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# RENNELL BELLONA PROVINCIAL GOVERNMENT TOURISM MANAGEMENT PLAN 2020

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Prepared by the Department of Tourism  
Renbel Province 2020

## **STATEMENT BY THE PROVINCIAL MINISTER FOR TOURISM INDUSTRY- RENNEL BELLONA PROVINCIAL GOVERNMENT, SOLOMON ISLANDS**

It is with great pleasure for me to introduce my government tourism plan 2020 for the next four years. I have no doubt that development of our tourism sector is not only a necessity for the growth of our small economy, but it is also an important tool to keep our culture and traditions alive.

Tourism earns foreign exchange, creates employment and earns additional government revenue. However, as this Tourism Plan outlines, careful and sensitive development, management and promotion of the Province tourism sector will also create a greater social cohesion amongst our communities. By concentrating more on *authentic ecotourism and community based tourism*, spread throughout our two island communities, we have an opportunity to provide more of the benefits that tourism development provides, more to our local population. This is not to forget our support to the listing of East Rennell (Lake Tegano) as a World Natural Heritage property of “Outstanding Universal Value” (OUV) under the

UNESCO World Heritage Convention 1972, the only site in the Solomon Islands, and the first in the insular Pacific Islands. This natural wealth, for sure can be utilized as a tourism economic leverage not only for our Province but for our country Solomon Islands now and beyond.

This tourism sector plan recognizes the history of problems we have had in developing our tourism industry. But more importantly, it outlines an Action Plan that provides recommendations as to how we can improve our market research, our tourism planning criteria, our investment focus, our tourism product development, our tourism institutional capacity and our promotional activities. A key message within the Plan is to constantly evaluate and monitor sustainability and viability in our programs and projects, this will also ensure the protection and conservation of our diverse environmental and cultural assets which provide us with a comparative and competitive advantage as one of a potential tourist destinations in Solomon Islands and the wider region, not only for visitors to enjoy today, but also for our future generations.

This tourism plan also points out the importance for all tourism stakeholders to work as partners during this difficult time to resilience the effect of COVID-19 global pandemic given that countries we refer to as our key source markets are severely affected by lockdowns and border travel restrictions. Nevertheless, better communication and cooperation between all tourism industry operators, stakeholders and our rural communities is essential to strategize actions to target domestic travel markets. The situation also gives us a better position to do more work by preparing and improving our facilities until such time international travel resumes, by then, we will take stock of better facilities and market products in place.

As the Renbel Tourism Division is under my portfolio, I am grateful to our local tourism specialist and to those who have contributed to produce this mandated Tourism Management Plan for our beloved Province. Aue kia tekoutou katoa.

God bless Renbel

Yours truly

**Hon. Willy Tuha MPA**  
**Premier**  
**Rennell Bellona Provincial Government**

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## 1. Introduction

Rennell and Bellona is Polynesia in Melanesia some 250km south of Guadalcanal and the capital Honiara well away from the plate collision zone, thus have a very low degree of seismic activity. Renbel is geologically younger than most of the other islands and have emerged differently. Near the end of the Pleistocene, tectonic movement along a convergent plate boundary raised the seabed in a ridge high enough to allow coral to build Rennell and Bellona and the Indispensable reefs. Structure and geomorphology indicate that the Renbel ridge on which they sit is a phase of active uplift following long subsidence five times. (Wingham, 1997).

Rennell (Mugava) is 86 km long by 14km wide and 66,000 ha in area nearly surrounded by limestone cliffs between 120 and 150m high. It is the world's largest uplifted coral atoll. Bellona (Mungiki) is a 25 ha island, 24km to the northwest of Rennell. Lake Tegano is the largest enclosed lake on the Pacific Islands. It is 27km long, averages 15km at widest point and 15,500ha occupies nearly a quarter of the island. It is brackish with a salt concentration maintained by a subterranean connection with the sea (IUCN). The islands inhabited by Polynesians who migrated many years ago from Uvea in the Wallis and Futuna island groups west of Samoa; and establishes their settlement here in the Solomon Islands.

East Rennell (Lake Tegano) has been inscribed on the UNESCO World Heritage Convention Registration on the 5<sup>th</sup> of December 1998, under criterion (*n*) (UNESCO COM23 Kyoto). The site is the only World Heritage listed property in Solomon Islands, and the first in the insular Pacific Islands, inscribed for having natural outstanding universal value of unique species of flora and fauna and birdlife species that are not found elsewhere in the world. The property also extended three nautical miles out to sea. This unique natural quality of East Rennell makes it one of a world-class tourist destination given that the World Heritage listing of properties around the world attracts huge attention from tourism players, particularly tourism operators, developers; and tourists themselves, therefore WHS are amongst the most popular promoted attractions in countries that have World Heritage listed properties around the world (Buckley, 2004).

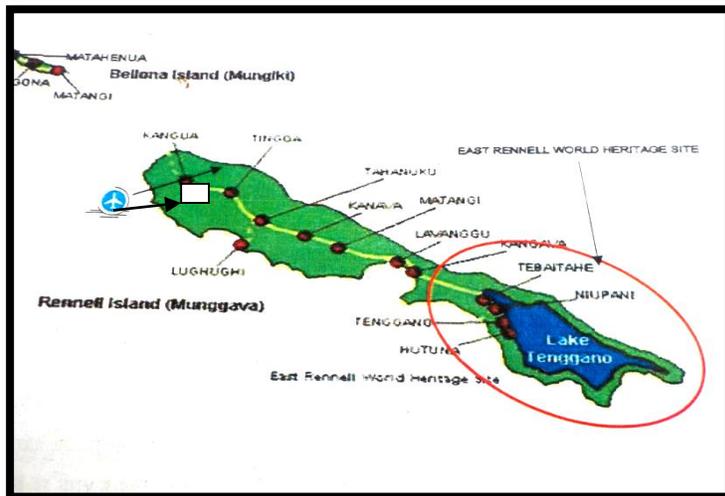
The three indispensable marine reefs, south- east of Rennell Island is part of the territorial waters of the Renbel Province, providing rich fisheries and a potential game fishing area. It can be further explored for other sea recreational activities that could be of bigger values, a fine example is the dive and game fishing market, now a popular tourism market in Solomon Islands. These reefs should be sought by Provincial Ordinance to become a marine park in the near future.

Renbel people are renowned in the Pacific Islands region for their traditional tattooing (*tusinga*), wood-art work (carving), skills and creativity. The stylish traditional mats (*malikope*, *ghapaghapa*), baskets (*kete*) and other novelty items woven by women using an endemic bush vein and native flakes obtained from a native *panadanus* subspecies are also extremely popular, being sold in Honiara and other Provinces and the wider region.

Based on its cultural wealth, unique land and seascapes, history and legends, the beauty of its people and hospitality described by many travel writers as the intrinsic "Avaiki Way," Renbel Province can be truly one of the top tourist destinations in Solomon Islands and the region should it nourished.

This Provincial Tourism Plan has been (assumed) prepared by the Division of Tourism of the Rennell Bellona Provincial Government and endorsed by the Provincial Executive. It is primarily framed for the

Renbel Provincial Government but also identifies some critical issues for operators and stakeholders to consider. The Provincial Tourism Division hopes it will be used to guide the sustainable development of tourism in the Province and assist (in a big way) the Renbel Provincial Government in implementing appropriate steps forward. This document sets out practical and realistic strategies to achieve the desired objectives of the Renbel Provincial Government to develop this fast growing industry, in particular, the eco-tourism and community base tourism sectors in such a way that all stakeholders, primarily, the local communities can benefit from its economic distributions; and as a tool to also enhance conservation of the natural environment and cultural values of the people of Renbel and future generation.



## 2. Goal and Objectives

The following goal and objectives are included in the Rennell Bellona Provincial Tourism Policy and have been endorsed by the Executive of the Rennell Bellona Provincial Government.

### 2.1 Goal

To develop a sustainable tourism industry for the Rennell Bellona Province which preserves the unique features of the land, sea and culture that provides economic benefit to the people of the Province.

### 2.2 Objectives

- To create sustainable livelihoods from tourism, particularly through employment and income generation;
- To conserve and protect the unique natural environment, including flora and fauna and birdlife for the benefit of residents and visitors;
- To encourage the preservation and sharing of Rennell Bellona unique history, stories and culture;
- To encourage Rennell Bellona residents to be proud of their Province and culture by maintaining and taking care of their property and surrounds.

### 3. Situation Analysis

#### 3.1 Overview of Tourism Development in Solomon Islands



It is estimated that Solomon Islands received 27,866 International visitors in 2018 and rose significantly to 28,930 in 2019 (TS 2020). It positioned 185 places on World Tourism Organisation world ranking of international visitor arrival number by country as well as in the 9<sup>th</sup> position out of the fifteen Pacific Islands tourist destinations compared to 11<sup>th</sup> place in the most recent years. This indicates a significant progress of visitor number arrivals (WTO 2019).

Table 1 below indicates international visitor arrivals by months and years to Solomon Islands. (©Tourism Solomons 2020).

**Table 1:**

Month	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019
Jan	1,235	1,600	1,383	1,590	1,415	1,259	1,655	1,514	2,081	1,750
Feb	1,209	1,658	1,591	1,544	1,523	1,465	1,707	1,635	1,855	1,891
March	1,766	1,861	1,677	1,184	1,816	1,675	1,675	1,732	2,360	2,401
April	1,820	1,736	1,839	2,021	1,514	1,750	1,799	2,013	2,250	2,106
May	1,137	1,760	1,968	1,857	1,462	1,681	1,896	1,851	2,003	2,434
June	1,797	2,009	3,122	2,317	1,949	2,131	1,984	2,561	2,768	2,523
July	2,264	2,185	2,865	2,574	2,114	2,077	2,319	2,295	2,862	2,537
Aug	1,845	1,900	2,133	2,022	1,639	1,426	1,918	2,589	2,313	2,481
Sept	2,153	2,159	2,309	2,291	1,730	2,211	1,428	2,397	2,663	2,695
Oct	1,813	1,931	1,919	2,057	1,789	1,840	2,257	2,500	2,366	2,761
Nov	1,624	2,195	1,545	1,981	1,515	2,101	2,199	2,317	2,044	2,298
Dec	1,858	1,947	1,564	1,993	1,595	2,099	2,355	2,305	2,301	3,053
<b>Total</b>	<b>20,521</b>	<b>22,941</b>	<b>23,925</b>	<b>24,431</b>	<b>20,061</b>	<b>21,623</b>	<b>23,192</b>	<b>25,709</b>	<b>27,866</b>	<b>28,930</b>

Most of these in-bound visitors are estimated to be “holiday visitors” (SI Survey for Tourism Sector Situation Analysis 2019). Table 2 below shows that tourism in Solomon Islands is very small compared to its Pacific neighbors of Papua New Guinea and Vanuatu receiving on the same year. Solomon Islands is clearly not keeping up with worldwide tourism growth. However, on the positive side, there is high potential to develop the industry to become a significant sector for Solomon Islands should it given priority at high decision-making level. Solomon Islands best year in terms of international visitor arrivals (see Fig. 1) was 2019 receiving 28,930. This is still significantly less than other Pacific island countries. Like other industries in Solomon Islands, tourism stakeholders worked progressively to attract international visitor arrivals to the country, not until severely hit hard by impacts of COVID-19 global pandemic, in particular our traditional source markets abroad. Despite this difficulty, the Ministry of Culture and Tourism, Tourism Solomons and key stakeholders are strategizing to address these issues by reviewing policies and plans for what has been described as a “new normal” tourism directions, for example, targeting the domestic market by branding new travel packages to local Provincial destinations (TS 2020).

Prior to COVID-19 pandemic, the majority of international visitors coming to the Solomon Islands tended to go to the Western Province having the most tourism development and investment. There are currently enough tourism products, promotions, marketing and demands in Western Province to service multiple flights a day and fast ferries to and from the Province. It also under-pinned by the recent opening of the 2<sup>nd</sup> International Airport in Munda on South-West New Georgia saw increased of in-bound international visitor arrivals to the Province; and to the Solomon Islands as a whole. All other Provinces in the country are now recognizing the potential of tourism as an income generator and are beginning to put together their own tourism development plans and strategies to also participate. Likewise, the Provincial government of Rennell Bellona is also taking steps toward reactivating its tourism sector to also participate. The mandatory and formulation of this Provincial Tourism Plan 2020 justifies the seriousness of the ruling Provincial Executive to also actively participate in this fast growing industry to also present its natural and cultural unique qualities targeting the ecotourism market.



### 3.3 Overview of Tourism Development in Renbel Province

#### Introduction

The most recent Tourism Solomons national survey report indicates Renbel Province received the least of all the Provinces’ international visitor arrivals. This is largely due to the fact that tourism in the Province is extremely weak, disorganized, poor infrastructures and given lesser priority at decision making level, therefore economic return for tourism operators, the rural communities and the Provincial Government is at a very low level. However, on the positive side, the Province is slowly picking up by doing little increase of its market products, in particular at the accommodation sector, though it observed that accommodations are oversupplied than diversifying market products to balance supply and demand, however, standard of accommodations offered, particularly around Tigoa airport on West Rennell are satisfactory and much improved compared to some budget accommodation standards offered in other Provinces, even in Honiara.

Over the years, the Renbel Provincial Government has very little investment in tourism; and rely on the private sector development. Nevertheless, realizing the potentials of the industry, it is now injected a wide range of interests both from the Provincial Government and from some members of the community to develop their own facilities while others keen to increase their understanding and determine how they can access to capitals for developing diverse tourism products to lure increase visitation to the Province. In whatever degree, the Renbel Provincial Government must be cautious in recommending any new tourism development without thorough research and understanding of issues affecting and directing tourism growth, for example, do research and dividing up the market to determine tourism potentials, development needs and target market options.

### **3.4 Ecotourism and Product Development**

It has been observed; and one can tell that Renbel Province is not a destination to entertain mass tourism due to lack of adequate infrastructures and products to support medium to large scale visitor arrivals. The cost of visiting Renbel is high compared to other destinations in the country that offer more attractive and diverse products of quality service which reflect worthwhile value for money. The current minimal tourism products offered in the Province is encouraged to be diversified and based on ecotourism concept as a pull-factor and appeal for other tourism segments. Ecotourism maybe best described as a nature-based and culture-based tourism where product developments are kept low and in keeping with both the natural and local culture. It also implies a high quality learning experience for tourism. Ecotourism is low capital investment and have a high spin-off benefit as well as a fast growing international product that is sustainably attracting large visitor arrivals of nature-admirer and adventure tourists to more areas and destinations in developed and developing countries around the world other than the traditional beach casinos/resorts and swimming pool bars tourism (WTO 2016).

Renbel Province is truly has some natural and cultural qualities that can make it one of a potential ecotourism destinations in Solomon Islands. These special natural and cultural features could provide the foundation of a number of profitable ecotourism experiences. The listing of East Rennell (Lake Tegano) WHA has been closely linked to its ecotourism value and economic leverage. Protecting and enhancing these qualities can help with marketing of Renbel as a vibrant ecotourism destination, but It must be understood that tourism is a comparative and competitive industry that deals directly with attracting human beings by enticing their travel options unlike other industries that are promoting and merchandising or make direct purchase of brainless materials and machineries.

### **Promotion and Services**

When doing tourism product promotions, it is important to realise that the product is moved (by promotion) to the invisible consumer (the visitor) elsewhere that tourism operators in Renbel Province never know of. The Province can only attract visitors by doing research and aggressive promotions of its unique products by targeting appropriate overseas tourism segment. This is because, (apart from Honiara the nation's capital), Solomon Islands is best categorized as "off the beaten track" destination (TRIP Consultants, 2015). This means it can only be an adventure travel destination for market segments that have time, patience and a desire to experience unique land and marine based environments and genuinely engage with the local people.

Hence, a focus on small scale tourism that based on niche product development and investment will continue to be essential; and Renbel Province must prepare to develop as such.

As mentioned elsewhere in this document, Renbel Province is truly has a wealth of historical and cultural heritage values as well as unique natural products which can package into attractive ecotourism destination in Solomon Islands.

The appeal of Renbel's natural and cultural and historical heritage is supported by the current Provincial tourism Policy direction that ensures good management for sustainability of these niche product resources because it will encourage sustainable tourism products and favorable domestic and international marketing position overseas.

### **3.5 Demographic and Psychographic Segments**

In doing tourism research to target certain sectors such as the demographic segment which is based on age group, gender, income, social class, race or ethnic grouping, profession or occupation, how many visitors does Renbel Province actually get each year, what are their interests; and where do they want to go etc., is important and can be accomplish via thorough research to identify target group markets. This can also be done for psychographic segment which is based on behavioural characteristics such as personality, lifestyle, attitudes, interests, activity options, opinions and motivations etc.

#### **Current Business**

Tourism development business in Renbel Province is small and notorious for being surrounded by weak, unrealistic tourism costs, disorganized and undiversified despite having the potential for investment growth. On the other hand, this cannot be wholly blamed on the few struggling local operators and communities considering the level of poor dissemination of information, disorganized and resource support from both tier-governments. It is observed that majority of local tourism investment in the Province has been concentrated on accommodation. However, most accommodations (particularly around Tigoa airport area) offered good and much better standards despite having shared facilities and kitchens for guests to cook their own meals unless requested to prepare local delicacy dishes. Guests are also able to stay in local family home stays in community villages. In rural areas it is advisable for inbound travellers to bring little food stuff from Honiara as resources sometimes scarce.

Most visitors to Renbel Province are commonly in-country business travellers and development workers from government ministries and NGOs; though a minimal international visitor number, mostly are free and independent hard to soft travel adventurers and researchers visited the Province, in particular, the East Rennell (Lake Tegano) World Heritage area.

Renbel Province is serviced by the Solomon Airlines 18 seater Twin-Otter aircraft at 3 flights a week, but additional flights are frequently added given the increasing demands on this air route for booked passengers and cargoes. MV Avaikimaine undertakes a passenger and cargo run from Honiara to the Province on monthly basis. Boat travel is cheaper and economical than air travel but the journey takes sixteen hours and few facilities on board are not suitable for international travellers. Sea travels between the islands are difficult and sometimes risk given the often rough seas and strong sea current usually experience when travelling to outer islands such as Renbel Province. Renbel people are notorious in Solomon Islands and the region for their skills as wood carvers for men; and fine weavers for women, portraying skillful art work of cultural designs and imagination of real life situations.

Fig. 3:



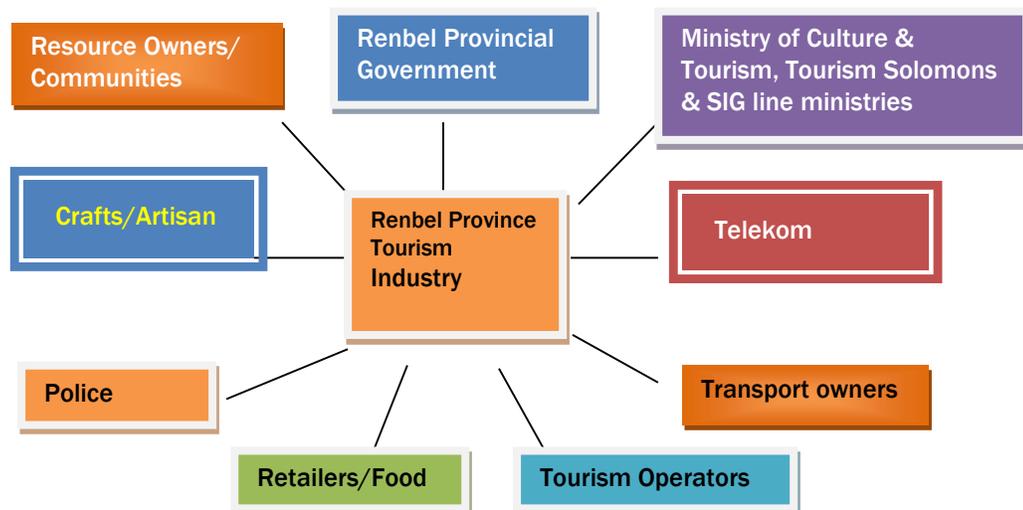
### 3.6 Stakeholders

There is a wide range of stakeholders in the Renbel's Tourism industry. A Provincial Tourism Association and a Tourism Council are therefore recommended for that matter (see Fig. 1). Each stakeholder should be considered; and preferably, consulted in decision making processes. Information and links need to be encouraged and strengthened between each grouping. The Renbel Tourism Department (assumed) can facilitate meetings and consultation to ensure communication is made between all these important stakeholders to showcase respect and cooperation as a stepping stone to develop a vibrant and sustainable tourism industry in the Province well into the future.

### 3.7 Provincial Tourism Department

To date, the Renbel Provincial Government is not yet establishes any tourism department (division) within its administration despite being posted in the Provincial recruitment structure. The Provincial Government should now take a bold step forward to fill this gap in order to coordinate and implement tourism policy objectives and that of this tourism management plan. In the interim, a local tourism specialist is being contracted to assist in formulating this Tourism Plan. It is therefore recommended that if the RenBel Provincial Government feels that tourism is one of their priority investment areas then they will need to invest in it by creating a tourism department (additionally, it is recommended to merge culture, heritage, environment and climate change into one division) considering their inter-related functions, with staffing and resources.

**Fig.4: Rennell Bellona Tourism Industry Stakeholders**



**Table 2: Stakeholders and their Roles**

<b>Stakeholder/Role</b>	<b>Tourism Function</b>
Provincial Govt	To establish, implement and monitor National/Provincial Tourism Policies and Strategies.
National Govt	To establish, implement and monitor National Tourism Policies and Strategies.
Tourism operators	To provide high quality services to visitors to the Province.
Landowners/Local communities	Owners of natural and cultural products. Potential tourism operators
Police/RSIP	Monitor law and order for safety of visitors and local communities.
Transport Providers	Link visitors to, from and within the Province
Solomon Telekom	Provide communication links between Renbel and the rest of Solomon islands and the world. Essential for bookings and promotion/marketing. Also needed for visitors to communicate whilst in the Province.
Retailers/Food	Provide supplies to visitors and tourism operators
Craft/Artisans	Producers of carvings and handicrafts that visitors could buy. Cultural dances and display of traditions and culture etc.

### **3.8 Infrastructures and Tourism Related Issues**

Infrastructure plays a large and key role in any tourism development anywhere, be it in the Provinces, in Honiara or elsewhere in the world as it allows the flow of visitors in and out of their countries destinations and supports visitors during their travel and stay.

Renbel Province being rural and isolated has a very low and minimal infrastructure development in place; and does not up to international standards. For a start, there are no proper domestic terminals and facilities at both existing airports at Anua (Bellona Island), and Tigoa (West Rennell). There are also tourism challenges associated with limited infrastructure such as no electricity, poor roading network, unrealistic tourism costs of services and very basic village living standards. Nevertheless, in some scattered Tourism Solomons Reports, it generally tell of some travel expatriates (international visitors) feel that Renbel Province is a place brimming with tourism potentials, but offers unrealistic value for money. Thus, tourists are detracted and sought other Provincial destinations who offered better infrastructures and services. It is therefore essential that tourism development is managed carefully to ensure basic needs, tourism costs and standards for international visitors are met, simultaneously, minimizing any potential negative impact on local communities and their natural and cultural resources.

### **Guest Accommodations**

Renbel Province is currently offering enough guest accommodations though it seems as over-supplied given the current level of demand and occupancy rate per person night. Table 3 below indicates tourism zones and names of guests' accommodation lodges:

Table 3: Current Operational Accommodations in Renbel Province.

<b>Zones 1: East Rennell</b>	
1.Mataake Resthouse-East Lake	
2.Motumahi Island Lodge-East Lake	
3.Avatai Home Stay-East Lake	
4.Tegano Lodge-Central	
5.Niupani Home Stay-West Lake	
6.Kia koe Lodge-North-west Lake	
7.Neitasi Ecolodge-West-end Lake	
<b>Zone 2: West Rennell</b>	
1.Kagava Beach Guest House-Kagava Bay	
2.Wendy Home Stay-Lavagu village, Kagava Bay	
3.Lavagu Home Stay-Lavagu village, Kagava Bay	
4.Ocean View Accommodation-Kagava Bay	
5.Hatagua Home Stay-Tigoa Airport	
6.Babae Lodge-Tigoa Airport	
7.Ma'anu Guest House -Tigoa Airport	
8.Tigoa Airport Transit lodge	
9.Point 8 Ecolodge-Tigoa Airport	
10.Avaiki Protocol Guest House-Tigoa Airport	
11.Moreno Guest Accommodation-Tigoa Airport	
<b>Zone 3: Bellona Island</b>	
1.Aotaha Cave Accommodation - East Bellona	
2.Nukutonga Lodge - East Bellona	
3.Tauahiti Guest House - Central Bellona	
4.Suani Guest Accommodation - Central Bellona	
5.Tungua Ecolodge - Ahanga beach, West Bellona	

Guests' accommodations in and around the Provincial township of Tupu'aki (Tigoa Airport) are of good provincial standards, located within good walking proximities to nearby local villages, the airport and public places of interests such as Telekom facility, Solomon Airlines office, police station etc. There are few lodges in the Province are needing renovations and tidying up with repainting and put on new materials, such as new mosquito netting, piping water for bathrooms and flushing toilets and good clean running water tanks.

Presently, there are lots of interests from local people in putting up new accommodation. However, it is recommended that eco-lodge concept, using local materials (to also display traditional structures) can be a viable investment, but most importantly there needs to be an increase understanding of viable tourism markets and the need to diversify tourism products instead of venturing into a single development such as building of more lodges. Consideration must be based on research and assessment outcomes, for

example, how many guest houses are available, the occupancy rate, who will stay in these lodges, how many tourists coming, and whether there is a strong demand for more accommodation or not, what services and standards visitors expected in these facilities etc. (re 3.3).

It is strongly recommended that the Provincial Tourism Division must discourage the local concept of “supply led tourism development” or developing a product that is over-supplied but very less utilizations, for example, building more lodges when current facilities are poorly occupied. This could be a real issue for tourism development in the Province if *standard accommodation* is introduced by Tourism Solomons in the near future. However, the Renbel Tourism Division must advise and conduct on-going community awareness to avoid unrealistic proposals, mindsets and expectations which can be very frustrating should it never met.

### **Tourism Solomons Bed Levy**

The Renbel Tourism Division must conduct dialogue on bed levy introduced by Tourism Solomons (formerly SIVB) to have this bed tax payable to the disposal of the proposed Provincial Tourism Council to support implementation of tourism development objectives of this tourism plan.

### **Communication**

The Solomon Telekom establishes communication facilities/towers (2 and 3 Gs) on Bellona Island and both West and East Rennell Island using modern technologies which provide easy connectivity access to internet via mobile phones making travel and accommodation bookings, tourism information research no longer a problem. In-bound travellers to the Province can be more feel at home when communicating back to their loved ones back home.

### **Electricity**

There is no running electricity provided by SIEA in any part in the province like other provincial centres. Nevertheless, portable generators are widely used by guesthouse owners when needed by guests for powering computers such as laptops or freezing food stuff. Solar powered facility for lighting is widely used, not only by guest houses but also by households throughout rural communities in the Province.

### **Environment Conservation**

Generally, the main attraction for visitors to Renbel Province is its pristine environment, culture and history. Some terrestrial and marine areas in the Province have been identified as having unique biodiversity; and high potentials to become protected areas under legislation. Potential sites have not yet formally endorsed as protected areas under the PAA 2010, but logging and mining encroached on some of them, particularly in and around West Rennell. Seriously speaking, the destruction of the natural environment and some significant cultural sites could cause drastic deforestations and forest degradations that could have long term impact on terrestrial and marine outstanding values. This will, in turn, negatively impact visitor experience and essential economic return in a longer term.

The Renbel Provincial Government needs to monitor some of the logging and mining practices that are being undertaken in the Province, particularly in remote rural areas. There is potential for logging and mining companies to take advantage of landowners and exploit the natural environment. The Provincial Executive should also consider whether they should grant further logging and mining licenses to companies that are notorious for having poor logging and mining reputations not following the Forestry Act and Mining Act and Regulations. The Provincial Executive should also consider the long term

impact of granting logging and mining licenses in areas which have been identified as having outstanding and/or special biodiversity. However, at this stage, it is extremely difficult for the Renbel Provincial Government to introduce desirable interventions given the non devolving of certain powers by the national government to Provincial governments as stipulated under Provincial Government Act. A fine example is the logging and mining sectors legislative arrangement. It is urgently required that dialog from both tier-governments on power-sharing arrangement is urgently sought.

Renbel Province is notorious for attracting several International Research Institutions around the world in the past and most recent past to do research work on culture and some of its endemic and endangered species of flora and fauna and birdlife in its terrestrial and marine waters. At present, there is an opportunity being coordinated by Live and Learn Education organisation (LLEE-SI), a NZ based Environmental organisation; and the East Rennell community on a community forest conservation pilot project to use the carbon trade market to generate alternative revenue to logging and mining. The Renbel Provincial Government is anticipated to also take a lead role should this proposal is eventuated given that East Rennell World Heritage conservation area is within its territory.

Renbel Province is predominantly subsistence living communities live-off their natural resources. It is understandable that any land or marine life is considered edible it is to be potential food. There are some species, such as turtles, coconut crabs and certain bird species are endangered; and if they are continued to be caught and/or slaughtered or have their eggs taken then there is a real risk that these species may become extinct. There is a real need to conduct broad community awareness on environment and conservation issues in the Province on an on-going basis. There is a huge potential to make more income from tourists coming to watch these unique species rather than killing them for short term gain such as for food or for their shells and teeth.

### **Financial Services**

Banking facilities and financial services are limited in Renbel Province. The Provincial government/executive should look at ways of attracting rural banking services to the Province. The Renbel Provincial government should also encourage financial institutions to assist tourism businesses through bank loans and financial management training for rural dwellers who could be potential tourism operators in the near future.

### **Land**

The land tenure system in Solomon Islands is a big challenge for growing the tourism industry. Land is customarily-owned and sometimes ownership and decision making on land use and development can cause conflict within the local community. Agreement must be obtained from all landowners before development begins. All landowners must be properly informed of the benefits and constraints of any development to ensure they understand the risks and benefits they could receive.

- **Land Fees**

One issue that has started to impact the tourism industry in all the Provinces, including Renbel is landowners charging visitors excessive fees every time they cross through their land or their water boundaries. If any operator plans to take visitors across land that does not belong to the operator then approval and agreement on fees must first be sought before a visitor embarks on the trip. Visitors can be dissatisfied if they have to pay extra fees that they were unprepared for and can distract from the whole visitor experience. As a consequence, visitors will never ever revisit the Province again in the future and can be more damaging when such information is passing by words of mouth.

## **Legislation**

Solomon Island Tourist Authority Act was replaced with the Solomon Islands Visitor Bureau (SIVB) Act 1996. Other relevant legislation includes the Solomon Islands visitors Bureau Regulations, now renamed *Tourism Solomons*. These two documents should be obtained from these national government ministries and held at the Renbel Provincial Government office. All tourism businesses within the Province must have a Provincial license to operate.

## **Safety and Health**

Tourism is all about a person who is travelling away from his/her usual work and living environment to another place or country whether a domestic or international destination, therefore it is fundamentally important that safety and health of the visitor is well looked after by the hosting operator. In Solomon Islands the following hazards are well known:

- **Malaria**  
Most of the Solomon Islands have malaria. Whilst visitors should take their own precautions for malaria, tourism operators can also reduce the risk for their guests. Tourism operators can take steps to minimise the risk by having good netting around windows and mosquito nets over sleeping beds. Mosquito coils and repellents should also be used in indoor and outdoor areas where guests rest and relax. Also, making sure there are no still waters and elements left around to attract breeding grounds for flies and mosquito. In the case of Renbel Province, it is well-known for being malaria-free Province; and this could be used in promotion!
- **Visitor Safety**  
Tourism operators in Renbel, as a Province, should be prioritising the safety of their clients. Potential risks could be canoe travel for sight-seeing or for doing water activities, in particular, Lake Tegano and other sea coastal living communities. Canoe trips can be regarded as a soft-adventure for visitors, cautions must be taken by providing life jackets, water proof rain jackets and canoe over-head shelter, these are required necessities to also avoid extreme sun heat. In western countries tourism operators are required by laws to provide all safety equipments for guests. No drink and drive an obm or a vehicle etc. While this is not the current situation in Solomon Islands and for Renbel Province, it is a factor that all operators (canoe and vehicle operators) need to consider seriously and think of the consequences of a boating or vehicle accident involving an international guest. Canoe drivers, in particular, can also minimise this risk by not travelling in bad weathers. Each tourism operator within the Renbel Province should assess the risk involved in tourism activities within their areas and regions and develop their own safety plans which identify any potential risks; and what can they do to prevent or minimise any danger as well as what they will do if any accident did occur.
- **Rain and Sun Heat**  
Boats and canoes operators are encouraged to set up shelters overhead to protect not only from rain but also heat from sun. Canoe/boat operators could investigate this requirement. Normal temperature in Renbel Province can be very high at times and up to 36 degree Celsius and there is potential for guests to suffer from heatstroke as a result. Operators can also encourage guests to bring and wear hats, sunglasses and sunscreen ointments.
- **First Aid Training**

Tourism operators, particularly activity operators, should be encouraged to undertake first aid training. If an accident occurred while visitors were out tramping or trekking or doing any outdoor activity it is essential that tour guides and staff understand what to do and how to respond.

- **Women's Safety**  
Some female visitors will be unaware of safety risks, such as appropriate dressing or unsafe areas at night time. The provincial tourism department could develop a fact sheet for female travellers to the province explaining appropriate dress code and ways to minimise risks. Operators could also be informed about how they can educate or brief their guests or better still, have a female staff to accompany them in the evenings if they wish to leave the guest house for a walk to a shop or mobile phone recharge points. Operators could also work with RSIP personnel to ensure areas where visitors frequent are monitored.
- **Theft**  
Visitors to an area can bring interest from the local community, particularly when they bring new and interesting things like cameras, mobile phones, wrist watches, shoes and clothes etc. Theft of an international visitor can have huge negative consequences and deter visitors or foreign investment in the community and the receiving Province. Appropriate education in communities that are interested in tourism needs to take place. Royal Solomon Islands Police (RSIP) can be contacted to take more community awareness on the issue.

### **Signage**

To date, there is poor signage system throughout the Province to indicate visitors' public areas of interests. This include the Provincial Headquarters at Tupu'aki and at Tigoa Airfield on west Rennell; Anua airfield in Bellona and Roadhead (Lake Tegano) East Rennell. From a visitor perspective it would be helpful to have welcoming signages at these airports, and especially at the Provincial Headquarters and on places of public interests, including guest accommodations. For example, basic maps would be useful for being a silent source of information for visitors to navigate their way through the main township of Tupu'aki and Tigoa airport which is surrounded by a large TNT community consisted of scattered villages, settlements and family shops. Additionally, there needs to plant carved poles in front of the two airports with welcoming words for in-bound travellers to the Province. This will depicts and increases the level of hospitality to justify the well known intrinsic "Avaiki Way" slogan, perhaps, expected by in-bound and out-bound visitors.

### **Visitor Information Centres (*i-Sites*)**

Information dissemination is of high priority. The Provincial Government of Renbel must seriously consider allocating a plot of land, preferably front of the Solomon Airlines air craft taxi way at both Anua airport, Bellona and Tigoa airport, West Rennell. This could also apply to Provincial Sub-stations at East Rennell (Lake Tegano) and Bellona to build *i-Sites* for the purpose of disseminating required relevant informations for visitors on arrival and bon-voyage. These required tourism infrastructures could also cater for cultural centres to showcase cultural novelty saleable items and souvenirs.

### **Transportation**

#### **Air Travel**

All air travel is from Honiara. There are only two airports located in the Province, one in Bellona (Anua airport-a grass strip) and another on West Rennell (Tigoa airstrip-grass/limestone??). Currently there are 3 flights a week after sized down from impact of COVID 19 influences from the more than 10 flights

a week, however, there are still additional flights taken place every week to cater for air freighted cargoes and heavy air travel bookings for this route. Land and sea/Lake transport are required to take visitors to and from within the Province while costing must be realistic.

#### Land

There are a good number of vehicles running on the islands, particularly West Rennell, mostly owned by individual families and few are owned by the Provincial Government. Most of them are land cruisers and twinned cabin hiluxes offering some comfortable rides to any destinations along the road as far as Lake Tegano, East Rennell. Though road conditions can be little rough at some corners from potholes and rain-dug disturbances, it can be still an additional experience.

#### Sea

Boat travel from Honiara to Renbel is serviced by MV Avaikima'ine of the Rennell Bellona Shipping Co. on a monthly basis, transporting cargoes and passenger run service to the Province. Though travel by ship is economical, it is slow and uncomfortable form of travel for any international visitor, but would be an experience for FITs and adventurous tourists. It takes around 14 hours to reach first sea port of call at Ahanga beach Bellona Island; and around 5 hours travel from Bellona Island to Lavagu anchorage, Kagava Bay on south-west Rennell Island. The fact that sea route from Honiara to Renbel Province is often rough being pulled by the strong southern sea current; this prevents interested fast ferries owners/operators to also provide a fast boat service to the Province.

#### Cruise Ships

In the past, Renbel Province hosted few cruise ships arrivals to its shore when there was a Tourism officer recruited by the Provincial government, who collaborated with a Honiara-based local in-bound tour company "Destination Solo" that have the inclusion of Renbel Province in their travel itinerary to also pay visits. Since then there have never been any visit by any cruise ship after the Division was abrogated. As strongly mentioned elsewhere in this tourism plan, the Renbel Provincial Government should re-invest in this potential sector by establishing a tourism department to liaise with in-bound tour companies to reintroduce this segment and coordinate wide community participation to showcase the true values of cultural practices as well as the pristine and endemism of the natural environment are found!

#### Yachts

Before and after the madness of the ethnic tension in Solomon Islands that had also affected tourism badly, there were a number of several independent yachts arrivals to the Province, particularly to Kagava bay, south-west Rennell Island. Since then, there were no arrivals, assumed to be a result of mining and logging ships and tug boats roaming the bay 24/7 a week. There is a potential to refocus on this market by doing more research and promotion to make Rennell Bellona a "yacht friendly" Province.

#### **Waste Management**

Visitors will bring and create extra rubbish and waste to the province. Operators should be encouraged to have appropriate strategies on how they will manage increases in waste and how they will dispose of it to minimise the negative effect on the land and coastal waters. The Renbel Provincial Government's infrastructure/works division or environment division should be reviewing this area of concern by increasing visitation to communities to hold community awareness to ensure sound rubbish and waste management practices are taking place. The Provincial government could investigate waste management

alternatives, including the establishment of a landfill for higher populated areas like the Provincial station at Tupu'aki and TNT and Tigoa airport surrounding communities for that matter. Littered areas easily distracted visitor experience. Sound waste management strategies provide a healthy atmosphere and also benefit the residential population.

### **Waste issues Operators need to think about:**

#### 1. Vegetable and fruit scraps

These should be disposed of in one area away from housing to avoid attracting rats and other wildlife. Where appropriate, vegetable and fruit scraps could be used to fertilize vegetable gardens or better known in the local dialect as "*supsup garden*" as compost. Biodegradable waste could smell bad so should also be away from guest areas or lodges.

#### 2. Meat and Fish Waste

This should be disposed of carefully to avoid the attraction of flies, rats and other animal scavengers such as dogs.

#### 3. Non Biodegradable Waste

Biodegradable wastes are objects such as tin cans, can drinks. Recycling alternatives should be investigated. It is easiest to prevent building up of non-biodegradable waste by minimizing its use, however this could be unrealistic, so strategies on what to do with the waste need to be decided. For example this waste may need to be buried in a designated area.

#### 4. Toilets

Human waste disposal should be up to a suitable hygiene standard for International visitors. The majority of international guests will be most comfortable with a clean flush toilet. Toilet tissues should also be supplied by the guest house operator. Other forms such as porcelain bowl and water to flush from buckets are fine in some areas but not all visitors will be happy with this. Visitors need to clearly inform by the operator on what sort of facilities to expect. This should have been outlined in a brochure by the operator. The Tourism department of the RenBel province should get all required informations from each tourism operators within the jurisdiction of the Rennell Bellona Provincial Government.

#### 5. Burning of Rubbish

Burning rubbish should be conducted away from guesthouse premises as it could disrupt their stay.

#### 6. Waste Information

Information on waste management could be also given to guests. This is seen as a helpful way to inform guests on what to do with their waste during their stay.

### **Water and Food**

#### 1. Drinking

It is essential that all tourism operators in the Province must offer safe drinking water to their guests. Particularly, with the heat in the Province and Solomon islands in general which could cause dehydration. It is therefore essential that all Operators within the Province are ensuring visitors have the ability to stay hydrated to avoid any safety risks with the hot weather. Renbel Province also has a large rainfall record, thus, rain water tanks are the easiest way to ensure there is water supply available for guests. Additionally, Renbel Province is notorious for its healthy sweet coconut fruit water which are plentiful in and around plantations all year round.

## 2. Washing

Hot water showers are not available in the province. Most washing facilities are shared with other guests. Leaf house showers are fine but privacy is imperative. It is important that guests are informed about safe drinking water and those are only used for washing. Better still; inform guests the level of water supply either scarce or plentiful.

## 3. Swimming

Water quality should also be of good standard in swimming areas, especially sea coastal community areas and Lake Tegano in the East Rennell region. Visitors should be shown good and clean swimming areas away from toilet areas such as those found in other islands. Residents should not throw away wastes in areas designated for safe swimming as it will deter from the visitor experience.

## 4. Food

Majority of guesthouses do not offer food for their guests. There is lack of understanding on visitor's food requirements. Often the same food is served at each meal. There needs some education on the food lining or "*food pyramid*" and offering a balance of different food groups for guests. Visitors are enthusiastic to pay for good food. Operators have the opportunity to earn income if they themselves provide food service at their guesthouses. On the other hand, it could also be a deterrent for potential visitors if they have to bring and cook all their food. At present some guests arrived without the knowledge of the need to bring their own food and cook their own meals; even have any knowledge of food stuff scarcity in small shops.

## 5. Scarce Food Resources

In some areas the availability of fresh fruits/vegetables are scarce for the residential population. If visitors come to an area it can place extra pressure on local resources. Both the provincial government and potential tourism operator need to consider this extra pressure before any development is considered.

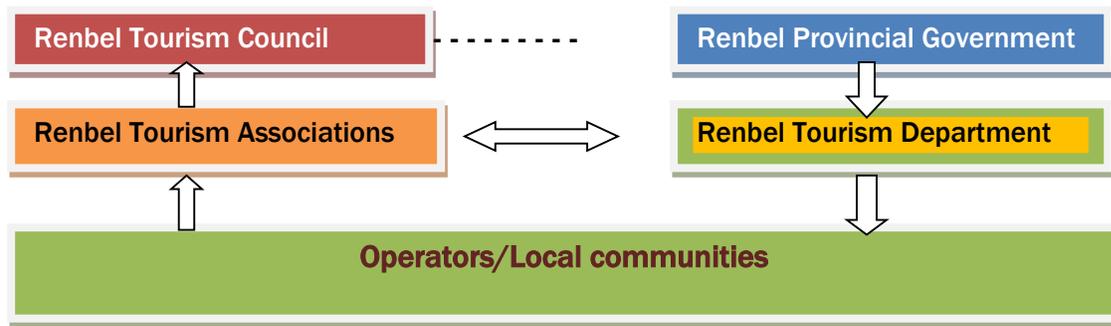
### **Rennell Bellona Tourism Industry Structure**

At present Rennell Bellona Provincial Government has no Tourism Department, neither a tourism officer. Nevertheless, the post is being proposed within its administrative structure to be created as soon as funds are appropriated in the coming months. Likewise, a Provincial Tourism Council should be set up and appointed to provide a forum for discussion and to support coordination of tourism development/activities in the Province. Without any Provincial Tourism staff and an established Department of Tourism in the Province, it is crucial that even if there is a Provincial Tourism Council, members and the Provincial Government Executive will take responsibility for interpreting and implementing this Tourism Plan and ensuring decisions are aligned with the Renbel Provincial Government Tourism Policy 2015 and this Tourism Management Plan 2020.

At this stage there is no operational "Tourism Association" of tourism operators and other potential stakeholders in the Province. It is recommended that current and intended operators form an association to discuss their ideas and concerns for tourism development in the Province. The Association through the RBP Tourism Council could then make a coordinated effort to lobby both national and Provincial governments on issues concerning them and the industry.

The structure below can be adopted should the Province is serious about reactivating its tourism industry. It shows how the tourism council discuss, where possible, advices the Provincial Government and how the Renbel Tourism Council could lobby government.

**Fig. 3: Proposed structure for Rennell Bellona Tourism Industry**



### 3.6 CHALLENGES AND PROPOSED ACTIONS

The Rennell Bellona tourism industry is volatile, so a cautious approach is recommended for the Renbel Province government given that tourism is an emerging new sector and it will take time to build it up into a sustainable, economically viable industry. There are a number of external factors that will inhibit tourism growth in Renbel; some are beyond the control of the Renbel Provincial Government. Table below highlights a number of challenges to the growth of tourism in the Province; it also identifies actions that can help to improve tourism development for the public and private sector. Small steps are needed and expectations must be realistic. Growth will be slow and may take few years before tourism can be realised as one of a significant economic sector for the Province.

CHALLENGES	PROPOSED ACTIONS
<b>Accommodation Issues</b>	
Most newly established accommodations in the Province are better with clean amenities. Few need to be improved.	Renbel PG to follow up with Tourism Solomons on Accommodation Standards program.
Lack of private reinvestment into facilities. Some in need of upgrading with facilities run down. Notably for those operated for over a decade.	Operators to be encouraged to fix broken services and abide by minimum standards identified above.
<b>Environment and Conservation Issues</b>	
Forestry and environmental degradation and deforestation will be real threatening issues given the natural attractions provided.	1. RBPG to develop a Resources Management Ordinance to support the following policy documents: Environment Conservation; Climate Change; World Heritage Conservation and Tourism that were developed in 2015/16/17;  2. RBPG to liaise with Ministry of Forestry/Mines the possibility for Province to monitor logging and mining activities to ensure sustainable

	<p>practices are abided in line with Forestry and Mines Acts;</p> <p>3.RBPG to collaborate with the East Rennell World Heritage program and partners to develop an educational mechanism for landowners and communities so they can understand the impact of different industries on their natural resources;</p> <p>4. RBPG to be aware of threatening commercial developments (such as logging and mining) and associated impact caused to cross-cutting industries such as tourism.</p>
No firm commitment to Conservation	Provincial politicians must consider conservation when making other decisions about development in the Province.
Environmental damage, slaughtering of birds and other endangered sea creatures, over harvesting and unsustainable practices Incl logging and mining in potential conservation sites.	Engage an environmental lawyer to develop a Provincial “Resource Management Ordinance” as soon as possible.
Clean up on waterfronts in some areas, in particular, villages situated along Lake Tegano-East Rennell; Kagava bay coastal community and Mata Moana community on Bellona Island.	<p>Community education is needed throughout the Province. RBPG to identify a renowned NGO partner and invite to conduct an on-going community awareness;</p> <p>Obtain national conservation regulations and distribute to relevant parties/stakeholders;</p> <p>Community education and tidy up campaign to lead by Health Environment Division, involve youth groups, sports clubs, schools and communities.</p>
<b>Health and Safety Issues</b>	
Safety	<p>First Aid training for activity operators. RBPG to contact Red Cross SI or other First Aid trainers</p> <p>Safety Plans are needed for activity operators- Training are needed to teach operators how to prepare and implement a safety plan;</p> <p>Contact RSIP about visitor safety and patrol around esp. when tour groups are coordinated. RSIP to ask to run community awareness on potential problems with visitors to an area (theft to visitors).</p>
	All operative activities in the Province will be monitored and inspected by the Provincial

Tourism operator cleaning and hygienic standards	Tourism office and the Health and Environment Division of the Province.
Safe and Clean Water	Beaches must be safe and clean. Drinking water (either rain water tank or drinking water holes/wells) must be safe for cooking, drinking and washing purposes.
<b>Infrastructure Issues</b>	
No Signage	<p>RBPG to investigate the cost of building and installing welcoming signages at the two local airports at Anua-Bellona Island and Tigoa airport on West Rennell Island.</p> <p>RBPG to create a community map of Tupu’aki Provincial Headquarters and surrounding communities including sites of special interests for visitors to identify and navigate themselves after settle down in their accommodation.</p> <p>Tourism operators to consider putting up signage for their businesses to help visitors identifying them from the road or from the street.</p>
Airports upgrading and extensions of runways	Extend the two airports’ runways (Tigoa airport on West Rennell and Anua airport on Bellona Island) and tarsealing to cater for Dash 8 aircraft.
No central tourist information area or No visitor Information Centre ( <i>i Site</i> ) in Rennell and Bellona Province.	RBPG to consider building “Visitor Information Centres” at front of the Provincial Headquarters and two other locations at Bellona airport and East Rennell Roadhead/Substation.
<b>Financial Services Issue</b>	
Lack financial services and facilities in the Province	The Tourism Division and Operators need to brief visitors when making bookings on the lack of financial services available, esp. when it comes to foreign money transaction before embark travel to the Province
<b>Developing a Tourism “Green Fund”</b>	
	<p>Liaise with Solomon Airlines Board the possibility of creating a green fund. E.g. a deduction of \$2 from ticket sales for all passengers travelling to and from Renbel Province.</p> <p>Likewise, negotiate with Avaiki shipping Board for e.g. \$2 deductions from tkt sales from travel passengers to and from the Province. Funds to</p>

	enhance tourism and environment conservation projects.
<b>Land Issues</b>	
Customary land and reef issues-getting agreement amongst land and reef owners for economic generation.	Tourism awareness and workshops must be held throughout the Province to ensure communities understand the positive and negative effects of tourism development.
Tourism Costs/Extra Charges being placed on visitors	<p>Community education programmes to increase knowledge on visitor management and potential income generation. RBPG to also encourage operators to consult appropriate landowners and communities prior to bringing visitors to significant tourism sites and clarify visitor charges.</p> <p>This is also applicable to other tourism service providers such as vehicle owners, obm/boat owners.</p> <p>Renbel Province is well known for having visitors confronted few service providers on unrealistic charges. It would be advisable for operators to submit to the Provincial Tourism office all their service rates other than causing embarrassment arguing face to face with visitor.</p>
<b>Marketing Issues</b>	
Weak to almost poor marketing.	Renbel Province to develop a marketing plan. Implement recommendations (see Tourism Marketing Plan section in this document) for further investigation.
<b>Marketing Research Issues</b>	
Minimum market research	<p>Because of availability of internet facility in the Province, the Tourism Division can do its own research activity for marketing and collecting up-date info through Tourism Solomons webpage and few other tourism stakeholders websites e.g. SPTO.</p> <p>RBP Tourism Division to investigate setting up some local research programmes, for example it could design a short accommodation survey to find out how many guests are coming to Renbel Province, how long did they stay for and where they come from.</p> <p>Find out from Solomon Airlines data on number of visitors in and out of the Province. This can also provide by local operators which the Renbel</p>

	Tourism office needs to encourage for operators to keep data of their guests.
<b>Regulations and control</b>	
Levies and taxes on tourism business not benefiting Renbel Province tourism operators	Renbel Tourism department and Tourism Council to liaise with Tourism Solomons about concerns over bed tax and benefits. Explore the opportunity for bed levy to pay to the tourism department of the Province to support activities re tourism objectives.
No monitoring	RBPG to monitor current tourism operators to ensure they meet all statutory requirements set by the national and Provincial governments.
<b>Social and Cultural Issues</b>	
No cultural Tourism Strategy. Whilst Renbel People is strong in culture, there is no coordination of cultural strengthening programmes.	Identify ways of developing the cultural products into accessible and enjoyable experiences for the tourism market. Cultural activities could spin-off into tourism product ideas.
<b>Structure Issues</b>	
No tourism office is established. No staff is recruited.	In order for the Province to coordinate and implement the desired plans and proposals in this Tourism Plan, it must first recruit a staff and resource it.
No strong working relationship between RBPG and national tourism authorities, such as Ministry of Culture and Tourism, Tourism Solomons and the travel and accommodation sectors.	RBPG to make regular contact with MCT, TS, travel agents and wholesalers in Honiara and establish a work relationship. Increase knowledge and information about the Province to sellers.

Little or lack of coordination between existing operators in the Province.	<p>Tourism operators to set up an association. By sharing lessons learned and concerns that operators can collectively lobby RBPG and National Govt on relevant issues. RBPG could also use this group if it needs to conduct consultation.</p> <p>Given how small and isolate the tourism industry in Renbel, it will be sensible for operators to help each other by cooperating. This could lead to a greater visitor satisfaction, for example, if information on activity operators is available at guest houses it will be easier for the tourist to explore.</p>
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<b>Tourism Awareness Issues</b>	
<p>A general lack of understanding of the tourism industry, the different types of tourism businesses and diversity of services offered. Issues include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Current operators are mainly on accom.</li> <li>• Lack of organized visitor activities and services</li> <li>• Planned copycat business or building before researching</li> <li>• Lack of understanding the customer expectations, motivations, customer service.</li> <li>• Lack of cultural tourism products</li> <li>• Social and cultural effects on communities</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Training and awareness workshops needed around the Province. Tourism Division to contact Ministry of Culture and Tourism and invite them to the province to run a series of workshops.</li> <li>• When RBPG is asked to review tourism development ideas they need to consider the issues in this Tourism Plan and Tourism Policy documents. The provincial executive should seek professional advice from its Tourism Division before making any decisions or recommendations.</li> </ul>
<p>Training and skill needs</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ There is a range of training needs in the Province. RBPG need to determine which training areas are priorities for the operators. Some suggested training that could benefit operators could be: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Small business training, financial management, customer service, marketing, catering and hospitality, tour guiding training, interpretation methods and first aid training</li> <li>▪ RBPG to identify adequate resources and training HRD required for operators.</li> <li>▪ Study tours to other Provinces such as Western Province and Central Province. Funding a trip can be sorted out by informing key agencies and stakeholders.</li> </ul> </li> </ul>
<p>Lack of resources for current operators and intending operators</p>	<p>RBPG to work with NGOs, Trade and Commerce and SI SBE in Honiara to gather and develop appropriate resources for small tourism businesses. Develop templates such as business plans, budgeting, marketing strategies and researching a product idea.</p> <p>RBPG to develop a “Starter Kit” for new tourism businesses-what you need to know about getting started in tourism in the Province. The kit could include templates, key websites, agencies and how to register a tourism business. Tourism Officer of the Province will need to keep informations up to date.</p>
<p><b>Transportation and Facilities</b> No ground facilities for in-bound and out-bound travellers at the two airports at Bellona and West</p>	<p>RBPG to contact Solomon Airlines and establish a relationship as well as with the local air line agent.</p>

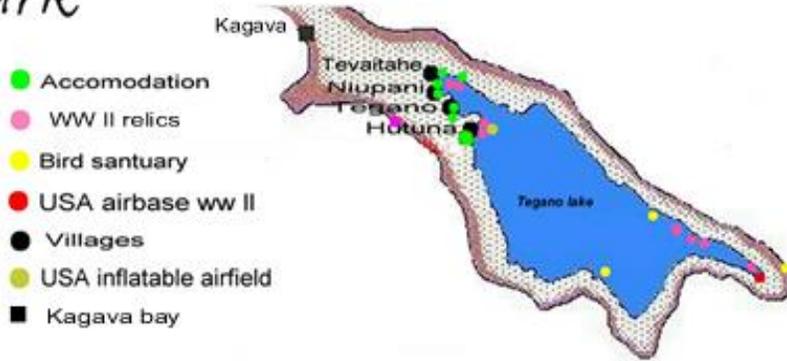
<p>Rennell. Solomon Airlines provide air transport but a source of many passengers' complaints being unreliable flights time, frequent timetable changes and little advance warning.</p> <p>Flight leaving late or early or not at all. Sometimes flight overbooked.</p> <p>Unrealistic tourism costs for land and sea (Lake) transportations.</p>	<p>RBPG to contact Civil Aviation about services at each airport, such as toilets, water and other facilities meant for the convenience of travelling visitors.</p>
<p><b>Waste Management Issues</b></p> <p>Lack of waste management Strategies</p>	<p><b>1.</b> Works Division to review priority tourism areas and ensure sound rubbish and waste management policies and practices are in place.</p> <p><b>2.</b> Health Environment and Works Division to investigate waste management alternatives, particularly in high populated areas, such as Tupu'aki Provincial headquarters, New Place PSS, residential areas east side of Provincial Education complex.</p> <p><b>3.</b> The Provincial Works Division and Environmental Health division to identify areas outside Provincial Headquarters to dig landfill and/or refuse pits to dump rubbish especially for common seen non-biodegradable wastes such as tins, empty bottle drinks, plastics etc.</p>

**PRODUCT DEVELOPMENT**

This section indicates demarcated tourism zones within the Province. It also identifies key natural, cultural and historical sites. It also indicates areas where infrastructure tourism products are currently located. The map below, whilst not exhaustive of all the special features in the Province are the key features excluding part completion tourism properties.

**ZONE 1: EAST RENNELL (LAKE TEGANO)**

*Lake Tegano Natural Heritage Park*

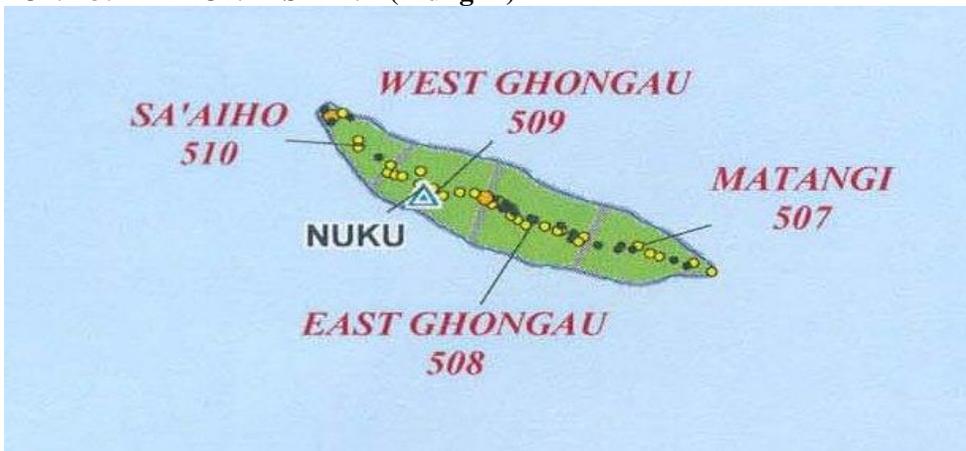


**ZONE 2: WEST RENNELL**

**(RENNELL ISLAND)**



**ZONE 3: BELLONA ISLAND (Mungiki)**



## PROVINCIAL PRIORITY TOURISM INFRASTRUCTURE DEVELOPMENT NEEDS

The fact that poor road condition and maintenance, in particular, on Rennell was perfectly described by a visiting Kiwi visitor that road travel to East Rennell World Heritage area was like a horse ride experience being bumpy from potholes and water pools through-out the trip. Thus, Inorder to develop a vibrant tourism industry in Renbel Province, it is well known that real obstacles for tourism growth is poor access or poor roading network.

Poor road condition and access in and around the two-Islands Province makes it a real subject of complaints by visitors, particularly the road to East Rennell-Lake Tegano WHA. If the RBPG is serious about building a sustainable and competitive tourism industry in the Province, it must first pursue development of priority infrastructures for each Zone as discuss below.

### **Zone 1: East Rennell**

1. Improve road condition by tarseal of the road from Tigoa airport (west Rennell) to Hutuna village Roadhead, Lake Tegano-East Rennell;

2. Build an *i-Site* (Visitor info Centre) at East Rennell roadhead - Lake Tegano.

3. Construct an additional airport at East Rennell to attract direct visitor arrivals, particularly international visitors to East Rennell-Lake Tegano;

4. Construct a new road and sea port at Ghoghiliu sea coastal area, south-east Rennell to cater for cruise boat arrivals;

### **Zone 2: West Rennell**

1. Improve and extend Tigoa Airport by tarseal of runway to cater for Dash 8. The current ground and gravel condition is inadequate and a subject of many complaints by Airline pilots and travelling passengers to Rennell Island when runway got wet from heavy rain fall or by overnight fogs. It almost cause landing accidents several time during poor ground conditions re above. This on-going runway problem can only be solved should the runway is extended and tarsealing (see challenges and action plan section).

2. Build an *i-Site* (Visitor Information Centre) at Tigoa Airport to also serve as a domestic terminal, simultaneously providing shelter for out-bound and in-bound travel visitors;



Tigoa Airport, West Rennell Island

### **Zone 3: Bellona Island**

1. Improve road condition from east to west Bellona Island;
2. Improve by extending the airport and grass condition by tarsealing of runway;
3. Build an i-Site (Visitor Information Centre) at Anua airfield. This could also use as terminal building for sheltering in-bound and out-bound travelling visitors to the island;

In line with the Renbel Provincial Tourism Policy 2016, priority tourism areas should make use of existing infrastructures (though inadequate) available given that they have regular air links and easy access to sites of tourism importance within minutes by vehicle such as in the case of West Rennell and Bellona Island. This is also true in the case of East Rennell, utilizing OBM canoe travel to natural and cultural significant sites of interests around the Lake. These areas must be developed and should be the focus for infrastructure development. Once these areas are built to provide reliable services, then other potential areas can start to benefit as well. It is best to set focus on priority potential areas than spreading resources too thinly to cover all areas for the sake of balancing tourism zones development throughout the Province.

### **POTENTIAL NEW DEVELOPMENT FOR RENNELL BELLONA PROVINCE**

The visitor experience is made up of four (4) key components: The Destination, Transport, Tourism Activities and Hospitality. At present there are adequate accommodation for the current demand in the Province, in particular, at West Rennell, however there is almost minimal hospitality services and poor organized visitor activities to earn visitor experiences. The Provincial Government needs to encourage and establish collaboration with operators and all stakeholders to diversify product development and discourage over-supply of one particular product such as in the accommodation sector. There is a real need to diversify and improve product development (and services) that are based on market demands to attract international visitor arrivals.

As mentioned elsewhere, tourism is a very competitive industry unlike any other industry. Therefore it will require research and better planning before developing any market product to compete with what other destinations are offering. In other words there is a need to diversify market products by offering something new, unique, enticing and perhaps endemic!

#### **Novelty Items-Handcraft, Carvings and Arts**

Rennell Bellona Province has some well known skillful carvers and unique carvings originated from its people, yet, it is difficult for visitors to purchase them. The Provincial Government should identify ways to encourage carvings and other handicrafts to be displayed and sold in each main tourist areas during festivals, particularly on the occasions such as 2<sup>nd</sup> Appointed Day celebration of the Province. The carving industry should be a focus of the Provincial Government to assist carvers and weavers, not only for selling their skillful handiwork but to preserve this traditional arts and ensure some of the traditional craftsman skills are being passed down to the next generation.

The Provincial Government must also consider using local carvers with some of its tourism infrastructures, for example, contract local carvers to put up signage posts at the two Airports and add welcoming sign for in-bound travellers to the Province; as well as outside of the new office complex at Provincial Headquarters. This also for substation offices at East Rennell and Bellona Island.

### **Custom Stories and Traditional Practices**

Rennell Bellona Province is rich in history and there are many custom stories from different parts of the Province. The Provincial Government is urged to find ways of preserving this history. Each Provincial Ward should be encouraging village elders to share these traditional stories or better still, have them written up on brochures and share them with visitors. It can create a wonderful experience for visitors. There is a huge potential in compiling custom stories and/or legends into a tourism product exactly how other countries such as the Maori of Aotearoa New Zealand have done it with their “*Te Ao Maori*” and the Australian Aborigines similar stories and activities.

Story tellers must understand the meaning behind the story and the beliefs of the community today. It would be beneficial for all operators to have trained tour guides; and the Provincial government to sponsor or arrange basic training on skills of interpretation methods, specifically on how to communicate with international visitors. There are other areas of interest for a visitor, such as explanations of traditional medicines, plants and vines species used for housing and food preparations. There are also interesting stories around how the land is maintained for crops and gardens. International visitors are unlikely going to understand *Pidgin English*, thus Tour Guides must have some basic training and good command in English language as a medium of communication for that matter.

### **Proposed Conservation Area(s)**

In Solomon Islands there is currently one site (area) being ratified as a listed property under the UNESCO World Heritage Convention 1972, East Rennell, including the 15,500ha brackish Lake Tegano and a marine component three (3) nautical miles off shore. The area has been ratified as a natural area, however, there is almost no progress made given that the East Rennell local committee are too confused, incapable and lack reliable capacity. Thus, the possible listing of the area under the PAA 2010 is still one of outstanding issues to date. Already there has been some logging activities took place on the west side of the buffer zone near Avatai village, Kagava Bay. Given the current status of the ERWHA now in the “in-danger” list, the Provincial Government must intervene and assist the ER communities by facilitating dialogue between all stakeholders to reach a consensual agreement between Avatai landowners and East Rennell community and State Party (SIG) to draw land boundary and speed-up the mechanism lead up to registration of the property under PAA 2010. There are few potential terrestrial and marine areas in the Province need assessment to verify its cultural and biological outstanding values, for example, the former *Hiti* dwelling caves at Tapuna area (Bellona) and its related stories.

### **Events**

Rennell Bellona Provincial Government should be actively attracting national events, though the recent past government failed desperately to host one such opportunity -the Solomon game- which was awarded by NOCSI to host by the Province in 2018, failed miserably by poor reporting and poorly misappropriation of funds . However, the new government should not take past political inability and madness as a stumbling issue to hinder potential economical opportunity for the Province and its people by pursuing such economical opportunities for the Province through sports tourism.

## **RENNELL BELLONA PROVINCIAL IDENTITY**

The national marketing slogan for Solomon Islands is “nature paradise and “Somewhere so different”. Renbel marketing strategy will compliment this national theme given that it recognized its own special and unique features that are highlighted in the product development section and marketing themes below.

## **Rennell Bellona Tourism Marketing Themes**

The three (3) key marketing themes below have been developed from the type of products and special features Rennell and Bellona could offer visitors. The next section looks more specifically at marketing techniques and actions to implement these marketing templates.

1. Environment and Nature
2. Culture and Traditions
3. Adventure

These unique qualities will be the focus of product development and marketing strategies to attract visitors to the Province. The creation of Rennell Bellona own Provincial identity will enable it to differentiate itself from other Provinces rather than competing head to head. The Provincial identity has been developed by the Provincial Tourism Department. The Province's marketing strategy has been broken up into 3 key themes namely: culture and traditions, environment and nature, and Adventure. Each theme has been broken into key tourism attractions under each theme:

### **Environment and Nature**

Rennell Bellona Province has a notorious natural beauty and unique geological story. It is remoted and has wild, rocky coastlines, blow holes, caves, pristine lagoons and white sandy beaches. It also has natural thick rainforest, home to some endemic and many native species and subspecies. Key environmental features include:

- It developed many unique bird, animal and plant species (compared its land mass size) than anywhere else in the Solomon Islands and the wider Pacific Islands region for its size
- Significant ecosystems
- Lowland forest
- Coastal and inland swamps
- A huge number of different mangroves species
- Highland moss forest
- Home of the Hiti people
- Unique physical island structure (haul of a canoe)
- Home to the only listed United Nations UNESCO World Heritage conservation global program of areas having Outstanding Universal Value (OUV) in the world;
- It rained 265 days a year
- Home of the biggest in-land 15,500 ha fresh water *Lake Tegano* in the insular Pacific Islands
- Nice looking and hospitable people reflected by their intrinsic "*Avaiki Way*".

### **Culture and Tradition**

It is highly recommended for the Rennell Bellona Provincial Government to create a Division within its administration to cater for Tourism, Culture and World Heritage to identify, develop and implement potential tourism related activities based on these sectors as well as provide community awareness, develop viable products and marketing strategies. The Division to also include Environment Conservation and Climate Change to its mandate given the inter-relations of these sectors. Language in Solomon Islands is not written, thus if these stories are not recorded or passed onto the next generation then they could be lost forever. Learned from tourism strength from other tourism destinations, our stories/legends could also draw huge interest from visitors and could attract visitors to the Province. One fine example is Renbel, home to the legendary Hiti people; the activities and stories associated to these extinct people and their former special sites could be truly pull the interests of visitors to come and see.

## **Adventure**

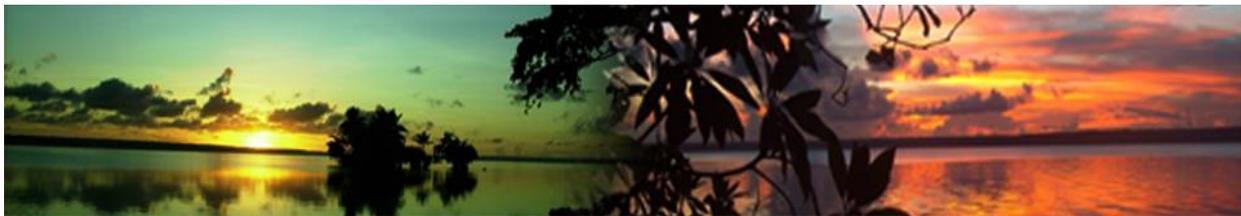
Renbel has very little development (particularly in and around Bellona Island and East Rennell tourism zones) and for most visitors it would feel like an adventure travelling to these regions. However, there are key attractions in the Province that could draw the more adventurous type travellers such as trampers/trekkers and researchers. There are many tracks in and around Rennell and Bellona one could opted to take and scout the evergreen forest, bird watching or simply track up the cliffs and navigated down to some of the best white sand beaches that visitors can find in the Solomon islands, flanked by forested cliffs and pristine living marine environment. Touring the thick forest or anywhere else needs to be prearranged with an accompanied trained Tour Guide (s).

There are many tracks around Rennell and Bellona islands, lead down to the sea coast, some have the potentials to be built into some best scenic spots to add visitor experience, some can be a day trip to special spots with best's panoramic sea and lake views from top of ridges and mountains. There is a huge potential to develop this market targeting adventurers and those wishing to get away and experience the true essence of mother nature in its truest form. Classic lessons on how to develop this market product can be taken from other Provinces that are benefiting from this segment, in particular, the Eco-Trek in the Bauro Highlands of central Makira Province, working in partnership with a renowned global conservation organisation, the Conservation International (CI) and a Makira community based organisation already draw a good number of international adventure travelers who like to get off the beaten track.

Marketing is needed to promote eco-tramping/eco-trekking in the Province that could have the opportunity to also bring specialized tour groups, for example, bird watchers clubs and botanists around the world. The fact there is no rivers in Renbel Province minimize the hazard/risk often took place in other Provinces by running rivers when bad weather is felt.

## **Summary**

Rennell Bellona islands (the Province) being a single ethnic group have many special natural and cultural qualities. Its biological story is unique and a subject of many researches taken by several International Institutions in the 1900s up to the present. The identification, assessment, nomination and subsequent ratification of East Rennell (Lake Tegano) as a world natural heritage property under the UNESCO World Heritage Convention 1972 by the International Union for the Conservation of Nature (IUCN), the first in the entire Pacific islands region and Solomon Islands justify the outstanding universal value of the area (Renbel), therefore make sense.



## **Introduction**

Rennell Bellona has had little or no existing promotion to date despite being one of the best and safest holiday destinations in the Solomon Islands. However, by the look of things the Province is not recommended at this stage to fully geared up to host a large number of visitors, particularly international visitor arrivals given the low standards and poor diversification and range of tourism services currently on offer. It is fundamental to realise that marketing needs to be done in a way that gives an honest portrayal of what visitors can expect from a stay in the Province whilst also encouraging a visit.

This marketing plan has minimal steps the Renbel Provincial Government can do to increase tourism awareness and understanding of Renbel as a twin isolated Islands best described as raised coral atolls and a Province of its own in the Solomon Islands. As recommended above, visitors are not expected to arrive in large numbers, realistically; the Provincial Government just hopes to see an increase in holiday visitors to the Province. It will take time to build the quality of product and the size of the visitor market to Rennell Bellona Province given the tourism product level currently on offer. In this marketing plan, there are two (2) parts to be concentrated:

1. Do quantitative and qualitative research and identify types of people that could be interested in coming to visit Renbel Province (demographic and psychographic segments);
2. Encourage these target markets to actually book and come to the Province.

## **MARKETING POLICY AND OBJECTIVES**

The following marketing guidelines have been approved by the Rennell Bellona Provincial Government Executive and are also magnified in the Renbel Provincial Tourism Policy 2017. All marketing activities should be implemented in line with the Policy; and monitor progress made.

### **Marketing Guidelines:**

1. The Rennell Bellona Provincial Government, through the Renbel Tourism Council to develop an *in-country* marketing strategy and programme to target domestic travel market;
2. Marketing must be honest and reflect the attraction and products that actually exist in the Province;
3. The Provincial Government, through the Renbel Tourism Council equitably includes all registered tourism operators and all stakeholders in the Province in marketing strategies;
4. The Provincial Government, through the Renbel Tourism Council to consult, cooperates and integrate international marketing programme with that of the Tourism Solomon (formerly known as SI Visitors Bureau (SIVB) and ministry of commerce;
5. The Provincial Government of Renbel, through the Renbel Tourism Council should regularly advocate for the inclusion of Rennell Bellona Province in marketing materials produced by Tourism Solomons;

The following objectives are specific to this Marketing Plan. They are fairly broad to help stimulate marketing activities of the tourism industry for Renbel Province Marketing Plan Objectives.

### **Objective 1:**

To promote the natural, adventure and cultural features of Rennell Bellona Province;

**Objective 2:**

To generate an interest and increase the product knowledge in Renbel's tourism products from Renbel's target markets;

**Objective 3:**

To increase existing tourism operators profile, coordinate marketing and encourage the operators to cooperate and be proud of their products and environment;

**Objective 4:**

To maximize promotional activities from any events, sporting, workshops and conferences in the Province, through advertising and press releases;

**Objective 5:**

To increase the local resident population's understanding of Renbel's natural, cultural and adventure features in the Province;

**Objective 6:**

To extend the trip length of consultants and development workers that come to the Province for work and encourage a return holiday trip for further exploration of other unseen parts of the Province. The Marketing Plan needs to be treated like a working document. It should be reviewed by the Tourism Council at intervals to see what objectives and tasks have been achieved, what challenges have been encountered and what adjustments need to be made. Extra marketing activities should be added and some will need to be updated, reprinted and redistributed.

## **MARKETS**

### **National Markets**

The main source markets to Solomon Islands are Australians, male, aged between 25-45 years old and their primary motive for travelling is diving. The Tourism Solomons is focusing on the Australian, Aotearoa New Zealand, North America and Japan markets. Within these countries, the markets are WWII interest travellers and marine/lagoon scuba diving. Cruise ships are an emerging market and interestingly picked up and Tourism Solomons is hoping to expand this market on available basis to other potential destinations in the Provinces that have ready markets and hosting ability. Renbel Province is expected to improve its standing to also participate in any expansion and extension of this cruise boat market.

### **Renbel Province Visitor Markets**

Although it may seem that selling tourism products is like selling dreams, what actually sold are things like accommodation, scenery, cultural experiences etc. However, the basic market product "Rennell Bellona" is already exists, unlike other products that must be grown or manufactured. As well, Renbel must attract the consumer to move to the product rather than the product is moved to the consumer. The Provincial Tourism Department is aware that it has a very minimal control over many factors relating to their products that going to affect visitor arrivals to the Province, for example, the weather, attitude of locals towards visitors, crime, unrealistic expectations and costs etc.

However, the products on offer must be competitive and compatible with the overall marketing strategy and markets Solomon Islands are aiming to attract. Whilst Renbel Province does not have identified significant diving sites and little known about diving compared to the Western and Central Provinces,

there are other special and interest attractions scattered in and around the Province that are compatible with the National Marketing Slogan of “*Nature’s Paradise.*” The Provincial identity builds on the Renbel three (3) key themes as mentioned earlier. These are: culture and tradition; the natural environment and adventure.

At present Renbel receives very low international visitors’ arrival to the Province. Minimal arrivals were mostly FITs (Free and independent travellers) and VFR (Visiting friends and relatives) type visitors. It currently does not attract the classic “holiday visitor” to the Solomon Islands, aiming to attract foreign earnings. This could be true on the fact Renbel does not have marketable products. At the current, the main visitor markets to Province are:

#### 1. Development workers

Renbel province frequently receives a regular flow of development workers who are based in Honiara; few came from other Provinces on specific assignment and are often have short stay.

#### 2. Visiting Friends and Relatives (VFR)

This local market tends to be people from Honiara who are either originally from Renbel Province or their families are currently living in the Province. This market is not very lucrative but they do use and support the transportation network to and from Renbel Province. Christmas tends to place extra pressure on this infrastructure.

#### 3. Researchers/bird watchers

### **POTENTIAL MARKETS FOR RENNELL BELLONA PROVINCE**

Renbel Province is seen as off the main tourist track in the Solomon Islands, it is not as developed as some parts of the country do. It would be expensive for the Provincial Government to attempt and/or try a marketing campaign specifically targeted the Solomon Islands current international holiday markets. It is off the beaten track and is more likely to attract and satisfy adventurous traveller who likes to explore new areas and don’t mind “roughing it.”

#### 1. Honiara ex-pat community

At this stage of international travel restrictions caused by the global COVID-19 pandemic which severely affects SI source markets abroad, the Provincial Tourism industry should now focus its target market strategy to the above segment, (see Target Market Action Plan). There is a large ex-pat community based in Honiara. It made up of volunteers, embassies/High commissions, ex-pat development workers, consultants, private sectors organisations, business owners etc. This market is more accessible and it is cheaper for Renbel to promote to than direct to the Solomon Islands international market which is very competitive and much longer waiting. At this stage it would be more economical for the Renbel Province tourism industry to also focus its marketing on this large ex-pat population. However it may take a few years to build it up. Many of this group will have been to popular in-country tourism areas such as the Western Province and are interested in exploring a new part of the Solomon Islands for new experiences. The marketing will target the wider population but the message and information should try to attract this smaller group. If standards improve in the Province then it could begin attracting a wider ex-pat group. Marketing therefore needs to be very clear.

#### 2. Cruise Ships

The Renbel Province has been hosted to few visiting cruise ships in the past, in collaboration and partnership with a local In-bound tour company “*Destination Solo.*” It stopped over at Ahanga, Bellona Island before headed to Kagava bay, south-west Rennell Island. Renbel Provincial Government should pursue such opportunity with relevant stakeholders.

### 3. Bird Watchers

Historically Renbel Province has attracted niche markets like bird watchers from Australia, New Zealand, Europe and the Americas. Renbel Province has many endemic bird species than many bigger islands in the Solomons and the insular Pacific Islands region. This is a special market that the Provincial Government needs stronger focus to develop.

### 4. Intrepid and Adventure Travellers

This group is after a real Solomon Islands culture experience. They want to stay in villages on home stays accommodation living with local families and eat traditional foods. They like to get “off the beaten track.” Renbel Province has a lot of product to offer this market. This group is more likely to gather information for them on the internet and also purchase themselves a travel guide books.

### 5. Eco-Trekking and Tramping Groups

There are interesting treks in and around Rennell and Bellona. There is a diverse range of land and seascapes to offer the eco-trekking and tramping markets and interesting biodiversity to explore and see. The trekking could also be combined with village stays, cultural experiences and custom stories about the land, its people and its wildlife and the pristine natural environment.

### 6. Researchers

## RENNELL BELLONA PROVINCE TARGET MARKETS

The marketing strategies for the Province identify ways of maximizing economic return from its existing markets and also attracting new markets to the Province. To make it easier to attract these different markets, they can be grouped into certain target markets. Different marketing activities can be developed and aimed at each target group as outlined below:

1. Ex-pat market based in Honiara
2. Nature and adventurer travellers (including bird watchers, trekkers, botanists etc)
3. Cruise ships market

Target Market	Action	Priority
Honiara Ex-pats	1. Design and print a brochure for the Province and distribute it widely to TS (SIVB), hotels, Embassies, High Commissions, Govt offices, Honiara Guest houses, Solomon Airlines offices, Airports, cafeterias, the media, Telekom outlets and other popular eating out venues like Lime Lodges.	High
	2. Post brochures to key NGOs offices and private businesses	High
	3. Write stories for Solomon Airlines In-Flight magazines and national calendars as well as those of	High

	other Provinces such as the quarterly Malaita Province info magazine.	
Nature lovers and Adventurers (Incl bird watchers, Botanists, Conservators, Eco-trekkers etc.	<p>1. Write press releases and articles for specialist magazines and club newsletters such as bird watching groups in Australia, New Zealand, Europe and the Americas. The National Geography magazine.</p> <p>2. Submit updated information and images to the different Guide Book companies Incl the popular <i>Lonely Planet</i>.</p>	High  High
Cruise Ship Market	<p>1. Arrange and meet the cruise ship wholesalers. Find out the requirements for stop-over in-country ports and whether there is potentials for increase stop-over to include Rennell Bellona Province.</p> <p>2. Prepare a flyer to distribute to the cruise ship wholesalers in Honiara focusing Bellona Ahanga beach and Kagava bay on Rennell.</p>	High  High

### RENNELL BELLONA TOURISM INDUSTRY MARKETING ACTION PLAN

The table below summarises the different marketing techniques the Provincial Government can use to promote the Province to attract visitors to its pristine shores. It also has **Actions** for the Provincial Government to implement. It is good to use a range of media; and the Provincial Government to select the most practical tools and approaches for promotion in the Solomon Islands and overseas using resources available to the Provincial Government.

It must be emphasized and remembered that tourism is a very competitive industry unlike any other functioning industry here at home and abroad. Therefore Renbel Province must present its products to compete at the national and international tourism markets.

Marketing Tool	Action	Priority
<b>Print</b>	<p>1. The Tourism Division to gather informations on all existing operators in the Province and combined them into a summary brochure for the Province. Brochure to be widely distributed at key outlets in Honiara to attract the key target markets.</p> <p>2. Posters to be developed for key events in the Province e.g. Avaiki cultural festival, sports festival or for East Rennell a rowing festival etc.</p>	High

	3. Provide TS (SIVB) with product materials to be used in TS (SIVB) marketing tools (print and web)	
<b>Public Relations (Media)</b>	<p>1. Keep TS (SIVB) up to date with a tourism business inventory including all tourism operators, facilities and contacts</p> <p>2. Write popular stories and press releases about the Province. Take advantage of any special events that are held in the Province, both prior and after the event. Write press releases and stories for range of print and electronic media such as Solomon Airlines, Air New Zealand, Air Pacific, Qantas, Air Niugini in-flight magazines etc.</p> <p>3. Submit stories and images to all Air lines that fly in to Honiara to be published in their In-Flight Magazines.</p> <p>4. Interviews on SIBC or local TV during special events such as sports tournaments that talk about special features of the Province.</p> <p>5. Submit news to the TS (SIVB) News Letter frequently.</p> <p>6. Submit news and Provincial profile to News letter of the South Pacific Tourism Organisation (submit press releases)</p> <p>7. Submit informations and significant images of the Province to TS to represent on Provincial behalf in Trade Shows and Promotions overseas.</p> <p><b>1. Trade Events</b> Get operators meet together and coordinate some materials to be sent to TS and Ministry of Trade &amp; Commerce for any Trade trips.</p> <p><b>2. Develop a “Rennell Bellona Tourism Kit”</b> to send to identified Travel Wholesalers and Travel Agents overseas.</p> <p><b>3. Travel Books</b> Lonely Planet Travel Guide Book for Solomon Islands section now has stand-alone pages with whole section on each Province in Solomon Islands. RenBel Province must explore providing latest information on real fact situation of potential and ready investment products.</p>	High
<b>Promotion</b>		High

	<p>4. Get carved custom poles and stand them at both Anua and Tigoa airports aircraft taxi bay with a welcoming signage.</p> <p>5. Place a large size maps at Provincial Headquarters outside main office complex for visitors to see and navigate themselves to places of common interests such as stores, mobile phone recharge outlets as well as for visitors to also interact with local people.</p>	
<b>Packaging</b>	<p>1.Coordinate joint marketing initiatives for all Operators in the Province e.g. East Rennell operators to devise a joint travel package by starting from boarding a vehicle from Tigoa airport and arrival to East Rennell, OBM/ canoe Lake scenic Tours, accommodation and food or bring your own food etc.</p> <p>2. Operators are essentially need training on how to develop a “Tour Package” and existing “Distribution Channels” that fundamentally involved them and a Travel Agent; the booking system and payment structure, including payable commissions.</p> <p>3. Discuss with TS (SIVB) Market Unit to link up with their website.</p> <p>4. Develop a map of the Province with key tourism features listed on to it.</p> <p>5. Internet is the key distribution channel for international tourism and information. It is essential that Renbel Provincial Government have a presence on the internet in somehow.</p>	High
<b>Price</b>	<p>1. The quality of tourism in Rennell and Bellona Province is fairly low.</p> <p>2. Pricing must reflect the quality of the product that is sold taking into account the price of similar products available and other items competing for the customer’s disposable income elsewhere.</p> <p>3. Most products and services in the Renbel Province are below international standards. Pricing strategies must reflect the standard of product offered. Renbel Province Tourism Division to work with Operators on pricing strategies.</p>	High

## **MONITORING AND REVIEW**

This Tourism Plan, along with the Provincial Tourism Policy, will be the two (2) key documents for guiding the Provincial Tourism Division in its mandate to direct tourism development in the Province whereby put focus to implement the recommended actions specified in this Plan; otherwise the tourism industry in the Province will be likely to continue on as it currently is.

To ensure that the Provincial Government commits to recommendation priority areas made in this Plan, it must be sourced, implemented and monitored on an on-going basis. In other words, investment must be made and progress must be reviewed and redirected to suit unforeseen circumstances and pitfalls where necessary. The proposed Provincial Tourism division and Tourism Council will collectively provide reports to the Provincial Government Executive on tasks implemented and any recommended changes to this Plan. Depending on staffing of the Provincial Tourism Division, it can support and implement ongoing work as required. The Provincial Executive needs to be realistic about what the Tourism Council can achieve as it can be made up of part time appointments as proposed in this draft.

### **Acknowledgement**

Sincere thanks to the cooperative and kind staff of the Division of Tourism; and Tourism Solomons (formally SIVB) within the national Ministry of Culture and Tourism in Honiara for their kind support and supplying of required data and the used of their computers to retrieve needed materials for the purpose of this document. Without their kind assistance and comradeship this document would not be informative and comprehensive. Special thanks to the Hon. Premier Willy Tuha for his vision and political will for initiating and mandating this task as basis to reactivate tourism as one of the potential economic sectors in the Province. Also, sincere big thanks to DPS Aubrey Sau'eha for his support during the scouting task in Honiara.

Tagio Tumas.

Department of Tourism  
Rennell Bellona Provincial Government 2020

### **APPENDIX IES:**

**Fig.1:**

## Annual Tourism Highlights, 2019



Source: UNWTO Barometer January 2020, NTOs, NSOs and SPTO

Fig. 3: Tourist Arrivals by Pacific Islands Destinations- 2019

### Top 5 Pacific Destinations for 2019 over 2018

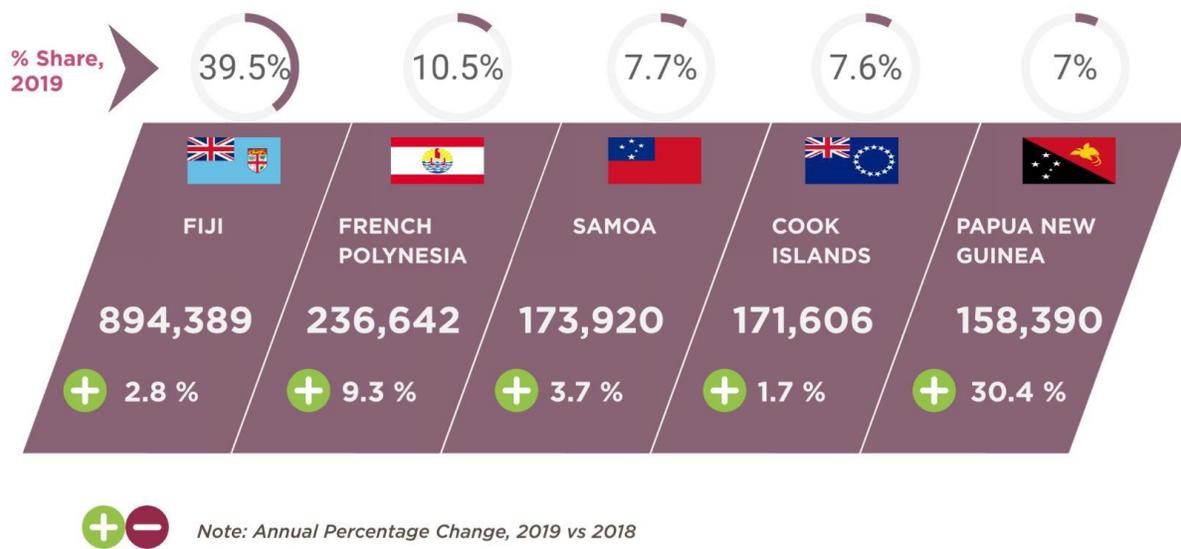
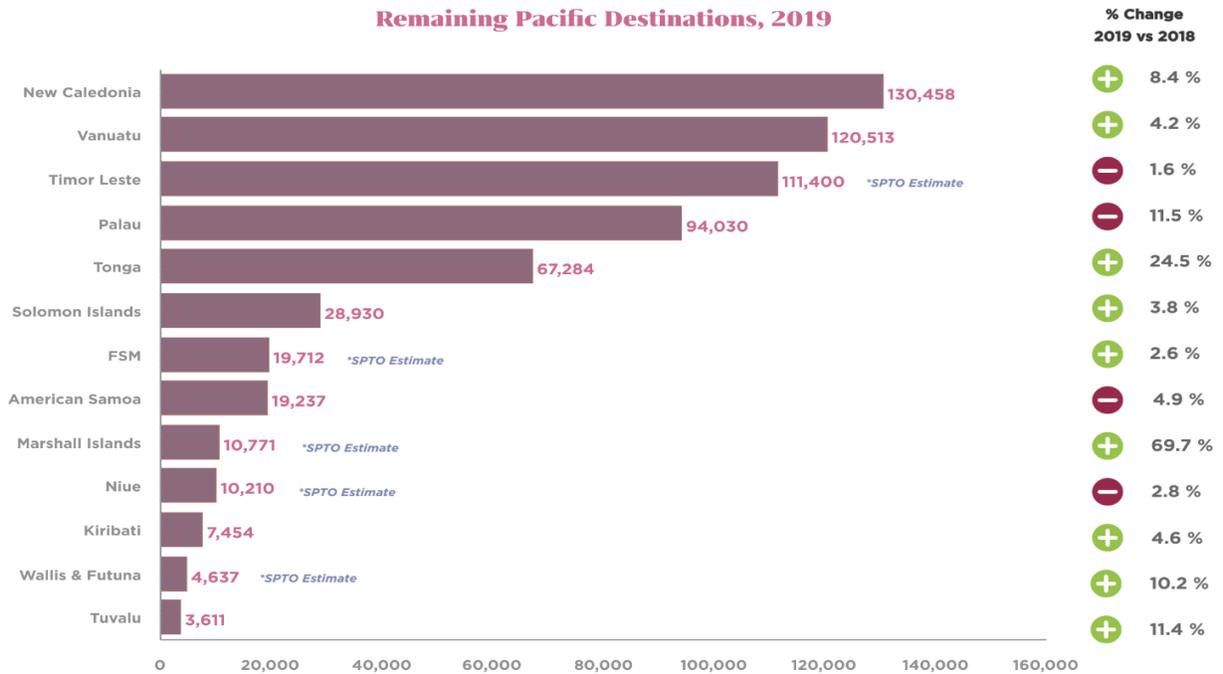


Fig. 4:

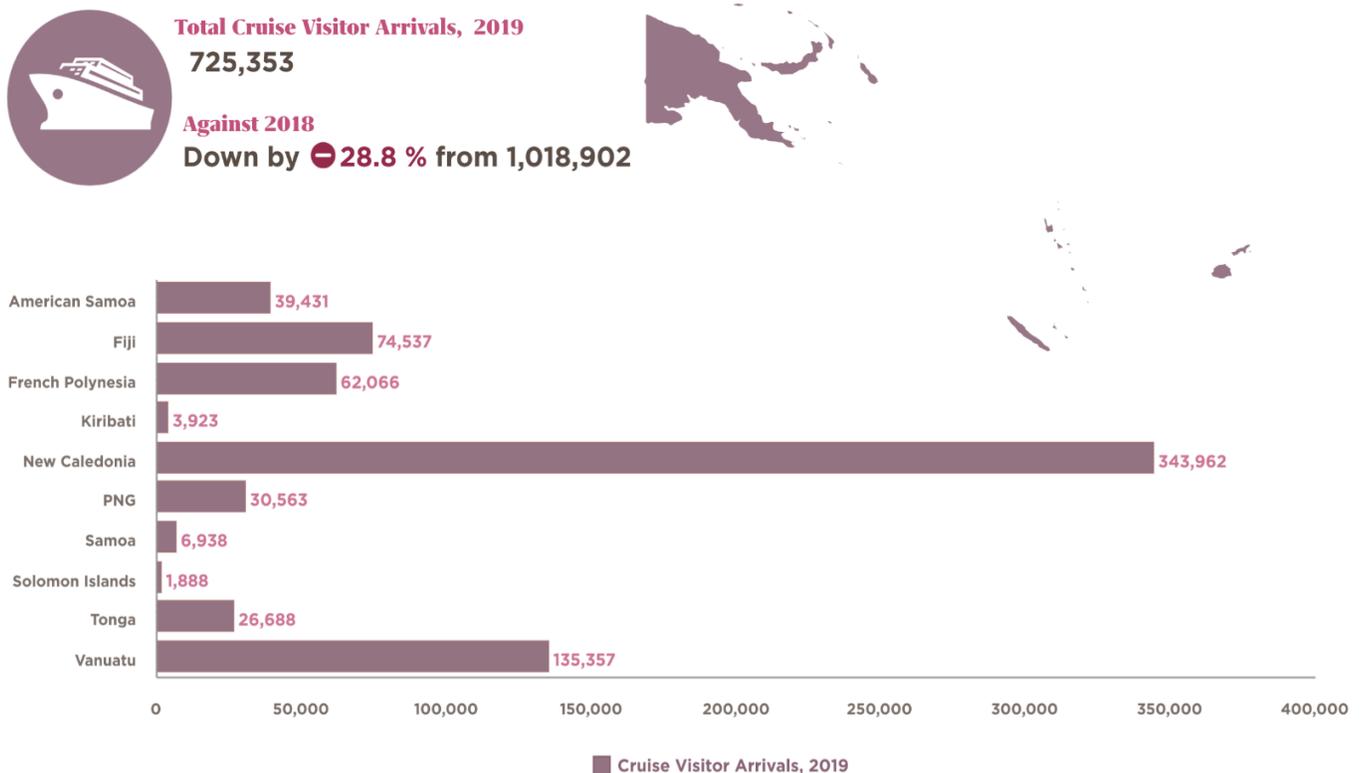


Source: NTOs, NSOs and SPTO

Note: Only PICs with available 2019 data (i.e. actual & provisional) listed.

SPTO and ACP Member Countries include American Samoa, Cook Islands, Fiji, Federated States of Micronesia, French Polynesia, Kiribati, Marshall Islands, Nauru, New Caledonia, Niue, Palau, Papua New Guinea, Rapa Nui, Samoa, Solomon Islands, Timor Leste, Tokelau, Tuvalu, Vanuatu and Wallis & Futuna.

**Fig. 5: Comparative cruise visitor arrivals by Pacific Islands destinations**



Source: NTOs, NSOs and SPTO

Table 2: Tourist Arrivals to Pacific ACP and SPTO member countries by Source Market

	Annual					Quarterly							
	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2018				2019			
						Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4
Australia	610,881	614,282	627,649	619,842	640,469	121,295	145,486	181,420	171,641	119,132	167,332	182,392	171,613
New Zealand	359,102	406,631	445,808	473,801	488,016	71,847	119,705	164,637	117,613	72,531	129,349	168,283	117,854
United States of America	195,740	199,336	205,370	223,945	253,812	51,425	57,599	57,027	57,893	57,920	69,428	64,128	62,335
United Kingdom	36,494	34,997	34,228	33,666	35,774	8,634	7,613	8,742	8,679	8,717	8,767	9,767	8,522
Europe	172,787	189,831	186,211	209,291	231,344	40,808	45,402	67,032	56,048	44,263	51,279	72,132	63,670
China	153,119	150,292	140,198	124,961	115,114	39,343	29,574	33,052	22,992	31,248	28,102	30,869	24,895
Japan	78,704	80,202	76,364	77,997	76,540	23,875	13,665	21,609	18,847	21,717	15,527	20,728	18,568
India	7,415	6,570	9,942	10,257	13,329	2,950	2,522	2,231	2,553	3,165	3,470	3,496	3,198
South Korea	19,146	20,884	24,057	27,092	23,686	6,999	6,247	7,244	6,601	6,437	5,984	5,720	5,545
Other Asia	65,392	128,704	134,701	125,680	140,703	30,547	31,431	32,994	30,709	31,968	38,422	35,711	34,602
Pacific Islands	125,909	135,909	157,262	155,878	167,152	37,133	39,254	39,813	39,678	38,783	40,128	46,286	41,955
Other Countries	68,793	63,055	61,848	70,532	77,255	20,294	15,016	18,229	16,993	19,010	18,133	20,347	19,765
<b>Total</b>	<b>1,893,482</b>	<b>2,030,692</b>	<b>2,103,638</b>	<b>2,152,941</b>	<b>2,263,194</b>	<b>455,149</b>	<b>513,515</b>	<b>634,031</b>	<b>550,247</b>	<b>454,890</b>	<b>575,922</b>	<b>659,859</b>	<b>572,523</b>

Source: NTOs, NSOs and SPTO.

Fig.6:

TABLE 3: Purpose of Visit Breakdown, 2019 Annual

	2019					2019 (% Share of Purposes per Destination)				
	Leisure	VFR	Business	Others	TOTAL	Leisure	VFR	Business	Others	TOTAL
American Samoa	4,312	10,265	2,990	1,670	19,237	22.4%	53.4%	15.5%	8.7%	100.0%
Cook Islands	147,580	13,939	6,171	3,917	171,606	86.0%	8.1%	3.6%	2.3%	100.0%
FSM	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Fiji	656,249	92,026	56,933	89,181	894,389	73.4%	10.3%	6.4%	10.0%	100.0%
French Polynesia	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Kiribati	3,025	267	3,404	758	7,454	40.6%	3.6%	45.7%	10.2%	100.0%
Marshall Islands	2,016	1,497	3,069	4,189	10,771	-	-	-	-	-
Nauru	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
New Caledonia	37,555	12,675	8,129	6,981	65,340	57.5%	19.4%	12.4%	10.7%	100.0%
Niue	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Palau	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
PNG	24,814	10,763	116,242	6,571	158,390	15.7%	6.8%	73.4%	4.1%	100.0%
Samoa	68,103	67,506	13,289	31,960	180,858	37.7%	37.3%	7.3%	17.7%	100.0%
Solomon Islands	3,576	1,756	3,434	4,093	12,859	27.8%	13.7%	26.7%	31.8%	100.0%
Timor Leste	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Tonga	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Tuvalu	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Vanuatu	95,761	8,758	8,044	7,670	120,233	79.6%	7.3%	6.7%	6.4%	100.0%
Wallis & Futuna	1,028	407	420	397	2,252	45.6%	18.1%	18.7%	17.6%	100.0%
<b>TOTAL BY PURPOSE</b>	<b>1,044,019</b>	<b>219,859</b>	<b>222,124</b>	<b>157,387</b>	<b>1,643,389</b>	<b>63.5%</b>	<b>13.38%</b>	<b>13.52%</b>	<b>9.6%</b>	<b>100.0%</b>

Source: NTOs, NSOs and SPTO.

Note: Percentage share for individual destinations are calculated against individual destinations total arrivals for the quarter.

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