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SOLOMON AIRLINES COMPLIMENTARY IN-FLIGHT MAGAZINE

ISSUE 86

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GUIDE TO
**Rendova
Island**
SEE INSIDE

Wogasia

Up close at the
Spear Throwing Festival

A solar-powered
adventure to the
Western Province

Pacific Games:
7 sports to watch



THE LATEST IN TRAVEL, INFORMATION AND NEWS FROM THE SOLOMON ISLANDS



SOLOMON ISLANDS **PREMIUM** LAGER BEER



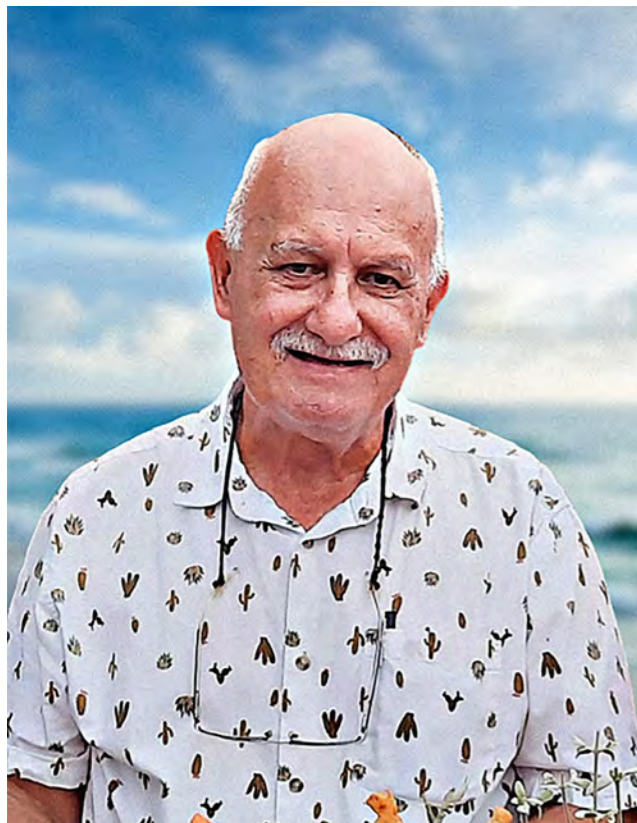
OUR GAMES

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Drink Responsibly



In June we signed a letter of intent to acquire a second, modern Airbus A320 under 10 years old.

home with them stories about the appeal of Solomon Islands as a travel destination. Already statistics for first quarter 2023 show visitor numbers slightly higher than those recorded in the same period in 2020, before our border closure of more than 800 days.

In June, Solomon Airlines implemented the next phase of our partnership with Air Vanuatu. We commenced operating a third weekly flight for Air Vanuatu between Port Vila and Auckland, complementing their existing Wednesday and Saturday services.

Under our agreement, Air Vanuatu also restarted direct flights between Brisbane and Santo, in Vanuatu, on Thursdays, with the new route also operated by Solomon Airlines, alongside the provision of a Twin Otter to support their domestic network until the end of August.

Meanwhile at home, we announced an expansion of our discount domestic holiday program 'lumi Tugeda Holidays', encouraging residents to explore our provinces. lumi Tugeda Holidays now offers packages with 16 participating tourism operators.

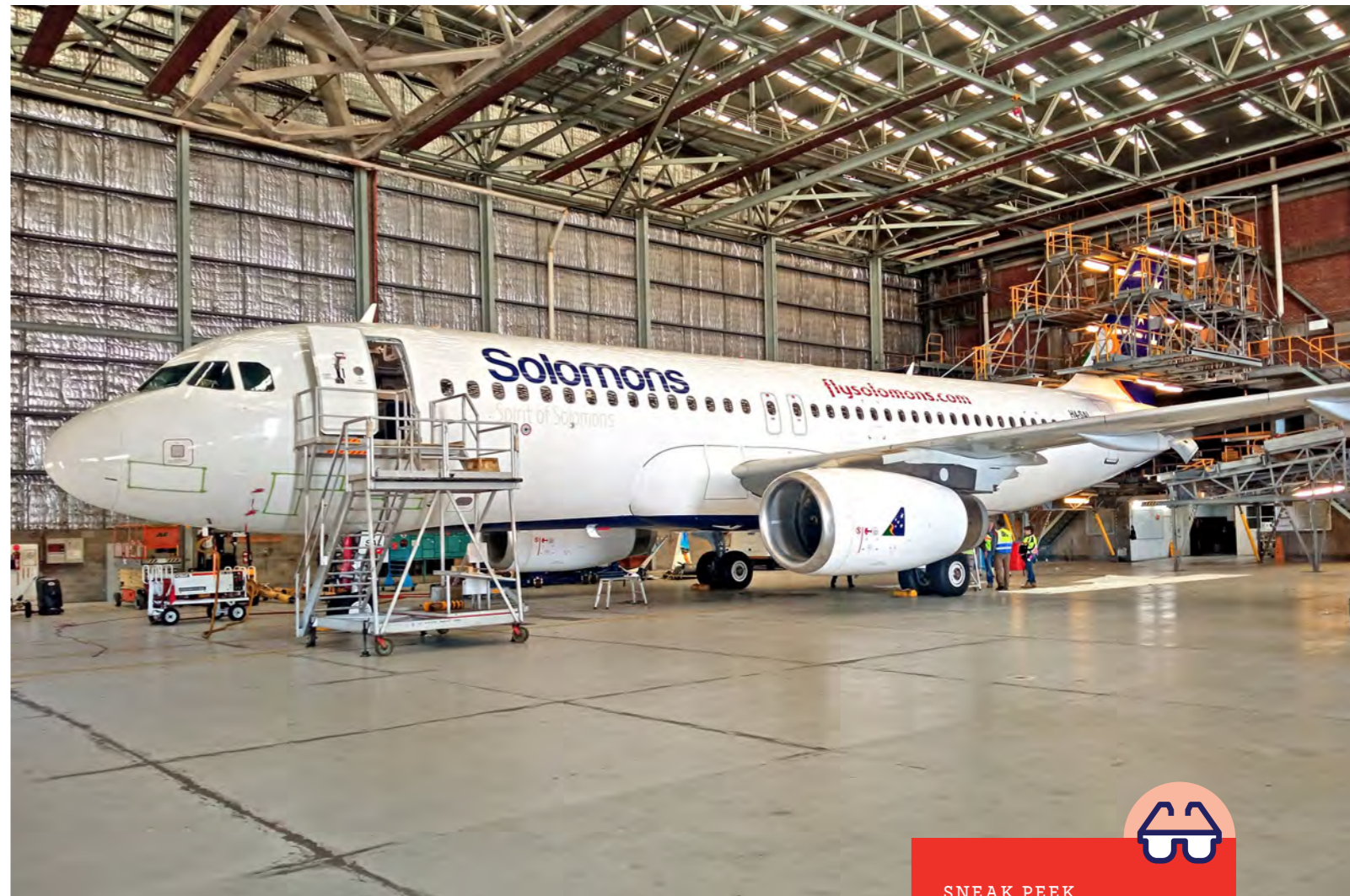
We are continually looking at how we can expand this program to benefit local residents, the private sector and tourism operators, whilst also creating packages which will appeal to international visitors.

Under our corporate social responsibility program, we were very pleased to assist the Pikinini Heart Foundation to fly eight young patients overseas for treatment. In April, eight youngsters with their parents and guardians, and local doctors flew to Fiji for life-saving medical treatment at the Sri Sathya Sai Sanjeevani Children's Hospital in Suva.

We also added our support to Solomon Islands National Netball Training squad who took part in a seven-day program on Queensland's Gold Coast, a valuable opportunity for our team to prepare for the Pacific Games.

Most recently Solomon Airlines launched our LAEFLAEN 'Wings of Change' children charities project.

I am proud to say our Solomon Airlines team identified this project as one they very much wished to develop,



Welkam oloketa (Welcome friends)

As we enter the second half of 2023, exciting developments are occurring for our airline.

In Honiara, preparations for SOL2023 are happening across the city, with construction, roadworks and clean-ups and athletes in training to compete in the 17th Pacific Games.

Solomon Airlines is a major sponsor of the games from 19 November to 2 December, 2023 and the 2023 Solomon Airlines Peace Marathon anticipated in October.

We are rapidly preparing to carry the thousands of athletes, officials, staff and spectators who will travel here from 24 countries.

This opportunity has expedited our board's decision to acquire a second Airbus A320 aircraft. In June we signed a letter of intent to acquire a second, modern Airbus A320 under 10 years old. It will join our fleet in September and whilst our first Airbus goes in for some planned maintenance in August, our new addition will take its place and we will have both available for our full operation by September 2023.

In the longer term, expanding our international fleet enables inbound tourism development. Visitors and media for SOL2023 will discover our country and culture, taking

based on the belief that every child has unique abilities and challenges, and all deserve to be valued, understood and embraced by society.

From 1 August we started collecting loose change donations from passengers on board all flights and via our Point Cruz sales office. Monies collected will support the Honiara City Council run Children's Clinic (Pikinini Referral Clinic) and the Solomon Islands Red Cross Society run School for Disabled Children (SDC).

We warmly welcome collaboration with Pink South Pacific and the Ministry of Communication and Aviation, in installing an Automated External Defibrillator (AED) at the Honiara Domestic and International Arrivals terminals, with more to be

added in additional locations in the near future.

The inclusion of these machines and the training of our team will play a crucial role in the event of an emergency such as heart attacks and other injuries.

As we continue to rebuild our national carrier and our tourism industry, whether you are travelling with us today for holiday or for work, tagio tumas (thank you) for flying Solomon Airlines. In this vein, we also say Tagio to the Government of Solomon Islands for their unwavering support for our airline.

We wish you good health, blessings and progress.

Gus Kraus MBE
CEO Solomon Airlines



SNEAK PEEK

New Aircraft Joins Fleet

As we go to print, an official announcement was imminent regarding the newest edition to our international fleet: a second Airbus, an A320ceo with sharklets, a crucial addition to our fleet ahead of the Pacific Games.

The aircraft registered as H4-SAL will appear on selected routes from 28 July 2023. More details on this exciting news are to come – please visit flysolomons.com or follow our Facebook or Instagram @solomonairlines to stay up to date.

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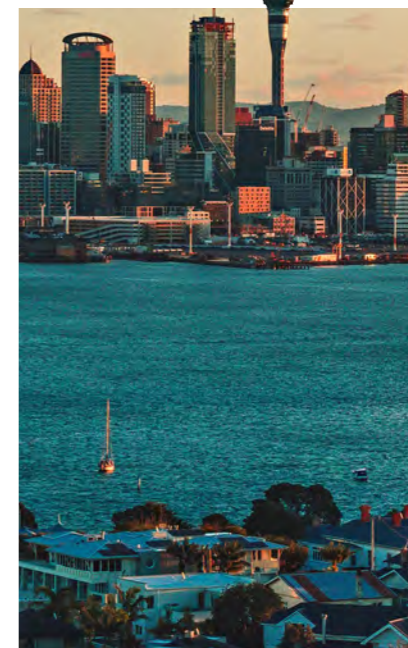


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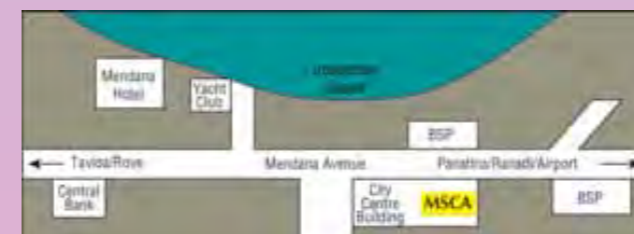
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FRESH, LOCAL FOOD ON THE MENU IN HONIARA

An idea that took shape during the COVID-19 lockdowns has come to fruition for a local, and Solomon Islanders are set to be the beneficiary.

MK Local food Haus was launched in June, a fresh produce and delivery business, taking produce, protein, and cooked food from local communities around Northeast Guadalcanal and reselling it in Honiara.

It's the brainchild of Debbie Lukisi, and is set to be a driver of economic opportunity for her community, promoting Solomon Islands food, culture and people.

MK Local Foods is expected to source supplies from around 300 farmers from Northeast Guadalcanal, employing 10 permanent staff and 20 casual workers.

As demand for products increases, more farmers will benefit and more local communities will benefit.

The business was launched with the assistance of the Strongim Bisnis program.

Australian High Commissioner, Rod Hilton was on hand to help launch MK Local Foods back in June, with the Australian commission having partnered with MK Local Foods to support its training for farmers to establish new crops, basic business skills training, improving its administrative and logistics capacity, development of a database to track produce availability, marketing and new online shop. ▶

MK Local Foods is now online and Solomon Islanders living overseas and in Solomon Islands can place orders and be delivered to their families in and around Honiara.

AIRPORT UPGRADES TAKING SHAPE

Honiara's runway is en route to becoming a whole lot smoother, with upgrades currently taking place to improve safety and efficiency.

The works are part of the SIRAP and SIRAP2 programs that are being financed by the World Bank through the International Development Association (IDA). They follow repairs on the strip last year under the same program.

The works will provide new runway surfacing, including safety areas at both ends. The existing runway ground lighting will also be upgraded with energy-efficient approach lights.

Meanwhile, if you've felt landings at Munda Airport have been a bit smoother recently, that's because they have – with upgrades completed to the runway in early-June. A new terminal is expected to be completed by October, ahead of the Pacific Games, again under the SIRAP and SIRAP 2 programs.

The project is also constructing seven new bridges (Koa, Bio1, Bio2, Kolofe1, Kolofe2, Su'u Harbor, and Bira Bridges) in Malaita, and developing town roads in Noro, Western Province. ▶

GAMES OVERWHELMED BY OFFERS OF LOCAL SUPPORT

More than 5,000 locals have applied to volunteer at this year's Sol2023 Pacific Games.

The Games Organizing Committee (GOC)'s Workforce Team confirmed the offers, reaffirming the public's excitement for the Games to kick off. A total of 5,129 applications were received by the deadline, and plenty more are expected to come in from visiting countries.

"The GOC is overwhelmed by the interest in volunteering for the Games and we appreciate the support from the community. We were looking to recruit only 3,000 volunteers and could not believe that we have exceeded our goal in less than a month", GOC Volunteer Supervisor, Donisan Kelly said.

The Games are to take place from November 19 – December 2, 2023. Read more about some of the most exciting sports to watch on page 30. ▶



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COLOURFUL, CREATIVE AND HEALTHY: WEST KOLA RIDGE GETS A MAKEOVER

The streets up near West Kola Ridge aren't the same as all the other streets.

A group of talented young artists have recently been to work, the result being a colourful mural that you might expect to belong in Berlin or Amsterdam.

This vibrant masterpiece serves a higher purpose: advocating for a healthy lifestyle. Supported by the Pacific Community Organization, it aims to raise awareness about

the battle against Non-Communicable Diseases (NCDs). The main types of NCDs are cardiovascular diseases (such as heart attacks and stroke), cancers, chronic respiratory diseases (such as chronic obstructive pulmonary disease and asthma) and diabetes.

Our main weapon against NCDs is to live a healthy lifestyle. As spray paint intertwines, the mural conveys a powerful message: by embracing a healthy lifestyle, we can transform our lives and the community. ▽



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Rendova Rendezvous

Part of the New Georgia Islands group, and located a short boat ride from Munda Station across the beautiful Roviana Lagoon, volcanic and richly forested Rendova Island and its black sandy beaches offers a wealth of cultural, environmental, and nature-based experiences.

Home to the endangered Leatherback Turtle, as well as the odd Saltwater Crocodile, this unspoiled gem is also a major drawcard for birdwatchers with many of the Solomon Islands' unique endemic species found here.

A BLUEPRINT FOR SUSTAINABLE TOURISM

Blending perfectly into the natural environment, Titiru Eco-Lodge is the main point of stay for travellers, a family run homestay established nearly a decade ago and seen by many as the blueprint for sustainable tourism accommodation in the Solomon Islands.

Set in a vast orchid garden, the lodge boasts three bungalows which can sleep up to nine guests, and a fourth bungalow is currently nearing completion. All bungalows are on the water and have a decent verandah where guests can sit to view the spectacular sunsets the western Solomon Islands is renowned for.

Holding true to its environmental composition, the lodge sources its power via solar panels and batteries, and all bungalows offer ensuite bathroom facilities for which water is supplied via gravity rainwater tanks.

The area around Titiru Eco-Lodge abounds with many activities and adventures including tropical rainforest walks, hikes to nearby waterfalls and bat caves and fishing trips. For a more cultural insight, weaving lessons and herbal medicine bushwalks can also be arranged.

A FAMOUS ISLAND, AND A FAMOUS COCONUT

The area is also steeped in WWII history. Rendova Island was the location for a Patrol Boat base for the US Navy, the very base that the famous SOS 'coconut shell' message from U.S. President John F. Kennedy was delivered to after his vessel, PT-109, was rammed and sunk by a Japanese destroyer in the area.

Just a short walk through the rainforest, lies Ugehe Village which guests can have an opportunity to immerse themselves

in the Western Province's unique living culture and centuries-old traditions, including 'water music' formed by an intricate system of hand-slapping and dance performed by local women who use the sounds to convey key messages to the village.



A WARM WELKAM

One of the most spectacular activities is the Ugehe Village traditional life displays. The village are happy to display their culture to visitors and the process goes like this:

Visitors are most welcome and as is tradition, and harking back to the region's head-

hunting days, visitors are always met with a fearsome warrior demanding to know the purpose of visit, and if visitors are friend or foe. Once the guide makes clear that visitors have peaceful intentions, the warrior then makes way for the village Chief to give a traditional 'welkam' and guests are allowed to move freely within the village.

Cultural activities on display include wood and stone carving, weaving, music, fire making, house building and various traditional food preparations.

KEY INFO

Village visits are best arranged through Titiru Eco Lodge, but can also be organized via Go West Tours, Castaway Lagoon Resort, Qua Roviana Motel and other tourism operators located in the Roviana area.



For more information on Titiru, or the Ugehe Cultural Village display, email titiru.eco.resort@gmail.com or visit Tourism Solomons website located at visitsolomons.com.sb

A Quick Guide to Honiara

Conveniently positioned centrally within the South Pacific and embedded deeply in World War Two history and Melanesian culture, Honiara is not only the capital of the Solomon Islands, but a great base for travellers visiting the South Pacific.

As well as this, there are a number of excellent food and drink options throughout the city, and modern facilities available for every kind of traveller.

Check out our map for information on where to go in the capital.



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This is not George Waimanu's first rodeo.



WORDS AND PHOTOS JARRYD SALEM

Metres in front of me George Waimanu thrusts his weapon and shield in the air, daring the men approaching from the east to join the battle. He twists and taunts, putting on an impassioned performance for the screaming crowd.

Behind him dozens of clay-coated warriors are waiting for the haunting sound of the conch shells that will signal the start of the spear fight. A chief calls out, the shells are blown, and George throws the first spear, narrowly deflected by his brother Robert who is in the opposing tribe. There is no holding back now. The battle has begun, and I am right in the heart of the chaos.

Every year in late May or early June when the new moon marks the end of the year-long yam season, Owriki, or Santa Catalina as it's known on maps, hosts one of the most fascinating two-day celebrations in the entire world. The Wogasia Spear Fighting Festival is an annual ritual where the 2000-strong population of this remote island ward off evil spirits, yearn for an abundant crop, and most dramatically take out a year's worth of grievances by hurling spears at each other.

Attending Wogasia is like walking into a documentary and becoming fully immersed with a civilisation that few know exist.



When you live on such a small island with little communication to the outside world, holding grudges is not an option. Instead the men suppress qualms they may have with friends or family members in order to keep the peace. But on one day of year, challenges are made via spear to release their pent up anger.

This is not done with malice, and despite the ferocity no harm is truly wished upon the other tribe. The spears are blunted, no deaths or serious injuries have been recorded in recent memory, and the worst that happens is usually bruised bones and egos.

Attending Wogasia is like walking into a documentary and becoming fully immersed with a civilisation that few know exist.



A chartered Twin Otter transports our group of 7 local residents and myself from Honiara to the grass runway of Santa Ana, where a beat-up Toyota Hilux continues through the jungle to a small leaf-thatched fishing village. From here we load up a few narrow boats and motor across to Santa Catalina.

We're met by Joseph, one of the village chiefs, and seemingly the entire island who have come to greet the curious visitors. International travellers aren't common on Santa Catalina – a look at the guest book shows less than 100 foreigners, or 'ai fakas', have visited in the past decade.

We're a day early, and we spend our time becoming familiar with the island's way of life. In a tech-driven world, Owriki is a throwback to simpler times. There are no vehicles or bicycles on the island, the only electricity comes from solar lights and an often-

Clockwise from opposite: Conch horns and kids; the next generation of warriors. **Above:** Practice makes perfect; women in Mwoko Mwoko.



The screams hit me before the stampede does, and I find myself confronted with dozens of camouflaged fighters waving spears and running towards the ocean.

broken petrol generator, and weak phone service appears sporadically. Luxuries like Wi-Fi and air conditioning are a world away, replaced by real human connections, like playing games and drinking coconuts.

It's today I meet George for the first time, who is vying for the title of the world's happiest man. "Don't let the smile fool you," my local guide Garedd Porowai tells me. "George is the fiercest spear fighter in Santa Catalina." George is a gentle soul though, spending hours showing me his personal carvings and teaching me how to kite fish.

Wogasia begins the following day. Conch shells are collected, special foods like susugu (a 6-month pudding) are prepared. As night falls the shells are blown and when the stars move into position hundreds of people



charge through the village, cheering and whacking the earth as hard as they can to ward away evil spirits. Kids throw flaming embers and buckets of fish guts in their path, adding to the dramatic scenes.

The next stage begins with the island gathering to await sunrise. I sit in the sand, passing around betelnut. Women collect flowers, the Amwea tribe grab their spears and sneak away, while Atawa men mark out the battlefield.

When the sun appears George beckons the Amweas. To the east a line of warriors approach through the sea. The crowd is electrified, and when the conch shells blast the warm-up fight begins.

Culture

Wayward spears fly dangerously close as the two tribes come head-to-head, taking aim for whomever they've challenged for the year. The chiefs call off the practice fight, and all men come together with smiles on their faces.

**

The screams hit me before the stampede does, and I find myself confronted with dozens of camouflaged fighters waving spears and running towards the ocean. The two tribes meet for the main event after lunch, and there is no waiting this time. George throws the first spear, and that's all that is needed to unleash the torrent.

The entire fight lasts less than two minutes, and the intensity of the war is intimidating to watch with no warrior leaving anything left in the tank. George runs forward to confront his brother, yelling and dancing before finally standing down. The audience cheers and the tribes embrace, this time laughing and checking to make sure their tribal brothers are ok.

The last of the rituals play out, all grievances laid to rest and the two tribes have done all they can to bring about a bountiful harvest. A feast marks the end of Wogasia, and for the people of Owriki life will go on in much the same manner as it has for generations.

In the morning I find myself sitting on the beach again with George, chatting about Wogasia and waiting for a boat to transport me back to Santa Ana. It's anyone's guess when another one will return with more ai fakas.

"I want more tourists to come to Santa Catalina," George tells me while drawing shapes in the sand with his machete. "It is very interesting for them to see."

I promise him I'll return next year, on the condition he won't challenge me to a duel.

George lets out an infectious laugh. "No fighting, we are the same tribe now," he assures me, and his warm eyes tell me he means it. ▽



Wogasia is held every year in late May or early June, with exact dates to be announced soon.

A very small number of tourists will be allowed to visit in 2024, with permits and logistics carefully organised by Tourism Solomons after a selection process. Contact Garedd Porowai for more details. garedd.porowai@tourismsolomons.com.sb

Clockwise from opposite: Preparation; Warriors charge the beach **Left:** George Waimanu charges up the crowd.

Talemaot: The Solomons' own War and Peace

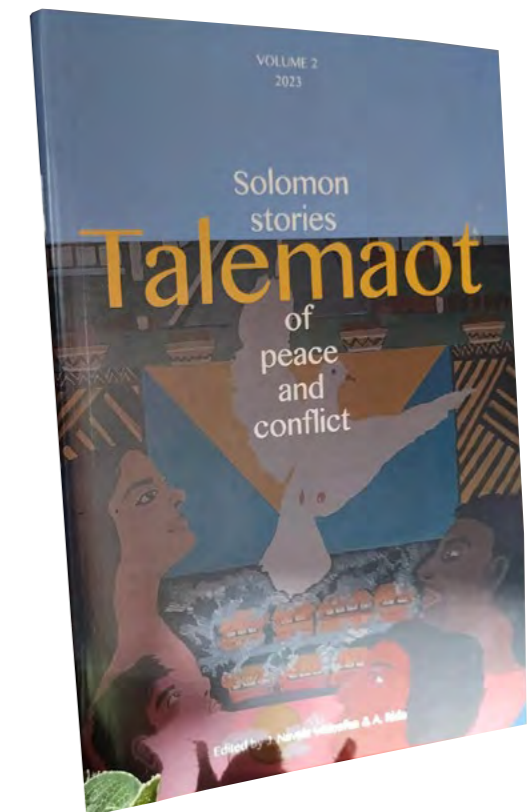
Solomon Islands' literature is less spoken about than other elements of the country's culture, but vibrant history and untold stories of a diverse community come alive, and are well worth a read.

WORDS REGINA LEPPING
PHOTOS REGINA LEPPING AND BEN JOE

While the country is renowned for its exquisite carvings, ornaments and artworks, hidden within the corners of the gift shop at the Solomon Islands National Museum in Honiara is a glimpse of literary works that will transport you through time and provide a deep understanding of this beautiful nation. These are not ordinary books; they are windows into collective memories, stories, and creative expressions of a community steeped in oral tradition, now embracing the art of written word.

From the powerful poems of July Makini, the first female poet in the Solomon Islands, to the collaborative efforts of the writers in the renowned Talemaot book series, these writings capture the essence of history as seen through the lens of creative minds.

At the heart of this literary movement stands the Solomon Islands Creative Writers Association (SICWA), the oldest such association in the country. Voluntarily working against the odds, SICWA ensures that Solomon's literature will always have a place on the shelf. Their latest publication, *Talemaot Volume Two: Stories of Peace and Conflict* was released on its own from a partnership with the young and vibrant Dreamcast Writers, showcasing almost seamless transition of storytelling from one generation to the next.



"When our literature lacks adventure and leisure, our tourism industry suffers. When our literature lacks opportunities and cohesiveness, our market lacks investors. When our literature lacks pacifying themes, our society lacks healing and a future," says Ms Jasmine Navala Walefea, President of SICWA.

"Solomon Islanders are natural storytellers."

"Solomon Islanders are natural storytellers. And our every story has a purpose and a lesson. It is within these spaces that we recollect experiences, impart meaning to them, and give ourselves the opportunity to make decisions to choose otherwise. It is in these conversations that we ultimately connect with our past, present, and future."

As the title suggests, both amity and war are major themes in the newest edition of *Talemaot*, offering a unique perspective on various islands through the eyes of these talented writers. Within its pages, you will encounter reflections of the past, struggles of the present, and hopes for the future.

As you embark on a journey through Solomon Islands literature, you will discover the true essence and uniqueness of these islands, a beauty that can sometimes be overshadowed in today's multi-cultural blended society. Each word, each verse, and each story whispers the soul of the Solomon Islands. ▶



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scan to connect

Friendship Brings Light

How one chance meeting led to the rebuild of a school in the Western Province

WORDS DOROTHY WICKHAM
PHOTOS NICOLE MCLACHLAN
AND EMMA-LEE LUTHER

Life seems to have a way of coming full circle, something Elizabeth Weymouth will attest to.

Elizabeth, a descendant of Ha'apai Village in Roviana Lagoon's Western Province, recently returned home to help with the rebuild of a local school to mark the completion of that circle.

She and husband Joel co-own a boat painting business on Australia's Gold Coast, but are relocating to the Solomon Islands this year to launch Freedom Adventures - an eco-tourism business.

Their mission while in the Solomons: to rebuild Ha'apai School, and promote environmental and cultural preservation in the region.

The Ha'apai School is located on the Roviana Lagoon, New Georgia Island in the Western Province of the Solomon Islands. It is the only school in the region, supporting five surrounding villages that attend classes. The old school building was condemned for health and safety reasons.

Although born in the Solomon Islands, Elizabeth has spent most of her life in Australia, but has always maintained a deep-seated desire to maintain the connection to her community.

Their journey can be traced from one significant step in 2021 when Elizabeth and Joel painted *Ocean Guardian*, a 60-foot Sailing catamaran owned by Andrew Price, owner and operator of a solar panel company and not-for-profit AIP Collective (Actioning Infinite Possibilities). Soon Andrew was supplying solar panels to Elizabeth and Joel's eco-lodge venture, and before long the collaboration began to extend beyond business.

Pictured: Ha'apai village in Roviana Lagoon - where locals are working with Australians to protect the natural landscape.



extend beyond business.

Andrew's generosity took shape when he donated an off-grid solar system to Ha'apai School, the project the Weymouths were involved in. In April & May this year, Andrew then spearheaded fundraising efforts as he led a team in a six-week sailing expedition across the Pacific Ocean to deliver and install the solar system, along with a team of scientists from environmental group Green Heroes and Citizens of the Great Barrier Reef. The project was dubbed 'Solar by Sea.'

The scientific team joined the expedition to document the biodiverse reef ecosystems of Roviana Lagoon.

The Weymouth's decision to leave behind the bustling life on the Gold Coast and focus on eco-tourism reflects their commitment to environmental sustainability and cultural preservation.

"My family lives in Ha'apai Village, and it has always been my dream to return home and make a difference," said Elizabeth.

"We believe that education is the key to a better future.

"By rebuilding Ha'apai Primary School and providing education to children from surrounding villages, we can open doors to better tertiary education opportunities in the future."

The benefits of the school's reconstruction are not limited to the community alone; they extend to the entire Roviana Lagoon,

considered one of the world's most biodiverse marine hotspots.

With the installation of solar power at Ha'apai Primary School, the educational resources will improve significantly.

The school will have access to ceiling fans, lighting, and computers, allowing for a better learning environment. Furthermore, the transition to solar energy will eliminate the need for petrol generators, reducing the school's environmental impact.

Elizabeth and her family's commitment to sustainable practices goes beyond the school project. They are currently building a village guest house in Ha'apai Village using sustainably and responsibly sourced materials.

Operating off-grid, they aim to create an exclusive cultural experience that harmonizes with the local community. A portion of the profits generated by Freedom Adventures will be donated back to the community, supporting the ongoing development of Ha'apai school and other vital infrastructure projects.

The couple's eco-tourism venture will provide visitors with an opportunity to explore the stunning beauty of Marovo Lagoon and Doke Doke Island, including ancient head-hunter sites, snorkelling, and fishing.

Andrew said that the decision to get involved in the project was vindicated when he saw the work being done in the village.

"My family lives in Ha'apai Village, and it has always been my dream to return home and make a difference."

Sustainability



"The thing about Ha'apai is that they live on the edge of a virgin rainforest, one of the only virgin rainforests in the entire Western Province.

"We saw that they were fighting tooth and nail to try and save that rainforest and preserve what they've got, which was really heart-warming.

"Our organisation has an environmental focus and so when we came here and saw how the village operates, not only in terms of keeping the rainforest but also the way they were educating the younger generation when it comes to the value of preserving natural resources, it made it very easy to support the project."

The solar installation is the first in a six-part effort to rebuild the school. Following the success of the solar installation, AIP Collective have also committed one step further in the construction of the Ha'apai School, to take place in installments over the next 12 months.

Andrew Price and AIP Collective are looking for those who are able to assist or contribute to the Ha'apai Project in some way, whether financially or through their skillset. Visit aipcollective.org.au for more information, or to get in touch. ▴

Opposite: The panels in all their glory, the physical result of Solar by the Sea. **Clockwise Above:** Turtle time; the next generation at Ha'apai; paradise.






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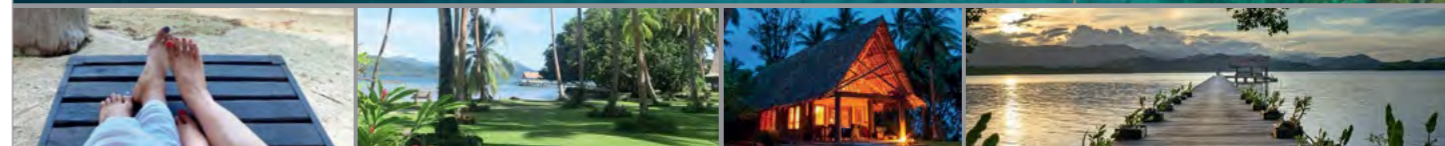
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7 to watch

As the countdown continues towards Pac Games 2023, we profile some of the most exciting sports to watch after the Opening Ceremony on November 19.

WORDS EDITORIAL
PHOTOS SUPPLIED



1 WEIGHTLIFTING

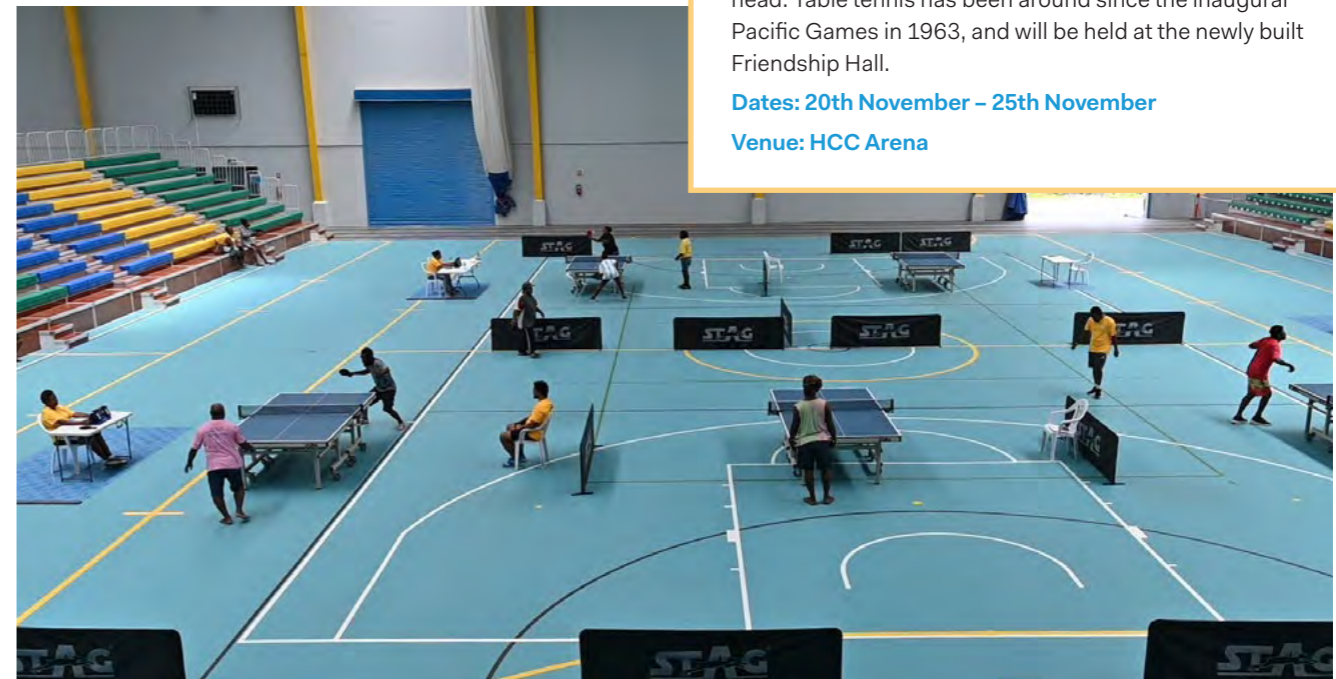
The Solomon Islands' own Jenly Tegu Wini recently bagged a gold medal for her country in the Commonwealth Weightlifting Championships in India, making her one of the favourites at home. Wini produced a lift of 189kg in the women's 55kg.

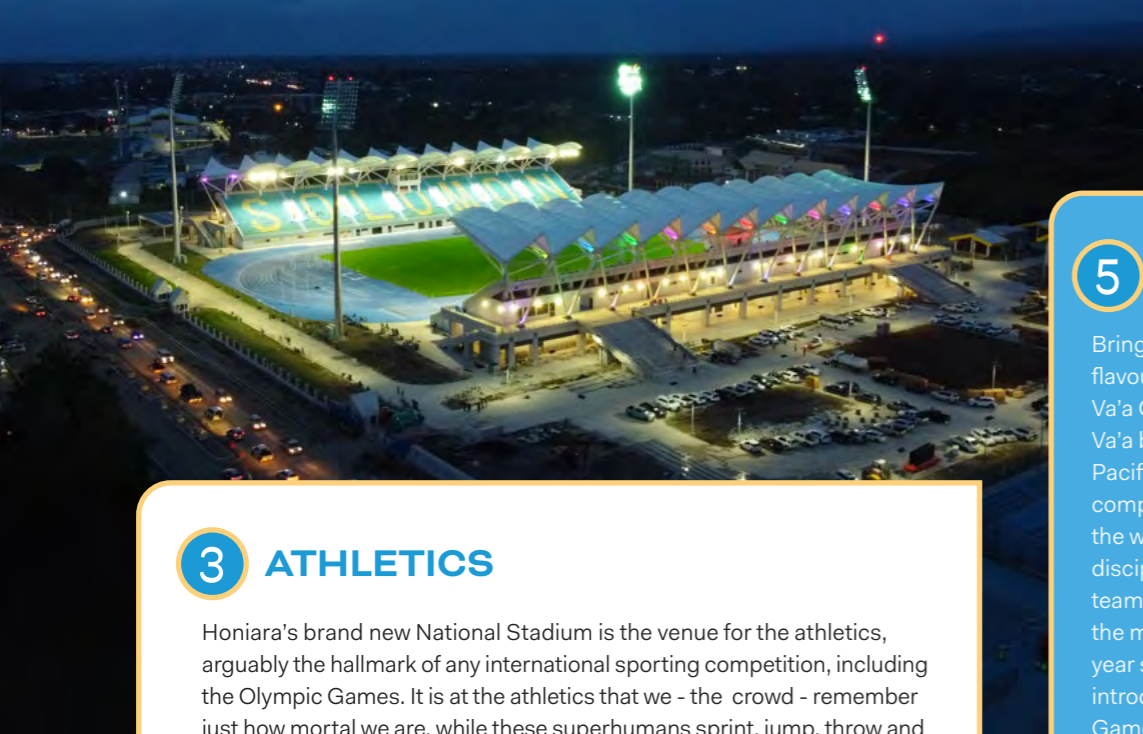
Dates: 20th – 24th November
Venue: Maranatha Hall

2 TABLE TENNIS

Have you ever seen a couple of elite table tennis players going head-to-head up close? It's incredible, an excellent spectator sport and unlike grass tennis, you barely have to move your head. Table tennis has been around since the inaugural Pacific Games in 1963, and will be held at the newly built Friendship Hall.

Dates: 20th November – 25th November
Venue: HCC Arena





3 ATHLETICS

Honiara's brand new National Stadium is the venue for the athletics, arguably the hallmark of any international sporting competition, including the Olympic Games. It is at the athletics that we - the crowd - remember just how mortal we are, while these superhumans sprint, jump, throw and catapult themselves in extraordinary fashion. The hype surrounding the unveiling of the new stadium only adds to the intrigue of this event.

Dates: 27th November – 1st December

Venue: National Stadium

5 VA'A CANOE

Bringing a truly Pacific flavour to the Games is the Va'a Canoe. Races are in Va'a boats, unique to the Pacific, meaning these competitors are the best in the world at this chosen discipline. Tahiti are the team to beat, having taken the most medals every single year since the sport was first introduced to the Pacific Games in 1995.

Dates:
27th November
– 2nd December
Venue: DC Park



6 NETBALL

Some of the Pacific's best athletes will go head-to-head in an event that will have added ramifications as contributing to the world netball rankings.

Dates: 27th November – 2nd December

Venue: Friendship Hall

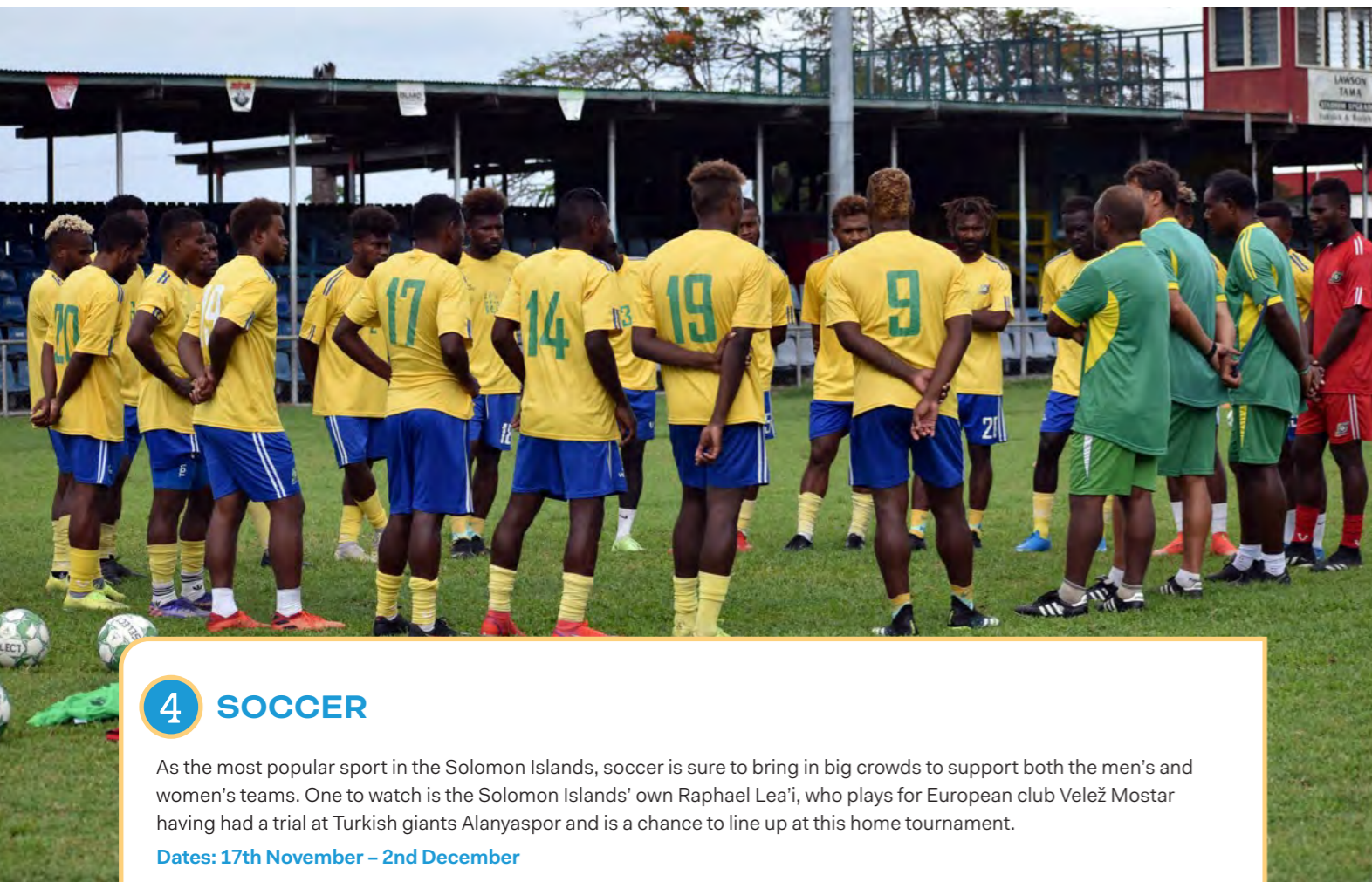
Seeing a nation's best go toe-to-toe makes for electrifying viewing.

7 BOXING

The Pacific has produced its fair share of talented exponents of 'the sweet science'. Seeing a nation's best go toe-to-toe makes for electrifying viewing, and it will once again be fascinating to see who comes out on top. To add an additional bit of spice, the competition will also serve as the qualifier for 2024 Paris Olympic Games.

Dates: 27th November – 1st December

Venue: Friendship Hall

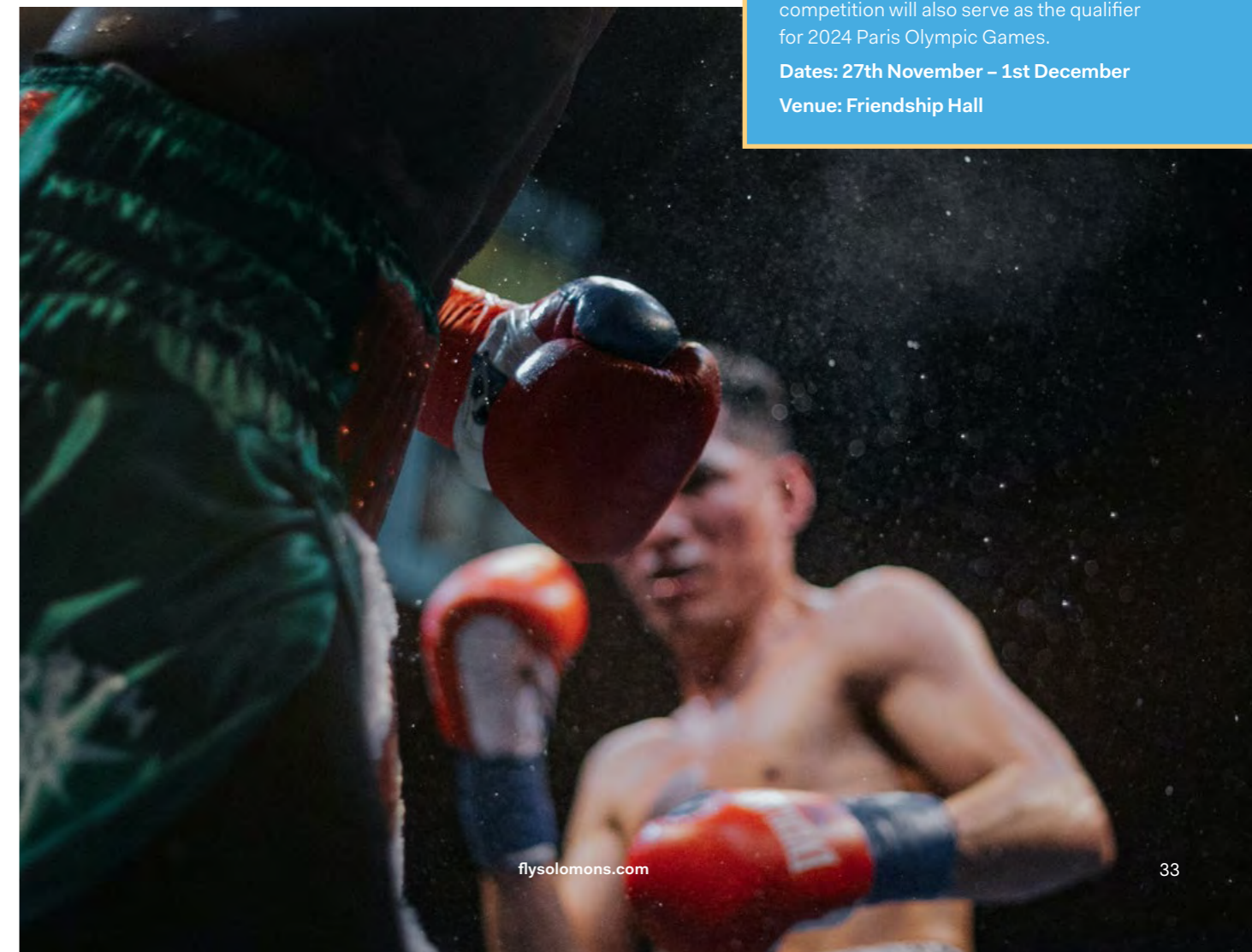


4 SOCCER

As the most popular sport in the Solomon Islands, soccer is sure to bring in big crowds to support both the men's and women's teams. One to watch is the Solomon Islands' own Raphael Lea'i, who plays for European club Velež Mostar having had a trial at Turkish giants Alanyaspor and is a chance to line up at this home tournament.

Dates: 17th November – 2nd December

Venue(s): SIFF Field 1, SIFF Field 2, National Stadium



Making dive memories in Vanuatu

A diary of learning to dive in the South Pacific.

WORDS CHRISTINE RETSCHLAG

Fly slowly in the waves. Five simple words stencilled along the side of my beachside bungalow float around my mind like a clown fish as I descend into the deep blue yonder.

I am at South Pacific Memories' dive resort along Vanuatu's aptly named Angelfish Cove on the island of Efate and I am learning to fly. Slowly. Underwater.

I'm taking on a one-on-one, three-day PADI-accredited learn to dive course, run by Gone Diving, the business run by South Pacific Memories' owners Anne Nesheim and Petter Lambine, two Norwegians who fell in love with diving, and each other, and opened their boutique resort in 2022.

Anne, a lawyer, and Petter, an engineer, searched the tropics intent on finding the ideal location where they could dive its warm waters.

"We went to the Caribbean, Thailand, the Maldives and Fiji and then we came to Vanuatu. We went diving with an operator here and saw there were two blocks of land for sale," Anne says.

"We were like 'let's quit our jobs and if we don't like it, we can go home'. We didn't want a boat - we wanted to go diving off the beach when we wanted to.

"We believe we all learn differently and people need time to be able to relax. You are so lucky to go into this adventure because its life changing."

And so I find myself on their 1.4ha property in one of four boutique bungalows, adorned with inspirational quotes and about to learn two new languages - the sign symbols of diving and how to interpret the ocean and her many moods.

The resort is situated fifteen minutes from the Port Vila's centre, at a calm and quiet beach along the Pango peninsula, overlooking the entrance to the harbor. It only opened in March 2022, four bungalows with private verandas and a roof terrace for nights staring up at the clear skies of the South Pacific.

Pictured: Navigating 'Dugong Highway' as the Norwegians know it.



Day One begins in the dive shop where we literally and figuratively unravel the equipment I will need in order to stay alive beneath the sea. It is here where I rapidly get to know my regulator – who I find out is my new “best friend”.

I am also taught a critical new acronym: Barry White Records Are Funky – which translated means to

check my BCD (Buoyancy Control Device), Weights, Releases and Air before the Final OK.

We navigate to the right of the Namale – the palm leaf which appears on the Vanuatu flag and which is used for important messages and symbols. In this case, and erected by the village chief, it is a sign that swimming to the left of this marker is forbidden.

“We call this the dugong highway” says Anne.

“We will emerge on the dugong deck. It is they who decide whether they will be here.

Opposite: South Pacific Memories by night.

Clockwise above: Lessons begin poolside; guides are with you every step of the way; today’s office - the big blue.

“We have lots of fish. This is not a coral dive because of this year’s cyclone. But we dive this reef almost every day and we just love it.”

There’s no dugong on Day One but we swim through a blessing of unicorn fish which Anne insists are “good luck” and practice several basic and essential skills such as learning to equalise my ears and how to ascend and descend slowly.

On Day Two I awake to a school of silver fish flicking their fins like flashlights on the ocean’s surface.

We descend to eight metres, kneel on the ocean floor and practice deep yoga breaths – in for four and out for six- slightly different to the kind of yoga you might do before work in the city.

Learning to dive, I quickly discover, is planning for the worst-case scenario so that you can enjoy the fish.

The same afternoon we return to the water and I discover how to alternate

“We believe we all learn differently and people need time to be able to relax. You are so lucky to go into this adventure because its life changing.”

breathing between my regulator and snorkel, how to remove and recover my BCD, and how to read a compass.

A compulsory 200 metre swim, a clearing of a snorkel three times and ten minutes of floating and with the flick of my fins I am now certified to dive to 18 metres.

I peel off my wetsuit and glance at the wall where there’s an inspirational quote from Van Morrison.

“Smell the sea and feel the sky, let your soul and spirit fly.”

Eat your heart out Barry White. ▶

The writer stayed and dived as a guest of South Pacific Memories and Gone Diving Vanuatu southpacificmemories.com

Want to practice your newly-acquired skills in the Solomon Islands? Head to Munda and hook up with the team from Dive Munda divemunda.com

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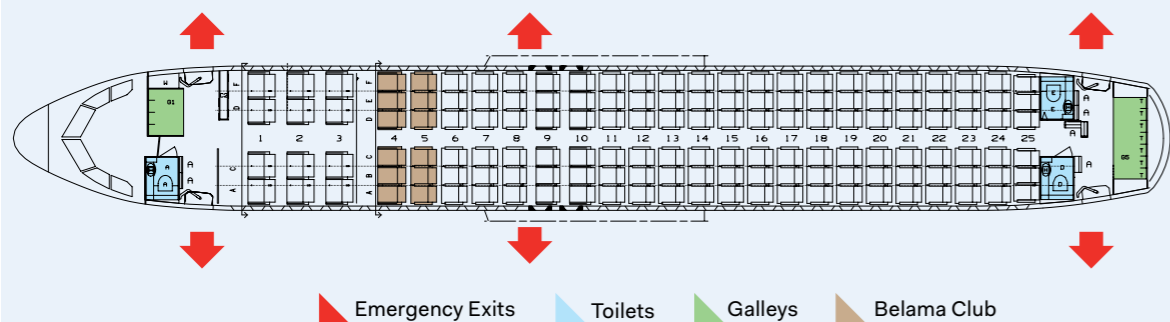


Solomon Airlines Fleet



A320

Registration	H4-SIB	Cruising Speed	830 km/h	Current Routes:
Length	37.57 m	Seating capacity	144	Brisbane, Nadi, Port Vila
Wing Span	34.10 m	Configuration:		
Range	3,000 nm	Business: 12, Economy: 132		



Dash 8-102

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



Twin Otter

Length	15.77 m
Wing Span	19.81 m
Range	1350 km
Cruising Speed	338 km/h
Seating capacity	16
Crew	2
Aircraft in Fleet	4
Current Routes:	All airports in the Solomon Islands

Inflight Info

Business Class

Enjoy the comfort of our friendly skies onboard our A320-200 aircraft, with a full meal service and range of alcoholic and non-alcoholic beverages available, personalised service and extra seat comfort, including 42-inch seat pitch and 27" of seat width, offering 30% more space than economy.

Business class passenger benefits include:

- 40 kg checked baggage allowance
- 10 kg cabin baggage allowance
- 7 kg sports equipment allowance
- Priority check-in and boarding
- Access to partner lounges including Fiji Airways Tabua Lounge and the Qantas Club Lounge in Brisbane

Economy Class

Our cabins are specifically configured for both space and comfort. Our inflight service offers a meal with a range of alcoholic and non-alcoholic beverages included complimentary for international sectors, and on domestic sectors a snack and water is provided.

Economy Class passenger benefits include:

- 30 kg checked baggage and 7 kg cabin baggage allowance on international services
- 16 kg checked baggage and 5kgs cabin baggage allowance on domestic services
- 7 kg sports equipment allowance

Solomon Airlines Contact Information

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Henderson Airport
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Ph: (677) 20031

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Solomon Airlines Building,
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Email: sales@flysolomons.com.sb

Australia

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Email: reservations@flysolomons.com

Fiji

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Ph: (679) 6722831
Fax: (679) 6722140
Email: solomon@connect.com.fj

Our point of difference



International Connections

- Solomon Airlines Routes ———●
- Codeshare Routes - - - - ●
- Interline Partners ———●



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Address: AirlinePros, Suite 358-360, 420 Lexington Ave, New York, NY 10170, USA

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Ph: (886) 2 2368 7828
Email: taiwan@apg-ga.com
Address: 11F, No.111, Sec 2 Nanjing E. Road, Taipei, Taiwan 104

Domestic Connections

- Solomon Airlines Routes ———●



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Reservations: (177) local or (677) 23506

Outer Ports:

Santa Cruz: Sales & Reservations
Ph: (677) 53159
Gizo: Sales & Reservations
Ph: (677) 60173
Munda: Sales & Reservations
Ph: (677) 62152
Kirakira: Sales & Reservations
Ph: (677) 50070

International Offices

AUSTRALIA – Reservations

Ph: 1300 894 311 or (61) 7 3860 5883
Email: reservations@flysolomons.com

AUSTRALIA – Operations

Address: Level 1, International Terminal, Brisbane Airport, QLD 4008, Australia

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 Destination Guide

Things to remember before your trip to the Solomons

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... take it easy!

Health

Malaria can be 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.

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

Our 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 the cost of your air tickets.

Currency

The Solomon Islands dollar (SB). \$100, \$50, \$20, \$10, \$5 and \$2 Solomon Islands notes, while coins are \$1, 50c, 20c, 10c and 5c.

Business Hours

Government and business general hours are Monday to Friday, 8am to 4:30pm, with a one-hour lunch break normally beginning at noon. Shops and some offices open Saturday 8am to 12 noon.

Tipping

Not expected and not encouraged.

Banks

ANZ Banking Group open Monday to Friday 9am to 4pm. Pan Oceanic Bank Limited opens 9am to 4pm Monday to Friday, and the Hyundai Mall main branch opens 10am to 1pm on Saturday. Bred Bank opens 9am to 4pm Monday to Friday. Bank of South Pacific opens 9am to 4pm Monday to Friday.

Transport

Taxis and buses are readily available in Honiara. Rental cars are available from Economy car rental and Elite Vehicle Rental Ltd.

Electricity

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

Telecommunications

Local, international calls and internet services are available through Solomon Telekom Company Limited (Our Telekom) and Bmobile networks. 4G network is available in Honiara, Auki, Munda, Noro and Gizo whilst all other provincial hubs are equipped with their 3G networks. SATSOL is also another internet service provider (ISP) in Honiara, other regional and provincial areas in Solomon Islands.

International Air

Solomon Airlines operate out of Honiara International Airport, while other carriers include Fiji Airways and Air Niugini.

Domestic Air

Solomon Airlines operate services throughout the country.

News Media

The country has a vibrant media landscape, offering choices in both English and Pidgin. Radio services are offered by state radio, Solomon Islands Broadcasting Corporation, private operators and religious bodies.

Our Telekom relays BBC and other satellite TV networks while Island Sun and Solomon Star are the two daily news papers, with a few monthly business and lifestyle magazines.

ANNOUNCEMENT

SOLOMON AIRLINES LAUNCHES LAEFLAEN 'WINGS OF CHANGE'

Solomon Airlines recently launched Lae flaen 'Wings of Change', a children charities project, on Friday 23 June at Skaelaen Aero Club.

The national carrier will start collecting loose change donations from passengers aboard flights, as well as from the Point Cruz sales office, effective from 1 August, in an ongoing effort to gather much needed funds to support two essential Solomon Islands children's charities.

The airline joined in the philanthropic effort by Telekom (Our Telekom) and South Pacific Oil (SPO) who will both match \$ for \$ funds received from inflight and Sales office donations.

The ongoing effort will support the Honiara City Council-run Children's Clinic (Pikinini Referral Clinic) and The Solomon Islands Red Cross Society run school for disabled children (SDC).

The Pikinini Referral Clinic serves the entire child population of Honiara City including children aged 12 and under, and also the needs of child patients from Guadalcanal Province. The partners aim is to procure much needed medical equipment for the clinic at an estimated cost of SBD50K.

"We are very appreciative that Solomon Telekom (Our Telekom) and South Pacific Oil (SPO) have joined us in both of in these projects," said Solomon Airlines CEO Mr Gus Kraus.

"With our partners and through the generosity of our passengers, we hope to quickly support the hardworking staff at Pikinini Referral Clinic to provide care for the children.

"Together we are very committed to supporting this essential facility and understand there is an urgent need for equipment from stethoscopes, otoscopes, and thermometers to infant scales," he added.

The 'Loose Change for Children' fundraising will also support Solomon Islands Red Cross Society's School for Disabled Children (SDC) located at Riffle Range, West of Honiara. The school caters for the educational needs



of children with special needs including the hearing and visually impaired.

"Our team have identified this project as one they very much wish to support, based on the belief that every child has unique abilities and challenges, and all deserve to be valued, understood and embraced by society," Mr Kraus said.

"We are therefore embarking on a project to raise SBD\$50k to urgently repair and maintain the school's classrooms."

"As part of our corporate social responsibility, we are committed to the principle of inclusion and that extends across the broader community. Through awareness campaigns, and partnerships with like-minded organisations, we will do our part to help create a more inclusive and compassionate society."

Pictured: Solomon Airlines staff, including CEO Gus Kraus.

Opposite: It's destination Auckland for Solomon Airlines.

ANNOUNCEMENT

SOLOMON AIRLINES FLIES TO AUCKLAND AFTER AGREEMENT WITH AIR VANUATU

Solomon Airlines has established a codeshare agreement with near neighbour Air Vanuatu, enabling both airlines to sell seats on a new flight between Port Vila and Auckland.

Air Vanuatu now flies three times weekly between Port Vila and Auckland following the addition of a third service on Mondays, operated by Solomon Airlines Airbus A320 aircraft under an ACMI lease. The codeshare agreement applies to both Monday and Tuesday service.

Solomon Airlines passengers can book flights to and from Auckland via the airline's website and all booking channels.

On Mondays, Solomon Airlines flight IE722 departs Honiara at 2.20pm landing in Port Vila at 4.20pm, and

connecting with Solomon Airlines flight IE710 departing Port Vila at 5.20pm arriving in Auckland at 9.30pm.

The return service on Tuesdays is Solomon Airlines flight IE711 departing Auckland at 11.00am arriving in Port Vila at 1.30pm and connecting to Solomon Airlines flight IE723 departing Port Vila at 2.20pm, arriving in Honiara at 4.20pm.

"These flights effectively re-establish Solomon Airlines re-entry to New Zealand, via the Auckland gateway," said Solomon Airlines CEO Mr Gus Kraus.

"We can now offer easy travel from Solomon Islands to New Zealand flying same day from Honiara to Auckland via Port Vila and vice versa," he said.

"Working with our Pacific neighbours, we can create synergies which benefit our passengers and make sense to us operationally," he said.

"Flights from New Zealand also have potential to rapidly bring benefits at a time when our tourism industry is in recovery from recent events, and we are also preparing for the opportunity of the Sol2023 XVII Pacific Games," Mr. Kraus added.

Air Vanuatu recently restarted Thursday direct flights between Brisbane and Espiritu Santo, in Vanuatu, with the new route also operated by Solomon Airlines.



UPDATE

PASSENGER NUMBERS CLIMB TO PRE COVID LEVELS

Solomon Airlines Chairman Mr Frank Wickham has revealed the national carrier is in 'a strong position to go forward' as he updated SICCI members and media on recent developments for the airline.



Solomon Airlines reported a steady increase in passenger numbers for both domestic and international operations, with the month of June seeing passenger numbers exceeding June 2019 pre-COVID numbers.

Mr Wickham said that as a result of growing passenger numbers, the airline's revenue is also steadily climbing. He confirmed that a review of all domestic routes is currently underway.

"Overall, earnings from passenger revenue is pleasing and further supplemented by the recent routes established

in partnership with Air Vanuatu," Mr Wickham said.

"The new codeshare Honiara-Port Vila-Auckland return flight and the Brisbane-Santo flights are quickly seeing an increase in passenger numbers. We have also leased our third Twin Otter aircraft to Air Vanuatu to assist recovery of their domestic operations.

"I am also delighted to say that we have made very good progress with our aim to employ Solomon Islanders with a number of locals now appointed to senior and technical positions at the airline."

ANNOUNCEMENT

VOLUNTEER PAEDIATRIC SURGICAL TEAM RETURNS TO HONIARA

Solomon Islands recently welcomed a volunteer Paediatric Specialist Surgical Team from Australia to support the important work of the National Referral Hospital (NRH).

With the support of the Rotary Club of Hall, in Canberra Australia, Rotary International, and Solomon Airlines, the team flew from Brisbane to Honiara in May and worked with NRH teams for the next week.

Chief of the Mission, Professor Geoffrey Croaker, was accompanied by Dr Rajay Rampersad, Anaesthetist Dr Sarah Latham, Theatre Nurse Mrs Lisa Hazell, and RN Elizabeth Hearn.

Solomon Airlines added its support to the effort, flying their equipment and medical supplies from Australia.

The highly regarded surgical team worked with the National Referral Hospital, attending to children with complex urinary and gastro-intestinal medical issues as well as general surgical problems.

Paediatric surgery teams from the Canberra Hospital first started visiting Honiara in 2015, performing up to 30 operations during each visit.

ANNOUNCEMENT

HENDERSON AIRPORT FITTED WITH LIFE SAVING MEASURES

The Pink South Pacific, in collaboration with Solomon Airlines, have installed an Automated External Defibrillator (AED) at the Honiara Domestic and International Arrivals terminals.

The inclusion of this machine will play a crucial role in the event of an emergency at Henderson Airport.

Another AED machine is scheduled to be fitted at the International Departure Terminal, with further plans to install another at Munda Airport in the near future.

Solomon Airlines will train their personnel in the operation of the AED machine. The initiative aims to prepare and equip staff members to effectively handle any potential incidents that may arise at the airport.

Pictured above: Solomon Airlines staff, media and SICCI members chat at a recent event.



2023
PACIFIC GAMES
SOLOMON ISLANDS

19TH NOV
2ND DEC
2023

CHALLENGE | CELEBRATE | UNITE

THE FIRST PACIFIC GAMES IN THE SOLOMON ISLANDS

From 19 November 2023, Honiara will welcome 24 countries from around the Pacific region, including Australia and New Zealand, to compete across 24 sports... all in just 14 days of action.



5,000
ATHLETES



15,000
MEALS PER DAY



3,000
VOLUNTEERS



BUS FLEET OF
250 VEHICLES



3,500
BED HOTEL



1,000
CONTRACTORS



CAR FLEET OF
50 VEHICLES



MY
NAME IS
SOLO

WHAT SPORTS WILL BE FEATURED AT THE GAMES?

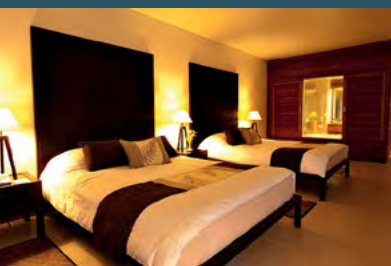
The 2023 XVII Pacific Games will feature 24 Sports played across 11 Games Venues in Honiara within the 14 days of competitions. These sports include; **Archery, Athletics, Basketball, Bodybuilding, Boxing, Football, Golf, Hockey, Judo, Karate, Netball, Powerlifting, Rugby 7, Rugby League 9, Touch Rugby, Sailing, Open Water, Table Tennis, Taekwondo, Tennis, Triathlon, Va'a & Kayaking, Volleyball (Beach Volleyball) and Weightlifting.** Sports competitions will start on 17th of November and end on the 2nd of December, 2023.

VISIT SOL2023.COM.SB

SOLO is the Official Mascot for the 2023 Pacific Games.

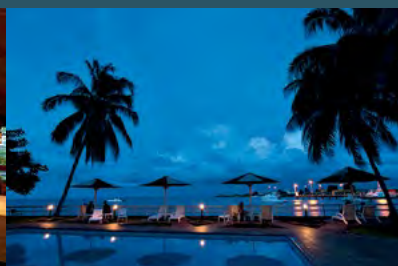


The pride of Honiara



Centrally located with 100 fully air-conditioned rooms, four executive suites and 14 executive rooms, all boasting splendid sea views, quality facilities and contemporary furnishings.

Our conference centre accommodates 20 – 150 people and is equipped with a modern communications system.



The Capitana Restaurant offers delicious international cuisine. Panoramic views of the historic Iron Bottom Sound Lagoon can be enjoyed over drinks and snacks on the Raratana Terrace.

Traditional, imported Japanese furnishings complete an authentic dining experience at the ever-popular Hakuabi Japanese restaurant.



Solomon Kitano Mendana Hotel

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