

SINSO NEWS

Your monthly guide to the Solomon Islands National Statistics Office News, Information and Events • Issue 7 • July-Sept 2018

Tracking consumer price

➡ P2



Upturn in CPI basket

➡ P3

LETS TALK!

Telephone :(677)27835/ 23951 Fax :(677)23775

Email: sinso@mof.gov.sb

Postal contact

National Statistics Office Ministry of Finance & Treasury P.O. Box G6 Honiara Solomon Islands



Government Statistician Douglas Kimi’s welcome message to readers

On behalf of the Solomon Islands National Statistics Office (SINSO), I take this opportunity to welcome you to the seventh issue of our monthly E-newsletter. This is a wonderful opportunity for the SINSO to embrace this communication medium and to fully maximize its capacity to disseminate statistical news, stories and information to meet the needs of its readers. This is our 7th edition thus we’re grateful that you’re taking your time to read it.

As the central statistical agency of government, the SINSO through this newsletter will ensure that information is disseminated widely to inform the public of the activities and developments that are happening within the SINSO. In this issue, we share with you the National Statistics Office realisations over the month of July to September 2018 with general news stories covering the NSO’s involvement in various regional statistics meetings, launch of the Solomon Islands Consumer Price Index rebased, Headline inflation for May, June and July 2018, International arrival statistics for the second quarter of this year-2018 with Vacation topping visitor arrivals in Solomon Islands and more with accompanying charts and photos. Now that the internet is increasingly becoming a channel for disseminating news and information, SINSO is very glad that through this network (monthly newsletter), its readers can be better and easily informed online through this fact file on its active website. Feel free to read the bulletins inside this issue. For public interest, the issue is downloadable from our website on this address: www.statistics.gov.sb The newsletter comes out at the end of every month. We hope to continue bringing in interesting articles, news and facts regarding the NSO’s work via this medium now and into the future. Please feel free to also forward this issue to your colleagues and friends and also feel free to get in touch with our media team for further information.

New inflation series to track consumer price info released

A NEW inflation series for tracking consumer level price information has been launched by the Solomon Islands National Statistics Office (SINSO) in September 17, 2018. The third (3rd) series which covers Honiara and other urban centres-Auki, Gizo and Noro present a better picture of the price behaviour at the consumer level. The new Indices available for 12 major groups. These include;

- Food and non-alcoholic beverages
- Alcoholic beverages, tobacco and narcotics
- Clothing and footwear
- Housing, water, electricity, gas and

- other fuels
- Furnishings, household equipment and routine household maintenance
- Health
- Transport
- Communication
- Recreation and culture
- Education
- Restaurants and hotels
- Miscellaneous goods and services

The base period for the new series is 2017=100. Meanwhile, the SINSO clarified that the rebased CPI series 3 is an updated price index series that only measures inflation or determines the level of inflation in a given pe-

riod, like every month for instance. “It does not cause inflation nor is it a determinant of inflation – so it cannot cause a foreseeable increase or decrease in inflation. However, one can track or investigate the causes of inflation by, for example, observing the movements in inflation corresponding to specific prices (groups) used in the derivation of the index (Series 3 CPI) such as Food, Transport, Clothing etc. “The movements in these prices as indicated by inflation for this group are driven by demand and supply factors. For example, on the demand side, consumers may change preferences for wanting to drink

coffee rather than tea so prices for tea may go down and prices for coffee go up and vice versa. “Moreover, the government may change tax policy by increasing taxes on certain goods so prices may go up etc. On the other hand, if the costs for operating a business increases and staff wages increase, there will also be a cost-push effect on prices,” the SINSO explained. The Government through the National Statistics Office, Ministry of Finance and Treasury previously released two CPI series and series 3 is the third one.

(See separate story on page 3).



Betsy and Patricia from the National Statistics Office collecting prices of vegetables, fruits and root crops sold at the Central Market in Honiara for the updating of the Consumer Price Index (CPI) basket. Photo: AVI/NSO



A local vendor at the Central Market in Honiara scaling his pumpkin fruit for the NSO officers to take record of its weight for the updating of the Consumer Price Index (CPI) basket. Photo: AVI/NSO

NEWSFLASH

Rebasing increase items in CPI basket



Left, NSO Advisor, Willie Lahari, Government Statistician, Douglas Kimi and Senior Statistician, Anna Luvu with the printed copy of the new Solomon Islands CPI, launched in September 2018.

The rebasing of the Solomon Islands Consumer Price Index (CPI) has generated an upturn in the price basket from 187 to 205 items.

Of the figure, items of the old pricing basket still remain in the new pricing basket.

The Consumer Price Index (CPI) measures the change over time in the general price level of goods and services that households acquire for the purpose of consumption with reference to the price level in 2012-13 Household Income and Expenditure Survey (HIES), the base year, which has an index of 100.

With the rebasing, the new base period is 2013=100 but the index reference period for the time series is 2017=100. This is based on practical compilation considerations noting the time lag since the base period and the optimal timing for an index reference period to link the Honiara index with the proposed indexes of Auki, Gizo, Noro, and the aggregate index.

Speaking on the latest development, the Chief Economic Statistician, Joachim Gaiafuna said the rebasing has become necessary due to changes in the consumption pattern in the country.

“Anytime there is a change in con-

sumption pattern, we need to rebase the CPI to reflect the actual consumption of goods and services. “...CPI is a measure of changes, over time, in prices of a fixed basket of goods and services representative of the consumption pattern of resident households in the economy.

“Household preferences change over time, due to the introduction of new consumer goods and services in the market, and so to keep up with these changes, rebasing is necessary for it to remain relevant and accurate,” Mr. Gaiafuna explained.

The outcome of the rebasing, which has 2017 as the index reference period, released by the National Statistics Office (NSO), Ministry of Finance and Treasury in September 17, 2018.

Coverage for the data collection include Auki in Malaita, Noro, and Gizo in the Western Province apart from Honiara.

“The decision was based on the latest 2012-13 HIES results, which showed that about 70 per cent of household purchases of goods and services nationwide were sourced from these towns.”

There have been some improvements as a result of the rebasing. This include the improvement in the updating of consumption basket

and weights to ensure the country’s CPI stays relevant and current for its intended purpose.

“Ideally, rebasing the CPI should be done every 5 years. Data for rebasing the CPI however, comes from HIES results and in Solomon Islands it can take longer than 5 years to conduct HIES due to budgetary constraints.

“To remain current and relevant as the CPI is a very important economic indicator for our country,” Mr. Gaiafuna said.

CPI is used mainly to:

- Assess changes in living standards and

- Measure inflation or changes in the purchasing power of money

On the CPI weights, Mr. Gaiafuna said weights are important because they reflect the relative importance of each item to households within the consumption basket, which must be taken into account when calculating the CPI.

“The higher the weight of an item (goods), the greater will be its impact on the overall change in the CPI if its price changes. For example, if households are spending 30 per cent of their income on rice and only 5 per cent on bus fares, then a 10 per cent increase in the price of rice will result in a higher increase

in the overall CPI than a 10 per cent rise in bus fares,” Mr. Gaiafuna explained.

Meanwhile, according to the Government Statistician, Mr. Douglas Kimi, the new weights based on the 2012-13 HIES show some of the major changes in the relative importance of items that can be seen in Food, Alcohol and Tobacco, and Communications since the earlier 2005-06 HIES which was used as the basis of the previous CPI weights.

“The users of the CPI information should be aware that the new series follows a new classification and index structure closer to the Pacific Classification of Individual Consumption according to Purpose (COICOP) 2012 where the July CPI will no longer be published by 8 Groups but by 12 COICOP Divisions with back-cast series to the historical indexes.”

The rebasing work has been undertaken by the Solomon Islands National Statistics Office (SINSO) with the technical support from the Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS).

Mr. Kimi thanked the NSO staff for the commitment rendered towards the making of the new CPI rebased report and also acknowledged the technical support of the ABS.

New items added to SI CPI basket

A total of 18 new items has been added to the Solomon Islands Consumer Price Index (CPI) rebase basket.

The outcome of the rebasing, which has 2017 as the base year was launched on Monday 17 September, 2018 by the Government Statistician, Douglas Kimi.

“The 18 new items include some varieties of rice which were not in the shops in 2006, when the basket was last updated, and other services such as recharging (top-up) of mobile phones which is now very popular,” Chief Economic Statistician, Joachim Gaiafuna said.

Mr. Gaiafuna said the revised basket now includes new items not previously in the consumption basket. However, he explained that weights of items in the basket were varied according to the expenditure pattern of Households as derived from most recent 2012-2013 Household



Two officers from the Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS) providing technical support towards the CPI rebased work with the NSO economic staff.

Income and Expenditure Survey (HIES).

“No item was removed from the basket,” Mr. Gaiafuna said.

The Consumer Price Index (CPI) Rebase is when the CPI has its weights that is weights of specific goods and services included in the consumption basket, and the basket

itself, is reviewed or updated to better reflect the current consumption pattern of households.

The CPI rebase is necessary because the CPI is a measure of changes, over time, in prices of a fixed basket of goods and services representative of the consumption pattern of resident households in the economy.

“Household preferences change over time, due to the introduction of new consumer goods and services in the market, and so to keep up with these changes, rebasing is necessary for it to remain relevant and accurate.

“The updated consumption basket and weights means our CPI stays relevant and current for its intended purpose,” Mr. Gaiafuna explained. Mr. Gaiafuna said to remain current and relevant as the CPI is a very important economic indicator for our country. CPI is used mainly to:

- Assess changes in living standards and
 - Measure inflation or changes in the purchasing power of money
- The rebasing work has been undertaken by the Solomon Islands National Statistics Office (SINSO) with the technical support from the Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS).

Inflation drops

A further 0.2 per cent fall in inflation rate was recorded for Honiara in June 2018.

According to the latest Honiara Consumer Price Index (CPI) for the month (June), the drop was from 192.9 in May to 192.5 in June. CPI is a monthly indicator of the variation in prices for retail goods and other items.

The basket of goods chosen represents the spending behaviour of the population of Honiara and the resulting CPI is used to calculate inflation. In the Solomon Islands, inflation is limited to the current CPI basket of goods and services and thus does not represent all price movements of all goods and services in the economy. It is generally a broad measure of the cost of living in the country.

Government Statistician, Douglas Kimi while releasing the statistics said the plunge offsets marginal price rises mainly in Food, Transportation and Communication categories.

“The Food index slightly rose during the month by 0.02 per cent to 178.5. This was mainly driven by price rises in powdered milk (0.9

per cent), second grade tuna (0.6 per cent) and in fresh fruits and vegetables at the Honiara market such as cucumber (25.8 per cent), green beans (16.9 per cent), melon (10.1 per cent), cooking banana (6.7 per cent), cassava (6.4 per cent), bush cabbage (2.9 per cent), and kumara heaps (1.5 per cent). These outweighed price drops in a certain produce such as dry coconuts (-1.8 per cent), tomatoes (-7.0 per cent), Chinese cabbage (-9.0 per cent) and coral fish (-19.2 per cent) resulting in the slight rise of the overall food index,” Mr. Kimi stated.

Other major changes in other sub-index includes;

- Drinks and Tobacco increased 0.4 per cent driven by a rise of 2.5 per cent in the price of betel nut outweighing a fall -1.0 per cent in tobacco prices.
- Housing and Utilities dropped 1.9 per cent on account of a drop -8.0 per cent in electricity charges.
- Household Operations went up 0.4 per cent due to an increase of 0.9 per cent in price of household supplies and services, in particular, washing powder 4.8 per cent.

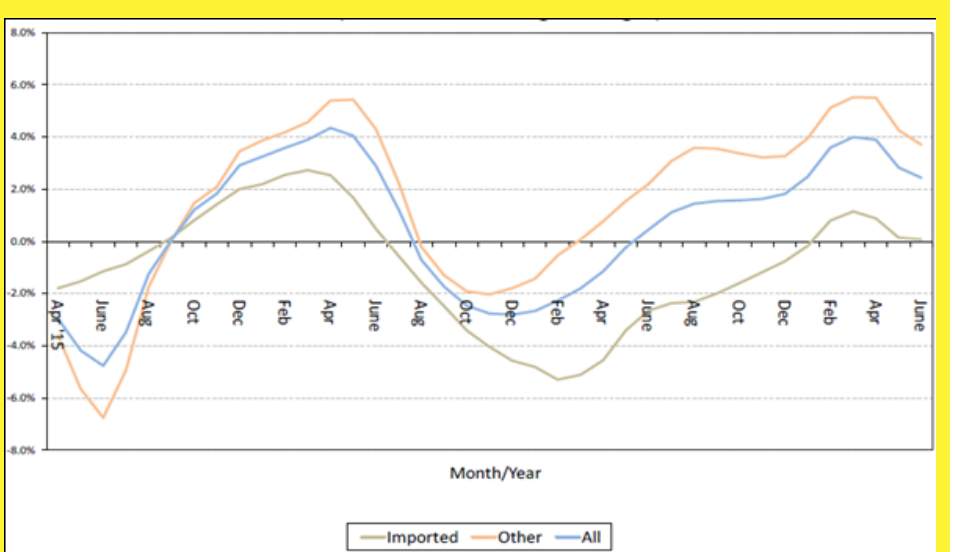


Chart shows the Honiara inflation rates from April 2015-June 2018.

“The Food index slightly rose during the month by 0.02 per cent to 178.5. This was mainly driven by price rises in powdered milk 0.9 per cent”

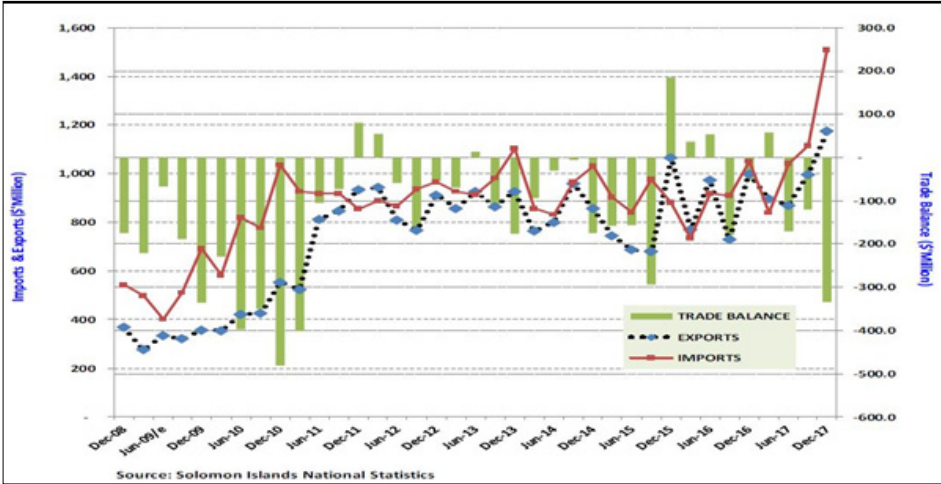
- Transport and Communication went up 1.3 per cent resulting from increases in diesel and petrol prices by 7.9 per cent and 6.3 per cent, respectively.
- Miscellaneous Items rose 0.6 per cent on account of a 3.0 per cent rise in the price of personal care products.

“The overall annual headline inflation rate for the month of June 2018 calculated on a 3 months moving average basis was 2.4

per cent, down by 0.4 percentage points from 2.8 per cent the previous month. The corresponding inflation rates for imported and other items were 0.1 per cent and 3.7 per cent, respectively.

“The main underlying rates of inflation based on a 3 months moving average for the month of June 2018 were observed between -0.5 per cent and 1.7 per cent while the headline inflation rate was at 2.4 per cent,” Mr. Kimi said.

NEWSFLASH



Graph shows imports, exports and trade balance by quarter from December 2008 - December 2017.

\$334.2m trade deficit recorded

A trade deficiency of \$334.2 million was recorded in the final quarter of 2017 the Solomon Islands National Statistics Office (SINSO) latest figures on the International Merchandise Trade Statistics (IMTS) has revealed. The statistics shows the movement of different types of goods between the Solomon Islands and a range of countries in Oceania, Asia, Europe, Africa, America and other regions. Government Statistician Douglas Kimi while releasing the official statistics on Wednesday 4 July said the shortfall has more than doubled 178 per cent with a \$212.1m increase over the deficit of \$120.1m recorded in the previous quarter.

He said in terms of the corresponding quarter a year ago, the deficit represented a drastic increase of \$282.3m accounting for 544 per cent, over six times the deficit of \$51.8m in 2016. “The year-ended December 2017 recorded a deficit of \$567.3m, the highest recorded since 2010. This is an increase of \$426.3.1m with 302 per cent or four times the size of the deficit of \$141.0m recorded in the year-ended December 2016,” Mr. Kimi explained. He added that the movement of goods into and out of the country (Solomon Islands) is an important aspect of our nation’s economic development.

On major exports in the fourth quarter of 2017 compared to the corresponding quarter of 2016, Mr Kimi stated that round log and sawn timber exports increased by \$108m with 16 per cent to \$788m while total of fresh/frozen and canned fish increased by \$43.5m with 48 per cent to \$133m, total of cocoa, palm oil and other agricultural products decreased by \$47m with -30 per cent to \$107m. This was mainly driven by low exports of palm oil and cocoa during the quarter. Gold has increased by \$224m with 6 per cent to close to \$4m.” Meanwhile, on major imports Mr Kimi said that food imports, which is comprised mostly of rice and canned meat, increased by \$42.8m with 20.4 per cent to \$253m. “Mineral fuel and lubricant imports decreased by \$62m with -27.9 per cent to \$160.6m. Machinery and transport equipment increased by \$417.2m with 143.8 per cent to \$707.2m driven also by an increase of 38 per cent in vehicle (special

purpose) imports.” Merchandise trade balance with major trading partners in the December quarter of 2017 compared to the same quarter in 2016 records the following:

- The trade deficit with Singapore, the main source of fuel imports, decreased by \$49.2m with -24.4 per cent to \$153m.
- The trade deficit with Australia increased by \$62.4m with 31 per cent to \$264m.
- The trade deficit with Papua New Guinea widened by \$3.7m with 21.6 per cent to \$21m.
- The trade balance with South Korea decreased by \$10m with -188 per cent to a surplus of \$5m.
- The trade surplus with China, the main destination of exported logs, increased by \$201.8m with 44 per cent to \$660m and
- The trade surplus with Italy, the main destination of fish-loin exports, increased by \$27.5m with 42 per cent to \$93m.

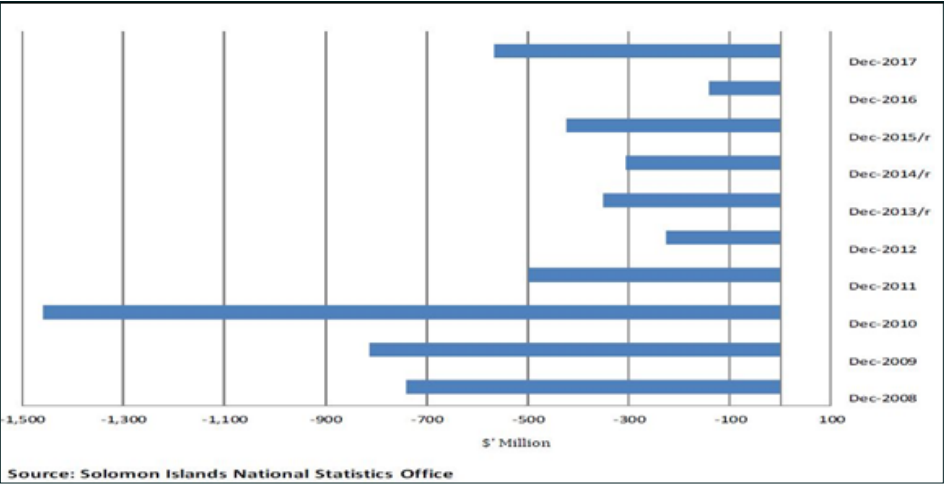


Chart shows trade balance year ended December 2008 - 2017.

Honiara inflation drops by 0.9% in May

The inflation rate for Honiara has fallen by 0.9 per cent in May from 194.6 in April to 192.9 recording a further decline since March. Consumer Price Index (CPI) is a monthly indicator of the variation in prices for retail goods and other items. The basket of goods chosen represents the spending behaviour of the population of Honiara and the resulting CPI is used to calculate inflation. Government Statistician Douglas Kimi while releasing the Honiara Consumer Price Index (CPI) statistics for the month in July said the decline was mainly driven by price drops in Food, Drinks and Tobacco, and Housing and Utilities categories

of the index, outweighing price increases in Transport and Communication. “The Food index dropped during the month by 1.9 per cent to 178.4. This was mainly driven by price declines in fresh fruits and vegetables at the Honiara market; most notable were bush cabbage -0.1 per cent, tomatoes -0.4% per cent, green bean -0.3 per cent, fern cabbage -0.4 per cent, dry coconuts -0.2 per cent, cucumber -0.1 per cent and cassava -0.1 per cent. These outweighed price rises in melon 0.1 per cent, kumara heaps 0.1 per cent, bush lime 0.2 per cent, cooking bananas 0.1 per cent and ripe bananas 0.2 per cent resulting in the fall of the overall food index,” Mr. Kimi stated.

Other major changes in other sub-indexes include;

- Drinks and Tobacco slightly fell 0.9 per cent driven by a marginal drop -0.02 per cent in both the prices of tobacco and betel nut.
- Housing and Utilities dropped 0.5 per cent on account of a marginal drop -0.02 per cent in both electricity charges and LP gas, outweighing a rise 0.06 per cent in the price of kerosene.
- Transport and Communication went up marginally by 0.06 per cent resulting from slight increases in diesel and petrol prices by 0.05 per cent and 0.04 per cent respectively. The Government Statistician said apart from the above, price movements elsewhere in the consump-

tion basket were negligible. He said the overall annual headline inflation rate for the month of May 2018 calculated on a 3 months moving average basis was 2.8 per cent, down marginally by 1.1 percentage points from 3.9 per cent the previous month. The corresponding inflation rates for imported and other items were 0.1 per cent and 4.3 per cent, respectively. “The main underlying rates of inflation based on a 3 months moving average for the month of May 2018 were observed between -0.4 per cent and 2.2 per cent while the headline inflation rate was at 2.8 per cent,” the Government Statistician said.

NSO represented at GFS regional training

The National Statistics Office (NSO) was represented at the Government Finance Statistics (GFS) regional workshop training held in Fiji in August, 2018. Focused on GFS Classification, Compilation and Dissemination, the training aimed at striking a balance between theoretical presentations and practical work and with the goal to enhance participant's knowledge on the GFS framework. Representing the office (NSO) was Principal Statistician, Moffat Sanau. Mr. Sanau said being part of the training is a big leap for him as a statistician to improve his competence in the field of statistics. He said the new knowledge acquired from the training was a bo-



Moffat Sanau, standing eleventh, left from the backrow with other participants that attended the training.

nus for him as it build his confidence to perform official duties and to produce quality data/statistics for the country. Pacific Financial Technical Assistance Centre (PFTAC) supported and facilitated the training. Mr. Sanau thanked PFTAC for making the training available and also

acknowledged the NSO for their support in one way or the other. Currently, the Ministry of Finance and Treasury (MoFT) staff works in collaboration with the Central Bank of Solomon Islands (CBSI) for the production of the country's GFS. The NSO used the data to mainly incorporate it in the Gross Domes-

tic Product (GDP) compilation process. The GFS framework is a measurable tool that supports fiscal analysis. Data generated from GFS used to;

- Support fiscal management and policy decisions
- enable analysts to assess financial soundness of general government and public sectors in ways commonly applied to other sectors of economy
- enable assessment of sustainability over the long term
- enable assessment of liquidity constraints and financing needs
- Be closely linked with other macroeconomic statistical systems (SNA, BOP, MFS)

Village census enumeration approaches completion



Village Resource Survey and Household Listing Director, Raphael Aipaina.

Field enumeration for the national Village Resource Survey (VRS) and Household Listing has approached its conclusion says the Director, Raphael Aipaina. Commenced in October last year (2017), VRS is expected to complete soon. "Field enumerations are planned to end by November, 2018," Mr. Aipaina said. He said almost all the provinces have done with field enumeration except for Western, Central Province, Guadalcanal, Malaita, Isabel

and Makira/Ulawa Province still in progress. However, he said field enumeration for Honiara almost complete adding data processing/entry is in progress at the National Statistics Office. The VRS and Household Listing 2017-2018 is the basis for 2019 Census enumeration areas (EA) demarcation. The survey (VRS) will play the role of assisting the Solomon Islands Government in providing quality

data at the village level, which is essential, to see the impact of development, and guide its development efforts and policy – makers in the future, to improve the livelihood and standard of living for all Solomon Islanders. The survey collects information on services to the village and include mapping and also collect information on the location of households

by GPS and the number of people per household by gender. The Solomon Islands Government (SIG) through the Ministry of Finance & Treasury (MoFT) is funding the VRS 2017/18 project. The NSO is undertaking the survey so that household data is updated and mapped out in preparation for the Population census that will be conducted next year (2019).

Why the survey (VRS) is important

The VRS and Household Listing 2017- 2018 is important because of the following factors.

- It is an opportune time to collect a complete coverage of data, covering all villages/ localities in the country,
- Small areas statistics will be collected which is not possible in sample surveys,

- Rural development plans can be enhanced effectively, with provision of good data at the village level,
- The policy of the SIG can be assessed and re-directed,
- Data can be used for legal "village planning", such as setting up of legal boundaries for villages with proper development targets,

- Proper infrastructure, business setups and administration centres can be developed to align with population pressure from settlements, and
- Effective planning for the National Population Census of Solomon Islands envisaged to be held in 2019, will only be possible with successful completion of the survey.

NEWSFLASH



Senior Statistician, Anna Luvu eight from left, front-row with participants that attended the training programme.

Luvu attends climate change related statistics training

The National Statistics Office (NSO) was represented at a Training Programme on Climate Change Related Statistics and the System of Environmental-Economic Accounting (SEEA), held in Fiji in September, 2018.

Focussed on climate change and SEEA, the training intended to provide the opportunity for participants to learn basic concepts and frameworks, with hands-on sessions, on statistics related to climate change, with the overall aim to strengthen capacity to produce a set of statistics, including indicators, to inform climate change policy decisions at the national and international levels.

Participants from statistics offices and line ministries/ departments representing Fiji, Kiribati, Republic of Marshall Islands, Federated States of Micronesia, Palau, Papua New Guinea, Samoa, Solomon Islands, Tonga, and Vanuatu attended the training programme.

Representing the NSO was Senior Statistician, Anna Luvu.

The objectives of the workshop include:

- Improved understanding of basic concepts and frameworks on statistics related to climate change and SEEA;
- To produce selected climate

change-related indicators using national data, and acquire basic knowledge and skills on the SEEA accounting principles and identify basic data needs for compiling accounts;

- Facilitate experience sharing among participating countries, and to understand country plans, and identify opportunities for collaboration; and

- Promote the use of SEEA and climate change related statistics in policy formulation and monitoring.
- United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (UN ESCAP), through its Pacific Office, Statistics Division and the United Nations Statistical Institute for Asia and the Pacific (SIAP) organised the training for Pacific Island Countries.

The SEEA is a guide to integrating economic, environmental and social data into a single, coherent framework for holistic decision-making.

“It is an international statistical standard for measuring the environment and its relationship with the economy.

“It shows levels and trends in the stock and flows of natural resources, capital greenhouse gas emissions from economic activities (Gross Domestic Product) and the eco-

nommic activities being undertaken to protect the environment.

“The SEEA provides a comprehensive conceptual accounting framework which brings together the blocks representing basic economic, environment and socio-demographic statistics and describes the relationship between them,” Ms. Luvu explained.

Ms. Luvu thanked ESCAP for making the training available.

According to UN ESCAP, Pacific island countries are amongst the highest at risk of experiencing disasters related to natural hazards, with the average annual cost of direct losses estimated at US\$284 million.

“For some of the smaller economies this means the cost of a single event could exceed annual gross domestic product (GDP). Increased number and intensity of extreme weather events is widely considered as one of the consequences of climate change, these events include increasing incidents of saltwater intrusion, prolonged heavy rainfall and flooding, increased temperatures, droughts, and more violent tropical cyclones. Pacific Islands Forum leaders recognised climate change as a significant threat to the lives and livelihoods, security, social development and wellbeing of the region.

“Development of evidence-based sustainable development strategies and policies relies on available and reliable statistics. Mainstreaming the measurement of environment concerns as part of the regular data collection programs of national statistical offices would give policy makers the means with which to make balanced policy choices for sustainable development.

“The System of Environmental-Economic Accounting (SEEA) Central Framework allows for the measurement and a better understanding of environmental-economic interactions.

“The SEEA has also been identified as a useful framework for monitoring and reporting for the UN 2030 sustainable development agenda in support of inclusive sustainable development. Production of SEEA in the Pacific is generally at early stages, with four countries completing experimental accounts while others have undertaken data and priority needs assessments which should lead to compilation of SEEA accounts. Many have yet to begin but remain interested, contingent upon resources and capacity,” UN ESCAP stated.

Solomon Islands is yet to begin its SEEA accounts but remain dogged.

Kimi joins training for producing data for agricultural, rural statistics

from pg. 8

The survey will provide benchmark data on land use, type of agriculture and related activities, structure of agricultural holdings and their main characteristics, to support the strategic plans and programmes of the Solomon Islands on agriculture production and investment as well as to support development of some Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) indicators in the agriculture sector.

The project is supported by the Solomon Islands Government (SIG) through the Ministry of Agriculture and Livestock (MAL) with the Technical support from Food and Agriculture Organisation (FAO) and Secretariat of the Pacific Community (SPC).

The survey (NASP 2017) results are expected to be released next year.

Kimi joins training for producing data for agricultural, rural statistics

The Government Statistician Douglas Kimi has attended a Sub-regional Training Course on Sampling Methods for Producing Core Data Items for Agricultural and Rural Statistics held in Fiji in August, 2018.

The course aimed at providing technical guidance on the selection and application of appropriate sampling methods for producing the minimum set of core data items for agricultural and rural statistics with specific objectives to;

- Examine the minimum set of core data items for agricultural and rural statistics in the context of the application of sampling methods for data collection and production of associated statistics and indicators; and
- Increase capability of participants in designing sample surveys for production of agricultural and rural statistics.

Joining other Government Statisticians and professionals from across the Pacific region, Mr. Kimi did a



Government Statistician, Douglas Kimi, fifth from left, front-row with other participants that attended the training course held in Fiji. Photo: Supplied/SIAP.

presentation about the National Agriculture Survey Project (NASP) that the National Statistics Office (NSO) piloted last year (2017) and the data now being analysed at the NSO in Honiara.

Mr. Kimi said such training is crucial considering the fact that the household based agriculture survey or NASP was completed in October last year and the data currently be-

ing analysed.

Mr. Kimi pleased with the training and acknowledged SIAP and ESCAP for making it available.

Statistical Institute for Asia and the Pacific (SIAP), in collaboration with Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (ESCAP), pacific office facilitated the training course.

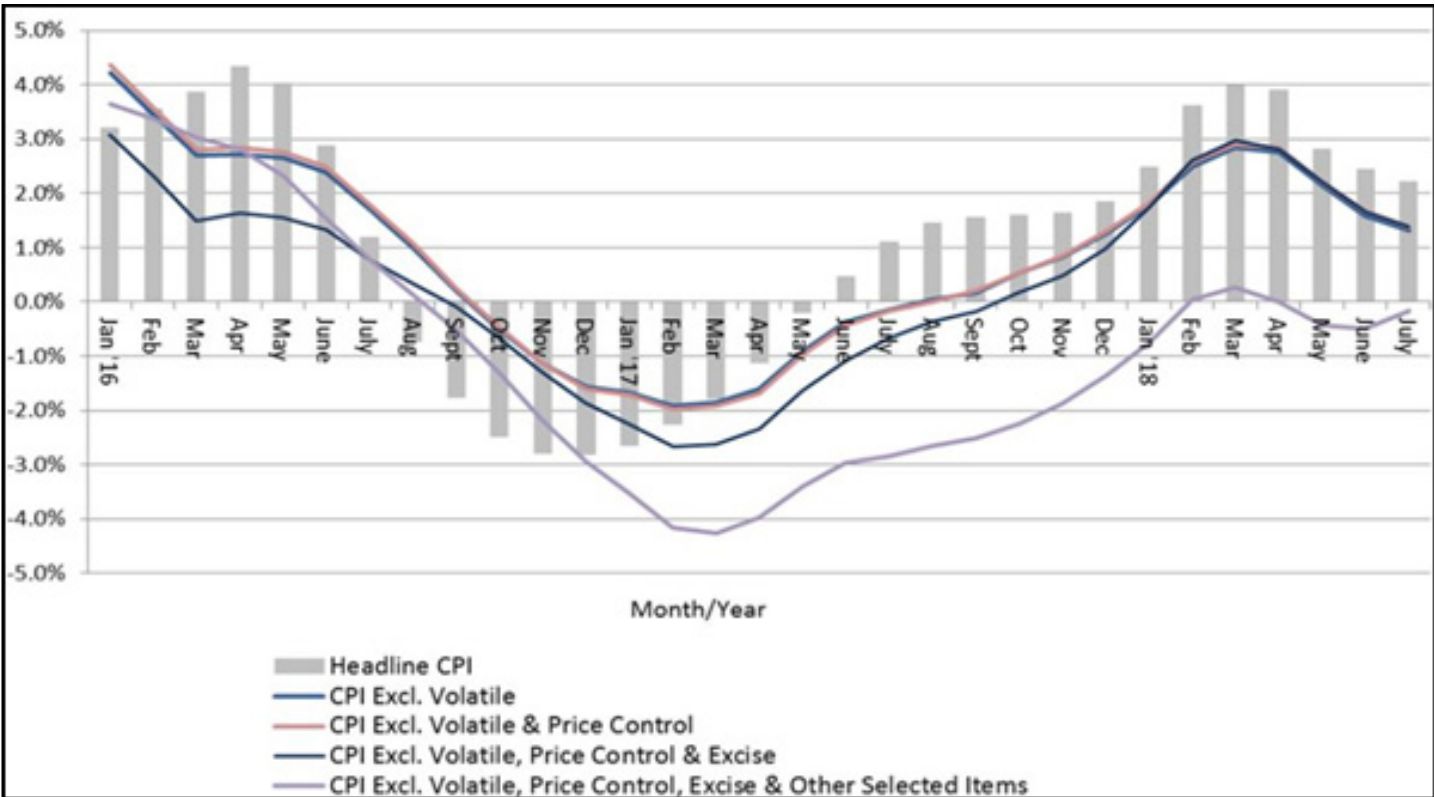
The NASP 2017 was the country's

first ever national agriculture survey and thus covers all selected household agricultural holdings.

The survey is intended to assist the government through its responsible ministry, the Ministry of Agriculture & Livestock (MAL) with planning to improve agriculture production in the country.

➡ Continue pg. 7

Inflation up by 0.2% in July



Graph represents Honiara annual headline & underlying rates from January 2016-July 2018.

A 0.2 per cent inflation hike was noted for Honiara town in July 2018, according to the recently updated Honiara Consumer Price Index (CPI) for the month.

The July CPI is the first release that introduces the 3rd Series of the Honiara CPI that was updated using data from the 2012/2013 Household Income and Expenditure Survey (HIES) and setting a new index ref-

erence period of 2017 (2017=100). (See separate stories on pg.2,3, 4).

Government Statistician, Douglas Kimi while releasing the monthly CPI said through the year, on the same month a year ago, the Honiara CPI has made an increase of 2.5 per cent.

However, he said Food and Non Alcoholic Beverages remained stable except for slight declines in bread and cereals -0.6 per cent, and fruits

-1.3 per cent were offset by slight increases in meat +1.2 per cent and vegetables +1.6 per cent during the month.

Other major changes in other sub-index includes;

- Alcoholic Beverages, Tobacco and Narcotics +0.6 per cent

The main contributor to the rise in this group was narcotics +3.8 per cent driven mainly by betel nut.

- Housing, Water, Electricity, Gas

and Other Fuels +0.9 per cent

The main contributor to the rise in this group was electricity charges +4.8 per cent driven by meter box bills +3.9 per cent and cash power bills 5.3 per cent.

This was slightly offset by a slight fall in diesel (for electricity purpose) of -0.3 per cent.

- Transport -0.3 per cent

The main contributor to the drop in the transport group was fuel -0.9 per cent.

The Government Statistician said apart from the above, price movements elsewhere in the consumption basket were negligible.

“The overall annual headline inflation rate for the month of July 2018 calculated on a 3 months moving average basis was 2.2 per cent, down by 0.2 percentage points from 2.4 per cent the previous month.

The corresponding inflation rates for imported and other items were 0.5 per cent and 3.0 per cent, respectively.

“The main underlying rates of inflation based on a 3 months moving average for the month of July 2018 were observed between -0.2 per cent and 1.4 per cent while the headline inflation rate was at 2.2 per cent,” Mr. Kimi added.

Vacation tops visitor arrivals in Solomon Is.

Spending holiday is the most common reason for international visitors visiting the country during the second quarter of 2018. The Solomon Islands National Statistics Office recent figures has revealed.

Government Statistician, Douglas Kimi said visitors who arrived in the country during the period (2nd quarter 2018) for holiday purposes accounted for 31.2 per cent followed by visiting for other reason with 28.4 per cent, Business and Conference 25.0 per cent, visiting friends and relatives 13.3 per cent and transit & stop over 2.1 per cent.

On visitors by country of residence, Mr. Kimi said that Australians continue to remain the largest group of visitors to the Solomon Islands with 35.2 per cent.

“There was a 12.5 per cent increase to 2,469 in Australian visitors compared to the first quarter of 2018 figure 2, 195,” he added.

He said the next largest group of visitors were from Other Asia with 10.5 per cent, followed by Fiji 7.2 per cent, Papua New Guinea 7.0 per cent, New Zealand 6.8 per cent, United States of America 6.7 per

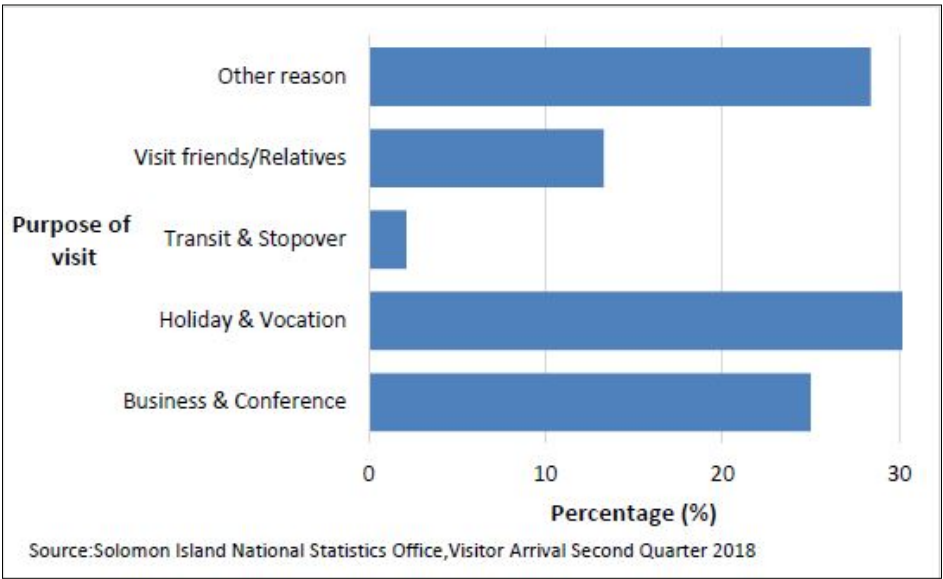


Chart depicts percentage of visitor arrivals to the Solomon Islands by purpose of Visit during 2nd Quarter 2018.

cent and Other Pacific 6.6 per cent.

“Visitor arrivals by month showed that June recorded the highest number of arrivals in the second quarter of 2018 with 2,768 visitors. This was followed by month of April with a total of 2,250 visitors and May the least with 2,003 visitors.

“Second quarter 2018 recorded a total of 2,340 tourists and they spent an average of 14.7 days in the country. Australian residents still made up the highest proportion of tourists with 38.2 per cent for the quar-

ter and stayed in the country for an average of 13.5 days.

“Residents from the United States of America made up the next largest group of tourists 11.4 per cent, followed by Other Asia 10.3 per cent, Other Europe 6.4 per cent, New Zealand 5.3 per cent, United Kingdom 4.6 per cent, China 4.1 per cent, Other Pacific 3.6 per cent and Japan 3.4 per cent,” the Government Statistician said.

On visitors by age group, Mr. Kimi said that 74.9 per cent of Visitors

were in the 25 years to 64 years age range.

“The youngest age group, 0 -14 years, represented 4.0 per cent of the arrivals while the oldest age group, 65 years and over made up 9.8 per cent of total visitor arrivals. The remaining 3.9 per cent were visitors who did not state their age. Male visitors represented more than half of the total visitors arrivals of 66.1 per cent and female visitors made up 33.9 per cent of arrivals thru the quarter.

“Visitor by Occupation showed that the “Other occupation” category made up the largest percentage of occupations 43.3 per cent during the quarter. This was followed by visitors who stated their occupation was from the professional and technical group 28 per cent, no work 11.1 per cent, administration and managerial position 10.3 per cent and production and related workers 2.2 per cent.

“The most popular carriers during the quarter were Solomon Airlines who carried 41.7 per cent of total visitors, followed by Air Niugini with 30.0 per cent and Virgin Australia 16.3 per cent,” Mr. Kimi said.

Kimi joins Pacific Statisticians leadership forum

Government Statistician Douglas Kimi joined professionals from other Pacific countries at the annual Pacific Statisticians Leadership Forum (PSLF) held in Australia in August 2018.

In recognition of the need to support statistical leadership and institutional strengthening, as well as improved planning and governance, the objective of the 2018 PSLF is to share ideas on ways to increase the effectiveness of National Statistics Offices (NSOs) to see data and statistics used in national decision making, and drive demand for official statistics at a national and regional level.

The Forum provided leadership coaching in key concepts around leading

innovative dissemination and informed decision-making. Through a statistical leadership lens, the forum intended to identify practical options and strategies for enhancing use of official statistics – from dissemination to decision-making.

Also, it provided an opportunity for National Statistical Office (NSO) leaders from across the region to share key achievements, learn from common challenges and discuss opportunities for future collaboration.

Mr. Kimi was accompanied by Solomon Islands National Statistics Office (SINSO), Chief Social Statistician, Anterlyn Tuzakana.

The forum was held with the theme: *Statistical Lead-*



Government Statistician, Douglas Kimi standing second from left in the third row and Anterlyn Tuzakana far right in the second row with participants from across the region that joined the forum held in Brisbane, Australia.

ership: From Dissemination to Decision-making.

The Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS) has organised the event.

Mr. Kimi pleased with the forum and acknowledged the ABS for organising it.

Pacific partner countries participated in the Forum, along with key partners in the Australian Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade (DFAT), Statistics New Zealand and Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade (MFAT), Secretariat of the Pacific Community (SPC), the Pacific Finance Technical Assistance Centre (PFTAC), World Bank, UN agencies, expert consultants, and ABS Executives.

26.4% growth in visitor influxes

International arrivals into the country has reached 14,648 in total for 2018 second quarter generating an upturn of 26.4 per cent growth. Government Statistician, Douglas Kimi, while releasing the figures for the second quarter of this year in September said the increase of 26.4% compared to the 1st quarter 2018, and compared

to the same quarter a year ago makes an increase of 13.2 per cent. Mr. Kimi stated that returning residents made up 51 per cent of arrivals for second quarter 2018 adding this was followed by visitors with 48 per cent of arrivals and the remaining 1 per cent were intending residents.

“Visitor arrivals for the second quarter increased by 11.5 per cent to 7,021 visitors, compared to the first quarter 2018 figure of 6,296 visitors. There was a 9.3 per cent increase in visitors’ arrivals from second quarter 2017 to second quarter 2018,” he stated.

“Returning residents made up 51 per cent of arrivals for the second quarter, 2018”

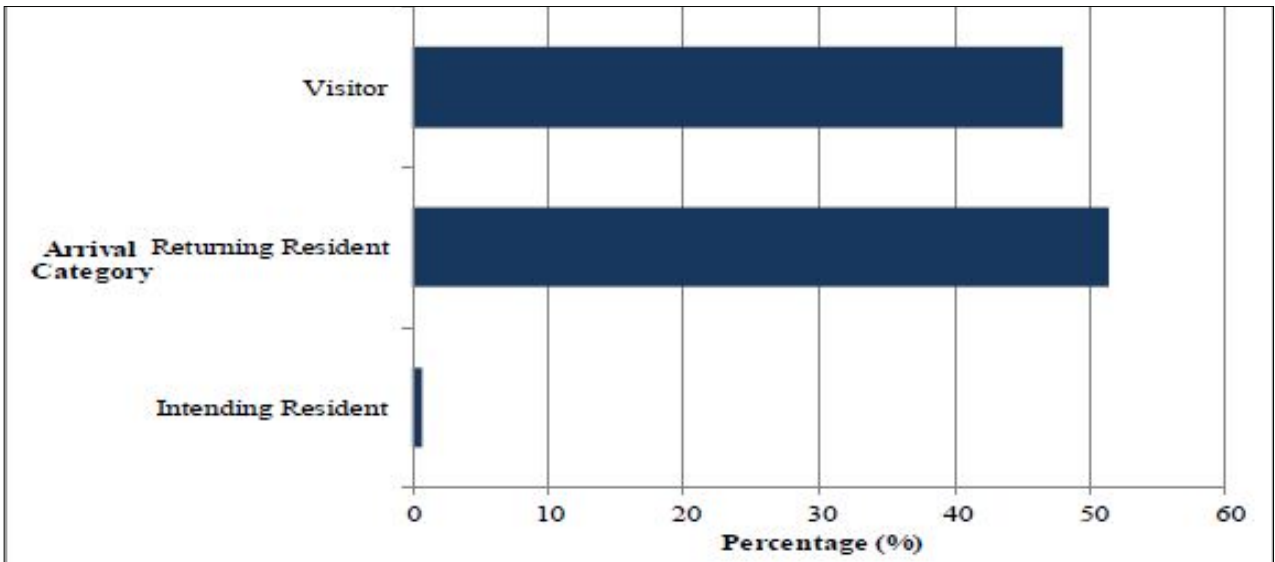


Chart showing arrivals by category in the 2nd quarter of 2018.

NSO national projects

Guided under the Statistics Act 1970 (Amendments 2007), the Census Act 1959, other major national projects that are facilitated by SINISO through its National Statistics Development Strategy 2015/16 to 2035 under the leadership of the Government Statistician include:

- The National Agriculture Survey (ongoing).
- The Solomon Islands Demographic & Health Survey (ongoing activities).
- The Household Income and Expenditure Survey – Extended for National CPI Project and Gross Domestic Product (ongoing activities).
- Proposed quarterly Labour Force Survey (LFS) (new/ongoing).
- 2019 Population & Housing Census Preparation.

About Us

The Solomon Islands National Statistics Office (SINISO) is a division within the Ministry of Finance and Treasury. Guided under the Statistics Act 1970 (Amendments 2007), the Census Act 1959, the SINISO is mandated to compile and disseminate official statistics of the Solomon Islands. The SINISO serves as the leading source of quality data about the population and the economy. We honor privacy, protect confidentiality and conduct our work openly. We are guided on this mission by our strong and capable workforce our readiness to innovate and abiding commitment to our customers. It is our goal to provide the

best mix of timeliness, relevance, quality, and services cost for the data we collect. The Government Statistician (GS) and his Statistics Management team lead the SINISO. The office is made up of four sections; the Economic Statistics Unit, Social and Demography Statistics Unit, Census and Survey Statistics Unit and Executive Management and Support Services Unit. Altogether there are 26 staff (including the GS) in the department carrying out duties ranging from collecting, compiling, analysing and disseminating information in the various subjects in the different sections.

Our core functions

As a Central Statistical Agency of the Government guided under the Statistics Act 1970, (Amendments 2007, the Census Act 1959), our role is to:

- Design standardized statistical instruments for producing Solomon Islands’ statistics: harmonized classifications, organizational methods and structures, technical standards.
- Harmonise statistical information: drawing up a set common concepts, languages and tools for producing statistics.
- Produce Solomon Islands’ statistics: consolidate the statistics of the Provinces and ensuring that they are comparable.
- Supply statistical information: identify, analyze and interpret Solomon Islands’ statistical data.
- Disseminate statistical information.
- Coordinate the Solomon Islands Statistical System.
- Advise statistical systems: help to improve the national statistical systems and promote good practice within the Solomon Islands Statistical System.
- Promote research and development: encourage research into techniques and tools for collecting, processing and analyzing data.

Coming up in our next issue

- Kanamoli appointed as new Deputy Government Statistician.
- NSO engages Youth@Work interns in data entry work.
- Inflation up by 0.3% in August.
- And more stories on the NSDS projects that the National Statistics Office is implementing.

For media inquiries contact National Statistics Office/NSDS Media team on Phone: 23422 E-mail: sdiisango@mof.gov.sb