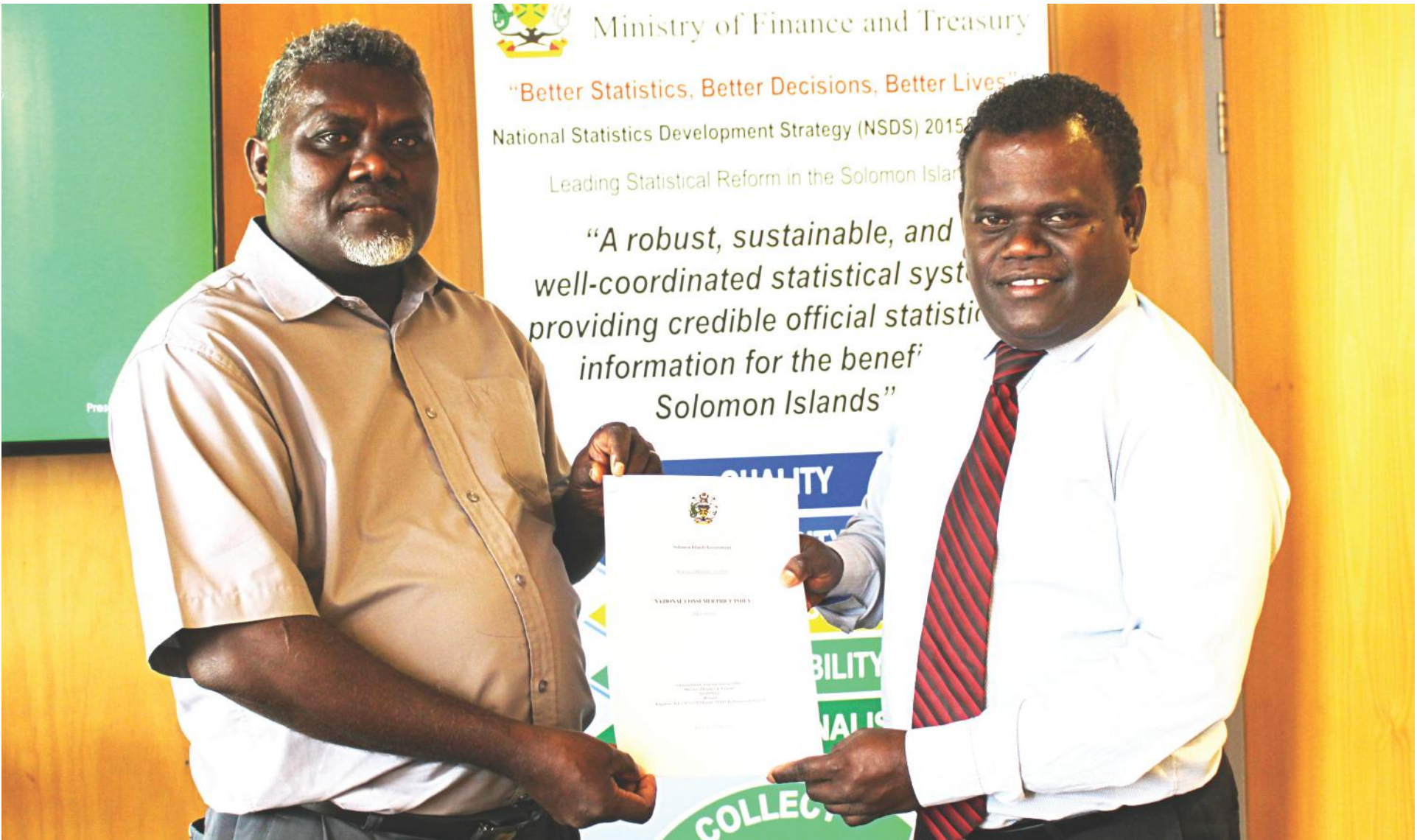


## First National inflation series launched



Government Statistician, Douglas Kimi handed a copy of the first (new) Solomon Islands National Consumer Price Index (NCPI) series to the Permanent Secretary for the Ministry of Finance and Treasury, McKinnie Dentana. The new NCPI replaced the the Honiara CPI publication series.

## ‘MILESTONE ACHIEVEMENT’

The Government through its National Statistics Office (NSO) has reached another milestone in its undertaking as it launched the country’s first ever National Consumer Price Index (NCPI) with an aim to help the government undertake sound effective monetary and fiscal policy formulation and decision-making. The launching took place at the Ministry of Finance and Treasury conference room on Wednesday 20 August 2019.

In a small but significant ceremony, Government Statistician, Douglas Kimi said that the release of this NCPI series introduces for the first time, the Solomon Islands National Consumer Price Index (NCPI), replacing the Honiara CPI publication series. The national index base period was referenced to 2017=100 and covers the urban areas of Honiara (Guadalcanal Province), Auki (Malaita), Gizo (Western Province) and Noro (Western Province).

Mr. Kimi said the CPI for Honiara - with continuity from the historical series, is produced together with new CPIs for Auki, Gizo and Noro. The National CPI is the weighted average of these four urban areas. Consumer Price Index (CPI) is a measure of the average change in the price levels of a basket of consumer goods and services purchased by households at a specified time relative to a base year. The current CPI is referred to as the Solomon Islands CPI given its

coverage of Honiara urban, Auki urban, Gizo urban and Noro urban as a representation for the country. He said that the NCPI as well as the CPIs and inflation measures for the respective local provincial towns are key economic indicators that are able to inform the country’s key monetary and fiscal (budgetary) policies, and inform the general public about the general cost of living in not only in Honiara or the country, but also in the other small provincial towns.

Continue page 7





## 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 eleventh 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 11th 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 May to August 2019 with the launch of the first ever National Consumer Price Index (NCPI) series replacing the Honiara CPI Publication series with general news stories covering the launching of the 2019 National Census project, headline inflation from month of May to August 2019, Solomon Islands trade bulletin/reports for March 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 the SIG online portal on this address/link under documents: <https://solomons.gov.sb/solomon-islands-national-statistics-office/>. 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.

### Cover story

# Gov't launches 2019 National Census Project



#### Quote of the month

“Unlike any other big events in the country like the election registration which targets only specific age group (18-years old and above) with other surveys/events, Census is different and the biggest ever occasion as it take record of every single citizens of a country starting from age zero (0) and above.”

The National Government (SIG) through its statistical agency, National Statistics Office/Census Office has launched the 2019 National Population and Housing Census, Friday 5th July, 2019. The official launching also coincided with the announcement of the census night which is November 24. Prime Minister Manasseh Sogavare presided over the launching event which took place at the Mendana Hotel in Honiara. The occasion was attended by Government Officials, representative(s) from the Central Bank of Solomon Islands (CBSI), Development Partners, Private Sector and Civil Society Organisation repre-

sentatives. 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 have 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. 2019 Census is the sixth census survey the country to have since the first one was conducted in 1970 under the then British authority. Census Commissioner and

Government Statistician, Douglas Kimi said the Census Office will be recruiting thousands of local residents (officers/enumerators) to help the census operation run smoothly. Mr. Kimi said this will be the biggest undertaking for the country. He said the Census Office is trying its best and collaborating to reach every communities across the country. Meanwhile, Mr. Kimi said since this will be the largest nationwide census survey envisioned to take in records of every citizens no matter what age category and cultural background, it is important that everyone must support and collaborate with the Census Office and its field officers

who will be out in the field for data collection. He said this is a crucial undertaking to ensure the country have an updated population count thus collaborative effort and support is indeed appreciative in this regard to guarantee a successful census. “Unlike any other big events in the country like the election registration which targets only specific age group (18-years old and above) with other surveys/events, Census is different and the biggest ever occasion as it take record of every single citizens of a country starting from age zero (0) and above. Solomons Islands conducted census after every 10 years.

This story was first published in (our) 2019 Census newsletter, 1st issue.



NSDS Project Manager, (Ag), Anna Pitaboe.



Officials attending the launching event.



Reps from development/donor partners.



# Trade surplus recorded

The Solomon Islands merchandise trade balance bounced back in March following a large deficit in the final quarter of 2018 after an abrupt decline in imports and lower than expected growth in exports, the Solomon Islands National Statistics Office (SINSO) disclosed, August 2019.

The International Merchandise Trade surplus was recorded at SBD\$75.7m in the March quarter of 2019 (first quarter) a shift from a deficit of \$298.2m in the previous quarter.

However, the trade surplus has significantly reduced by -47.0 per cent from a surplus of \$143m in the same quarter of 2018.

“During the quarter, exports of \$1,106m exceeded imports of \$1,031m at the back of major declines in import commodities such as food by -34.1 per cent, machinery and equipment by -61.6 per cent, and crude materials -23.1 per cent although growth in exports was lower than expected.

“Compared to the previous quarter, total exports dropped as major agricultural exports weakened amid the declining trend in global commodity prices during the quarter,” Government Statistician, Douglas Kimi said when releasing the statistical report.

“By the year-ended March 2019, the trade deficit of \$314m declined by

34.9 per cent (a third) from the deficit of \$482m recorded in the previous year-ended March 2018.”

The movement of goods into and out of the country is an important aspect of the nation’s economic development.

On Major Exports Mr. Kimi said total timber exports comprising of log and sawn timber increased by

per cent), and coconut oil (-41.0 per cent). There was no exports of copra during the quarter due to lower global prices.

“Gold declined drastically by \$3.1m (-77.8%) to \$0.9m.”

Meanwhile, on Major Imports, Mr. Kimi said, “Food imports decreased by \$97.6m (-34.1 per cent) to \$188.2m driven by declines in

“Mineral fuel and lubricants increased by \$66.9m (+36.9 per cent) to \$248.4m. This was attributed to an increase in distillate fuels (+54.9 per cent) and motor spirits (+183.5 per cent).

“Machinery and transport equipment declined by \$383.2m (-61.6 per cent) to \$238.5m. This was due to major declines in imports for vehicles (goods and special purpose, -98.7 per cent) and passenger vehicles (-13.2 per cent) overriding an increase in outboard motors (+6.4 per cent).

Merchandise trade balance with major trading partners in the March quarter of 2019 compared to the previous quarter records the following:

- The trade deficit with Singapore, the main origin for fuel imports increased by \$59.7m (+36.9 per cent) to \$- 221.4m.
- The trade deficit with Australia decreased by \$59.6m (-25.8 per cent) to \$-171.4m.
- The trade deficit with Papua New Guinea slightly increased by \$3.0m (+12.7 per cent) to \$-27.1m.
- The trade surplus with China, the main destination of exported logs, declined slightly by \$9.5m (-1.6 per cent) to \$574.8m.
- The trade surplus with Italy, the main destination of fish-loin exports declined by \$9.6m (-12.8 per cent) to \$65.6m.

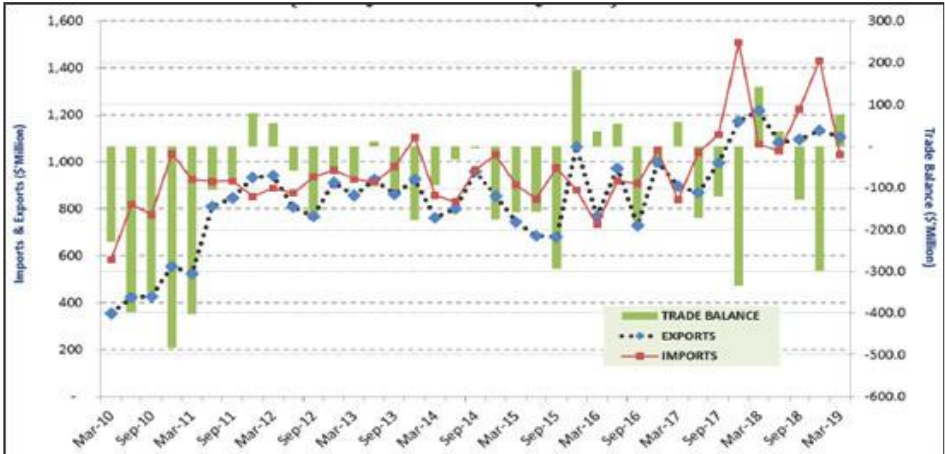


Chart shows imports, exports and trade balance by quarter from March 2010 to March 2019

\$12.6m (+1.5 per cent) to \$832.6m. This overshadowed a decrease of -14.9 per cent in sawn timber.

“Total of fresh/frozen, canned and smoked fish rose by \$1.7m (+1.5 per cent) to \$112.5m outweighing a decrease (+10.9 per cent) in tuna loins (smoked).

“Total agricultural products decreased significantly by \$26.0m (-29.7 per cent) to \$61.9m.

This was driven by zero exports of copra (-100 per cent), palm oil (-3.3

imports for rice (-51.7 per cent), meat preparations (-0.4 per cent) and sugar (-16.7 per cent). This outweighed increases in other food imports such as fish preparations (+139.6 per cent) and flour (+42.3 per cent).

“Beverages and Tobacco increased by \$5m (+25.5 per cent) to \$24.4m driven by an increase in unmanufactured tobacco (+352.4 per cent) overshadowing a decrease in beer (+37.8 per cent).

# Inflation stands at 0.9% ending May

The Solomon Islands Consumer Price Index (CPI) which measures inflation level in the country on a three months moving average basis rose by a +0.5 points to +0.9 per cent in May compared to the month of April, 2019.

The Solomon Islands National Statistics Office first National inflation statistical report which was launched and released recently revealed.

Releasing the statistical report, Government Statistician, Douglas Kimi said despite the surge (rise), corresponding inflation rates for imported and domestic items were observed at -1.8% and +2.2%, respectively.

However, on a month to month basis, the National Consumer Price Index

(CPI) remained flat at 0.0 per cent at 104.2 in May 2019 compared to the previous month.

He added that through the year, compared to the same month in 2018, the National CPI increased 1.2 per cent.

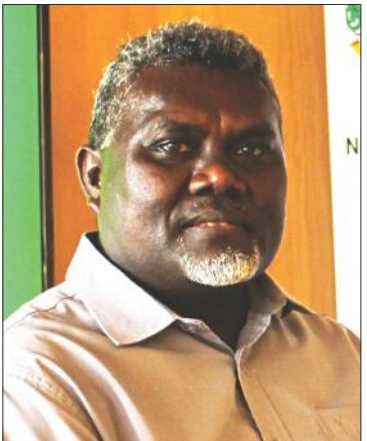
The major changes in other expenditure categories from the month of April include:

- Food and Non-Alcoholic Beverages -0.5 per cent
- Transport +0.8 per cent

“Movements in all other expenditure groups remained stable in May.

The national index faced price pressures from both imported and domestic indexes for Food and Non-Alcoholic Beverages which contracted at -0.3 per cent and -0.7 per cent respectively, while the imported index for Transport rose +1.9 per cent driven by a rise in fuel.

“The Solomon Islands underlying rates of inflation based on a 3 months moving average for the month of May 2019 were observed between -1.1% and +1.3% while the headline inflation rate was at +0.9 per cent.”



Government Statistician and Census Commissioner Douglas Kimi

Mr. Kimi stated that the headline inflation rates for the respective provincial

towns were: Honiara +1.0 per cent, up by +0.5 percentage points; Auki +2.3 per cent, up by +0.4 percentage points; Gizo: +0.3 per cent, up by +0.6 percentage points; Noro: +3. Per cent, up by +1.0 percentage points.

The main percentage changes in index by CPI town from the previous month (April) include:

**Honiara -0.1 per cent**

The main contributor to the marginal fall in Honiara was Food and Non-Alcoholic Beverages -0.6 per cent. This was countered by a rise in Transport +0.8 per cent driven by a rise in fuel +2.9 per cent.

**Auki -0.6 per cent**

The main contributor to the slight fall in Auki was Food and Non-Alcoholic Beverages -1.4 per cent, and

Furnishings, Household Equipment and Routine Household Maintenance -2.5 per cent. These were partially offset by a rise in Transport +0.5 per cent.

**Gizo +0.4 per cent**

The main driver to the slight rise in Gizo was Furnishings, Household Equipment and Routine Household Maintenance +2.3 per cent and Housing, Water, Electricity, Gas and Other Fuels +2.8 per cent.

These outweighed a fall in Alcoholic Beverages -2.7 per cent.

**Noro +0.8 per cent**

The main contributor to the rise in Noro was Food and Non-Alcoholic Beverages +1.9 per cent, Transport +0.3 per cent and Housing, Water, Electricity, Gas and Other Fuels +0.1 per cent.



# Cheaper food drive down Honiara inflation in May

**H**oniara inflation rate fell further as the falling price of food and non-alcoholic drinks helped reduce some of the pressure on Honiara consumers.

The Solomon Islands National Statistics Office (SINSO) said the Honiara consumer price index (CPI) fell -0.1 per cent to 104.3 in May from 104.4 the previous month (April 2019).

Releasing the statistical report, Government Statistician, Douglas Kimi said food and non-alcoholic beverages/drinks recorded a -0.6 per cent drop.

The main contributors to this change are bread and cereals by -0.4 per cent, fruits -0.1 per cent, vegetables -4.3 per cent and potato and tubers by -5.1 per cent.

“These are partially offset by a rise in milk, cheese and egg by +0.2 per cent and fish and seafood + 0.6 per cent.”

Major changes in other expenditure categories include:



Fresh cabbage sold at the Honiara Central Market.

- Transport +0.8 per cent

The main contributor to the change in Transport group was Operation of personal transport equipment +2.7 per cent driven by a rise in fuel.

- Housing, water, electricity, gas and other fuels +0.1 per cent

The main contributor to the change in Housing, water, electricity, gas and other fuels group was Electricity +0.6 per cent.

“The All Groups inflation rate for the month of May 2019 calculated on a 3 months moving average basis was +1.0 per cent, from +0.5 per cent the previous month.

The corresponding inflation rates for imported and other items were -2.2 per cent and +2.1 per cent, respectively.

“The main underlying rates of inflation based on a 3 months moving average for the month of May 2019 were observed between -1.0 per cent and +1.5 per cent while the headline inflation rate was at +1.0 per cent.”

From front page: **First ever national inflation series launched**



*CBSI and DFAT reps close to camera and MoFT Under-Secretary Margaret Moveni during the launching event.*



*Permanent Secretary of the Ministry of Finance, McKinnie Dentana congratulates the NSO as Government Statistician, Douglas Kimi and NSO Advisor Dr. Willie Lahari looks on.*

“Apart from the availability of other official price measures, other uses of the CPI include informing decision making about inflation adjusted wage indexation policies.”

Mr. Kimi stated that in the absence of accurate or updated CPI data, it would be difficult, for example, for the government to undertake sound effective monetary and fiscal policy formulation and decision-making including its use in various sector policies including research and analysis.

“With the ever increasing demand for statistical information and with immersing global statistical challenges, the NSO will continue to be guided by the National Statistics Development Strategy 2015-16 to 2035 which encompasses the policies of government, to continue efforts to revitalise and reform our country’s national statistical system. In this connection, the NCPI data is a key source of data input for the national statistic system so as to inform policy, planning and decision making,” he said.

Mr. Kimi then thanked stakeholders, development partners including cooperation of all levels of government and the fullest participation of people across the nation and NSO staff would contributed one way or the other towards the success of this NCPI series.

Congratulating the NSO for the landmark achievement, Permanent Secretary for the Ministry of Finance and Treasury McKinnie Dentana said that the launch of the NCPI series is also a fine achievement for the Democratic Coalition Government for Advancement (DCGA) according to its 100 days policy statement.

He said that this NCPI series will not only support the government in its monetary and fiscal policy formulation and decision-making but stakeholders, businesses and everyone will benefit from the information it provided now and in the future.

Meanwhile, PS Dentana said that despite the challenges the NSO is facing, his executive will continue to render support to the office (NSO) to ensure it continue to effectively implement its work programs.

The launching event was attended by PS MoFT, government officials, representative from the Central bank of Solomon Islands, DFAT, MOFT and NSO staff.



# Staff polishes knowledge on item specifications

**E**ight staff from the National Statistics Office (NSO), economic section has undertaken a week-long job training on Consumer Price Index (CPI) specifications and collections.

The training was held at the NSO in Honiara from 19 -23 August with the intention to enhance and perfect staff knowledge on item specifications, outlets, pricing sheets and data entry practices.

“The training was important because to get quality data, specifications must be clear so that you collect “like with like” every time you do your collections to ensure we measure the price change and not quality change,” Senior Statistician, Anna Luvu said.

She said the training is also part of staff capacity building.

“Now that the training is done, staff



Senior Statistician Anna Luvu, standing left front row with the CPI staff.

now be able to differentiate between price change and quality change of a product which is the core of CPI collection,” Ms Luvu said.

She also encouraged the staff to always loyal to their duty and work with integrity.

“Though your job may seem not important and is dirty, do not forget

that you are responsible for the lives of the people. Because the prices you collect affects even yourselves. In Solomon Islands, it is not only a measure of inflation but cost of living and living standard as well. It is one of the main economic indicators for our country.”

Meanwhile, Government Statisti-

cian, Douglas Kimi pleased with the training saying it contribute significantly towards staff capacity development.

He affirmed that the training was important since it will equipped staff with price collection capacity with regards to CPI in their own regions/provincial centres – Auki in Malaita, Noro and Gizo in the Western Province.

Both Honiara based and Provincial based (Auki, Noro & Gizo) CPI officers attended the training.

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.

The basket of goods chosen represents the spending behaviour of resident homes and the resulting CPI is used to calculate inflation.

# National inflation rose 0.7 per cent in July

**T**he country’s national inflation has climbed to 0.7 per cent in July 2019 after a 0.1 per cent movement noted in the month of June.

Government Statistician, Douglas Kimi revealed while releasing the national (all groups) consumer price index (NCPI) lately.

Mr. Kimi said the NCPI increased to 0.7 per cent in July 2019 to 105.0 succeeding a 0.1 upswing to 104.3 in June following no movement of 0.0 per cent in the month of May 2019.

“Through the year, compared to the same month in 2018, the National CPI increased 1.4 and 1.9 percent in June and July respectively,” Mr. Kimi added.

The major changes in other expenditure categories include:

- Food and non-alcoholic beverages recorded zero change in June and picked up +2.1 per cent in July.
- Alcoholic beverages, tobacco and narcotics increased in June by +0.7 per cent and July +0.3 per cent.
- Transport increased in June +1.1 per cent then dropped in July by

- 1.6 per cent.
- Housing, water, electricity, gas and other fuels declined in June by -0.9 per cent then rose in July by +0.7 per cent.
- Furnishings, household equipment and routine maintenance increased in June +0.1 per cent and subdued to zero change in July.
- Recreation and culture rose in June by +0.2 per cent and July +0.3%.

by import and domestic category showed price pressures in domestic items by +1.2 per cent driving overall price change as movements in imported items subsided by -0.8 per cent.

“By CPI towns, overall price movements in Honiara continue to impact on the national average while distinct price movements in respective towns showed inflation rates

lated on a 3 months moving average basis was +1.0 per cent, up 0.1 percentage points, and +1.5 per cent in July, up 0.5 percentage points.

The corresponding inflation rates for imported and other (domestic) items were -1.6 per cent and +2.3 per cent in June, and -1.7 per cent and 3.1 per cent in July respectively.

“The Solomon Islands underlying rates of inflation based on a 3 months moving average for the month of June 2019 were observed between -1.1 per cent and +1.2 per cent, and in between -1.0 per cent and +1.4 per cent in July 2019.

“The headline inflation rates for the respective provincial towns calculated on a 3 months moving average basis were:

Honiara: June +1.1 per cent and July 1.7 per cent;

Auki: June +2.4 per cent and July +3.0 per cent;

Gizo: June +0.4 per cent and July +0.7 per cent and;

Noro: June +4.4 per cent and in July +5.2 per cent.”

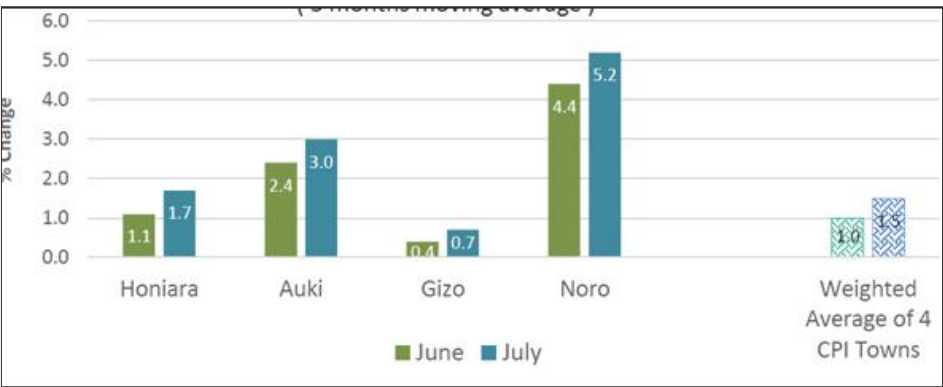


Chart showing All Groups Percentage Changes by Consumer Price Index Towns

- Miscellaneous goods and services increased in June by +0.1 per cent, with same increase in July.

Mr. Kimi said price movements

for all towns except Gizo above the national average.

“The Solomon Islands inflation rate for the month of June 2019 calcu-

# INFLATION: PRICES ON FOOD, ELECTRICITY UP

**H**oniara inflation rose to 1.3 per cent in March, 2019.

The was driven mainly by domestic inflation attributed to the increase/ cost of food and electricity charges whilst moderate growth was also realised amongst tobacco, household equipment and transport.

However, the rise in food prices was offset by declines in rice and sugar and confectioneries (sweets).

The Solomon Islands National Statistics Office (SINSO) latest statistical report on the Honiara Consumer Price Index (CPI) for the month (March) revealed that 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 re-

forms 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.

## National inflation up 1.7% in August

**T**he country’s national inflation rate has rose to +1.7 per cent in August based on a 3 months moving average. Government Statistician, Douglas Kimi revealed while releasing the national (all groups) consumer price index (NCPI) for the month of August. “This was a rise of +0.2 percentage points from the inflation rate recorded in July. The corresponding inflation rates for imported and domestic items were -1.4 per cent and +3.3 per cent respectively. “However, on a monthly basis, the National All Groups Consumer Price Index (CPI) was flat at 105.0 in August 2019 as in July 2019. Through the year, compared to the same month in 2018, the National CPI also increased 1.7 percent,” Mr. Kimi stated. The major changes in other expenditure categories from the previous month include:

- Food and Non-Alcoholic Beverages fell by -0.7 per cent
- Alcoholic beverages, tobacco and narcotics by +1.2 per cent
- Housing, water, electricity, gas and other fuels -0.1 per cent
- Transport +0.8 per cent
- Miscellaneous goods and services -0.1 per cent

Mr. Kimi said price movements by import and domestic category recorded slight declines in domestic items by -0.1 per cent counted by a rebound in imported items by +0.3 per cent during the month. “The Solomon Islands underlying rates of inflation based on a 3 months moving average for the month of August 2019 were observed between -0.8 per cent and +1.7 per cent while the headline inflation rate was +1.7 per cent.” Meanwhile, for overall price movements in Consumer Price Index (CPI) town it showed that Honiara continue to impact on the national average, while price movements for all towns except Gizo were recorded above the national average. The headline inflation rates for the respective provincial towns calculated on a 3 months moving average basis were:

- Honiara: 1.8 per cent, up +0.1 percentage points;
- Auki: +3.3 per cent, up +0.5 percentage points;
- Gizo: +0.8 per cent, zero change
- Noro: +4.7 per cent down -0.5 percentage points.



## NEWSFLASH

# Enhancing statistical skills through opportunities

Some say countless opportunities may come at once in a life time, but small opportunities surround us every day. Don't waste it. Grab it and make the most of it. Otherwise the sun will set on your time, then you'll look back and say, such is an unrewarding life journey.

Hailed from Chichinge village, Malango Ward in Central Guadalcanal, Graeme Risoni, 30, is a Public Officer.

He works as a Senior Statistician within the Economics Unit in the National Statistics Office (NSO), Ministry of Finance & Treasury (MoFT).

Mr. Risoni is a determined young man.

He sees challenges as a highway to accomplishment.

"I joined the workforce with very little experience. A challenge really for me."

Though, it's tough for him, Mr. Risoni never regarded (his) challenges as hurdles but determined to explore fresh opportunities to hone his statistical skills and knowledge.

Mr. Risoni landed an opportunity! His dream to secure at least an opportunity to boost his statistical skills and knowledge has come true.

In 2019, based on his submission, he was selected by his office (NSO) to attend the United Nations Statistical Institute for Asia and Pacific (UN SIAP), in alliance with the Japan International Cooperation

Agency (JICA), the Ministry of Internal Affairs and Communications (MIC) of the government of Japan, training programme.

Held in Chiba, Japan, the programme runs for three months (21st May to 13th July 2019).

It focussed on Statistical Analysis of Disaggregated Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) Indicators for Inclusive Development Policies.

"The training has offered me a great learning opportunity and a good experience.

"The training has improved my statistical skill to be more effective.

"I am pleased to participate in the training. It's really an eye opener for me," Mr. Risoni said.

There are diverse ways of learning that one could take to groom its skills and knowledge.

Others good at theory while others learn best through hands-on practical.

But for Mr. Risoni, learning is about 'self-exploration'.

"When you think about it, learning is a personal experience. It's about self-exploration, gaining knowledge, building confidence and expanding skill sets.

"Regardless of how it occurs or whether it's for personal or professional growth, learning is about the individual," the young and enthusiastic Statistician, Mr. Risoni attested.

The training involved two chores.



*Graeme Risoni receives his certificate of completion from the UN SIAP Director, Ashish Kumar.*

Theory and hands-on (practical) task with 22 statisticians from 21 countries including Solomon Islands attended.

The training aims to strengthen capability of agencies comprising the national statistical system in developing countries to produce disaggregated SDG indicators and relevant economic, social and environment statistics that enable analyses of disparities in development outcomes.

"The lessons taught really boost my statistical knowledge to be more effective and capable in serving the National Statistics Office (NSO) and the country as a whole," Mr. Risoni said. The Knowledge acquired from the training will help his work colleagues in producing official statistics and indicators, interpret and use these for monitoring progress in SDGs and also to produce official statistics that would help policy-makers for future planning.

The training also involved field work/site visits. Field visits involved observation and making courtesy visits to the Japan Statistics Bureau and the Office of Policy Planning (Statistical Standards) of the Ministry of Internal Affairs and Communications and the National Statistics

Centre, industrial establishment, academic institutions, other Japan's statistics divisions and have talks on Japanese Statistical System.

Other sites visited including Chiba prefecture, Other Japanese Major ports, factories and industrial site.

Mr. Risoni thanked UN SIAP in co-operation with JICA and the Japanese Government for the opportunity and for all the support rendered to him during the course of the training.

He also extended his greatest gratitude to the Government Statistician and Census Commissioner, Douglas Kimi for the trust and confident he has placed on him and the support the NSO management and staff rendered that makes his study program a success. Participants from; Asia & Pacific- Afghanistan, Albania, Bangladesh, Egypt, Ghana, Iran, Iraq, Indonesia, Kenya, Laos, Sierra Leone, Malawi, Mali, Mongolia, Rwanda, Solomon Islands, Sudan, Thailand, Tunisia, Papua New Guinea, Vanuatu, Vietnam attended the programme.

Many NSO staff has gone through the same participation process with the Statistical Institutes for ASIA and Pacific SIAP – JICA arrangement in previous years.



*Graeme Risoni standing second far right from back-row with participants who attended the programme.*

## Quote of the month

*"The training has improved my statistical skill to be more effective. I am pleased to participate in the training. It's really an eye opener for me."*



# Officers undergo GIS training

At least seven officers within the National Statistics Office (NSO), Ministry of Finance and Treasury has completed a training on Geographic Information System (GIS).

Lasted two full weeks, from 12-23 August, it was intended to impart staff with general understanding of GIS and its potential and also make sure officers acquired the necessary skills and knowledge on rapid mapping and satellite analysis.



*Deputy Government Statistician, Samson Kanamoli and a rep and facilitator from the SPC (Centre) with the National Statistics Office staff that were part of the training.*

The training was also part of the 2019 Census preparation since the officers will play a major role in mapping and satellite analysis

now and during the implementation phase of the Census in November 4-December 8, 2019.

The two weeks train-

ing was made possible through the partnership of the Secretariat of the Pacific Community (SPC) and NSO.



*National statistics Office staff during the two weeks training on GIS - August 2019.*

# Tourist arrivals surges 16% in 2019 second quarter

International arrivals in the country has rose to 16.0 per cent in the second quarter of 2019 compared to the previous (first) quarter.

Government Statistician, Douglas Kimi revealed while releasing the quarterly statistical report on Tourist Arrivals recently.

However, Mr. Kimi said that compared to the same quarter a year ago, there's a decrease of 6.2 per cent noted.

"Visitors made up 51 per cent of arrivals for Second quarter 2019. This was followed by Returning residents with 48 per cent of arrivals and the remaining 1 per cent were Intending residents.

"Visitor arrivals for the second quarter increase by 17.4 per cent to 7,063 visitors, compared to the first quarter 2019 figure of 6,019 visitors. There was a 0.6 per cent increase in visitors' arrivals from second quarter 2018 to second quarter 2019," Mr. Kimi stated.

Mr. Kimi said that Australians continue to dominate visitors to Solomon Islands with 40.4 per cent re-

corded for the quarter (2nd quarter 2019).

"There was a 25.2 per cent increase to 2,854 in Australian visitors compared to the first quarter of 2019 figure 2,279.

"The next largest group of visitors were from Other Asia with 12.6 per cent, followed by United States of America 7.9 per cent, New Zealand 7.2 per cent, Fiji 5.3 per cent, Papua New Guinea 5.0 per cent, and China 4.1 per cent."

On visitors by month, Mr. Kimi said that June recorded the highest number of arrivals in the second quarter of 2019 with 2,523 visitors.

"This was followed by month of May with a total of 2,434 visitors and April the least with 2,106 visitors.

"Second quarter 2019 recorded a total of 2,577 tourists and they spent an average of 14.8 days in the country. Australian residents still made up the highest proportion of tourists with 43.3 per cent for the quarter and stayed in the country for an average of 12 days. Residents from

the United States of America made up the next largest group of tourists with 11.8 per cent, followed by Other Asia 8.2 per cent, Other Pacific 6.1 per cent and New Zealand 4.9 per cent.

"The most common reason for visitors visiting the Solomon Islands during the quarter was for Holiday and Vacation 32.6 per cent. This was followed by Business and Conference 25.5 per cent, visiting for Other Reasons 24.5 per cent, Visiting friends and relatives 13.5 per cent and Transit and Stopover 3.9 per cent.

"The distribution of visitor arrivals by broad age groups for second quarter 2019 showed that 74.6 per cent of Visitors were in the 25 years to 64 years age range. The youngest age group, 0 -24 years, represented 12.8 per cent of the arrivals while the oldest age group, 65 years and over made up 9.3 per cent of total visitor arrivals. The remaining 3.3 per cent were visitors who did not state their age. Male visitors represented more than half of the total visitors' arriv-

als with 66.9 per cent and female visitors made up 33.1 per cent of arrivals during the quarter.

"Visitor by Occupation showed that the "Other occupation" category made up the largest percentage of occupations with 36.4 per cent during the quarter.

This was followed by "Professional and Technical" by 32.2 per cent, Administration and managerial position 10.5 per cent, No work 10 per cent, and Production and Related Work 3.4 per cent.

"The most popular carriers during the quarter were Solomon Airlines who carried 50.1 per cent of total visitors, followed by Air Niugini 21.8 per cent and Virgin Australia 16.6 per cent.

"Arrivals by country of residence to Munda, Western Province for the same quarter showed that Australians 81.1 per cent recorded the largest group of Visitors.

This was followed by visitors from United States of America with 7.7 per cent of the arrivals."



**BELOW:** Pictures took during the soft launch of the first National Consumer Price Index (NCPI) series, MoFT. *See story on page 1-7*



**ABOVE:** NSO staff during GIS training. **BELOW:** NSO held one day information session with Ministry of Agriculture and Livestock on the first ever national agriculture survey report.

*See story on the GIS training on page 8. However, stories on the launching of the agriculture report will be coming out in our next issue. (issue 12).*







NEWSFLASH

# National Agriculture survey report set for launching

The National Statistics Office (NSO) is ready to launch the first ever Solomon Islands National Agriculture Survey (final) report. The launching event is set for Thursday 14 November 2019 at the Mendana Hotel in Honiara. The launching will include the brief presentation of key findings, question and answer session from officials and distribution of the report copies to officials and the public. The programme will commence with a keynote address from the Government Statistician and Census Commissioner, Douglas Kimi, followed by remarks from a senior representative from the Ministry of Agriculture and Livestock

(MAL), remarks from Food and Agriculture Organisation (FAO) and World Bank reps. Minister for the Ministry of Finance and Treasury (MoFT), Hon. Hurry Kuma together with the Minister for the Ministry of Agriculture and Livestock (MAL) Hon. Augustine Auga are expected to launch the report. Government Senior Officers, Development Partners representatives, Heads of Private Sector agencies, Civil Society Officials and the media personnel and other invitees are expected to attend the launching program. The National Agriculture Survey Project 2017 (NASP) was implemented by the Solomon Islands National Statistics Of-

fice (SINSO) in partnership with the Ministry of Agriculture and Livestock (MAL). The NASP 2017 was the country's first ever national agriculture survey and thus covers all selected household agricultural holdings across the country. 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 based on the data collected. The survey provide benchmark data on land use, type of agriculture and related activities, structure of agricultural holdings and their main characteristics to support the stra-

tegic 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 was supported by the Solomon Islands Government (SIG) through the Ministry of Agriculture and Livestock (MAL) in partnership with the Ministry of Finance and Treasury through its National Statistics Office with the Technical support from Food and Agriculture Organisation (FAO) and Secretariat of the Pacific Community (SPC). Public are encourage to get a copy of the report from the National Statistics Office.

More on the agriculture report launching event will come out in our next issue (issue 12).

## 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

- Gov't acquires benchmark information on agriculture
- NSO scoop top awards
- Inflation stable in December 2019
- And more stories on the NSDS projects that the National Statistics Office is implementing.



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