Maru is a great dive year-round, with the visibility varying from 15 to 30 metres. And with so much to see on this old war relic, ensure you stay in Gizo for at least a week, so you can dive the Toa Maru again and again and again. 🇧🇵

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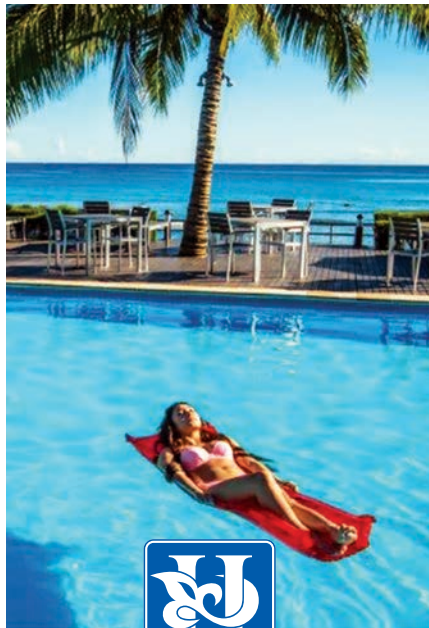
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WWII

Homeward Bound

The return of a US naval aviator

Words by Mark A. Roche
Photos by Gerald Rambert

Many are unaware that the US Military lists over 72,000 personnel as Missing in Action (MIA) from WWII. Several thousand individuals were lost in the Solomon Islands. Through the efforts of the US's Defense POW/MIA Accounting Agency (DPAA), dedicated individuals and groups and concerned Solomon Islanders, the remains of these long-lost warriors are being discovered and identified with increasing frequency. What follows is the story of the discovery and return of one such individual.

Since my earliest memories I've been absorbed in the history of WWII, especially the

Pacific Theater. We lost my Uncle Buck Sommer in the Gilbert Islands, but that didn't explain a specific lifelong obsession of one day traveling to the Solomon Islands. A tugging, nagging desire to travel to the Solomons was with me constantly. For a kid growing up and working in the fields of the US Midwest farmlands, this was a bit of a strange obsession. People always asked me why I had this passion, but I was challenged to explain it.

I also was crazy about WWII naval aviation and the air battles in the Solomons. My favorite aircraft was the Grumman Wildcat, the stubborn little single seat fighter that was the backbone of our air campaign there. One of my life's ambitions was to someday own and fly this now-vintage aircraft. Truly a pipe dream it seemed.

With old age and a lot of hard work, I was fortunate to realise the flying dream and eventually purchased a couple of WWII Navy SNJ-5 advanced trainers and a Wildcat. I even started a warbird training company called Gauntlet Warbirds.

I never gave up on the dream of traveling to the Solomons. In 2008, with time off between jobs, I was determined to give it a shot. After explaining to numerous travel agents where the Solomons Islands was, I was ready to give up. Finally an agent connected me with Dive Gizo and Dive Munda. Both arranged an exciting couple of weeks of diving ship and aircraft wrecks and trekking the jungle battlefields. My time with both organisations was life changing. Dive Gizo arranged for me to spend a few hours with Eroni Kumana, a key figure in rescuing President Kennedy and his crew of PT 109 fame. That led to an unforgettable encounter with the Kennedy family—a story for another article. Dive Munda brought me to a less traveled, but exceedingly rewarding path in life.

My guides at Dive Munda, Sunga Boso and Brian Daga, took me on numerous dives on known wrecks for a couple of days. They were intrigued with my knowledge of WWII Navy



aircraft and asked if I'd take a boat ride over to Mbairoko Harbor to examine a recently discovered wreck in the water. They were unsure if it was Japanese or American. Not a hard decision—we were off the next morning. After an hour boat ride, we arrived at the site about 100 yards offshore near Enogai Inlet. We geared up and I anxiously entered the water. I wasn't an experienced diver and frankly was always a bit spooked by "things" down there. When you enter the water and feast your eyes on one of these wrecks, however, the fear goes right out the door and you just enjoy the ride. Well, this site was sensory overload. As soon as I entered the water, I gazed down some 50 feet on the most perfectly intact Grumman Wildcat I've ever seen. It was flat on its back and, now bare aluminum, was gleaming in the light.

After a very rapid and, admittedly, rather unsafe descent, I began combing every inch of the plane. I surveyed the forward area and wings of the aircraft. The .50 caliber machine guns were still intact. Even the oversized landing lights were undamaged in the wings. One gear was extended, which explained the inverted nature of the wreck. Very little coral growth was on the plane, but the cockpit was inaccessible. After so many years, no paint remains on these aircraft and data plates tend to decay.

As I was continued my survey, I was rounding the tail section when something told me to take a hard, extreme look over my shoulder (not easy in full gear). To my amazement, there standing upright on the tail was an American canteen. It was as if it was standing there at attention saying, "Hey! Over here!". Immediately I saw something glinting in the sand to the right of the canteen—a snap off a canteen pouch. Then, immediately to the right of the snap, a human rib! Then another rib, and longer bones. Suddenly I was following a bone trail underneath the tail. As I was furiously pulling away coral and digging under the tail, I was literally openly saying in my regulator "it all makes sense now, it all makes sense" alternating with an almost involuntary reflex of saying "I'm sorry".

On the trip back, no one said a word. We determined to return the next morning for a more dedicated search for remains and, hopefully, some identification. We recovered a few more remains, the pilot's goggles, headset and soles of his boots, but no identification. In the end, it was clear the pilot had egressed the plane only to be dragged down and pinned beneath the tail. I regretted that I hadn't a US flag in which to drape the remains.

Thus began a 9-year effort to identify this naval aviator. I arranged for his remains to be turned

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over to DPAA's forensic lab at Hickam Air Force Base at Pearl Harbor, which is where all MIAs go pending identification. I was invited to work with the Research and Analysis Section of the DPAA on Solomon Wildcat cases. There were over 50 Wildcat MIA cases just in the Solomons! Eventually, DPAA whittled the case down to two Wildcats that were shot down by Japanese Zeros in an August 4, 1943, engagement over Bairoko. Both pilots, Lt Irvin Rink and Ensign William "Billy" Clifton, were from squadron VF 27. Both went missing. As if this wasn't tragic enough, the unit shipped out for home later that day.

Once I learned of the potential candidates, I went to work to track down the families for DNA reference samples. Amazingly, I discovered that Rink's brother had just passed away. His sister, Lorna, was still alive! Clifton's surviving relatives,

like most WWII MIAs, were down to nieces and nephews. DNA samples were secured from both families. Finally, in 2017, a positive identification of Lt (jg) Irvin Rink was made. The family was presented with the news and the US Navy arranged for Irvin's funeral with full military honors. In a twist of fate, Irvin's sister Lorna passed away the night before he was flown home.

My wife and I were invited to attend the funeral and, what turned out to be, a long overdue family reunion. I received the honor of giving Irvin's eulogy. After what seemed like a two-hour funeral procession through Wichita and past the family farm (now a shopping center) in Maize, Kansas, we laid Irvin to rest beside his parents in a small prairie cemetery outside of Maize.

I learned a lot about Irvin. Only 25 years old, he was just a midwestern farm kid, working in the



fields much like me. He had an early passion for aviation and learned to fly as a civilian. He graduated from the University of Kansas with a degree in petroleum geology and was headed for the oil and gas industry (ironically, I'm in the oil and gas business). He had a sweetheart named Viola, whom he intended to marry upon his return. Most importantly, Irvin didn't have to go on the mission that day—he took someone else's place.

Since concluding this case, I have thrown myself into MIA research and recovery in the Solomons. Through DPAA, I was introduced to Ewan Stevenson, Matt Wray and Dave Moran, co-founders of Sealark Exploration—which is dedicated to identifying MIAs throughout the Solomons. We just concluded a three-week expedition, located four different crash sites and have leads on several more. We work extensively with Belinda Botha, owner of Dive Munda, and her team in this effort. In May 2019, we worked in conjunction with Belinda to lay a plaque on Irvin's plane commemorating his sacrifice. I carry a US flag with me, just in case.

As the years roll on, I'm saddened by the passing of our WWII veterans. Current estimates are that about 4 per cent are still alive. I grew up hanging onto these men's stories and still count many among my best friends. My Solomon experi-



ence has introduced me into another realm of WWII veterans who don't grow old and are always there waiting; the 18, 20, 25-year-olds who have no voice with which to convey their stories. They communicate in a different way. It might start with a wingtip or a tail fin sticking up out of the ground—or, in Irvin Rink's case, a little canteen standing at attention on a tail. 🇺🇸

Mark can be reached via email on: mark@sealark.co.nz



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What's on

Shell Money Festival

Shell money was once used as a traditional currency. Today it's still used to settle disputes, for bride price and as gifts. Don't miss three days of cultural displays, demonstrations and entertainment performed by the people of Langalanga Lagoon.

13 - 15 August

Busu Cultural Village, Langalanga Lagoon, Malaita Province

Lagoon Festival

People from all over Roviana Lagoon gather in Munda for this cultural festival. See villages show their style through colourful floats on land and water. The signature activity is the Alec Wickham Swim, which falls on the last day.

1-5th October

Munda, Western Province

Dive Festival

The annual Dive Festival is a celebration of the magnificent experiences Solomon Islands has to offer to the local and international dive community. Dive activities, cultural experiences, seminars and competitions run all week.

2 - 6 October

Honiara and Tulagi, Central Province

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Islands





By Lata Yaqona

One of the many beauties of Fiji's first island beach club is that you can do as little or as much as you want – no pressure at all.

It is a short 25-minute boat ride from the Denarau Marina to Malamala Beach Club where the laid back vibe of the island and the friendly but unobtrusive staff, allow you to enjoy the island at leisure.

Since its opening in August 2017, Malamala has amassed a loyal following with international and local guests alike.

"We believe our guests keep coming back because the visitor experience is so good, from the service, to the food and beverage offerings and the excellent facilities," says Malamala Beach Resort Business Development Manager, Loretta St Julian-Ooms.

The facilities have been designed so that guests can choose between the buzz around the infinity pool or a private beachside cabana. These private bures, which cater for two to eight guests,

include a private butler service and are dotted around the island.

"Our guests love the atmosphere and the proximity to the mainland – there aren't many places in the world where you can completely escape to paradise in just a 25-minute boat ride," says St Julian-Ooms.

Malamala is part of the Mamanuca islands group, and offers a completely unique experience for visitors who want a change from the hotels and resorts of the Coral Coast, Denarau and Nadi.

So what does a day at Malamala look like? If you are feeling energetic, you can swim, snorkel and kayak. You can take more gentle exercise and play boules, walk around the island, or simply linger pool or beachside with a book and a cocktail.

Malamala Beach Club has also quickly become popular for companies hosting incentive events or conferences in Fiji, who are looking for an island experience or an off-site dinner venue for delegates. The venue can be shared with other leisure guests, or the island can be booked exclusively for special events. "There aren't many places in the



world where you can have an island to yourselves and rebrand it completely,” says St Julian-Ooms. The Club also offers the added convenience of the South Sea Cruise catamaran ferries, and a transfer service from Coral Coast hotels, with the Fiji Marriott Resort Momi Bay being the most popular over the past year.

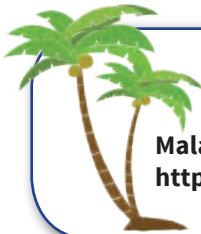
Weddings are currently a big focus for Malamala with the construction of an airconditioned dressing room for brides at The Venue, a covered space with ocean views which is perfect for events of up to 50 guests.

Malamala is also the perfect place for a picture-perfect proposal (heli-proposals are particularly popular at the moment,) hen and stag parties, birthdays and after-wedding functions. The event

spaces cater for up to 100 people but you can also go all-out and host a private function for around 400 people.

Nothing rings truer for this idyllic island than the old adage about first impressions being the last. You are sure to leave Malamala already planning your next trip to this gorgeous spot. 🇧🇲

In brief:



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<https://malamalabeachclub.com>



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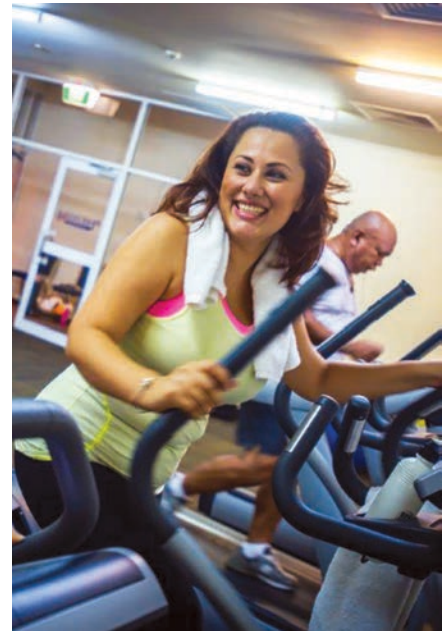
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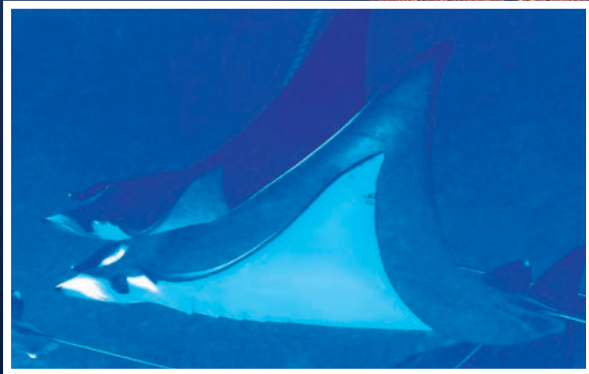
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Citizen science meets marine biology



Words by Dr Andrew Chin, James Cook University

Scientists have a problem. They can't be everywhere, all of the time. This is a pretty obvious problem really, there aren't that many full-time marine scientists, and the ocean is a very big place. Very, very big.

Also consider that the Pacific is the world's biggest ocean and we know that her waters and shores hold marine treasures that are yet to be discovered. For example, it was only four years ago that the very rare – and critically endangered – river shark was 'rediscovered' in Papua New Guinea. I emphasise the word 'rediscovered' as

the local villagers always knew they were there, they just didn't realise the global significance of the species swimming around in their river.

SCUBA diving is a major global industry with just one of the many SCUBA training organisations, PADI, certifying over one million divers every year. More and more divers are exploring the underwater world across the Indo-Pacific, and the warm waters of the Solomon Islands are well known for their rich marine life. The Solomon Islands are part of the Coral Triangle, a global hotspot for marine biodiversity, and when you consider all the WWII wrecks available to dive, it's no wonder that diving is a major tourism drawcard for the islands. And more divers means more eyes than ever, looking,



seeing, exploring.

This is great news for marine biologists. Divers can play a critical role as ‘citizen scientists’, regular people who in their own time travel to new places, see new species, and perhaps most importantly, take photos of what they see. The images stored on a divers’ camera SD cards can be invaluable. They can help communities and local authorities better understand the marine life in their waters, scientists figure out what occurs where (this is especially important for rare and threatened species) and can even help the dive industry highlight particularly interesting species that divers may want to see. It’s because of these potential discoveries that the Shark Search Indo-Pacific project at James Cook University is working with SCUBA divers to record the diversity of shark and rays throughout the Pacific. These are incredibly important animals in the Pacific. These species help make up the complex underwater cities we call coral reefs, but they are also culturally significant to many Pacific peoples, and can also be extremely important to dive tourism.

Shark Search Indo-Pacific (SSIP) scientists have published a species checklist and status report for the Solomon Islands’ archipelago. Part of the Shark Search approach is to work closely with the local community to make sure the best and most up-to-date information is used, and to make sure that the checklist is ‘checked’ against what locals know. This has made it a team effort with scientists working with ‘in-country partners’ from the Ministry of Fisheries and Marine Resources, the Ministry of Environment, Climate Change, Disaster Management & Meteorology, Solomon Dive Adventures, Uepi Island Resort, Wilderness Lodge, and other scientists working for universities and NGOs. The checklist was published in October 2017 and listed 50 species of sharks and rays recorded in the Solomon Islands. While this was a great start, the report noted that given that very little shark and ray research has been done here,

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the number of species was probably an under-estimate. This proved to be an accurate prediction.

Just two months later, SSIP scientists received photos taken by divers who were on a trip with the dive live-aboard vessel MV Bilikiki. An Australian diver, Andrew Short, was diving from the Bilikiki in September and took photos and video of a group of devil rays while diving in the Florida Islands. As Andrew recounts, 'It was actually a photo that nearly didn't happen.'

"I was busy trying to get my lighting right for a macro photo of a small nudibranch, (a *Chromodoris annae* if I recall correctly), however I didn't end up taking the macro photo because just then I saw in my peripheral vision a number of rays passing by. I recall thinking at the time, is it worth changing the setup of the camera to shoot the rays?"

Fortunately, for everyone, Andrew did decide to shoot off a few frames and some video of the group of rays. These images made their way from the Bilikiki to the SSIP team in Australia and confirmed what was suspected, the species Andrew photographed was Kuhl's devil ray, *Mobula kuhlii*. Scientifically, this was an important find for two reasons: it extended the global range of the species from northern Australia into the Pacific and the Coral Triangle; and it added one more species to the Solomon Island's checklist, bringing the total number of sharks and rays in the Solomon Islands to 51 species.

This case also shows how important citizen science can be in documenting the occurrence of species across the world's oceans. Andrew's high quality photographs allowed scientists to confidently identify the species, and his snap decision to photograph the passing rays thus added an important piece to the puzzle of which species occur where. As Andrew later said:

"I'm so glad I made the right choice to photograph the rays, and in doing so helping science out just a little bit".

These photographs and records of Kuhl's devil ray in the Solomon Islands have just been published in the scientific journal *Pacific Conservation Biology*, creating a permanent scientific record of Andrew's observations. However, the Indo-Pacific is still a very, very big place, and it's almost certain that more sharks and rays are out there, waiting to be photographed in places we didn't think they occurred. If you're diving in the Solomon Islands, or the wider Indo-Pacific, consider that some of the critters you see and photograph may also be important scientific discoveries. If you see a species that nobody on the boat or in the dive shop can identify, or is a species that isn't supposed to be there, don't just file it as 'unsolved' and move on. It just might be that projects like www.sharksearch-indopacific.org would love to hear from you. 🇳🇵

In brief:

www.sharksearch-indopacific.org
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My Hapi Place

The Breakwater Cafe

On my first visit to the Breakwater Café I immediately knew I had found my zen-coffee place. I was in Honiara just before the elections this year, and had a chance to get a cappuccino and freshly baked pastry to go, before a boat ride across to Tulagi in the Central Province and three days of instant coffee.

So you can completely understand why I made a beeline back to Breakwater Cafe when I was back in Honiara in August and yes I was back there every day throughout the week but who's counting ?

There are many reasons why.

First of all the range of beverages including teas and coffees and mugs of chai lattes. You will definitely want to sample at least one of their exotic fruit blends for the not-so-caffeine inclined.

Then there are the pastry and



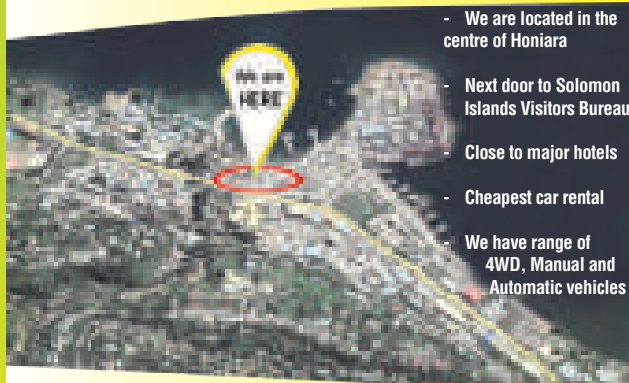
Breakwater view

Photo: Samantha Magick

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Breakwater bread

Photo: The Breakwater Café

baked options including pies and cakes and even bagels, which means your options—including for vegetarians— are wide. Everyone is bound to fall in love with the best fruit salad with coconut jelly !!

Aside from the food selection and the friendly staff, the cafe has a large, spacious interior which means you can experience the cafe vibe as well as your personal space. It is also child-friendly.

But that's if you want to sit indoors. Perched on the Honiara waterfront, it is one the best places to start a busy day or just chill on the deck during the day (ask also about their yoga sessions).

The Breakwater Cafe is a great place to catch up with friends or find a space to catch up on your

reading.

Just a word of advice, the Breakwater Cafe works on a cash-only basis so make sure you are prepared as you're sure to be tempted by everything on offer.

And the only downside is that it is not open for dinner! 🇯🇲

Fiji's Sharon Bhagwan Rolls is a regular visitor to Solomon Islands for work and a confirmed chai-latte addict.

Situated on the Point Cruz waterfront, The Breakwater Cafe is a favourite for locals as well as visitors to Honiara. It opens from 7am every day.



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Shelling out Shell Money

Words and photos by Dan and Nid

Shell money is a currency made of shell that is used in the Solomon Islands. Although its use started in Malaita Province, it is now used throughout the Solomon Islands and continues to be used today.

The history of shell money in the Solomon Islands starts with the people of Langa Langa Lagoon. Dispossessed of their land and pushed to

the sea some 150 years ago, they made lemonade out of lemons (limes actually, as it is hard to find true lemons in the Solomon Islands) by building their own artificial islands on the reefs of the Lagoon. One rock at a time, these islands were built until they were robust enough to support a house, several houses, and even small villages. As you can imagine, living on rock islands made it particularly challenging to grow food or raise animals so the people of Langa Langa diversified: they started



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making shell money.

All Solomon Islands shell money comes from Langa Langa Lagoon. Making it is a painstakingly lengthy and tedious process and even with modern drills, shell money making is a group effort. "Just one person cannot make shell money," our guide said wagging her finger.

The first step is gathering the shells, and no, you can't just pick up any old shell you find off the beach. At the top of the shell hierarchy are the shells with the pink hue, the red shells. Red shells are the most beautiful and the most difficult to find. They are also the hardest to break down, meaning they last longer than other shells. Further down the hierarchy are shells in white, black, brown and grey, less valued because of their dull colour and weak durability compared to red shells.

In the early days, shells were easily plucked straight from the shore, but the scale of shell money production has stripped the lagoon of its most prized shells. Shells are now much harder to find and young men dive to deeper depths to find them. Nowadays, sacks of shells are often purchased and imported from other parts of the Solomon Islands.

Once there are enough shells to work with, the women will form an assembly line to start the process of shell money making. Younger women



with less experience are often at the top of the line, and women with more experience will tackle the more skilled processes. Experienced women will also handle the red shells so that as little shell as possible is wasted.

First, shells are carefully smashed between rocks to break them down into smaller pieces.

These pieces will be passed onto the next woman who will shape the pieces into rough

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The flat surface of the shell pieces are then smoothed by grinding the pieces between two stones and a bit of water.

Once smooth, a hole will be drilled into the middle of the shell piece. Drilling, especially with the traditional manual tool, is the most finicky step of the process and is often reserved for the village matron who has many years of practice under her belt. Asked which job was her favourite, the Matron brightly replied “Disfala job hem favorit job blo mi, but mi save duim eni job” (This job is my favourite job, but I can do any job).

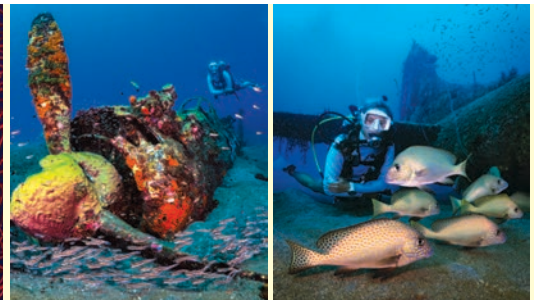
From here, the pieces are barbecued on hot rocks to bring out the true colour of the shell. There is a knack to knowing when they are cooked enough because yes, it is possible to undercook and overcook a shell.

If you were pressed for time, once the pieces are cooked, you could put these pieces in your wallet and start using the shells as money. A handful of pieces could get you a packet of biscuits from the local convenience store but this would only work if you were buying in Langa.

To reach its final traditional shell money form, the cooked pieces of shell are then strung onto 1.5 m strings and attached to a wooden board for sanding. The sanding is always done by the men

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as it requires muscle and a full day to smooth just one strand. With a man on either side, the strand is sanded to a smooth and uniform edge using rocks and water.

Finally, these smoothed and buffed strings are strung into 10-strand strips and small pieces of jewelry.

Strips of shell money are used for bartering and ceremonial payments. Red shell money holds the most value and one strip could be worth around 1300 SBD dependent on the quantity of red shell. That's a lot of Sol Tuna.

One of shell money's major uses is bride price, a strong tradition in Malaita where a dowry is paid to the bride's family. Shell money is practically synonymous with bride price and the cost of a bride can be anything from 10 strips to 120 strips (not including additional wedding gifts of pigs, food items, and cash money).

Shell money can also be used for compensation if you find yourself in a situation where you have wronged a person and need to make it up to them. If you're a Big Man, or woman, attending an important local event, you'd expect the hosts to adorn you with shell money as befits your status.

If you'd like your own piece of shell money, they are easy to come by at Honiara Central Market. But the best way to get your shell money is to



have it gifted to you. And if it's red, you know that makes it extra special. 🟡

Dan and Nid are two Kiwis who learnt how to crack their first coconut while working and exploring in the Solomon Islands. Other achievements include passable Pijin, Solomon Islands driving licenses, one slippery cabbage recipe, and scuba diving tickets. They also wrote a blog about their experiences in Solomon Islands to inspire more people to come and visit these incredible islands.



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Central Bank of Solomon Islands

RAMSIT 201

Managing risk for success

TOWER Insurance's 145 years in the Pacific



For more than 30 years TOWER Insurance has been operating in Solomon Islands, and its history in the Pacific dates back to 1878. TOWER was the first insurer to set up a physical office in the Solomon Islands and is a multiple winner of the Solomon Islands Chamber of Commerce and Industry's Business Excellence Awards.

TOWER Insurance's Solomon Is General Manager Diana Tasion gives *Solomons* readers the backstory.

Tell us more about TOWER Insurance and its footprint in the Pacific?

TOWER Insurance is a New Zealand owned company with its Head Office operating out of Auckland, NZ.

TOWER Insurance through its subsidiary TOWER Pacific has been in the Pacific for more than 145 years and has a presence in eight Pacific countries, Fiji, Papua New Guinea, Solomon Islands, Cook Islands and Vanuatu under the brand name TOWER Insurance. TOWER also operates in Samoa, American Samoa and Tonga and trades as National Pacific Insurance (NPI).

Can you give us an insight into doing business in the islands?

Every Pacific country is different and unique in its challenges, environment, people, economy, so there is a lot of diversity and rightfully so. So TOWER Insurance does not treat all Pacific countries like "one size fits all" but instead we seek to understand each of the eight countries we work in and tailor our product and services.

If a Prime Minister or President of a country in the Pacific asks you what you would change to make doing business in the islands smoother, what would you have on your list?

We should introduce financial literacy and insurance awareness into the school curriculum to grow basic awareness so Pacific Islanders, from a young age, have a better

understanding how insurance works and how it assists them when there is an unexpected calamity or event.

Secondly, we would encourage government to invest in infrastructure, policies and laws that make it mandatory so that minimum requirements

can be met. This would give insurance companies the confidence to write and accept risks we take on.

How is climate change affecting the industry?

Yes, climate change is changing the game for insurance in general but again, TOWER and any other insurance companies for that matter, cannot sit back and wait for disaster to strike. For example, we are investing in reviewing what we offer our clients, making proper assessments, offering technical support and advice, so our clients are in a position to better manage and face the challenges (of inclement weather) caused by climate change. This is important and something we are taking into account when it comes to covering risk, be it for individuals or for businesses

What other trends is TOWER seeing in the insurance market?

The Pacific is slowly but surely becoming more aware of the importance of insurance and how it can assist them financially in time of a loss.

Generally speaking, most Pacific Islanders come across insurance when they get a loan from the bank as its part of the Bank's requirements. However the business sector is also becoming more aware of the importance of insurance and they take it up as a normal part of doing business.

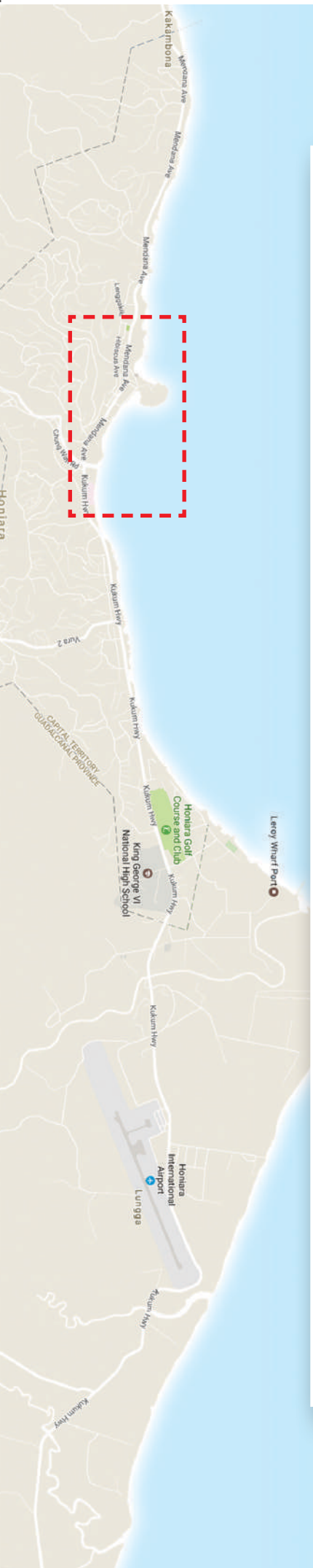
At TOWER, we don't just sell insurance but we also provide insurance advice to our business clients, to help them better manage their risk. Now if they manage risk better, then they're positioning their business to succeed. So it's good for them, it's good for TOWER and it's good for the local economy.

While there is an insurance-awareness gap, we are committed to working with various development partners to improve financial literacy and insurance awareness in the Pacific. In doing so, we are contributing towards Pacific communities that are more aware, better engaged and able to make sound financial decisions for themselves, their families and their communities.

Is it becoming too risky? Well insurance is in the business of Risk Management so we operate in this environment, we understand it, we are proactive and anticipate what may or may not happen and have strategies in place so we are best placed to respond to the needs of our customers.

We take pride in the many qualified and experienced people in our business across the Pacific and New Zealand and we provide quality insurance advice and solutions to our customers for whatever requirements they may have. TOWER expanded in 2018 and we have a Pacific Operations team that operates out of Suva, Fiji and so we have specialized in-house teams that provide technical support for our eight Pacific countries, in risk management, complex claims, underwriting and the like.

Your quick guide to our capital city



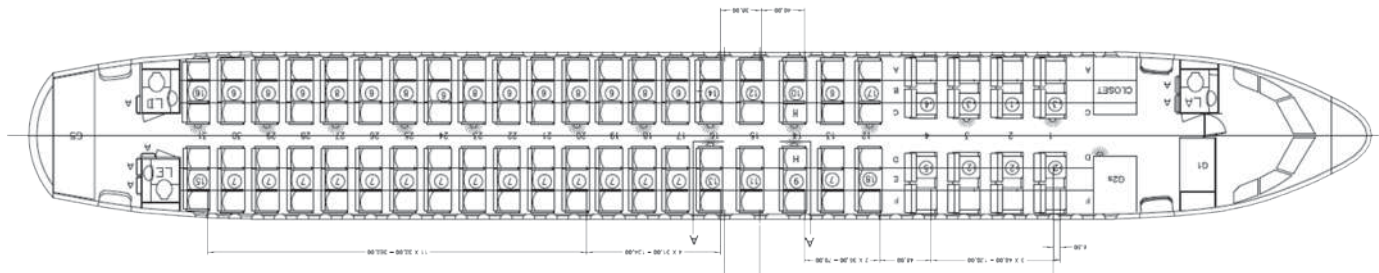


SOLOMON AIRLINES



AIRCRAFT: A320

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



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:	1350 km
Cruising Speed:	338 kph
Seating capacity:	16
Crew:	2
Current Routes:	All Ports in the Solomon Islands
Aircraft in Fleet:	4

Website: www.flysolomons.com

fact sheet



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 - Brisbane, Qantas Lounge access (Belama Plus Members)

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GENERAL INFORMATION

Head Office:

Henderson Airport

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

Travel Centre:

Mendana Avenue

- Ph: +677 20152 • Fax: +677 23992
- Email: sales@flysolomons.com.sb

Australia:

Level 1 5a Grevillea Place

Brisbane Airport Qld 4008

- Ph: +61 7 38605883
- Toll Free: 1300 894311 (Aus)
0800 424980 (NZ)
- Email: reservations@flysolomons.com

Fiji:

Nadi Airport, Office 27, First Floor

- Ph: +679 6722831 • Fax: +679 6722140
- Email: solomon@connect.com.fj

Email: belama@flysolomons.com

International Connections



For all bookings, ticketing and flight enquiries:



AUSTRALIA

Australia Cargo GSA
Pak Fresh Handling

BNE AIRPORT | 5 Cyperus Street Brisbane Airport
QLD 4008 | 07 3119 2571 | 0499 018 481

Georgia McCabe | Branch Manager BNE |
georgia@pakfresh.com.au | 0499 018 481

ADL AIRPORT | 2-3 Comley Street Export Park SA 5950
08 8234 4222

CBR AIRPORT | 8 George Tyson Drive ACT 2609
02 6247 1157 | 0424 840 922

Eagle Farm
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Email: flysolomons@airlinemarketing.co.nz

NZ Cargo GSA

GSA Cargo Services New Zealand Ltd
Carolyn Evans | Director
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Fax: +64 9 2758707
Mobile: +64 21757400
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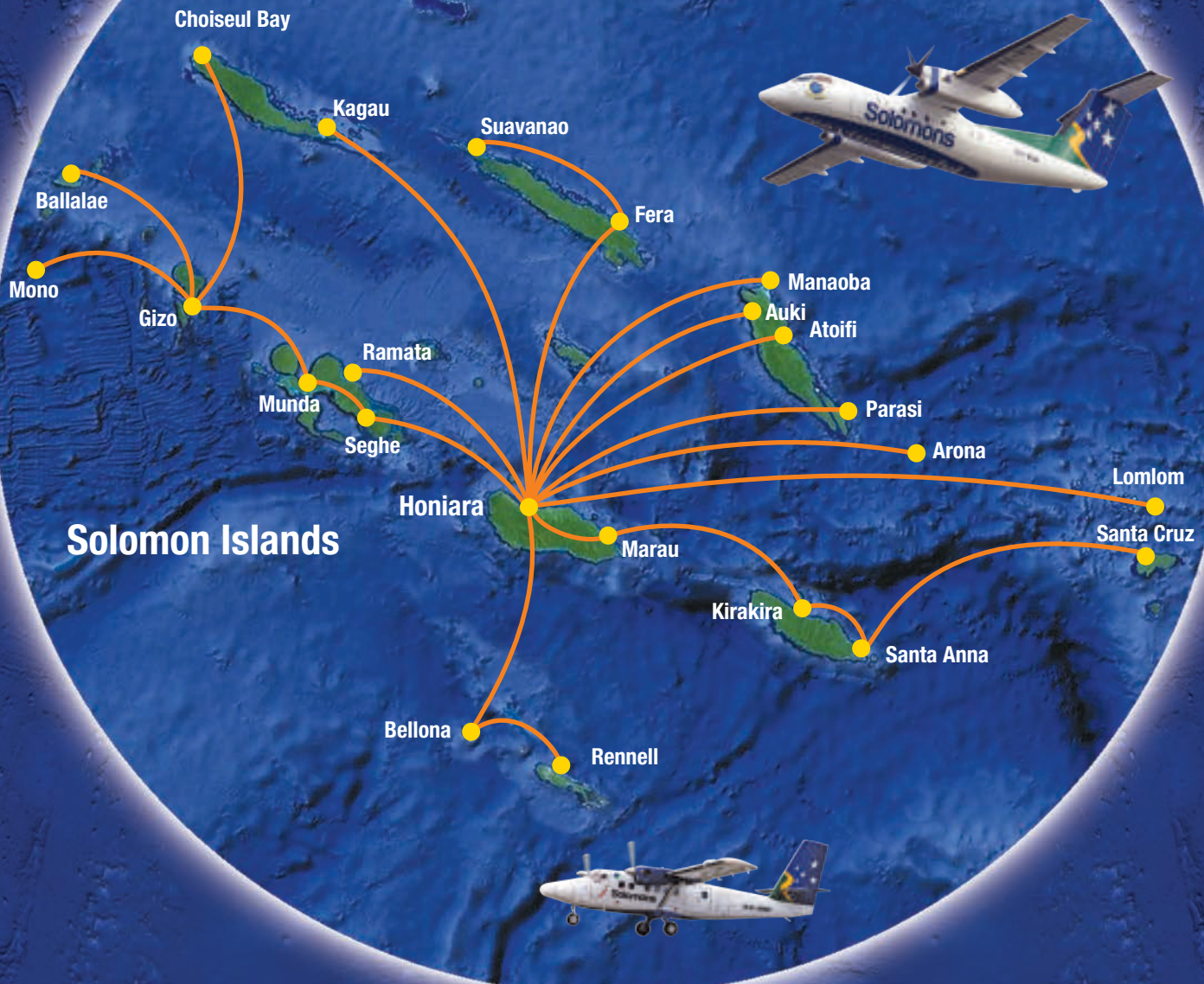
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Domestic Connections



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
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Email: rfs@vanuatu.com.vu

Head Office

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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 Tel: (677) 36048
Engineering Tel: (677) 36104
Cargo Tel: (677) 36071
International Terminal Traffic Tel: (677) 36077
Domestic Terminal Traffic Tel: (677) 36048/36251

SANTA CRUZ Sales & Reservations

GIZO Sales & Reservations Tel: (677) 60173

MUNDA Sales & Reservations Tel: (677) 62152

KIRAKIRA Sales & Reservations Tel: (677) 50070

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

• Fax: (677) 53092

• Fax: (677) 60202

• Fax: (677) 62152

Overseas Administration Offices

AUSTRALIA - Brisbane Airport

Administration Solomon Airlines, Level 1 5a Grevillea Place,
Brisbane Airport, QLD. 4008
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
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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

Solomon Airlines welcomes new flight attendants



Solomon Airlines lass of 2019, pictured with Flight Standards trainer Harriet Taukave.

Flight Attendants are the face of any airline as they spend more time with customers than any other employee. Looking to the future, Solomon Airlines earlier this year embarked on a recruitment process with a view to not only strengthening our onboard inflight service, but to prepare for new and exciting times ahead.

With over 300 applications and with so many highly qualified candidates to select from, it was a difficult selection process but eventually was narrowed down to the final nine.

The rigorous selection process included panel interviews, exams and background reference

checks.

Congratulations to our new cabin crew members who are now taking care of our customers on our international flights to Brisbane, Port Villa, Nadi and Tarawa.

Solomon Airlines' flight attendants are passionate about providing outstanding customer service and showering our valued passengers with the "Hapi Isles smiles" as they provide their warm and efficient delivery of our onboard service.

Be sure to look out for our crew on your next flight with Solomon Airlines.

Dash 8 Check by Air Niugini in Port Moresby

By Julai Tomadek, Manager Engineering

On the 29th of July 2019, Solomon Islands' Dash 8 left Honiara for Port Moresby (POM) via Munda. Arriving on the same day, the domestic bird and the team onboard was received by the Air Niugini management team and their media crew. After fulfilling all Papua New Guinea immigration formalities, the outgoing team was directed to the Dash 8's designated hangar facility where they prepared the aircraft for engine ground runs and input in the hanger. This preparation was completed the following day, as there

were a range of media activities as the notion of an outside operator such as Solomon Airlines carrying out their "C" check by the premier airline of PNG was a milestone achievement for both Air Niugini and the country as a whole.

It created a real buzz as the Solomon Islands' domestic bird was the first outside contract they have ever checked, apart from their own Dash 8s, F70s and F100s. Our Dash 8 aircraft was in the hangar for 11 days before it was pushed out on the 8th of September where some minor issues were identified and rectified in the process. A successful assessment flight was carried out the next day



with minor defects recognised and repaired. On the 10th of September, all technical defects were acknowledged as resolved and the aircraft was released back to service. On the same day, the team departed for Honiara on an uneventful journey back through to Munda where it refueled before heading to Henderson Airport in Honiara.

On September 11 the Dash 8 was back in full service and has not encountered any Aircraft on Ground (AOG) issues. For these and other reasons per the signed agreement between the two stakeholders, the management and staff of Solomon Airlines are impressed and satisfied with the quality service they have received for Dash 8. 🇧🇲



Your Guide to the Solomon Islands

Things to know as visitors to our shores:

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

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

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

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

Airport Tax... SB\$305 payable by passengers (12 years and over) boarding international flights, and these are generally added onto your air tickets.

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

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

Business Hours... Government and some business offices open Monday to Friday, 8am to 4:30pm with a one-hour lunch break normally beginning at noon. Shops and some offices open Saturday 8am - noon.

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

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



Our Subsidiary

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

Tipping ... Not expected and not encouraged.

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

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

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

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

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

Provinces

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

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

• **Isabel** - Provincial capital: Buala

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

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
Isabel	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


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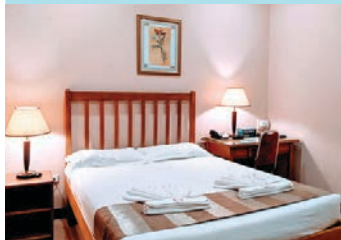
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