

SINSO NEWS

Your monthly guide to the Solomon Islands National Statistics Office News, Information and Events • Issue 10 • March - April 2019



Hou congratulates 2019 Census boss



Kimi calls for 'Census' collaborative support

Page 3



Inflation climbs to 1.3%

Page 9

Hou congratulates Census new boss

Page 2



LET'S 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 tenth 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 10th 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 March to April 2019 with general news stories covering the announcement of the 2019 Census Commissioner, SINSO preparations to the 2019 National Population & Housing Census, headline inflation for January and February 2019, Solomon Islands trade bulletin/report for 2018 final quarter, headline inflation for March 2019 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.

Hou congratulates Census new boss

Caretaker Prime Minister (PM) Hon. Rick Houenipwela has congratulated the Government Statistician, Douglas Kimi on his new role as the 2019 Census Commissioner and commended him for the heart he has for accepting the call to head the 2019 Census Project.

PM Hou conveyed his compliments to Mr. Kimi following the proclamation of his (Mr. Kimi) appointment as the 2019 Census Commissioner at the Prime Minister's Office (PMO) on Monday 18 March 2019. Those attending the ceremony include the Permanent Secretary for the Ministry of Public Service (MPS), Nego Sisiolo, Permanent Secretary for the Ministry of Finance and Treasury (MoFT), McKinnie Dentana, Secretary to Prime Minister (SPM), Dr. Jimmy Rodgers, Media personnel's, Prime Minister's Office staff, National Statistics Office (NSO) staff and invitees.

Also, align with the announcement of the 2019 Census Commissioner, Mr. Hou also announced the conduct of the 4th National Population and Housing Census (2019 Census) which planned to take place in November.

The National Statistics Office within the MoFT is mandated to execute the 2019 Census through its Census Office. While congratulating Mr. Kimi for his appointment, Mr. Hou said he is indebted to Mr. Kimi for his leadership and willingness



Caretaker PM, Hon. Rick Hou congratulating Government Statistician, Douglas Kimi on his new role and appointment as the 2019 Census Commissioner. Photo: SINSO Media

to take on the important role of the Census Commissioner for the 2019 national Census project while also continuing his role as the Government Statistician.

The Caretaker PM also acknowledged the contributions made by the former Permanent Secretary for MoFT, Mr. Harry Kuma and the new Permanent Secretary, Mr. McKinnie Dentana both of whom were instrumental on expediting the census preparatory efforts and plans for the actual enumeration.

He then commended the staff of the NSO for their hard work and commitments so far in ensuring the 2019 census preparatory work is

succeeding.

Meanwhile, Mr. Kimi said he is honoured and humbled and accept the appointment.

Mr. Kimi said he not only accepted the announcement of his appointment as the Census Commissioner (Appointee) by the Hon. Caretaker PM but he's equally grateful and applauded the announcements made by Mr. Hou for the conduct of the 2019 Census and the execution of the census by the Census Office of the NSO within the Ministry (MoFT). Mr. Kimi then thanked Mr. Hou for taking his time to officiate on the occasion, given his very busy schedule and electoral commitments.

Solomon Islands will conduct its 4th national Census since independence in November this year (2019). However, Mr. Kimi said the formal launch of the 2019 Census Project itself and the official declaration of the actual census date in November 2019 will be done by the incoming Prime Minister or his representative by June 2019 immediately after the formation of the new government.

The 2019 Census will be the first census undertaken in the post-recovery period after the civil unrest the country has faced.

It will also be the 6th census undertaken since the census of 1970 under the then British authority but this will be the 4th Census since the country granted independence in 1978.

Solomon Islands had its first census count in 1970, the second was in 1976, and again in 1986, 1999 and the latest and the fifth one in the series was in 2009.

Census is the official count of how many people and dwellings there are in the country (SI). It gives a unique snapshot of our communities.

Information from the census helps determine how government funding is spent in the community.

It is also used by the government/policy-makers to plan for the future. Solomon Islands conducted census after every 10 years. The latest census was held in 2009.

Kimi calls for ‘Census’ collaborative support

The newly appointed 2019 Census Commissioner, Douglas Kimi is calling on everyone to support the Census Office in the National Statistics Office (NSO), Ministry of Finance & Treasury as it prepares to implement the 2019 Census in November.

Mr. Kimi who is also the Government Statistician, was appointed the 2019 Census boss by the Caretaker Prime Minister Rick Hou on Monday 18 March at the Prime Minister's Office (PMO). Delivering his speech shortly after



2019 Census Commissioner and Government Statistician, Douglas Kimi.

the announcement of his new appointment, Mr. Kimi said the 2019 Census success depends very much on every citizen's cooperation in one way or the other.

He said this is the biggest undertaking for the country, therefore, everyone's joint effort is necessary for a successful Census operation.

However, Mr. Kimi assured the people of the Solomon Islands that under his leadership, the Census office will do its utmost best to implement a successful Census enumeration by end of the year (2019) and provide

preliminary results my mid-2020.

Mr. Kimi also stressed that the success of the 2019 Census will also depend very much on development partners and donor support, cooperation of all levels of government and the fullest participation of our people across the nation.

He also used the opportunity and called on the country's development partners and donors, line ministries and key stakeholders, and citizens to support the Census office and the NSO implement the 2019 National and Household Census project.



Caretaker Prime Minister, Rick Hou addressing officials and invitees during the announcement of the 2019 Census Commissioner on 18 March 2019.



PS-Finance and PS Public Service at the ceremony.



Deputy Statistician, Samson Kanamoli and SPM to PM, Dr. Jimmie Rodgers.



NSO/NSDS staff, Charles Oloka and Anna Luvu during the ceremony.



Government Statistician and the 2019 Census Commissioner, Douglas Kimi and the Secretary to the PM, Dr. Jimmie Rodgers.

Inflation up 0.6% in January

An insignificant rise of 0.6 per cent in inflation have been noted for Honiara in the month of January 2019.

The Solomon Islands National Statistics Office (SINSO) has revealed in its recent statistical report on the Honiara Consumer Price Index (CPI) for the month (January).

Releasing the report, Government Statistician, Douglas Kimi said the upturn was from 104.2 in December 2018 to 104.8 in the month of January 2019.

“Food and Non Alcoholic Beverages recorded a 0.1 per cent rise,” Mr. Kimi added.

He said the main contributors to this change are bread and cereals by +0.8 per cent, and sugar, jam, honey chocolate and confectionery by +1.6 per cent from outlets, and fresh fruits by 0.3 per cent at the market. These are partially outweighed by drops in potatoes and tuber vegetables by -5.8 per cent

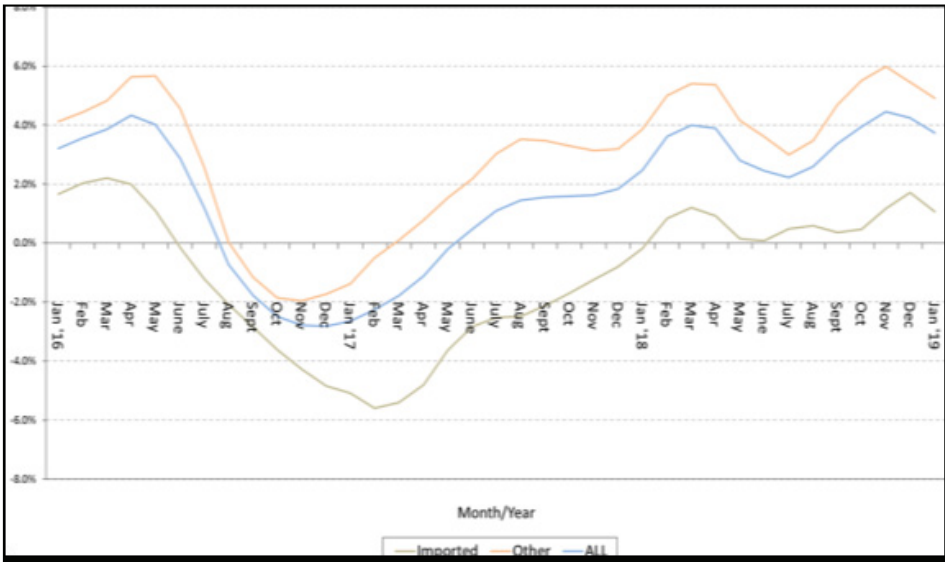


Chart shows inflation rates from January 2016 to January 2019.

and other preserved or processed fish and seafood with -0.2.

The major changes in other expenditure categories include:

- Alcoholic Beverages, Tobacco and Narcotics by +0.7 per cent

The main contributor to the increase in this group was narcotics,

particularly betel nut by +4.9 per cent.

- Housing, water, electricity, gas and other fuels by +5.3 per cent

The main contributor to the rise in this group was water charges by +32.5 per cent and liquid fuel by +2.8.

- Transport -3.4 per cent

The main contributor to the rise in transport group was operation of personal transport equipment, particularly fuel by -10.7 per cent.

Mr. Kimi said apart from the above, price movements elsewhere in the consumption basket were negligible.

“The overall annual headline inflation rate for the month of January 2019 calculated on a 3 months moving average basis was 3.7 per cent, down by 0.5 percentage points from 4.2 per cent the previous month. The corresponding inflation rates for imported and other items were 1.1 per cent and 4.9 per cent, respectively.

“The main underlying rates of inflation based on a 3 months moving average for the month of January 2019 were observed between -0.4 per cent and 1.3 per cent while the headline inflation rate was at 3.7%.”

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.

Inflation drops in February

A significant 0.8 per cent inflation drop was noted for Honiara in February 2019, according to the Honiara Consumer Price Index (CPI) monthly report.

The statistical report which was produced and released by the Solomon Islands National Statistics Office (SINSO) recently says the descent was from 104.7 in January to 103.9 in the month of February.

Releasing the report, Government Statistician, Douglas Kimi said, despite the decline, food and non-alcoholic beverage continue to record a 1.9 per cent rise with the main contributor to the change was fruits responsible for +4.7 per cent while vegetables +16.6 per cent at the market.

Meat was outweighed by -2.3 per cent and selected potato and tuber-vegetable by -6.3 per cent.

Other major changes in other sub-index includes:

- Alcoholic Beverages, Tobacco and

Narcotics -1.6 per cent.

The main contributor to the drop in this group was narcotics by 6.9 per cent, especially tobacco by -0.2 per cent and betel nut by -7.0 per cent.

- Clothing and Footwear, +0.3 per cent.

The main contributor to the rise in this group was garments by +0.4 per cent.

- Housing, water, electricity, gas and other fuels by -3.5 per cent

The change in the group was driven by a drop in electricity, gas and other fuels by -10.2 per cent and liquid fuel -2.1 per cent outpacing a rise in maintenance and repair of dwelling by +0.2 per cent.

- Furnishings, household equipment and routine household maintenance -0.3 per cent.

The change in this group was attributed to a fall in furniture and furnishings by -0.3 per cent outweighing a rise in tools and equipment for house and garden by +2.9 per cent.



Graph shows the Honiara annual inflation rates from February 2016 to February 2019.

- Transport -3.1 per cent.

The main contributor to the change in transport group was operation of personal transport equipment by -10.0 per cent and fuel and lubricants by -10.5 per cent.

However, Mr. Kimi said that apart from the above, price movements elsewhere in the consumption basket were small.

“The overall annual headline inflation rate for the month of February 2019 calculated on a 3 months moving average basis was 2.1 per cent, down by 1.6 percentage points from 3.7 per cent the previous month. The corresponding inflation rates for imported and other items were

-0.9 per cent and 3.2 per cent, respectively.

“The main underlying rates of inflation based on a 3 months moving average for the month of February 2019 were observed between -0.7 per cent and 1.3 per cent while the headline inflation rate was at 2.1 per cent,” Mr. Kimi said.

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.

NEWSFLASH

2019 Census Commissioner's proclamation in pictures

Here are few takes of the event of the announcement of the 2019 Census Commissioner by the Caretaker Prime Minister, Rick Hou at the Prime Minister's Office (PMO) on Monday 18 March 2019. See pages 2 & 3 for reports. Also see this page for more photos.



Caretaker Prime Minister Hon. Rick Hou (centre front row) with the 2019 Census Commissioner, Douglas Kimi, second from left after the NSO Advisor, Dr. Willie Lahari, Permanent Secretary for the Ministry of Finance & Treasury, Mckinnie Dentana, right next to the PM, Permanent Secretary for the Ministry of Public Service (MPS), Nego Sisiolo and the Secretary to Prime Minister (SPM), Dr. Jimmie Rodgers with the NSO staff after the announcement of the census commissioner's appointment.



National Statistics Office staff witnessing the announcement of the 2019 Census commissioner's post at the Prime Minister's Office on Monday 18 March 2019.



Caretaker PM, Rick Hou delivering his keynote address during the announcement of the 2019 Census Commissioner.



National Statistics Office Advisor Dr. Willie Lahari and the 2019 Census Commissioner, Douglas Kimi.



Permanent Secretary (PS), Finance, Mckinnie Dentana and PS Public Service, Nego Sisiolo witnessing the event.

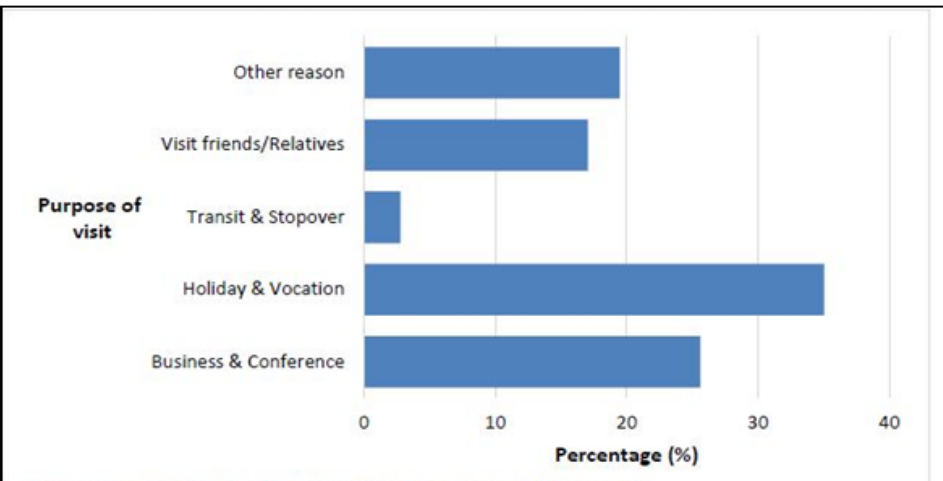
Visitor arrivals makes 3.9% gain

A total of 15,385 international visitors/tourist have visited the country, generating an increase of 3.9 per cent in the latter/final quarter of 2018.

The Solomon Islands National Statistics Office (SINSO) has revealed in its statistical report on International arrivals released recently. Government Statistician, Douglas Kimi while releasing the report said: “Of the total figure (15,385), an increase of 3.9 per cent was noted compared to the third quarter 2018.” However, Mr. Kimi said compared to the same quarter a year ago, a decline of 5.1 per cent was recorded. He stated that Returning residents made up 56 per cent of arrivals for the fourth quarter, followed by Visitors with 44 per cent of arrivals and the remaining less than 1 per cent were Intending residents.

“Visitor arrivals for the fourth quarter decreased by 14.4 per cent to 6,711 visitors, compared to the third quarter 2018 figure of 7,838 visitors. There was a 5.8 per cent decrease in visitor’s arrivals from fourth quarter 2017 to fourth quarter 2018.

“Arrivals by country of residence for the fourth quarter 2018 showed that Australians remain the largest group of visitors to the Solomon Islands with 39.5 per cent. There was



Graph shows percentage of visitor arrivals to the Solomon Islands by purpose of visit during the 2018 final quarter.

an 8.4 per cent decrease to 2,650 in Australian visitors compared to the third quarter of 2018 figure 2,892. “The next largest group of visitors were from Other Asia with 10.9 per cent, followed by New Zealand by 6.7 per cent, Fiji 6.5 per cent, Papua New Guinea 6.2 per cent, China 5.5 per cent, and Other Pacific 5.4 per cent,” Mr. Kimi stated.

On Visitor arrivals by month, Mr. Kimi said October recorded the highest number of arrivals in the fourth quarter of 2018 with 2,366 visitors followed by month of December with a total of 2,301 visitors and November the least with 2,044 visitors.

“Fourth quarter 2018 recorded a total of 2,538 tourists and they spent

an average of 17.2 days in the country. Australian residents still made up the highest proportion of tourists by 40.7 per cent for the quarter and stayed in the country for an average of 17.4 days. Residents from the United States of America made up the next largest group of tourists by 8.9 per cent, followed by Other Asia by 6.7 per cent, Other Pacific by 6.0 per cent and Papua New Guinea by 5.5 per cent.

On Visitors by Purpose of Visit, Mr. Kimi said the most common reason for visitors visiting the Solomon Islands during the quarter was for Holiday and Vocation with 35.0 per cent, followed by Business and Conference by 25.6 per cent, visiting for Other reason 19.5 per cent, Visiting

friends and relatives 17.1 per cent and Transit & Stop over 2.8 per cent. “The distribution of visitor arrivals by broad age groups for the quarter showed that 72.6 per cent of Visitors were in the 25 years to 64 years age range.

The youngest age group, 0 -24 years, represented 14.3 per cent of the arrivals while the oldest age group, 65 years and over made up 9.1 per cent of total visitor arrivals.

The remaining 4.0 per cent were visitors who did not state their age. Male visitors represented more than half of the total visitor’s arrivals by 64.8 per cent and female visitors made up 35.2 per cent of arrivals during the quarter.

“Visitor by Occupation showed that the “Other occupation” category made up the largest percentage of occupations by 36.6 per cent during the quarter, followed by “Professional and Technical” with 31.3 per cent, No work 13.0 per cent, Administration and managerial position 11.1 per cent, and Production and related workers 2.7 per cent.

“The most popular carriers during the quarter were Solomon Airlines who carried 49.4 per cent of total visitors, followed by Air Niugini by 26.1 per cent and Virgin Australia 16.3,” Mr. Kimi said.

SI trade deficit hits \$298 million

Solomon Islands (SI) international merchandise trade deficit more than doubled in the 2018 final quarter as imports rose led by machinery and transport equipment. Despite that, deficit narrowed by 10.8 per cent from \$334m over the last (same) quarter of 2017, says the Solomon Islands National Statistics Office (SINSO).

Releasing the statistics in its trade quarterly report in April, Govern-

ment Statistician, Douglas Kimi said the \$298 million deficit for 2018 last quarter has more than doubled by 132 per cent from a deficit of \$128m in the third (previous) quarter. “The \$1,432m surge in imports by 17 per cent comes from rising imports of food by 27.3 per cent, crude materials-inedible by 28.7 per cent, and machinery and transport equipment by 59.2 per cent,” Mr. Kimi stated.

“These outweighed a moderate growth in exports by 3.5 per cent that included a doubling of beverages and tobacco exports during the quarter.

“By the year-ended December 2018, the trade deficit of \$247m has drastically reduced by over half the size of the deficit of \$567m recorded in the previous year-ended December 2017.”

Meanwhile, on major exports, Mr.

Kimi stated that total timber exports comprising of log and sawn timber increased \$51.9m by +6.8 per cent to \$819.9m dominated by a decline by -29.9 per cent in sawn timber.

“Total of fresh/frozen, canned and smoked fish declined \$22.1m by -16.6 per cent to \$110.9m outweighing a rebound in fresh/frozen fish exports by six times by +574.4 per cent the amount.

- ➔ Continue page 9

NEWSFLASH

International arrivals drop

International arrivals in the country has dropped pettily in the first quarter of 2019 compared to the 2018 latter (last/final) quarter, says the Solomon Islands National Statistics Office (SINSO).

In its statistical report on visitor arrivals, SINSO said that though a total of 11,849 tourist visited the

country in the quarter, a decrease of 23.0 per cent was noted compared to the previous quarter which is the fourth/final quarter of 2018.

Government Statistician, Douglas Kimi who released the official report further said that a decrease of 2.2 per cent was also recorded compared to the same quarter a year

ago.

Mr. Kimi said of the total arrivals, visitors made up 51 per cent of arrivals for the first quarter, followed by returning residents with 48 per cent of arrivals and the remaining 1 per cent were intending residents. “Compared to the 2018 fourth quarter figure of 6,711 visitors, a

decrease of 10.3 per cent from the 2019 first quarter total arrivals (11,849) to 6,019 visitors was noted. There was also a 4.4 per cent decrease in visitor’s arrivals from first quarter 2018 to first quarter 2019,” Mr. Kimi added.

See related story on page 8



A tourist boat, Sun Princess berthing at the Honiara International Sea Port in November 2017. Photo: SINSO Media

Kimi joins Gender Statistics summit

Government Statistician, Douglas Kimi has recently joined other Professional Statisticians from across the Pacific at a regional conference on Gender Statistics in the Pacific held in Fiji.

Runs from February 12-15 2019, the regional event has convened Government Statisticians, Gender Statisticians and Gender data users from across the region including policy makers, media, academicians and civil society organizations where they discussed the importance of producing, disseminating and using gender statistics extensively and came up with concrete steps on how to make it (this) happen.

The event was held with the title “Gender Statistics in the Pacific: Establishing a Roadmap for better produc-

tion and use of gender statistics to monitor the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) in the Pacific”.

The objectives of the workshop include:

- Assess the gender dimensions in existing sets of localized SDG indicators in the region and other indicator sets such as the Pacific National Minimum Development Indicators (NMDI).
- Explore the possibility of updating regional indicator sets from a gender equality perspective.
- Validate assessments on existing challenges to producing, disseminating and using gender statistics in the Pacific
- Study existing initiatives and strategies implemented in other regions to enhance the production and use of gender statistics and evaluate whether the

Pacific region could benefit from some of these.

- Evaluate the gender statistics needs of select data users from public institutions, civil society and academia.
- Draft a gender-sensitive regional Roadmap to produce, disseminate and use quality gender data to monitor the SDGs in the Pacific, including specific plans for support to data production, dissemination and use.
- Begin work towards establishing appropriate mechanisms for the endorsement and future implementation of the (this) roadmap, including modalities for implementation, roles and responsibilities.

It was organized jointly by UN Women, Secretariat of the Pacific Community (SPC), the United Nations Economic and Social

Commission for Asia and the Pacific (ESCAP) Office for the Pacific and the United Nations Population Fund, formerly the United Nations Fund for Population Activities (UNFPA).

During the workshop, participants assessed key needs and challenges pertaining to the production and dissemination of SDG-related Gender Statistics in the Pacific, as well as other gender statistics related to national and regional gender equality commitments.

According to ESCAP, the work will build on progress achieved in the Pacific through existing initiatives managed by a range of development partners, including SPC, Pacific Islands Forum Secretariat (PIFS), ESCAP, UNICEF, UNFPA, Government of Aus-



Government Statistician, Douglas Kimi

tralia, Asian Development Bank (ADB), World Bank and others.

“For instance, among other initiatives, the event will build on work carried out for reporting on the 2012 Pacific Leaders Gender Equality Declaration and associated Pacific Women Shaping Pacific Development country work plans and regional programmes, which have increased focus on gender statistics as critical tools to monitor and evaluate gender-equality policies.

“Similarly, the work will also build on existing statistical efforts to monitor progress us-

ing the National Minimum Development Indicators and will explore the possibility to support an update to the set from a gender equality perspective. The workshop will also complement ESCAP’s work in the Pacific to support countries ensure their national indicator frameworks adequately track progress towards national priorities/plans.

“In addition, and beyond SDG localization and regional priority setting efforts, the workshop serve as a starting point to filling up gender data gaps and overcoming some of the challenges that will be identified.”

Gov't targets improved coverage in 2019 Census

Government (SIG) through the Census office within the Solomon Islands National Statistics Office (SINSO), Ministry of Finance and Treasury (MoFT) are determined to make sure every citizens are counted in the coming 2019 national census.

Census Commissioner, Douglas Kimi said with the census is planned for November, the Government through its Statistical Agency (SINSO) and the Census office are working firmly and vigorously to ensure everyone are enumerated/counted.

Mr. Kimi said over 2700 field workers/enumerators will be deployed across the country to conduct the census survey to guarantee no undercounting transpired.

“Our enumerators will be set out to their designated Enumeration Areas (EAs) through the country, so, your support in providing them with the right and accurate information/data is utmost.”

Mr. Kimi said this will be the largest operation, therefore, a collective support from people to the project (Census) is significant.



Permanent Secretary of the Ministry of Public Service, Nego Sisiolo and the 2019 Census Commissioner, Douglas Kimi in discussion during the event of the announcement of Mr. Kimi's appointment as the census commissioner at the Prime Minister's Office on March 18. Looking on is the National Statistics Technical Advisor, Dr. Willie Lahari.

“There was a case in the 2009 census where some people are not counted (undercount), and that is the issue we are dogged to avoid this time round.”

However, Mr. Kimi said to mitigate undercount challenges, the Census office will provide a free-toll number so that any person or family that is missed or not visited/counted by

enumerators during the enumeration period to call and be counted by completing the Census questionnaire over the phone or to be visited by the nearest enumerator.

“The census office field workers will be out there to collect data thus no village or household and individual will be left uncounted,” the Census Commissioner affirmed.

Mr. Kimi added that Census is a crucial undertaking since the information/data collected will aid the government/policymakers to plan for the future.

“Data's/informations that the Census final analysis report will be providing is an essential element and will be used as a measuring tool for the government in its development work program to verify where particularly in the country needs urgent support in terms of health, education, security and other socio-economic concerns.

“Everyone's participation in the coming 2019 Census is paramount,” Mr. Kimi emphasised.

The 2019 Census project official launching is planned for early July to coincide with the announcement of the actual date for the actual census enumeration by the Prime Minister or his official representative.

There have been five Censuses conducted in the Solomon Islands over the years including in 1970, 1976, 1986, 1999 and 2009.

The 2019 Census will be the sixth one for the country to conduct.

Australia still tops visitors' record despite a 14% fall

Australia has been recorded as the country that has many of its nationals visiting the country in the first quarter of 2019, despite, a 14 per cent fall/drop in the quarter compared to the 2018 latter/last quarter, says the Solomon Islands national Statistics Office (SINSO).

In its latest quarterly statistical report, SINSO said that though Australians remain the largest group of visitors to visit the Solomon Islands, generating a 37.9 per cent points, there was a 14.0 per cent decline to 2,279 in Australian visitors noted compared to the fourth/final quarter of 2018 figure 2,650.

Government Statistician, Douglas Kimi, while releasing the report stated that the next largest group of visitors were from Other Asia with 12.4 per cent, followed by New Zealand by 7.4 per cent, Other Pacific by 7.1 per cent, Fiji 6.3 per cent, United States of America 5.8 per cent, and China 5.0 per cent.

On Visitor arrivals by month, Mr. Kimi said that March recorded the highest number of arrivals in the first quarter of 2019 with 2,378 visitors, followed by month of Febru-

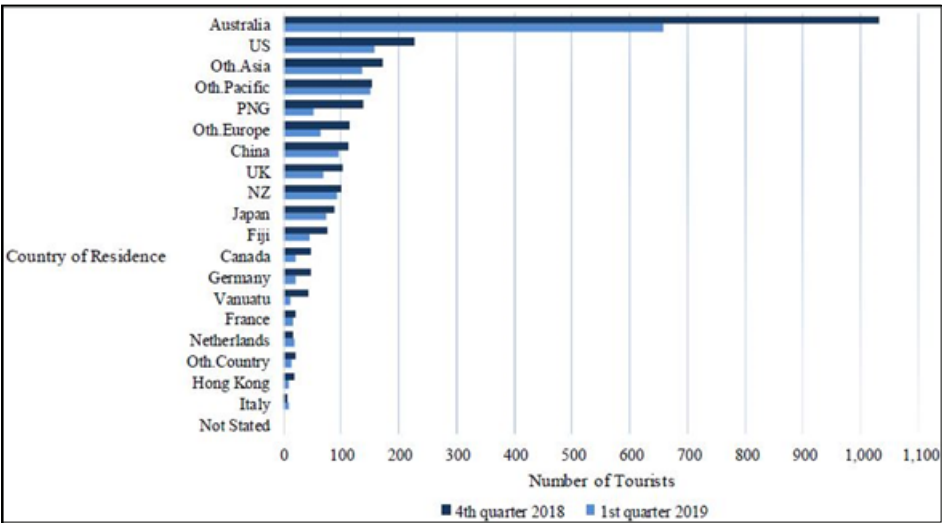


Chart shows tourist arrivals by country of residence for the fourth quarter 2018 to 1st quarter 2019.

ary with a total of 1,891 visitors and January the least with 1,750 visitors.

“First quarter 2019 recorded a total of 1,718 tourists and they spent an average of 14.9 days in the country. Australian residents still made up the highest proportion of tourists by 38.3 per cent for the quarter and stayed in the country for an average of 13 days. Residents from the United States of America made up the next largest group of tourists by 9.2 per cent, followed by Other Pacific by 8.7 per cent, Other Asia by

8.0 per cent and China 5.5 per cent,” Mr. Kimi said.

“The most common reason for visitors visiting the Solomon Islands during the quarter was for Other reason 30.4 per cent, followed by Business and Conference 27.4 per cent, visiting for Holiday and vacation 23.8 per cent, Visiting friends and relatives 13.6 per cent and Transit & Stop over 4.8 per cent.

“The distribution of visitor arrivals by broad age groups for first quarter 2019 showed that 77.3 per cent

of Visitors were in the 25 years to 64 years age range. The youngest age group, 0 -24 years, represented 11.0 per cent of the arrivals while the oldest age group, 65 years and over made up 7.9 per cent of total visitor arrivals. The remaining 3.8 per cent were visitors who did not state their age.

“Male visitors represented more than half of the total visitors' arrivals by 72.3 per cent while female visitors made up 27.7 per cent of arrivals in the quarter, Mr. Kimi stated.

On visitors by occupation, he said the “Other occupation” category made up the largest percentage of occupations by 42.7 per cent during the quarter, followed by “Professional and Technical” 25.6 per cent, No work 9.6 per cent, Administration and managerial position 9.2 per cent, and Service worker 5.9 per cent.

“The most popular carriers during the quarter were Solomon Airlines who carried 44.2 per cent of total visitors, followed by Air Niugini with 25.3 per cent and Virgin Australia 14.7 per cent.”

Inflation climbs to 1.3% on rising food & electricity prices

Honiara inflation rose to 1.3 per cent in March driven mainly by domestic inflation attributed by an increase in the cost of food and electricity charges whilst moderate growth was also realised amongst tobacco, household equipment and transport.

The rise in food prices was offset by declines in rice and sugar and confectioneries (sweets), according to official data from the Solomon Islands National Statistics Office (SINSO).

In its statistical report on the Honiara Consumer Price Index (CPI) for the month (March), SINSO says the hike was from 103.9 in February to 105.3 in March 2019.

Whilst there is a downward trend in headline inflation rate since November 2018, any rise in inflation in a given period should be a concern for government, especially ministries involved in reviewing or formulating specific sector policies such as the Ministry of Commerce’s review of the minimum wages determination and on-going tax reforms by the Ministry of Finance and Treasury.

The impact of rising inflation has implication of household budgets and spending behaviour as many workers and citizens of this country continue to endure the high cost of living. The new government, Democratic Coalition Government for Advancement (DCGA) should also consider reviewing current policies to enable competition and ensure consumer protections and safeguards are in place from unfair pricing of goods and services to allow especially low income earners to be able to cope with the high cost of living being experienced in the country.

But, releasing the report, Government Statistician, Douglas Kimi said from the 1.3 per cent rise, food and non-alcohol beverages accounted for a 0.8 per cent.

He said the main contributors to the changes were; fresh fruits with +1.5 per cent and vegetables +6.0 per

cent in particular, potato and tubers with 6.1 per cent at the Honiara Central Market and non-alcoholic beverages with +0.2 per cent points. “These offset drops in rice -0.1 per cent, and sugar and confectioneries -0.8 per cent,” Mr. Kimi stated.

The major changes in other expenditure categories include;

- Alcoholic Beverages, Tobacco and Narcotics +0.3 per cent

The main contributor to the rise in the (this) group was tobacco with +0.9 per cent.

- Housing, water, electricity, gas and other fuels +4.8 per cent

The change in the (this) group was driven by an increase in electricity, gas and other fuels by +15.0 per cent.

- Furnishings, household equipment and routine household maintenance +0.1 per cent

The change in the (this) group was attributed to a slight rise in tools and equipment for house and gardens by +0.2 per cent.

- Transport +1.1 per cent

The main contributor to the change in transport group was operation of personal transport equipment by +3.4%) and transport services +0.2 per cent.

Meanwhile, 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 March 2019 calculated on a 3 months moving average basis was 1.3 per cent, down by 0.8 percentage points from 2.1 per cent the previous month. The corresponding inflation rates for imported and other items were -2.4 per cent and 2.5 per cent, respectively.

“The main underlying rates of inflation based on a 3 months moving average for the month of March 2019 were observed between -0.8 per cent and 1.7 per cent while the headline inflation rate was at 1.3 percent,” Mr. Kimi said.



Sweet potatoes/tuber sold at the Honiara Central Market.

From page 6

SI trade deficit hits \$298 million

“Total agricultural products decreased slightly \$2.3m by -2.5 per cent to \$88m. This was driven by low exports of copra -34.8 per cent, cocoa -24.0 per cent and coconut oil by -14.6 per cent. “Gold declined \$4m by -49.4 per cent or close to half the amount, to \$4m.”

On major imports, Mr. Kimi stated:

“Food imports increased \$61.4m by +27.3 per cent to \$285.8m as imports rebounded for rice by +72.2 per cent and flour by +76.2 per cent with close to doubling by +97.3 per cent of meat-preparations. This outpaced declines mainly in fish-preparations by -64.2 per cent.

“Mineral fuel and lubricants decreased by \$63.7m (+26.0%) to \$181.4m. This was attributed to declines in distillate fuels (-25.7%) as motor spirits continue to plunge (-24.8%) since first quarter.

“Machinery and transport equipment rose by \$231.1m (+59.2%) to \$621.7m at the back of imports of shipping vessels (\$300m) and rises in passenger vehicles (4.3%), offsetting declines in vehicles (goods and special purpose,

-34.9%) and outboard motors (-39.4%).

“Crude materials-inedible increased by \$2.9m (+28.7%) to \$12.8m driven mainly by demands in second-hand clothing materials.”

Merchandise trade balance with major trading partners in the December quarter of 2018 compared to the previous quarter records the following:

- The trade deficit with Singapore, the main origin for fuel imports, decreased by \$62.3m (-27.8%) to \$-161.7m.
- The trade deficit with Australia widened by \$21.6m (+10.3%) to \$-231m.
- The trade deficit with Papua New Guinea increased by \$5.3m (+27.9%) to \$-24.1m.
- The trade surplus with South Korea declined sharply by \$19.1m (-165.3%) to a deficit of \$7.6m.
- The trade surplus with China, the main destination of exported logs, increased further by \$67.6m (+13.1%) to \$584.3m.
- The trade surplus with Italy, the main destination of fish-loin exports, declined by \$30.0m (-28.5%) to \$75.2m.



Inflation drops by -0.9% in April

The Consumer Price Index (CPI), which measures inflation level in the country has dropped to -0.9 percent in April 2019 from the 1.3 percent rise driven mainly by declines in food and electricity prices in March 2019. This is according to a monthly inflation statistical report for Honiara which was produced by the Solomon Islands national Statistics Office (SINSO), in the Ministry of Finance and Treasury (MoFT).

Releasing the report which shows the gradual drop in the price index, Government Statistician, Douglas Kimi said the plunge (drop) was from 105.3 in March to 104.4 in April. The report highlighted that food and non-alcohol beverages are the main backer to the price fall of -2.3 per cent.

Mr. Kimi said the main contributor to the decrease in the Food group was bread and cereals by -0.4 per cent, fish and sea food -0.3 per cent, fruits -0.4 per cent, vegetables by -15.3 per cent and potato and tubers by -5.3 per cent at the Honiara Central market, outweighing an increase in milk, cheese and eggs by +0.2 per cent and canned sardines by +0.7 per cent.

The major changes in other expenditure categories include:

- Alcoholic Beverages, Tobacco and Narcotics +0.4 per cent

The main contributor to the rise in this group



2019 Census Commissioner and Government Statistician, Douglas Kimi.

was narcotics particularly betel nuts +2.4 per cent.

- Housing, water, electricity, gas and other fuels -2.4 per cent

The change in this group was driven by a drop

in electricity, gas and other fuels by -6.8 per cent offsetting an increase in liquid fuel by +5.5 per cent.

- Furnishings, household equipment and routine household maintenance -0.5 per cent

The change in this group was attributed to a drop in furniture and furnishings by -2.5 per cent, outweighing a +0.5 per cent rise in tools and equipment for house and garden.

- Transport +1.6 per cent

The main contributor to the change in transport group was operations of personal transport equipment by +4.9 per cent and transport services by +0.2 per cent.

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

“The overall annual headline inflation rate for the month of April 2019 calculated on a 3 months moving average basis was 0.5 per cent, an 8 percentage points drop from 1.3 per cent recorded in March 2019.

The corresponding inflation rates for imported and other items were -2.8 per cent and 1.6 per cent, respectively.

“The main underlying rates of inflation based on a 3 months moving average for the month of April 2019 were observed between -1.0 per cent and 1.4 per cent while the headline inflation rate was at 0.5 per cent,” Mr. Kimi said.

About Us

The Solomon Islands National Statistics Office (SINSO) is a division within the Ministry of Finance and Treasury. Guided under the Statistics Act 1970 (Amendments 2007), the Census Act 1959, the SINSO is mandated to compile and disseminate official statistics of the Solomon Islands. The SINSO 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 SINSO. 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

- Cheaper food drive down Honiara inflation in May.
- Agriculture Survey - Dissemination workshop.
- 2019 Census updates.
- 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