
TURISM

NEWSLETTER | May 2021 Issue



A group picture of the first-ever tourism COVID-19 Extra care training at Heritage Park Hotel, Honiara. The training was co-facilitated by the Ministry of Culture and Tourism and the Ministry of Health and Medical Services in April 2021.

ABOUT THIS NEWSLETTER

This is the Tourism Division's first newsletter issue. It is a gateway to inform you, our readers of the work of the Division through its programs and activities.

It covers the tourism activities and events in the months of April and May 2021.

On that regard, the Tourism Division is really happy to share with you its other communications media, especially its two Facebook platforms– which your daily doses of information and entertaining posts are provided.

YOU CAN VISIT OUR:

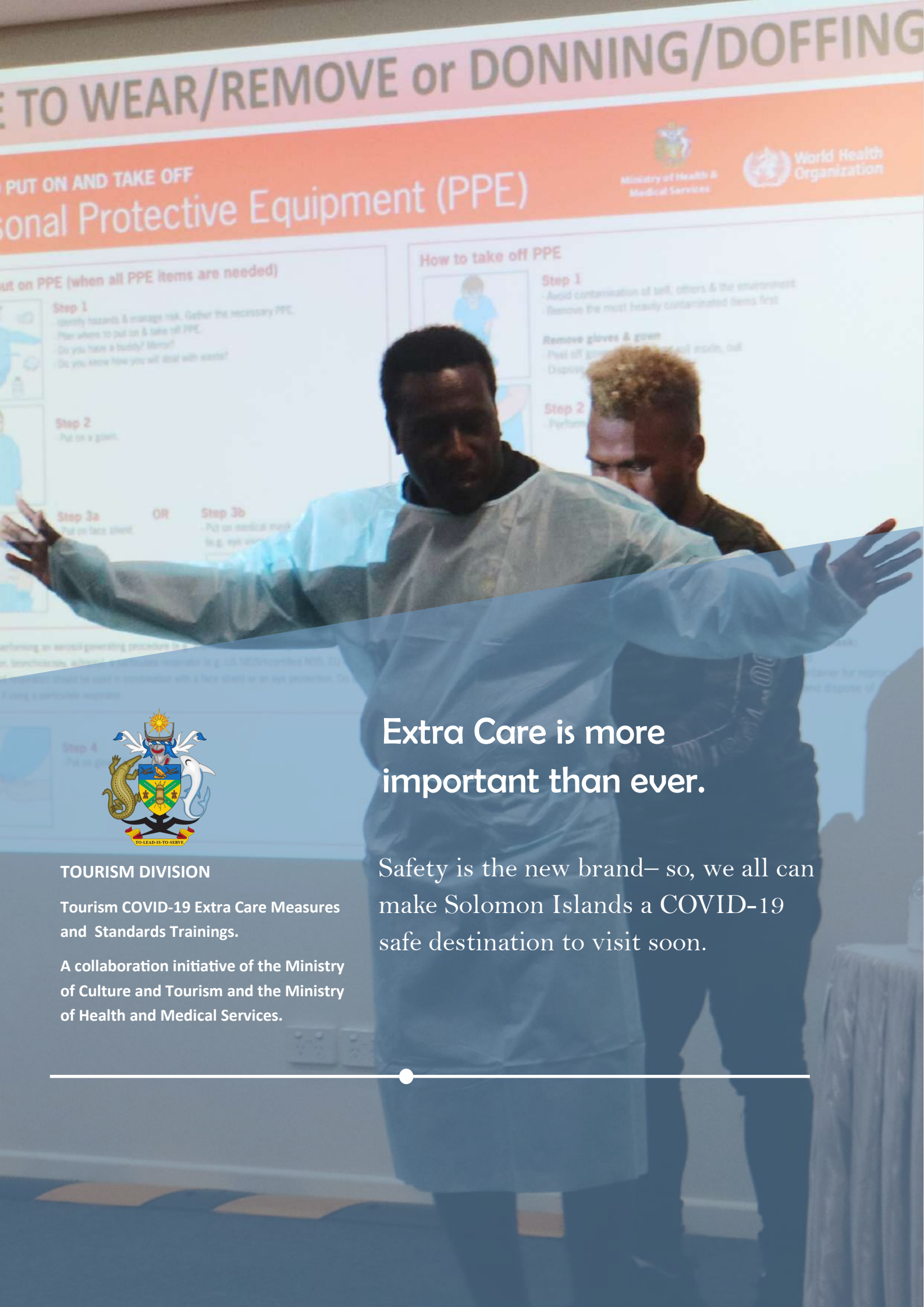


Tourism Blong lumi– Solomon Islands group: <https://www.facebook.com/groups/1504281239789497>

Tourism Division Page: <https://www.facebook.com/DivisionTourism>

Inside this issue

- Hotel workers trained and qualified in tourism COVID-19 Extra care
- Tourism COVID-19 Extra care rolls out to the Western border.
- More tourism updates



PUT ON AND TAKE OFF

Personal Protective Equipment (PPE)



Put on PPE (when all PPE items are needed)

- Step 1**
- Identify hazards & manage risk. Gather the necessary PPE.
 - Plan where to put on & take off PPE.
 - Do you have a buddy? Mentor?
 - Do you know how you will deal with waste?

- Step 2**
- Put on a gown.

- Step 3a**
- Put on face shield.

OR

- Step 3b**
- Put on medical mask (e.g. eye protection).

How to take off PPE

- Step 1**
- Avoid contamination of self, others & the environment.
 - Remove the most heavily contaminated items first.

- Remove gloves & gown**
- Peel off gloves & gown inside out.
 - Dispose of gloves & gown.

- Step 2**
- Perform hand hygiene.



TOURISM DIVISION

Tourism COVID-19 Extra Care Measures and Standards Trainings.

A collaboration initiative of the Ministry of Culture and Tourism and the Ministry of Health and Medical Services.

Extra Care is more important than ever.

Safety is the new brand— so, we all can make Solomon Islands a COVID-19 safe destination to visit soon.

MEET OUR TOURISM DIVISION TEAM

BARNEY Sivor
DIRECTOR

GREG Autaa
ACTING DEPUTY DIRECTOR

MARK Ligo
PRINCIPAL TOURISM OFFICER
Investment

RACHEL Sibisopere
PRINCIPAL TOURISM OFFICER
Training

ELDINE Devesi
PRINCIPAL TOURISM OFFICER
Monitoring and Evaluation
(on study leave)

HUDSON Kaefia
SENIOR TOURISM OFFICER
Product Development: Central Region

LAURIE Leketo
SENIOR TOURISM OFFICER
Research

JOAN Sautehi
SENIOR TOURISM OFFICER
Product Development: Eastern Region

EMILY Tavake
SENIOR TOURISM OFFICER
Product Development: Cruise Preparedness

JONATHAN Taisia
SENIOR TOURISM OFFICER
Product Development: Western Region

JOAN Suatehi
SENIOR TOURISM OFFICER
Eastern Region

TOBIAS Sandakabatu
SENIOR TOURISM OFFICER
Quality Standards



PUBLICATION TEAM

EDITOR IN CHIEF

Barney Sivor

SENIOR EDITOR & DESIGNER

Oligao Niniu

WRITER AND PHOTOGRAPHER

Oligao Niniu

TOURISM NEWSLETTER

TABLE OF CONTENTS

DIRECTOR'S DESK/ 1

FIRST TOURISM COVID-19 EXTRA CARE
TRAINING/ 3

TOURISM FAMILY FAREWELLED A LONG-
EST MEMBER/5

ONLINE VISITORS SURVEY TRAINING FOR
SI/7

KEY INITIATORS OF UMI TUGEDA TRAV-
EL HELD AWARENESS TO PRIVATE SEC-
TOR/ 9

TOURISM DIVISION & TOURISM SOLO-
MONS HELD WORKSHOP ON IOS DRAFT
REPORT 2021/ 10

MCT & DBSI PENNED THE GRANT AGREE-
MENT DEAL/ 11

PS OF FINANCE CONGRATULATED MCT
TO IMPLEMENT THE GOVERNMENT RE-
DIRECTION POLICY/ 12

TOURISM INDUSTRY STORIES:

TRAVEL LOCAL– Roderick Bay Beach Bunga-
low should a name for your next travel/ 14

IN THE FACE OF CRISIS– Kilo Paza keeps
Hope Alive for Titiru Eco Lodge/ 16

A STORY WITH GREG AUTAA/ 18

IUMI TUGEDA HOLIDAY PACKAGES/ 21

GLOBAL TOURISM FOCUS/ 23

TOURISM RESOURCES/ 25





BARNEY Sivoro

FROM THE DIRECTOR'S DESK

Halo everyone and welcome to the first edition of our “Tourism blo umi newsletter”.

The newsletter is published by the Tourism Department of the Ministry of Culture and Tourism to help our readers and industry partners and the public at large know what our government through the ministry is doing to help grow our tourism industry. We intend to use this as a medium in addition to our online platform (social media –Face Book) to share information about our work which you may find useful and educational.

Despite the challenging environment our sector is in at the moment due to the Covid 19 global pandemic, we are excited about some of the initiatives we are currently doing internally to navigate this situation. Since the global pandemic, our focus has been to explore our domestic tourism potential and opportunities while we plan on resetting the industry for future growth. This is guided by our industry 5-point recovery plan 2020-2035.

In this edition, you will read about some of the exciting news and updates. This includes the Umi Tugeda Holiday (Domestic Tourism Bubble); a joint initiative by 3 government ministries, Solomon Airlines and Tourism Solomons aimed at helping our airline and tourism operators

‘Since the global pandemic, our focus has been to explore our domestic tourism potential and opportunities while we plan on resetting the industry for future growth. ‘

remain in business while allowing public servants to enjoy real holiday to a destination

of their choice within Solomon Islands. The Covid 19 Extra Care Measures and standard is an initiative of the Ministry of Culture and Tourism in partnership with the Ministry of Health and Medical Service (MHMS) targeting our hotel and accommodation service providers to be Covid 19 informed and prepared. It is part of the industry response to re-align the sector with the new health and safety protocol, the DBSI tourism loan scheme aimed at helping operators to upgrade their properties and many more.

Next page ➤



I would like to acknowledge the partnership we have forged with the line ministries and industry partners and also the provincial government and financial institutions to actually realise some of these initiatives. We will continue to explore more opportunities where we can pool our resources together to achieve maximum results.

It is also worth noting and acknowledging our donor partners for their ongoing support. We will bring you more news and updates of their involvement in the upcoming edition.

Thank you for your time to read and hope you will find it interesting. If you want to know more information about what you read here, please drop us a line in our face Book page.

First– ever Tourism COVID-19 Extra Care training conducted in Honiara.

The Ministry of Culture and Tourism (MCT), in collaboration with the Ministry of Health and Medical Services (MHMS) conducted a first-ever Tourism COVID-19 Extra care training for the hotel workers in Honiara in the middle of April 2021.



ANDREW Nihopara, Permanent Secretary of the Ministry of Culture and Tourism addressed the participants of the Tourism COVID-19 Extra Care training at Heritage Park Hotel.



MINISTER of the Ministry of Culture and Tourism, Hon. Bartholomew Parapolo awarded a certificate of successful completion to a hotel worker during the certificate presentation evening at the Heritage Park Hotel.

The training was held from April 13, to April 16, 2021 at the Heritage Park Hotel conference room. About 107 participants attended two sessions of two days for each group.

"The COVID-19 extra care Measures and Standards training is clearly articulated in the Point two of the [Tourism sector] 5 Point Recovery plan. Aligning the local tourism sector to the new normal with the global COVID- 19 safe standards is crucial in order for the Solomon Islands to be ready to host international visitors when borders reopen", said Andrew Nihopara, Permanent Secretary Ministry of Culture and Tourism.

The training followed a three-year co-operation agreement signed by MCT and MHMS in August last year to incorporate COVID-19 extra care



public health and safety measures including Infection, Prevention and Control (IPC) into MCT's minimum standard requirement for tourism services mainly in accommodation, tours, transport and attractions.

As part of this cooperation, the training that week was to ensure the tourism sector is strategically and relevantly aligning itself to the “new normal”, or new way of living, working and interacting with other people to protect against COVID-19 and mitigate transmission.

“The pandemic created huge negative impact and subsequent high degree of uncertainty on the global, regional and the national tourism sector. While we cannot rush forward blindly into these uncertain times, we surely also cannot shut down. Like we took measures to mitigate and adapt to climate change, so must we also start making the necessary adjustments and taking the critical actions to adapt and be resilient to live with the impacts of COVID-19”, he added.

National Health Emergency Operation Centre (NHEOC) Incident Controller Dr Nemias Bainivalu in his remarks expressed appreciation towards the partnerships.

“Our core mandate is to protect and preserve the health of our people and this includes thousands of employees within the tourism sector, including our visitors, thus, the Ministry of Health and Medical Services is very pleased in the roll out of the partnerships agreement which includes this training this week”, explained Dr Bainivalu.



▲ The Minister of Culture and Tourism and officials from the two ministries posed with the certificates recipients; from top to the bottom: Heritage Park Hotel workers with their certificates; Kitano Mendana Hotel participants; and King Solomon Hotel workers.

The three hotels namely, Heritage Park Hotel, Kitano Mendana Hotel, and King Solomon Hotel are COVID-19 ready certified tourism operators.

“Similar trainings for the tourism workers we will conduct for the tourism businesses in the areas close to the Western border- Choiseul and Western Province; which are prone to any possible COVID-19 outbreak,” he added.



Mrs. Savita Nandan Makabo retired from the Tourism Division.

Tourism Family farewelled a longest serving Member

MR. SAVITA Nandan Makabo has worked for the Solomon Islands Government, with the Tourism Division for 32 years until her retirement in March 2021.

In a memorable farewell party at the School of Tourism and Hospitality, Solomon Islands National University; the staff of the Tourism Division, Tourism Solomons, Solomon Islands National University Tourism School, Solomon Airlines, tourism industry operators, their families, and friends farewelled, Mrs. Savita Nandan Makabo who has served the tourism sector under the Tourism Division, Ministry of Culture and Tourism for 32 years until her retirement in March 2021.

"To loose someone who has served for 32 years, it means we are losing 32 years of experience in our work," said Barney. "We started with only four staff, and have grown over the years to where our Division is today with her vision."

Among her contributions, she took up the leadership to develop the Solomon Islands Tourism Minimum Standards, the development of the School of Tourism and Hospitality building, she initiated the Tourism sector forums, and she organized some of the Tourism Division's past big events, and she served the tourism sector in good faith until her retirement.

"From me as your former Director, Savita. I have learnt a lot from you than you learned from me," added Sivoro.

He thanked her husband Tony Makabo and her two daughters for their tireless support during her employment with the Tourism Division.

"On a professional level. I have drawn a lot of lessons from you, Savita." Said Andrew Nihopara, Permanent Secretary of the Ministry of Culture and Tourism.

"She is a very caring person. When anyone from the Ministry was sick, she attended to him or her, or she ensured someone was attended to."

He encouraged Savita to move on, by using her expertise to continue in engaging with the tourism sector in the opportunities which will come ahead of her.

Nihopara thanked Savita for her long dedication to serve the Ministry of Culture and Tourism over the past 32 years.

“On a professional level. I have drawn a lot of lessons from you, Savita.”



FROM LEFT TO RIGHT: Director of Tourism and staff thanked Savita Nandan Makabo for her long dedication to serve the tourism sector with them. Savita thanked her working colleagues and many friends she met with the tourism sector.

ONLINE SURVEY

Training conducted in Solomon Islands.

New Zealand Tourism Research Institute, Auckland University of Technology conducted an online workshop- "Designing surveys" started on April 29, 2021 for the Solomon Islands.

The half day Zoom workshop was the first of a series of workshops targeting the tourism stakeholders who are dealing with the tourism research data: Customs, National Statistics office, Tourism Solomons, School of Tourism of the Solomon Islands National University, and the Tourism Division.

"The need in the Pacific is what type of data we need to develop products," Milne stated. "The idea is to try to have an ongoing survey. Not one of kind of survey."

He added that online survey data is a very important resource in decision making. And it can support the decision making over-time.

It is important this time to use the existing data to inform the decision making in the pandemic recovery.

Milne further highlighted that the benefits of online international visitors survey include;



ONLINE IVS participants from the Tourism Solomons and Tourism Division attended the first Zoom session of few workshops to come in May and June 2021.



Avoid airport hustles and visitor frustrations. And it encourages Customs Section and Tourism to working together in processing the visitors survey.

However, there are some challenges to the online visitors survey; how long the visitors will answer the survey questionnaire email.

Fortunately, Solomon Islands has a very good response rate around 20 percent from 2018 to 2020.

“This is a reflection of good cooperation between the stakeholders involved – Customs, Statistics office, and Tourism sector,” added Simon.

With the eye on the visitors retention in the post COVID-19, the online International Visitors Survey will be easily adjusted.

According to Laurie Leketo, the Tourism Division’s Senior Research officer that the training is timely and relevant to the country’s tourism sector in preparation for the recovery.

In the post covid-19 when the borders will open, the information about how safe the country visited is important. The tourism of the destination countries need informed data to manage the post COVID-19 travel trend.

The second online international visitors survey training will happen towards the end of May 2021.

In the post covid-19 when the borders will open, the information about how safe the country visited is important. The tourism of the destination countries need informed data to manage the post COVID-19 travel trend.



Key initiators of the Domestic Holiday Travel Bubble held awareness to the Private Sector.

The key organizers of the domestic holiday travel bubble held awareness to members of the private sector on the evening of May 28, 2021. The awareness session was held at the Solomon Airlines social club, Aero Sky at Henderson, East Honiara.

The Director of the Tourism Division, Barney Sivoro said that the 'lumi Tugeda' domestic holiday travel bubble is an initiative put together by the Ministry of Culture and Tourism, Ministry of Public Service, Ministry of Aviation, Solomon Airlines, and Tourism Solomons in early 2021, in response to the negative impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on the national Airlines and the tourism sector.

"It's part of our tourism sector Five Point Recovery Plan. The key objective of this initiative is to help our tourism operators and the Solomon Airlines to stay operational during this pandemic," highlighted Sivoro. "We approached the Ministry of Public Service, our biggest employer in the country. Now the Public Service is in the process of finalizing the packages for the public servants; from Level 10 and above, to travel on this package soon."

On that approach, the Chief Executive of the Tourism Solomons, Josefa Tuamoto appealed to the private sector to help the tourism operators who are now struggling to survive.

"As part of this initiative, you can organize some of your meetings; your board meetings in one of those tourism accommodations by using this initiative," added Tuamoto.

Collin Sigimanu, Head of the Operations of the Solomon Airlines thanked the partners in the lumi Tugeda holiday package to willingly support this initiative.

"I would like to thank the private operators who are willing to come on board. Many of these are small local tourism operators. And they are hoping to get a slice of benefits from this package," said Sigimanu.

He added that it is encouraging to know from the Airlines sales team that enquiries and bookings for the packages have been received.

That awareness evening was well attended by the private businesses and the members of the Solomon Islands Chamber of Commerce and Industries.

Tourism Division and Tourism Solomons Held workshop on IOS Draft Report 2021.

The staff of the Tourism Division and Tourism Solomons held a half day workshop on the IOS report 2021 on May 28, 2021, at the Solomon Islands National University School of Tourism and Hospitality, Kukum Campus.

The workshop covered the key recommendations of the IOS report 2021 regarded the tourism area. The recommendations touched on the tourism products developments, post COVID-19 Tourism impacts and visitor forecast, capacity building, and branding and marketing.

In terms of the post COVID-19 tourism, the reset of the tourism development in considering the influence of the Coronavirus on consumer attitudes, values, and trends is important for the Solomon Islands tourism.

There is an opportunity for the Solomon Islands as a tourist destination to focus on quality experience. The relative isolation of the Solomon Islands, it will remove the stressful urban life-style and associated health related impacts. It can send a positive message to the 'new normal' travel markets.

According the discussions, the visitor quality experience will be defined differently from the traditional visitor quality experience in the pre- COVID-19.



“Our tourism sector will experience change to the visitor’s needs. And health safety consideration will be among the requirements of how our visitors will evaluate their experiences during their holidays in our country,” said Andrew Nihopara, Permanent Secretary of the Ministry of Culture and Tourism.

When the international borders will be opened, the following critical steps are recommended in the report; health and sanitation protocols, testing and monitoring COVID-19 cases, and strengthening healthcare system.

Currently, the Tourism Division and the Ministry of Health and Medical Services are conducting the tourism COVID-19 Extra Care Measures and Standards trainings for the tourism operators. The trainings have followed the World Health Organization COVID-19 Standard practices.

The participants had been divided into four groups to discuss the four key areas; tourism products development, tourists arrivals trend, branding and marketing, and capacity building. Then the individual groups presented their discussed recommendations to the whole workshop participants.

That workshop was one of the series of collective discussions, meetings, and workshop to reset the country’s tourism for the reopening of the international borders and international tourism.



MCT And DBSI Penned the Grant Agreement Deal.

The Ministry of Culture and Tourism (MCT) and the Development Bank of Solomon Islands (DBSI) signed a grant agreement for the tourism loan on May 27, 2021, at the DBSI office.

In acknowledging this new initiative for the tourism to take on more commercial approach to development, the Permanent Secretary of the Ministry of Culture and Tourism, Andrew Nihopara said the transferring the tourism development grants to DBSI is a Government's redirection policy towards more commercial approach.

The DBSI Chief Executive Officer, Tukana Bovoro thanked the Ministry of Culture of Tourism to allocate the fund towards the tourism loaning program with DBSI.

"In our discussion, what we want to do is to go and support the existing tourism operators. This is the time for fixing their rooms, getting water pumps, solar lights, and whatever they need to prepare for when the borders are open," he added.

Because of the limited fund available. The loan program will target the low hanging fruits. The DBSI and MCT will try to help them by making criteria which the bank can be sustainable. And the loans can be repaid.

"If everything works out. These two million dollars we can really support a lot of tourism operators. We want to identify and support the low hanging fruits to make them successful before broaden our scope of our assistance."

The brief signing of the grant agreement was witnessed by the staff of DBSI and MCT, and media.

PS of Finance and Treasury Congratulated MCT to implement the Government Redirection Policy.

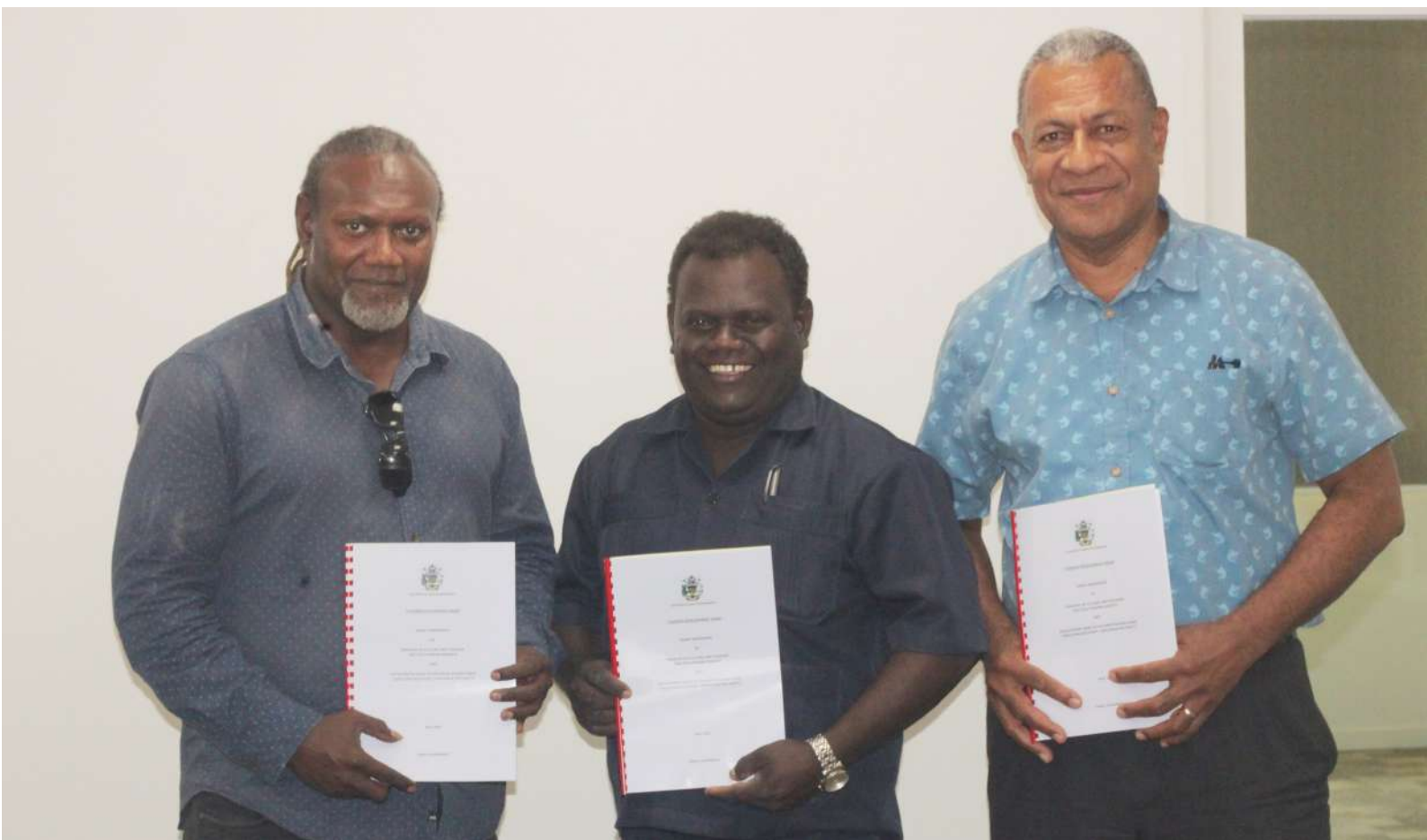
Permanent Secretary of the Ministry of Finance and Treasury and DBSI Chairman, Dentana Makini congratulated the Ministry of Culture and Tourism to be among the first ministries to implement the government plan and budget 2021.



“One of the DBSI policies of the resumption is to ensure that institution carries forward some of the important policies of the government— where the government wants to promote certain activities in our economy,”
said Makini.

Permanent Secretary of the Ministry of Finance and Treasury and Chairman of the Development Bank of Solomon Islands (DBSI), Dentana Makini congratulated the Permanent Secretary of the Ministry of Culture and Tourism and his staff to be the first Ministry to implement the National Government’s redirection policy in diverting the tourism development grant to DBSI for the tourism loan scheme. And also it is one of the Ministries already progressing with the implementation of the 2021 budget.

Next page ➤



Left to right: Permanent Secretary of MCT, Andrew Nihopara, Permanent Secretary of MFOT, Dentana Makini, and Chief Executive Officer of DBSI, Tukana Bovoro posing with the signed grant agreement documents.

“One of the DBSI policies of the resumption is to ensure that institution carries forward some of the important policies of the government— where the government wants to promote certain activities in our economy,” said Makini.

“The signing of the grant agreement is one of the fulfilment of that policy.”

He said the Bank will manage the facility for the long term, to benefit the tourism operators.

It was the first arrangement of the government through the ministries with the DBSI.

He said more of such arrangements would be coming later in the near future.

As far as the Bank is concerned, there is a mechanism in place for the fund to be well managed to serve its purpose of lending the loans to the existing tourism operators. ●

TRAVEL LOCAL

Roderick Bay Beach Bungalow should be a name for your next travel.

BY Oligao Niniu, Tourism Division's PR personnel has traveled to Roderick Bay, Sand fly Passage— Central Islands in May 2021.

I had an opportunity to join a day trip with four Filipinos staying and working in Honiara. They chose the Roderick Bay Beach Bungalow to celebrate the mother's day 2021.

Like many tourism businesses during this COVID-19 pandemic, the Roderick Bay Beach Bungalow in the Sandfly Passage, Big Gela is on the survival mode, targeting the Honiara leisure travelers. For the past months, since April 2020, there have been inflows of day visitors and short stayers at that accommodation.

We enjoyed the day; snorkeled the colorful corals near the World Discoverer— an expedition vessel which on its way from Laulasi in Langa Langa Lagoon, Malaita, struck an charted rock or reef in the Sand fly Passage and wrecked along the Roderick Bay beach in year 2000.

The day trippers enjoyed a zip line from that vessel to the shore and paddled a dugout canoe.

It's true what Patrick Sara, the owner of the Roderick Bay Beach Bungalow said that the Roderick Bay has a lot to offer to tourism.



Two bungalows which the visitors to there can accommodate in during their stay.

Community benefits

Beyond Sara's tourism rhetoric words. What caught my attention was his purpose to go into the tourism business.

"I have a vision to engage the community, especially the young people to utilize their resources in the tourism development," said Sara. "Most of our family members and community are not formally educated enough to get formal jobs. I decided to return home after I completed my education to serve my community in whatever I could."

Six local carvers are usually displaying their artifacts to the visitors at the Roderick Bay Beach Bungalow; a young man by the name of Mathew Paia is a lead tour guide on the Susupu Hill trail; and women are working as house keepers, gardeners, and cooks.

Next page ➤

Sara admitted that retaining staff at a time when there is no business has been costly; as such, he has taken the biggest sacrifice to ensure the survival and sustainability of the company.

"It's times like this that the company reinforces its brand and builds its goodwill and loyalty with both staff and customers," he added.

Welcoming the domestic visitors

"For the meantime, we are concentrating on the domestic leisure market. And also to maintain our facilities, and remain operational," said Sara. "I am optimistic that soon the international visitors will return to visit us.

"With our dynamic approach to the social media marketing, especially our Facebook page, we received an increase in the customer enquiries and bookings in the past months."

Things to enjoy

Roderick Bay is such an amazing visitor's destination. It offers the perfect choices for snorkelers, holiday makers- and the perfect backdrop for my next photography shot!

As we climbed the Susupu Hill trail, I could sense how passionate my young tour guide, Mathew Paia was- in sharing a part of his home with me- the magnificent views of the different bays, coastlines, coral reefs below, and the islands in the distance which form that part of the Central Islands.

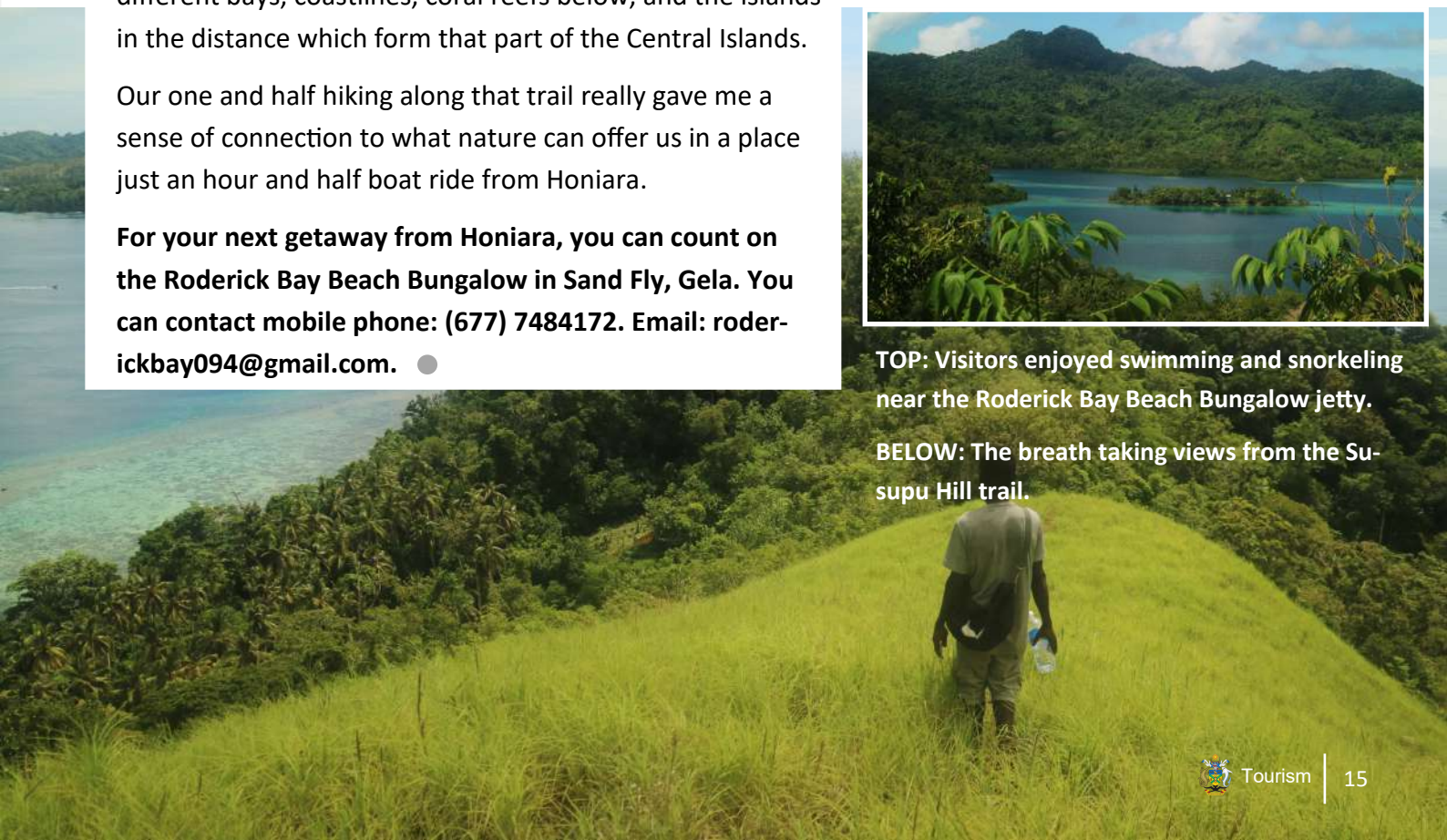
Our one and half hiking along that trail really gave me a sense of connection to what nature can offer us in a place just an hour and half boat ride from Honiara.

For your next getaway from Honiara, you can count on the Roderick Bay Beach Bungalow in Sand Fly, Gela. You can contact mobile phone: (677) 7484172. Email: roderickbay094@gmail.com. ●



TOP: Visitors enjoyed swimming and snorkeling near the Roderick Bay Beach Bungalow jetty.

BELOW: The breath taking views from the Susupu Hill trail.



IN THE FACE OF CRISIS

Kilo Paza keeps hope alive for Titiru Eco Lodge.



Words by Oligao Niniu, and photographs from the Titiru Eco Lodge. Mr. and Mrs. Paza, the owners of the Titiru Eco Lodge.

Titiru Eco Lodge gives a picture of what is like to be a tourism operator, when the COVID-19 pandemic affected the local and global tourism since March 2020 until 2021. According to its owner, Mr. Kilo Paza, the international arrivals dropped totally to zero because of the international borders closed.

“It was a good start for us in 2020, when the international booking was very good- with a worth of Solomon \$100,000 in the month of April and May only,” said Paza. “Unfortunately, it happened the opposite.

“I worried for the future of the business, of what I would do for its continuity.”

With perseverance and determination, Kilo never quit his business operation. Instead, he pivoted to domestic travel markets to save his day.

With perseverance and determination, Kilo never quit his business operation. Instead, he pivoted to domestic travel markets to save his day.

Next page ➡

“I got advices from few friends to consider targeting the domestic visitors from Honiara and nearby in Noro and Munda. And now three local packages for local markets are now running”, he added.

Though outgoing he was, Kilo took some calculated risks to approach the idea of developing the long stayers from Honiara, the day visitors from Noro and Munda, and of course the lumi Tugeda package introduced by the Government and the tourism stakeholders.

“Titiru Eco Lodge really benefits from these domestic markets, despite the international border closures. In the past months, our business received steady incomes from local tourism between \$5000 to \$15,000 monthly. For me, it’s enough to keep us going forward”, Paza confidently elaborated. “Domestic tourism will be staying with tourism, even when the inflow of the international tourists when the border restrictions are eased and confidence of travelers return to travel.”

He is optimistic about the future of tourism in the country by saying, “I am dreaming that one day the international visitors will return here. But we have to prepare for that, by maintaining our property and develop more activities for them.”

He was in Honiara, shopped for more mattresses- because his business is having an increase demand from the locals traveling for meetings, events, and those on business; when I caught up with him for the interview.

Learning from his experience during the COVID-19 related crisis, Paza has put it simply.

“Entrepreneurs must learn to prepare for the unknown. And be diligently managing their businesses. It’s a game changer which can enable them through the difficult times and become stronger.

But he said that it’s not the right time for us to make excuses for not trying. Because if our tourism has been one of the most affected sectors, the collective efforts of the governments, tourism industry members, other stakeholders, and community are more crucial than ever; to overcome the pain that our tourism has gone through, and a renewed hope can be realized soon.

To support Kilo Paza with his effort to keep his vision for the rural communities alive, you can simply book a holiday package at the Titiru Eco Lodge Facebook Page or call 7902696 . ●



A series of pictures of an overwater bungalow at the Titiru Eco Lodge in Rendova Island.

A Story With Gregory Autaa



GREGORY AUTAA

Acting Deputy Director

Education Background

I started my primary education at Ngalibiu Primary School, Guadalcanal Plains, in 1983.

Then I move back to my home village at Radesifolomae, Langa Langa Lagoon and continue with my primary education at Arabala Primary school in Malaita province attending grades 1- 4 from 1984 – 1988, however, due to the financial burden five of us (siblings) had on my father’s financial capability- in terms of meeting our school fees and other needs, my bigger sister had to move me with her. I left with her family in early 1989, and did my grades 5 and 6 at Belaha primary school, Belaha village in malango ward, central Guadalcanal.

I passed my secondary school examination in 1990 and did my form one to form five at Ruavatu Provincial Secondary School from 1991-1995. 1996, after passing my examination for forms six I was very lucky and fortunate to continue with my Form 6 studies at King George Sixth National Secondary School.

In 1997, I started my pre-degree foundation studies in Arts at Solomon Islands College of Higher Education (SICHE), which is now Solomon Islands National University (SINU), and in 1998, I was on a government scholarship to do my Bachelor’s degree studies in Tourism Management and Public Administration at the University of the South Pacific (USP), Laucala Campus in Fiji.

Year 2000, which supposed to be my final year- was a challenging year for me. Due to the coup in Fiji which was led by George Speight, so as the political instability in our country as well- the government made a decision for us to return home in mid-June 2000.

The rest of year 2000, due to the Ethnic Tension I spent most of the time at my home village in Langa Langa Lagoon.

Prosperously, in early 2021 I finally return to Fiji and completed my studies and graduated with my degree by end of that school academic year.

Next page ➤

Work Background

In 2006, I started as a Senior Tourism Officer for the Ministry of Culture and Tourism- purposely responsible for the central region of Solomon Islands; Guadalcanal and Honiara, Central Islands, and Malaita Province. My job responsibilities were very much on giving people information about tourism related business opportunities in the country, did site assessments on the potential sites for tourism businesses; such as homestays and eco-lodges, did Monitoring and Evaluations on approved projects funded by the ministry, provided trainings and community awareness programs related to the tourism to our people of all the corners of the country.

Accordingly, that was one of the jobs I really enjoyed and the fact that you traveled a lot and then experienced different cultural backgrounds with the people within the country.

And also the fact that this is the only times in life that you feel you gave back something to you people which something I'm very proud off.

And also the fact that this is the only times in life that you feel you gave back something to you people which something I'm very proud off.

Challenges

This job demands a lot of travel and with the geographical setting of our country- one has to be very careful- since most of the traveling is by sea in an outboard motor engine.

With the impact of climate change, the weather is realistically unpredictable. A classic example is in 2008 when our team led by our director travel from Santa Cruz island in Temotu Province to Reef Islands quiet very late in the evening as the sun sets, a very challenging trip but we fortunately arrive safely at Reef Islands at around 11:30pm in the night. Other challenges I face with over the years in the job are as follows;

- How you deal with people from different cultural backgrounds within the country. Its quiet difficult at times in terms of decision making but very enjoyable too, as you come to realise the potential they have for tourism.
- Land dispute over a potential site for tourism
- Change of government policies relating to tourism funding's for 2012 and 2013 with the endorsement and approval as granted by the member of parliament for each constituency and not based on the tourism division technical staff assessments.
- The decision which I made in rejecting a scholarship directly endorsed and approved by Public Service for me to do my Master's Degree in Mexico.

Next page ➤



.....
Continues from previous page

Apart from the challenges and with my contribution within the ministry as a public servant officer, there are quiet few successful projects which I'm proud of through my profound advises and close collaboration with the people since day one- today, they are now successfully operating as tourism business entities. And to name a few; Ginger Beach Retreat and Parangiju Inland Mountain Lodge.

Aspiration

My new appointment as the acting Deputy Director of the tourism Division, I am always inspired by the level of team work our staff continue to maintain within the ministry, and most profoundly with the leadership of our Director who always provides us with the guidance with our planned activities.

As such, my focus now is to ensure all my staff are actively participate in all our planned activities within the time frame allocated. Especially in achieving our divisional goals and objectives for the benefit of our people and this nation Solomon Islands.

Further to that, making sure staff officers get the understanding of having the ownership of the plan activities each want to implement and also having the responsibility that all individual staff plan activities are positively and successfully implemented within the time frame allocated.

And finally, due to the limited time frames we normally have and with the responsibility of each staff, other staff officers will be high on alert to provide support to others who are heavily involved with their line activities- just to make sure each have the honor of undertaking our colleague's responsibility as part of relieving their work load purposely in achieving it within the timeframe allocated. ●

.....

IUMI TUGEDA HOLIDAYS



Solomon Airlines in partnership with Tourism Solomons and the Ministry of Culture and Tourism has launched Solomon Islands largest ever domestic tourism initiative called 'Iumi Tugeda Holidays'. The domestic tourism program across 11 destinations in 8 provinces offers a year-long program of massive savings on holidays throughout 2021 to support the local industry and encourage greater travel throughout the Solomon Islands.

The holiday specials go on sale 1 March 2021 and will remain on sale until 28 February 2022 for travel throughout 2021 through to 31 March 2022. Close to 40 accommodation operators are participating in the campaign which offers savings of up to 50% at accommodation around the country combined with Solomon Airlines discounted airfares.

Flights from Honiara to Fera



Travel Dates

All year round

ECONOMY
from **\$188** AUD*
ONE-WAY FARES



Travel Dates

Mon 01 Mar 2021 - Thu 31 Mar 2022

ECONOMY
from **\$431** AUD*
RETURN FARES

Return airfare and 3 nights at Ghaseali Island Resort. Per adult based on 2 guests. Conditions apply.



Travel Dates

Mon 01 Mar 2021 - Thu 31 Mar 2022

ECONOMY
from **\$442** AUD*
RETURN FARES

Return airfare and 3 nights at Maringe Lagoon Lodge. Per adult based on 2 guests. Conditions apply.

Contact the Holiday Sales team on (+677) 36362 or holidays@flysolomons.com



PATA joins The Future of Tourism Coalition to chart a more sustainable direction for tourism as the sector recovers from COVID-19.

BANGKOK, May 11, 2021 — The Pacific Asia Travel Association (PATA) has today become a signatory of The Future of Tourism Coalition with the global mission to place destinations at the centre of recovery strategies.

PATA CEO Dr Mario Hardy said, “While decades of growth before the outbreak of the COVID-19 pandemic have been celebrated by the travel and tourism industry, it has also placed many destinations at risk – environmentally, culturally, socially, and financially. As the industry looks towards recovery, it must realign around a strong set of principles in order to bring about long term sustainable and equitable growth. We encourage all of our members, partners, and affiliated organisations and businesses to show their support and become part of the movement by joining as a signatory to this initiative.”

The Coalition was formed in 2020 by six global non-governmental organisations (NGOs) including the Center for Responsible Travel (CREST), Destination Stewardship Center, Green Destinations, Sustainable Travel International, Tourism Cares, and the Travel Foundation. Today almost 550 organisations have since signed up to the Coalition’s 13 Guiding Principles, which place destination needs at the centre of tourism’s new future. The Guiding Principles outline a bold vision for tourism’s path forward and is calling on tourism agencies, travel companies, governments, investors, non-governmental organizations, and destination communities to commit to them.

Jeremy Sampson, CEO of the Travel Foundation and Chair of The Future of Tourism Coalition, said, “With PATA’s support for the Coalition our initiative is significantly strengthened. PATA was an early advocate of sustainable tourism within the Asia Pacific and, by joining The Future of Tourism community, it can facilitate a greater flow of best practice to and from the region. The Coalition’s aim is to create a truly global movement of organisations committed to a better future based on its guiding principles, and representing the broad diversity of perspectives, needs, capabilities and expertise within tourism. We have over 500 organisations on board so far and, with PATA’s support and guidance, we’ve just taken another huge stride towards this shared goal.”

The Guiding Principles provide a clear moral and business imperative for building a healthier tourism industry while protecting the places and people on which it depends. Those Principles call for signatories to:

1. See the whole picture
2. Use sustainability standards
3. Collaborate in destination management

4. Choose quality over quantity
5. Demand fair income distribution
6. Reduce tourism's burden
7. Redefine economic success
8. Mitigate climate impacts
9. Close the loop on resources
10. Contain tourism's land use
11. Diversify source markets
12. Protect sense of place
13. Operate business responsibly

The foundation of these principles was built on a firm belief that taking a holistic approach to responsible and sustainable tourism is the only way to secure the future the Coalition stands for.

The Coalition recognizes that a strong commitment to diversity, equity and inclusion is fundamental to achieving its Guiding Principles. The travel and tourism industry has much work to do, and the Coalition will act with intentionality in addressing the role that racial and environmental justice play in creating a more equitable tourism economy. The Coalition members have made a commitment to listen, learn, and seek change by engaging with signatories and other entities as a part of that journey, and this work will be guided by Global Sustainable Tourism Council (GSTC) indicators and criteria related to equity, inclusion, and non-discrimination.

The path to change is a journey and lasting solutions take time. The Coalition will support the industry by providing the tools, guidance and collaboration to ensure a stronger path forward and encourage a diverse and inclusive set of signatories to sign on and share their perspectives and experiences to collectively work toward a more just, equitable, and sustainable future for all.

Interested travel and tourism stakeholders are invited to show their support and become part of the movement by joining as signatories. Visit www.futureoftourism.org.

Source : PATA, 11th May 2021

RESOURCES

TOWARDS A CODE OF PRACTICE FOR THE TOURISM INDUSTRY

Code of Practice for the Tourism Sector

- Provide consistent and efficient services to every guest.
- Be honest and fair with guests at all times.
- Marketing materials should be accurate and truthful about prices and services provided.
- Complaints are dealt with courteously and issues are attended to promptly.
- Staff are treated fairly and given proper training and instruction in their area of work.
- Support free and fair competition and promote cooperation within the tourism sector.
- The business and its staff complies with all local laws and regulations.
- High standards of cleanliness and hygiene are observed in all aspects of the business.
- Maintain facilities, equipment and transport used by guest to the highest standards.
- Care is taken in the operation and maintenance of facilities to ensure a safe environment for guests and staff.
- Staff and management are trained and equipped to deal with potential emergencies.
- Appropriate security is provided for customers and their possessions, including secure accommodation and storage.
- Tourism activities must not harm the environment or wildlife of Solomon Islands.
- Tourism businesses are respectful of local cultural protocol and where necessary tourists are informed about local customs.
- Efforts are made to increase the efficiency of resource and utility usage.
- Care is taken to reduce waste to a minimum, and dispose of it responsibly.



COVID-19 SAFETY TIPS

RESOURCES

Hygiene

Keep the employees and customers safe is the utmost importance and having right policies, procedures, and processes in place will help everyone practice good hygiene to reduce risk of virus spreading.

Staff

It is essential that you train your team on the best hygiene practices to keep both them and your customers safe.

These practices include:

- Washing hands regularly for at least 20 seconds and changing gloves (if using) between activities.
- Staying home if feeling unwell.
- Giving cutlery and condiments to customers directly to limit self-servicing.
- Wearing masks if working in close proximity to other staff or customers.

Guests and Patrons

It's important to put strict hygiene policies and procedures in place to help keep your customers safe. Measures you can take include:

- Providing hand sanitiser if hand washing facilities are unavailable.
- Having a booking system that allows for the right data collection to help with contact tracing.

Protect yourself, protect others from Coronavirus

Cleaning

Taking the time to increase cleaning schedules and regularly disinfect surfaces will help keep your business clean and your customers reassured.

- Make sure your workplace is clean and hygienic. surfaces (e.g. desks and tables) and objects (e.g. telephones, keyboards) need to be wiped with disinfectant regularly.
- Promote good respiratory hygiene – provide paper tissues and closed bins for hygienic disposal.

Physical distance

- Employees should consult national travel advice before going on business trips. Those at higher risk of serious illness should avoid travel (e.g. older people and those with medical conditions such as diabetes, heart and lung disease).
- While traveling, employees should wash their hands regularly and stay at least one metre away from people who are coughing or sneezing. Ensure employees know what to do if they feel ill while traveling.
- Employees returning from travel should monitor for symptoms for 14 days. Anyone developing symptoms should stay at home and self-isolate.
- Make a plan for what to do if someone becomes ill with suspected COVID-19, and a plan for how to keep your business running if employees are sick or can't come to work.

For more information contact the Public Health Surveillance Centre on 23650 or 7522202.



T **OURISM**

Newsletter Issue 1