

SINSO NEWS

Your monthly guide to the Solomon Islands National Statistics Office News, Information and Events Issue no: 15 Jan—Mar 2022

NSO Staff Rising against the Corona Virus : Work must go on



Also in the stories:

- ♦ 2019 Census Analysis progresses
- ♦ International Arrivals increase in late 2021 amidst declining trends
- ♦ NSO Staff share COVID-19 experiences

LET'S TALK

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Government Statistician Douglas Kimi's welcome message to readers



Hello and a happy New Year 2022!

On behalf of the Solomon Islands National Statistics Office (SINSO), I take this opportunity to welcome you to the 15th issue of our monthly E-newsletter.

This is a wonderful opportunity for the NSO 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 15th edition and thus we are 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 NSO.

SINSO like the rest of the government and private sectors has been affected by the current Corona-virus pandemic. But we are moving on with our workplans for 2022.

One of our main projects is of course the 2019 Census survey. We are now progressing on the analysis of the results and the official results should be launched anytime this year if all goes according to plan.

Since it was the beginning of the year, work is picking up again in other areas of statistics apart from work being progressed in finalizing the 2019 Census editing phase towards final analysis, and plans for release of final results in 3-4th quarter this year.

We hope to bring you more stories in our next edition for the months of April to June.

SINSO continues to acknowledge the significance of the internet and how 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 & links: <https://solomons.gov.sb/ministry-of-finance-and-treasury/solomon-islands-national-statistics-office/>.

The newsletter comes out at the end of every month and recently on a quarterly frequency depending on the periodic accumulation of statistical news and events.

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.

NSO commences analysis for 2019 Census results

The National Statistics Office has begun analysing the results of the 2019 Census as it works towards releasing the official results sometime this year. The office is rising above the challenges and effects of the COVID-19 as it strives to progress work and complete the 2019 Census.

Following a meeting on Wednesday 23rd March the week before, the officers within the different units in the office were separated into pairs and groups, and allocated different tables collected in the 2019 survey which they will study.

They will write up reports on their findings and submit them to the Census Consultant Dr. Micheal Jonathan Levine to carry out the final edits. The reports will subsequently make up the official 2019 Census results.

The November riots in Honiara in 2021 plus the COVID-19 outbreak in the country in the beginning of the year imposed a significant set-back to the progress of the census results, but the office is committed to seeing its completion right up to the final launch and dissemination this year.

On Wednesday 30th March, the first group including the Deputy Census Commissioner Micheal Dimola, Chief Statistician Social Anterlyn Tuzakana, NSDS Project Manager Anna Pitaboe and other statisticians sat down together to set their workplan.

“We are studying the first two chapters”, Mrs Tuzakana said.

“These two chapters are on Population Profile and Change, and Urbanisation. This will take us about two weeks or more to complete.”

Other groups will work on their analysis when they receive their tables. The office included most of its new staff in the process to build up their capabilities. Some stakeholders will also participate.

The provisional results for the 2019 Census was released in November 16th 2020, which revealed that as of midnight (Census Night) of 24 November 2019, the country’s provisional population count was approximately 721,455.

This is an increase of approximately 169,930 people (30.8%) since the last 2009 Census.

NSO will launch the final results of the survey anytime this year and they are expected to be slightly different compared to the provisional results.



NSO Staff begin their analysis on the 2019 Census.

CPI rises 0.4 percent in December 2021

The National Consumer Price Index (CPI) rose 0.4 percent to 107.8 in December 2021.

Releasing the bulletin on Wednesday 9th March 2022, Government Statistician Douglas Kimi said through the year, compared to the same month in 2020, the National CPI rose 3.5 percent.

He said the most significant changes by major expenditure groups from the previous month include:

- Food and Non-Alcoholic Beverages: (+0.7%),
- Alcoholic beverages, tobacco and narcotics: (-0.9%),
- Housing, water, electricity, gas and other fuels: (+1.5%),
- Furnishings, household equipment and routine household maintenance: (+0.2%),
- Transport: (+0.3%),

Mr Kimi said the Solomon Islands inflation rate for the month of December 2021 calculated on a 3-months moving average basis was +2.5%.

“The corresponding inflation rates for imported items was 4.0%, while other (domestic) items inflation rate was +1.9%.

“At the end of the calendar year, the annual inflation rate ending December 2021 dropped -0.1 percent compared to 3.0 percent in 2020.”

Meanwhile, the headline inflation rates for the respective provincial towns calculated on a 3-months moving average basis were: Honiara: (+2.8%); Auki: (+1.5%); Gizo: (+8.4%); and Noro: (-1.5%).

The report shows by the end of the calendar year, their corresponding annual inflation rates were: Honiara: (+0.1%); Auki: (+0.6%); Gizo: (+8.2%); and Noro: (-4.7%).

The main percentage changes in index by CPI provincial town and expenditure group from the previous month of November show the following:

The CPI for Honiara rose 0.5 percent driven by significant price movements in the following groups:

- Food and Non-Alcoholic Beverages: (+0.8%) e
- Alcoholic beverages, tobacco and narcotics: (-1.0%)
- Housing, water, electricity, gas and other fuels: (+1.8%)
- Furnishings, household equipment and routine household maintenance: (+0.2%)
- Transport: (+0.3%)

The CPI for Auki rose 0.4 percent with the main contributor of price movement being Housing, water, electricity, gas and other fuels (+2.2%).

The CPI for Gizo dropped 0.3 percent owing to movements in the following categories:

- Food and Non-Alcoholic Beverages: (-1.3%)

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□ Housing, water, electricity, gas and other fuels: (+1.8%)

The CPI for Noro increased 0.8 percent driven by these main contributors:

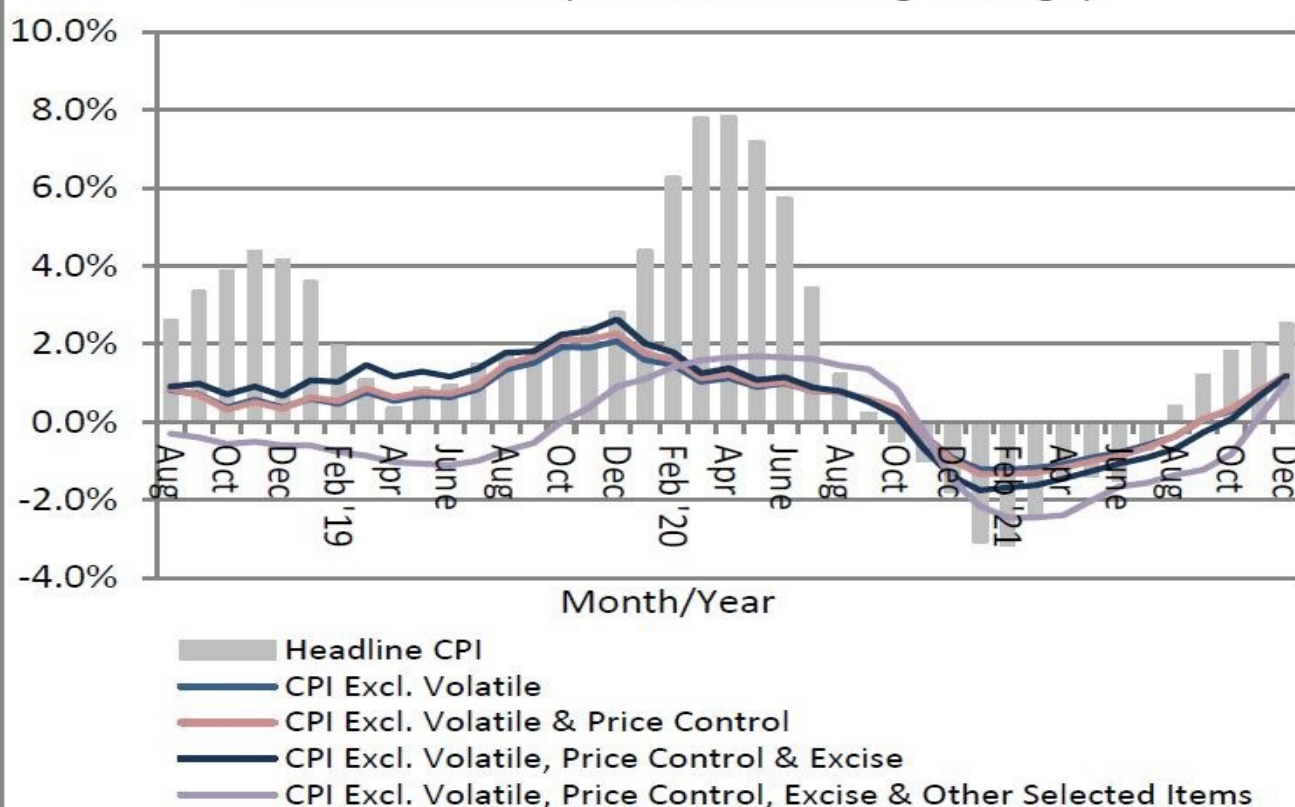
- Food and Non-alcoholic Beverages: (+1.1%)
- Alcoholic beverages, tobacco & narcotics: (-0.3%)
- Housing, water, electricity, gas and other fuels: (+2.7%)
- Transport: (+0.3%)

Food and Non-alcoholic beverages for the month of December 2021 was 0.7 percent

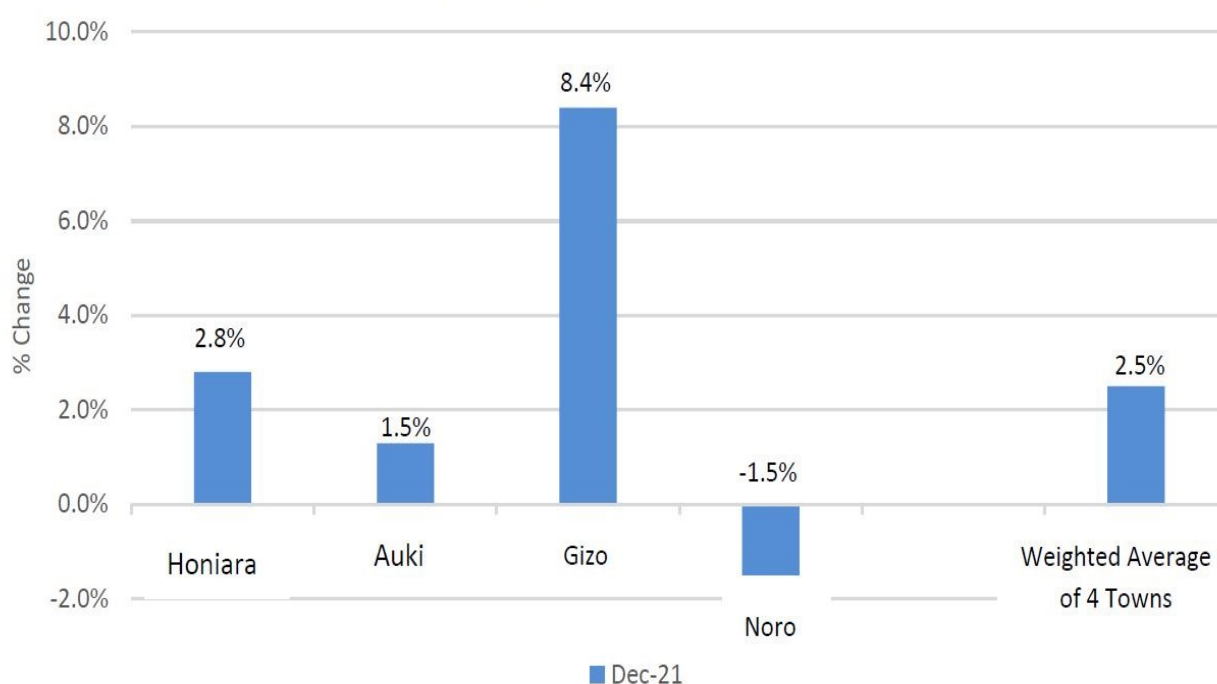


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Graph 2: Solomon Islands Annual Headline and Underlying Inflation Rates (3 months moving average)



Graph 3: All Groups Percentage Changes by CPI Towns
(3 months moving average)



Visitor arrivals continue to decline due to COVID-19 restrictions

The total visitor arrivals to Solomon Islands over the past years shows an increasing trend from 21,623 visitors in 2015 but significantly declined in 2020 to 4,440 visitors due to COVID restriction and measures imposed by Solomon Island Government.

The latest report on international arrivals was released by the National Statistics Office on Wednesday 2nd March 2022.

Government Statistician Douglas Kimi said a decrease of 84.7% of visitors was recorded in 2020 compared to 2019 with 28,930 visitors.

“Returning residents account for more than half (57.8%) of the total arrivals in 2020. This is followed by Visitor Arrivals with 41.4% and Intending Residents with less than 1% of the arrivals.

“Arrivals by category shows that both Returning residents and Visitors make up the largest proportion of all arrivals, increasing from 90.4% in 2014 to 99.4% in 2019, and 99.1% in 2020, although declining in numbers in 2020.”

Mr Kimi said intending residents have declined from 6.7% of all arrivals in 2015 to 0.9% in 2020.

At the same time, a decrease in Visitor arrivals was evident for all countries of residence in 2020 compared to 2019 arrivals.

A significant decline was recorded for the following markets: Vanuatu (92.8%), China (92.4%), Hong Kong (89.8%), United States of America (89.2%), United Kingdom (88.0%), Japan (86.3%), Germany (85.7%), France (85.6%) and other Asia (85.4%).

Table 1: Arrivals by Category: 2014 to 2020

Year	Returning Resident	Intending Resident	Visitors	Total
2014	16,272	3,873	20,070	40,215
2015	19,244	2,953	21,623	43,820
2016	22,298	1,256	23,194	46,748
2017	26,408	706	25,709	52,823
2018	28,227	345	27,866	56,438
2019	26,774	360	28,930	56,064
2020	6,202	93	4,440	10,734
Percentage Change (%)				
2014-2015	18.3	-23.8	7.7	9.0
2015-2016	15.9	-57.5	7.3	6.7
2016-2017	18.4	-43.8	10.8	13.0
2017-2018	6.9	-51.1	8.4	6.8
2018-2019	-5.1	4.3	3.8	-0.7
2019-2020	-76.8	-74.2	-84.7	-80.9

International Arrivals in Solomon Islands increase in late 2021 amidst a declining trend



A flight from Nauru arriving at the Honiara International airport.

The National Statistics Office has released the final International Arrivals bulletin for 2021, which saw an increase of visitors to Solomon Islands in quarter four compared to the previous quarter, overshadowed by a declining trend since March 2020 as a consequence of the SOPE restrictions on travel.

Government Statistician Douglas Kimi released the report on Monday 28th March 2022.

“The total arrivals for fourth quarter of 2021 were 1,174. This is an increase of 1,331.7% compared to the previous quarter (3rd quarter 2021).

“However, compared to the same quarter a year ago, a decrease of 6.5% was recorded.”

Mr Kimi said returning residents made up 63.3% of arrivals for the fourth quarter 2021.

This was followed by Visitors with 35.9% of arrivals and the remaining less than 1.0% were Intending residents.

“Visitor arrivals for the fourth quarter increased by 4,110.0% to 421 visitors, compared to the third quarter 2021 figure of 10 visitors,” he said.

“There was an increase of 261.4% in visitor arrivals from fourth quarter 2020 to fourth quarter 2021.”

Similar to the third quarter, Australia again recorded the largest group of arrivals by country of residence for the fourth quarter, but with an increase of 3,840.0% to 197 compared to the third quarter of 2021 of 5 visitors.

The next largest group of visitors were from New Zealand (24.0%) followed by Fiji (12.1%), Papua New Guinea (8.8%), China (2.9%), Other Asia (2.6%), Japan (1.9%), Vanuatu (0.5%), and Other Europe and Other Country (0.2%) respectively.

The highest number of arrivals by month was in November with a total of 234 visitors, followed by December with 145 visitors. October recorded 42 arrivals.

Rising above COVID-19 and adjusting to the new normal



The first swabbing exercise conducted at the Finance headquarters for all its departments in January 2022.

Nine staff from the National Statistics Office were initially positive with the COVID-19 corona virus after swabbing tests were conducted on January 2022.

The swabbing exercise was carried out at the Ministry of Finance and Treasury Headquarters.

A scale down exercise was immediately imposed at the office, and most of the staff worked from home.

In the weeks that followed, almost everyone had flu-like symptoms and were sick.

Returning to work was a new normal where everyone was expected to adhere to the Covid-19 regulations.

There was a movement of the staff and their work stations so they can have the required 2-meter space between them.

Some officers relocated to a room previously used by data entry officers, leaving the remaining officers more space.

Each officer had his or her own experience to share from the corona outbreak in Honiara.

Desmond Papage from the Survey section had malaria and was completing his dose when he was confirmed with the corona virus.



Desmond Papage sitting at his new workstation.

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But he returned to work soon after his next swab showed he was negative.

Mr Papage welcomed the new office environment saying it is a new normal that everyone has to uphold.

“We just have to follow the office work policies regarding the virus. As usual – social distancing, wearing masks, washing hands, etc.

“The virus is here now, it is our responsibility to look after ourselves and those around us.”

Gwen Vola lives at Mamara, North-West Guadalcanal. The lockdowns were not easy for them to get to town and buy food supplies. They were often turned back.

“There were blockades established at Kakabona. It was difficult to get to town.”

“Those were challenging times”, she said. “I’m glad it’s over now.”

Mary Duku, one of the maintenance staff would wear her face mask and gloves faithfully every morning as she goes about her daily duties.

“It felt strange the first time. But now I am getting used to it. They are additional equipment to protect me when I’m doing my job.”



Gwen Vola in front with other staff, ready for their daily drop-off.



Mary Duku taking a break from her duties.

Coming up in the next Issue :

- ◆ NSO releases 2018-2020 GDP Numbers
- ◆ NSO Prepares for new major project, HIES
- ◆ Solomon Islands records 1044 international visitors
- ◆ CPI Releases for month January to April 2022

Watch this space!!!



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