

Thursday 23 November 2023

## **SOLOMON WATER AND GOULBURN VALLEY WATER FORGE INTERNATIONAL PARTNERSHIP TO ADDRESS CLIMATE RESILIENCE AND WATER SUSTAINABILITY**

Solomon Water is thrilled to be working with Goulburn Valley Water of Australia as part of the 'Partnerships for a Resilient and Climate Smart Water Sector' program, facilitated by the Australian Water Association and the Pacific Water and Wastewater Association.

The water utility partnership program, funded through the Australian Water Partnership by the Australian Government, encompasses three vital action areas:

**1. Finding solutions for rising sea levels:** This initiative aims to reduce saltwater ingress at Noro water source on New Georgia Island, ensuring a sustainable source of freshwater for the region.

**2. Reducing water loss from the water system in Honiara:** A pilot project will be launched in three district metered areas (DMAs) to combat water loss, which is a pressing issue for Solomon Water. This will improve the efficiency and sustainability of the water distribution system.

**3. Strengthening the meter-to-cash process:** This initiative will map and identify areas for development within the same areas piloted in the NRW project - all towards streamlining and strengthening Solomon Water's billing and revenue collection processes.

Chief Operations Officer Scravin Tongi emphasized the value of this twinning program to Solomon Water's operations and business, stating, *"This partnership is a game-changer for us. It enables us to access international expertise and resources, which will significantly enhance our capacity to address the climate change and water-related challenges we face."*

Revenue and Debt Recovery Coordinator Lucy Bonunga expressed her appreciation of the twinning program, saying, *"Working with Goulburn Valley Water to reduce water loss in Honiara is a golden opportunity for us. Water loss is a significant concern for Solomon Water, and collaborating with our Australian counterparts will help us develop effective strategies to combat this issue head-on."*

The partnership program marks a significant step toward building a more resilient and climate-smart water sector in the Solomon Islands.

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Monica, Goulburn Valley Water lead for the meter to cash action area, said that the program presents unique prospects to create lasting solutions to mutual water sector issues, *"This has been an incredible opportunity to work together collaboratively, build relationships, share problems, and look at solutions to meet our shared vision of being able to provide safe and reliable water."*

For Dan Wooley, Goulburn Valley Water lead for the water loss project, it was his first international experience. He had this to say about his experience, *"I cannot believe I have been so lucky to be involved in such an amazing program. It's been an eye-opening, mind-blowing, yet humbling experience. This has been a life-changing experience in so many ways. I would like to thank AWA and Solomon Water for this opportunity to work alongside the Solomon Water team, to build bonds with an international water utility, and work together to build a better, more sustainable future for everyone."*

Mark Mitchell, Goulburn Valley Water lead for the saline intrusion project on New Georgia Island, said the partnership program better positioned the Goulburn Valley Water team to provide advice and support that would respond to the challenges and barriers Solomon Water faced. *"This is a fantastic opportunity to work with like-minded peers facing similar climate change issues in a uniquely different environment. It broadened my understanding of the different challenges our partners in the Pacific Islands face."*

The Solomon Water and Goulburn Valley Water twinning partnership started in March 2023, and aims to create a long-term beneficial relationship between the two organisations.

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## About Solomon Water

Solomon Water is a state-owned enterprise (SOE) established by the Solomon Islands Government in 1992 to provide municipal water and wastewater services in the country. Solomon Water currently serves over 17,000 customers in the capital city of Honiara and in key provincial centers, including Auki, Noro, and Tulagi.

*Our vision:* "Safe water for a healthy nation."

*Our mission:* "To provide reliable and safe water supply and sewerage services within our area of operations in Solomon Islands, while working in partnership with the community to plan, deliver, and operate infrastructure in a manner that seeks to minimize the social and environmental impacts of our activities."

## PHOTOS



*The Solomon Water Non Revenue Water Team with Goulburn Valley Water operations specialist Dan Wooley. Photo: AWA/Zac Rudge.*



*Monica and Dan from Goulburn Valley Water joined the Solomon Water Revenue Team to identify challenges with water metering in the Honiara network. Photo: AWA/Zac Rudge.*