

Welcome to the Chamber's Newsletter!

SEPTEMBER - OCTOBER 2019

Call for reduction of electricity tariffs

● Page 3



BUSINESS FORUM IS VITAL

SICCI Chairman, Jay Bartlett escorting Prime Minister Hon Manasseh Sogavare to the official opening of the 11th Australia-Solomon Islands Business Forum hosted at the Heritage Park Hotel in Honiara from 11-12 September 2019. Hon Sogavare told Forum delegates this Business Forum is essential in building confidence and trust between businesses in both Australia and Solomon Islands. **Reports & more photos on pages 4, 5, 6 & 7.**



SBD 1.2
billion
infrastructure
projects



SICCI hosts
roundtable
on Trade
Agreements



2019 BEA
to be live
televised for
the first time



'Teachim
Me' program
comes to an
end



Welcome

This is the official Newsletter of the Solomon Islands Chamber of Commerce & Industry (SICCI), published and distributed to members and stakeholders after every two months.

It contains updates on all Chamber activities, news, members' feature, interviews, upcoming events and department updates from the Secretariat.

This publication is produced by the SICCI Media & Communications Department.

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Business Forum

Prime Minister
updates Business
Forum on Tax
Reform Gov't is
undertaking

p7



2019 BEA

SICCI introduces
2 new award
categories for
the 2019 BEA on
November 30

p6

Business Capability

Capability &
Investment
workshop brings
together export
ready businesses

p10



Our ICT analyst

"Let's work together
to make Solomon
Islands a technology
smart & progressive
country"

p17

SICCI raises concerns and calls for reduction in electricity tariffs

Wednesday 16 October, Honiara – SICCI is calling on Solomon Power to work together with the Ministry of Mines, Energy and Rural Electrification to approve an immediate reduction in electricity tariffs in the domestic, commercial and industrial segments.

This comes after recent private sector consultations with SICCI members revealed that the cost of electricity is one of the biggest challenges that all businesses have raised serious concern towards and would like addressed as a high priority.

This concern with electricity costs was further reinforced at the recent 11th Australian Solomon Islands Business Forum, which was hosted in Honiara in September 2019, as a key impediment to growth and development in the Solomon Islands.

CEO for the Chamber, Ms Atenasi Ata said that this call was driven by the sad reality faced by majority of the nation being unable to afford electricity, contributing to a further demise in the quality of life, economy and living standards for both ordinary citizen and local business owners alike.

"A letter was submitted to the Board of Solomon Power and the Minister of Mines, Energy and Rural Electrification where we highlighted that electricity tariffs in the Solomon Islands are one of the highest in the world at ~US79c/kWh, being at least 30% higher than neighbouring Pacific countries," CEO Ata said.



SICCI CEO, Ms Atenasi Ata says the high electricity costs are a hindrance to our communities' survival.

Ms Ata said the high electricity costs are a hindrance to our communities' survival.

"We know that the entity's prime objective is to be as profitable as possible, however, according to the SOE Act, it is also tasked to exhibit a sense of social responsibility by having regard to the interest of the community through making electricity affordable.

"It is evident that Solomon Power are prioritizing profits over the people and businesses of Solomon Islands, which is ultimately self-defeating given how much high electricity prices are hurting the economy," she said.

The SICCI CEO added that it is also of great concern that the company has built significant cash reserves and is still claiming to be unable to provide any relief to the people and making it more difficult to source alternative sources of power.

"We feel that Solomon Power's actions to date in this regard have fallen short of community particularly business-consumer expectations.

"Yes, the Government funded Tina River Hydro Power Project to be commissioned in 2022 is expected to lower tariffs. The long timeframe, however, exceeds business and community tolerance levels," she said.

The communication to Solomon Power also requests its participation post-immediate tariff reduction, in an analysis of the current tariff framework and compliance with the various regulations and legislations.

"We hope that with the proposed review being SICCI-led, the country could be assured its independence as well as transparency," says CEO Ata.

SICCI roundtable on Trade Agreements

Wednesday 16 October, Honiara – SICCI on Tuesday 15th October 2019 hosted a roundtable meeting for its members based on important Trade Agreements to Solomon Islands.

This is the fourth and final roundtable meeting organized by the SICCI Advocacy Department this year.

The other three were on agriculture, land and infrastructure.

"Trade Agreements once entered into will have effect on imports, exports, and business in general. As such, it is important that discussions be had

in order for businesses to benefit from trade agreements that the country is, or becomes, a party to," Executive Officer, Nelson Kere, said.

With this roundtable on Trade Agreements, SICCI aimed for its members to be updated on Solomon Islands' graduation from Least Developed Country (LDC) status, and understand implications of Trade Agreements.

There were two presentations made by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and External Trade (MFAET).



Trade Commissioner, Joseph Ma'ahanua

PM says Forum vital in building business confidence

Opportunity for Government and the Private Sector to share ideas

Thursday 12 September, Honiara – The Australia Solomon Islands Business Forum is essential in building confidence and trust between businesses in both Australia and Solomon Islands.

Prime Minister Hon Manasseh Sogavare uttered this when delivering the keynote address at the opening of the eleventh edition of the Forum in Honiara on Wednesday 11th September 2019.

Hon Sogavare said it is also an opportunity where the Government together with the Private Sector can come together and share ideas on how to better collaborate in moving this country forward.

The Solomon Islands Chamber of Commerce and Industries (SICCI) in

partnership with the Australian Pacific Islands Business Council (APIBC) have been the driving force behind this forum.

This year's theme is "Partnership for Shared Prosperity"; which the Prime Minister believe is very relevant and reflective of the ever-growing relationship with businesses.

"It is indeed thrilling to see that this forum has continued to bring together senior government officials and corporate executive in the private sector from both countries, who strive for a common purpose; which is doing business in the spirit of cooperation and partnership.

"I believe that such approach is essential in building confidence and trust between

businesses here in Solomon Islands and Australia. I have no reservation in saying that this forum has played a significant role in growing our economy through the sharing of ideas, forging of partnerships and strengthening of relationships," he said.

Hon Sogavare said this year's theme is reflective of the need for a stronger, vibrant and dynamic partnership for a shared prosperity between our country and people.

"The Democratic Coalition Government for Advancement (DCGA) would like to see a more equitable, mutual and collaborative business relationship."



SICCI Chairman, Jay Bartlett welcoming Prime Minister Hon Manasseh Sogavare to the 11th Australia Solomon Islands Business Forum. Looking on Mr Gary Clifford, President of the Australia Pacific Islands Business Council.

11th Australia-Solomon Islands Business Forum



Forum delegates at the 11th Australia-Solomon Islands Business Forum.

SBD1.2 billion infrastructure projects

Friday 20 September, Honiara- Ten infrastructure projects are been identified to be the focus of the Solomon Islands Government within the next five years.

These infrastructure projects, labelled as high priority, represent a financial commitment of SBD1.2 billion.

Minister of National Planning and Development Coordination, Hon Rick Houenipwela revealed this during the 11th Australia-Solomon Islands Business Forum hosted in Honiara from 11-12 September 2019 where the Minister was guest speaker during a session on 'Financing Infrastructure for Sustainable Economic Growth'.

The ten prioritized projects include the Honiara International Wharf Remedial Work (\$200,000,000), Industrial and Commercial Estate Development (\$114,000,000), Provincial Airport Upgrade (\$30,000,000), Biosecurity (\$25,000,000), Lungga WTP-Honiara Water Supply (\$20,000,000), Control Tower (\$10,000,000), Tina 66KV Transmission Line



Minister for Infrastructure Development, Hon Manasseh Maelanga (*left*) having a quick conversation with SICCI members during tea break at the 11th Australia-Solomon Islands Business Forum.



(From left to right) Gary Clifford, President Australia Pacific Islands Business Council (APIBC), Jay Bartlett, SICCI Chairman, Australian Deputy Head of Mission to Solomon Islands, Sally-Anne Vincent and SICCI CEO, Atenasi Ata.

[continue next page](#)

11th Australia-Solomon Islands Business Forum

from previous page

(\$108,000,000), Bina Fisheries Project (\$70,000,000), Grid- Connect Solar System Ambu – Auki (\$50,000,000) and Ranadi Landfill (\$36,000,000).

Hon Houenipwela said in total, the Solomon Islands National Infrastructure Pipeline (SINIIP) prioritised 55 infrastructure projects with an aggregated value of over SBD9.0 billion in the Energy, Water and Sanitation, Solid Waste, ICT, Transport (air, land and sea), the Productive sectors (Commerce, Agriculture, Tourism and Fisheries), Health and the Education sectors.

Out of the 55 projects, the ten high priority projects are identified for the next five years.

The Democratic Coalition Government for Advancement (DCGA) Statement and Policy Translation and Strategy, launched in July, also affirms the Government's intention to accelerate the development of physical and economic infrastructure to build foundations for long-term growth.

"It also states that the Government will have to allocate sufficient budget and increase national spending for roads, port services, airports and power and



Permanent Secretary of the Ministry of Culture & Tourism, Mr Andrew Nihopara speaking during the Business Forum.

communications infrastructure projects," Hon Houenipwela said.

"The Government is putting together a new concept of transformational, game changer transportation infrastructure projects," he added.

This new concept is what is now called the Solomon Islands National Transport

Core (NTC) Initiative. This concept envisages building a transportation network of sea ports, airports and road transportation system which is expected to link 75% of the population, three international sea ports, two international airports and up to 90% of the total economic activities.



(From left to right) Young entrepreneurs Brown Thompson, Limahl Totogi and Betty Akao shared their stories, experiences, challenges and opportunities as young entrepreneurs in Solomon Islands during the Business Forum.

11th Australia-Solomon Islands Business Forum

PM updates Business Forum on Tax Reform

Thursday 12 September, Honiara – Prime Minister Hon Manasseh Sogavare says his Democratic Coalition Government for Advancement (DCGA) has now moved onto legislative reform on tax.

“Government is open to inputs and dialogue in this area,” Hon Sogavare told Forum delegates and members of the private sector.

“The Government intends to bring to Parliament the Tax Administration Bill, Customs and Excise Bill and Value Added Tax Bill. This may not happen in this meeting but the next meeting of Parliament in 2020,” the Prime Minister said during the Business Forum.

SICCI, as the peak body representing private sector, welcomes the progress



Prime Minister, Hon Manasseh Sogavare delivering his remarks at the Business Forum.

made so far by Government in tax reform. Prime Minister Hon Sogavare acknowledges the impact of the tax regime on private sector in the Solomon Islands.

“Our tax regime in this instance has resulted in the Government losing out on millions of dollars. I have since instructed my staff to work closely with other

relevant ministries to address this,” he said.

“Any tax regime must be one that encourages and promotes employment. I do understand that there are external factors as well, but we must have a system in place that can cushion the impacts of these external factors,” Prime Minister, Hon Sogavare, said.

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Two new award categories added to the 2019 Business Excellence Awards

‘YECSI Entrepreneur of the year’ & ‘Business Contribution to Sustainable Development and Community’

Sunday 15 September, Honiara- SICCI announces two new award categories to be added to the 2019 Business Excellence Awards (BEA) which returns for the 6th time this year.

The BEA has now been rescheduled for Saturday 30th November 2019 at the Coral Sea Resort & Casino.

Looking again to increase entrant numbers and to reach the wider business community, SICCI has decided to revamp the award categories by adding two new categories for the 2019 BEA.

The two new awards categories are ‘YECSI Entrepreneur of the year’ and ‘Business Contribution to Sustainable Development and Community’.

The ‘YECSI Entrepreneur of the year’ award focuses on the contribution of a dynamic, creative and visionary young entrepreneur.

The winner of this award must demonstrate drive, innovation, an entrepreneurial attitude, market awareness and operational efficiency who will be held up as an example of

what an enterprising young individual can achieve in business.

To be eligible for this award, the business would need to be a member of the Young Entrepreneurs Council of Solomon Islands (YECSI).

The ‘Business Contribution to Sustainable Development and Community’ award will reward the organisation or business that can best demonstrate a company-wide commitment to Sustainable Development and therefore to their local community.

The concept of Sustainable Development has its root from UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) which calls on all its member countries to act to end poverty, protect the planet and ensure that all people enjoy peace and prosperity.

To nominate for this award, businesses are required to provide a detailed explanation of the policy or project that positively impacts on sustainable development and/or their local community regarding inclusive and transparent economic growth;

harmonious and fair social development; innovative waste management; or green and resilient environmental development.

Therefore businesses will be honoured at the award ceremony in the following categories: Entrepreneur of the Year, YECSI Entrepreneur of the Year, Large Business of the Year, Medium Business of the Year, Small Business of the Year, New Business of the Year, Business Contribution to Sustainable Development & Community Award, Innovation & Technology Award, Agribusiness of the Year, Tourism Business of the Year and the Prime Minister’s Business Excellence Award.

The 2019 Business Excellence Awards are proudly sponsored by: Solomon Islands Government, BRED Bank, Bank of South Pacific (BSP), Strongim Bisnis, Ricoh, Our Telekom, Coral Sea Resort, Kokonut Pacific (KPSI), Guadalcanal Travel Service, SATSOL, Solomon Star, TTV, Solbrew, SINPF, Island Sun, Millicent Designs, Sullivans, YECSI, Guadalcanal Plains Palm Oil (GPPOL), DJ Graphics, Ad Konect.



The Business Excellence Awards (BEA) is back for 2019 and promises to be the best yet . (Pictured) Guests at the 2017 BEA entertained by the event’s two hosts.

2019 BEA to be live televised

Monday 21 October, Honiara – We are pleased to announce that Solomon Islands’ most prominent business awards event, the Business Excellence Awards (BEA) will be televised live for viewers throughout the country.

Telekom Television Limited (TTV) is supporting SICCI with the first ever live telecast of the 2019 Business Excellence Awards on TTV1 and online.

“As a committed partner, TTV is proud to be supporting the 2019 BEA with the live broadcast of the event. We want to share with our wider audience recognition of the outstanding achievements by the private sector in their very important role as contributors to the national economy. It is sure to be a great and entertaining night with high quality

performances from local groups,” Manager Television Services at TTV, Mr Tony Rayner, said.

As the event coordinator for the Chamber, Ms Melanie Champion, is excited with the prospect of more Solomon Islanders being part of the BEA this year.

“After four (4) years of organising the Business Excellence Awards, I am very excited that it can finally be televised for all Solomon Islanders to view and appreciate.

“Viewers can expect an entertaining event which pays homage to the best businesses in the Solomon Islands.

“I’d like to thank Our Telekom and TTV for coming on board as a sponsor and making this possible,” Ms Champion said.



Kokonut Pacific Solomon Islands (KPSI) Managing Director, Bob Pollard, accepting the PM’s Business Excellence Award in 2017.



Partnerships for a shared Future

Saturday 30th November 6pm

Coral Sea Resort

Tickets on sale now

Inclusive of 3 course meal, drinks and the award ceremony.

Members	
Small Business	\$500
Medium Business	\$600
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Corporate Tables	\$1,300 per head

Award Categories

- Prime Minister’s Business Excellence Award
- Entrepreneur of the Year
- Large Business of the Year
- Medium Business of the Year
- Small Business of the Year
- New Business of the Year
- Innovation & Technology Award
- Agribusiness of the Year
- Tourism Business of the Year
- Business contribution to Sustainable Development & Community Award
- YECSI Young Entrepreneur of the Year Award

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Business Capability and Investment

SICCI/PTI NZ workshop brings together 30 local export ready businesses

Thursday 19 September, Honiara- SICCI in partnership with Pacific Trade Invest New Zealand (PTI NZ) for a third successive year delivered a 'Business Capability and Investment' workshop in Honiara on Thursday 19th September 2019.

The free one-day 'Business Capability and Investment' workshop brought together thirty (30) participants ranging from local export ready businesses both SICCI members and non-members and Government representatives

The workshop was facilitated by PTI NZ Development Manager, Mr Ian Furlong and Mr Emmanuel Valdez, Acting Trade Commissioner of PTI NZ.

This is part of PTI NZ's Pacific Path to Market business capability building programme aimed at assisting businesses to be successful and in the future be able to enter the export market.

It is the first step in a seven (7) staged programme that can provide selected businesses the opportunity to participate in a Trade Mission to New Zealand in 2020 to look at export opportunities for themselves.

The workshop gave participants a snapshot of the New Zealand market environment, current trading patterns and balance of trade, understanding your customer and how that can benefit your business, developing your company story and value proposition as well as understanding product costing, pricing and profitability.

During the afternoon session, participants were able to go through an overview of the investment environment, global investment climate, factors influencing investment decisions, ease of doing business snapshot, input cost situation, foreign direct investment trend, opportunities for investment, where to invest, how to make an

investment decision and objectives of investors and finance providers.

These are critical for business development and growth.

SICCI through its Export Industry Development Department values this relationship with PTI NZ for the past three years seeing it as one way of partnering with other organizations and institutions in delivering knowledge and required skills to Solomon Islands businesses.

According to the SICCI Export Industry Development Department, as a result of this partnership with PTI NZ, a total of fifteen (15) export ready Solomon Islands businesses have been able to travel to New Zealand since 2017 to test-market their products at the annual PTI NZ Trade Show organized for businesses from around the Pacific.

[continue next page](#)



The free one-day workshop brought together thirty (30) participants ranging from local export ready businesses both SICCI members and non-members and Government representatives.



'Business Capability and Investment' workshop participants and representatives from Pacific Trade Invest New Zealand and SICCI.

from previous page

Hosting such a workshop falls in line with SICCI's goal through its Export Industry Development Department on market-access related activities that will assist in export industry growth in Solomon Islands.

Mr Ian Furlong, Development Manager at PTI NZ said the 'Business Capability and Investment' workshop was designed for small businesses to be able to build their capabilities internally, and to export their products at some point going into the future.

"We want to help local businesses realize their dreams of exporting outside of Solomon Islands which is good for them and good for the country's economy.

"The success of this programme would not have been possible without our partners the Solomon Islands Chamber of Commerce, SICCI.

"This partnership has made this such a success and I'm confident it will continue going into the future and I thank SICCI for being our active partners," Mr Furlong said.

Meanwhile, SICCI acknowledges the valuable partnership it has with Ministry of Commerce, Industry, Labour and Immigration (MCILI) and the Pacific Horticulture Agriculture Market Access (PHAMA Plus) for their support in sending local businesses to the annual PTI NZ trade show in New Zealand for the past two years.



Sharon Salono, a Supervisor at Cathliro Cocoa showcasing her business' cocoa products during Business Capability and Investment the workshop.

SICCI invited to be part of Gov't delegation to Beijing

Tuesday 8 October, Honiara – With the Government having made the decision regarding its Taiwan and China foreign relations, the Chamber is embracing the opportunity to explore more what this new relationship will entail.

This is according a statement SICCI released to the media on Tuesday 8 October 2019.

SICCI, as the peak body representing private sector in the country, respects the Government's decisions regarding its foreign relations policies, especially on PRC and the Republic of China Taiwan.

Further, it clarifies that its activities remain directed towards the growth of private sector in the country.

SICCI released this statement following an invitation by the Office

of the Prime Minister to its Board Chairman, Mr Jay Bartlett to be part of Prime Minister Hon Manasseh Sogavare's delegation that left for China this week.

This will be the Government's first official state visit since establishing ties a fortnight ago with the PRC.

"The Chamber regards this as an opportunity to find out more about what this means to businesses and the private sector in general. We believe further that this mission would reinforce SICCI in its position as the leading private sector organization in the country."

"As the peak private sector body in the country, it would be advantageous to be at the table discussing potential vital developments that will be of benefit to not only the private sector, but also the country as a whole," the SICCI statement says.

"We see that this participation will result in gauging of opportunities to better understand risks. We also look forward to reinforcing our view that investments in the country will have to consider local content. We are committed to contributing to dialogue that will result in real appreciation of our country's development aspirations."

The Chamber understands that representatives of State-Owned Enterprises (SOEs) and other businesses were also invited, although some were not able to make the trip.

Business representatives from the private sector met their own expenses and are not funded by the Solomon Islands Government or the People's Republic of China.

SICCI joins Gov't for PACER Plus awareness in Lata

Thursday 4 October, Honiara – SICCI worked in collaboration with officials from the External Trade Division within the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and External Trade (MFAET) in conducting an awareness program on the Pacific Agreement on Close Economic Relations (PACER Plus) in Lata, Temotu Province on Friday 27th September 2019.

This was part of the External Trade Division's efforts to prepare Solomon Islands for ratification of the PACER Plus Trade agreement.

The objective of the awareness program is to ensure that key stakeholders in the country are aware of the PACER Plus and also to understand the issues and complexities that come with the Trade Agreement.

SICCI, as the peak body representing private sector in the Solomon Islands, and in its role as co-Chair of the National Trade Development Council, is part of this preparation towards ratification of this Trade Agreement as it impacts industry in the country as well.



SICCI Advocacy Officer, Mr John Ta'amora delivering his presentation during the awareness program on PACER Plus in Lata, Temotu Province.

The Chamber therefore took the opportunity to make comments on the prospects and some challenges to manage that the Trade Agreement would entail, especially in regards to business and prospects for growth.

SICCI Advocacy Officer, Mr John Ta'amora, who represented the Chamber

at the awareness in Lata, said:

"Stakeholders are being informed about the opportunities that are readily available to take advantage of. Also, the challenges that must be addressed in order for Solomon Islands to meaningfully participate under the PACER Plus agreement."

OUR BEA HOSTS!!

SICCI is pleased to announce two well-known figures in the local media industry as hosts of this year's Business Excellence Awards (BEA) which will take place on Saturday 30th November at the Coral Sea Resort from 6pm.

Owen Talo returns and will be joined this year by **Georgina Kekea** on stage at the 2019 BEA.



Tagio Tumas

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2019 BUSINESS EXCELLENCE AWARDS

Partnerships for a shared Future

YECSI celebrates its first cohort of mentees and mentors



John Wopereis
YECSI Coordinator

In YECSI's mission to foster a conducive entrepreneurial ecosystem and producing effective future business leaders in the Solomon Islands, mentorship was identified as a gap that needed to be filled. In the ongoing development of our nation's private sector, connection, storytelling and knowledge sharing between experienced business leaders and the upcoming generation of young business leaders is vital in creating an ecosystem of young business leaders.

Connecting our young entrepreneurs to our present key business leaders from the Solomon Islands Chamber of Commerce and Industries (SICCI) through Teachim Me is not only the first mentoring program of its kind, but an opportunity to strengthen, guide and build capacity through mentorship for our YECSI members to contribute towards the ongoing socio-economic development of our nation Solomon Islands.

In early 2019 YECSI formally launched its Teachim Me pilot program targeting this gap, following a robust application and interview process 9 local, experienced business leaders were matched with 9 local young entrepreneurs. Over the 4-month pilot timeline, over 40 mentoring sessions were held totalling to over 40 hours of mentoring, storytelling and knowledge sharing.

Some topics discussed during these sessions included staff motivation, tax, marketing, contract development, leadership, strategy and of course wantok involvement in business.

To celebrate the closing of the mentoring program YECSI held its final Ignite Networking at the Lime Lounge Café



YECSI representatives and some of the Teachim Me program participants during YECSI's final ignite networking event on Thursday 31st November 2019.



YECSI Coordinator, John Wopereis (centre), SICCI Board Member, Sir Bruce Saunders and some of the mentees in the Teachim Me Program.

with the program evaluation report also being launched on the night. Mentees and Mentors gathered for the last time, many of them having decided to carry on mentoring outside the Teachim Me program, a huge success and step in the right direction.

As YECSI's prepares for 2020, the team would like to congratulate all mentees and mentors for taking up the challenge and diving into Solomon Islands first Teachim Me mentoring program. Thank you for offering your time, for having the confidence to participate in Teachim Me

and for seeing the value of mentoring and being mentored.

YECSI would also like to thank Chris Elphick from Breadfruit Consulting the implementation partner and SICCI members for their support and coming onboard as mentors.

YECSI look forward to offering an improved Teachim ME mentoring program for YECSI members and experienced business leaders in the private sector. Interested individuals are encouraged to connect with the YECSI team.



John Ta'amora
Advocacy Officer

The SICCI Advocacy Department would like to give you an update on recent & current developments.

Road Transport Board (RTB)

The Solomon Islands Road Transport Board (RTB) held its first meeting on Thursday 10 October 2019. Meetings will be held regularly on the second Thursday of each month. Key take out from the first meeting is police will now be erecting road signs. These will include parking/no parking, bus stops 3 minutes only, speed signs and others. RSIPF and HCC enforcement officers will have the authority to take action with regulations and signs in place. Spot fines can be issued. This will take a few months to roll out as financial systems need to be set up for payments and records. The next meeting for the RTB was scheduled for 7 November 2019. If you have traffic related issues affecting you, please get in touch with the Advocacy Department so the matter can be forwarded to the RTB for consideration.

Consumptions Tax [Value Added Tax (VAT)]

The Economic Reform Unit (ERU) and Inland Revenue Division (IRD) have completed consultations on the proposed Consumption Taxes or Value Added Tax. The Consultation team are preparing a recommendations paper to be submitted to Cabinet in late October or early November for considerations and approval. Once approved drafting will commence on a VAT Bill. Consultations on the VAT bill will be first half of 2020 and then to Parliament mid-year and a lead-time of 18 months before implementation around mid-2021.

This work is on top of the Governments Tax reform agenda and the passage of the Act is a priority according to the DCGA National Development Strategy and Translation Document.

VAT could replace goods tax, excise, sales tax, accommodation levy and most import duty. This regime will bring about a single rate proposed at 15% (e.g.) of the value of goods imported. The tax will be collected from consumers by companies registered for VAT (proposed threshold \$600,000). VAT collected will then be remitted by VAT registered companies to SIG detailing input vs output and a refund could be made.

SIG – SICCI Advisory Group

The 7th Advisory Group meeting was held on 26 June 2019 the next will be held in early November.

A couple of companies presented on the difficulties faced in the coconut industry with regard to the world market price for copra.

Following these two presentations the Advisory Group proposed a Coconut Workshop to be held, along with a subsidy scheme to assist SMEs that are facing similar issues. SICCI secretariat and MCIL will work closely on the Coconut Workshop.

The government is putting in a lot of efforts to reinvigorate DBSI which is hoped will enhance the local economy in terms of employment and catering for financial inclusivity for local SMEs.

RSIPF – SICCI Executive Group

This group met twice in 2018 and once in early 2019.

The meeting was attended by the Police Commissioner Mathew Varley and SICCI Chairman Jeremy Bartlett along with SICCI CEO Atenasi Ata, YECISI Coordinator John Wopereis and other key figures in the RSIPF.

The main discussions were based on 1) Security for businesses during the National General Elections and 2) YECISI youth project in Betikama.

Efforts have been made to organize another meeting in November before the year comes to an end.

Indicative Agenda for the next meeting:

- Business Security during the festive season.
- Business Security with recent diplomatic events.

If you have any suggestions for items you would like included in the Agenda, get in touch with the SICCI Advocacy Department.

Anti-Corruption

A review Workshop on the Solomon Islands National Anti-Corruption Strategy 2016 was held in early October 2019. This is to update the strategy and align it with the coming in to force of anti-corruption legislative framework and provisions for the establishment of the Solomon Islands Independent Commission Against Corruption (SIICAC). Call for expression of interests for positions of commissioners of SIICAC have been made and there is confirmation that appointment of Commissioners will be made in early December to coincide with the International Anti-Corruption Day which falls on 9 December 2019. Setting up of SIICAC Office will commence after Commissioners have been appointed. This work is driven by the Office of the Prime Minister and Cabinet.

SIG updates

Ministry of National Planning and Development Coordination, updates NDS 2016-2035 and the Solomon Islands Infrastructure Investment Plan

The Voluntary National Review will be complete a month before November when the submission will take place.

Least Developed Country Graduation is being progressed with assistance from UNDP to help develop a smooth transition strategy. Graduation will happen in 6 years' time or 2024.

Development and donor partners are actively consulting with SIG such as the MCC and the new infrastructure facility National Transport Fund is not being spent. Opportunity to review spend proposal of SBD259million.

Ministry of Finance and Treasury

continue next page

from previous page

Budget Review is ongoing and will be finalised at end of Quarter 2 (end June). There will be another supplementary budget which was highlighted as one of the priorities in the 100 days policy of this new Government.

Some bills are waiting to go through including the Credit Union Bill.

Office of Prime Minister and Cabinet updates

1. The Prime Minister met with Australian High Commissioner (AHC) about the AUD2 billion worth of assistance to Solomon Islands.
2. A Joint team (Cabinet coordinating team) has been formed to coordinate monitoring of Government priorities. One matter being considered by this body includes tariffs. Translation of policy is being led by the PMIEU. The Chamber as the private sector representative organisation is key stakeholder in this
3. Anti-Corruption Committee is being progressed and will be formalised by the GG. By November the Anti-Corruption Committee should nominate a Director General.
4. A Legislative Calendar will be developed identifying all the revisions and the new laws to be considered by Parliament. This will be useful for private sector and others to know when are the Bills and Legislation Committee will be meeting on these laws and revisions.
5. Related to this Amendments of Acts such as Land, Financial Assessment will be written down into 1 page Amendment.
6. The PPSAG can use the coordinating committee to get its updates to Cabinet.
7. The South Pacific games 2023 is being looked after by SPM.

MCILI updates

Director for Industry Development Department updated the group about 100 day policy that include projects such as Kira Kira Cocoa Factory, Bonale Pineapple and Suava Real Estate. The Marketing division is currently working on a Coconut Strategy.

PS/Chair also highlighted that the legislation for the SME Act will be one of the MCILI priorities.

Indicative Agenda for the next meeting:

- Follow up on previous meetings action items;
- External Trade;
- Trade Agreements;
- Current negative business environment and areas for possible solutions.

If you have any suggestions for items you would like included in the Agenda, get in touch with the SICCI Advocacy Department.

UPCOMING EVENTS

November 5Waka Mere Celebration Breakfast

Host: SICCI/IFC

Venue : Heritage Park Hotel

November 22Business After 5

Host: Telekom

Venue: Telekom Haus, Pt Cruz

November 30Business Excellence Awards (BEA)

Host: SICCI

Venue: Coral Sea Resort

December 6Business After 5

Host: Strongim Bisnis

Venue: Heritage Park Hotel

December 19Business After 5

Host: Solomon Post

Venue: To be confirmed

December 20

SICCI office closes for holidays and reopens Friday 3 January 2020.

*For events enquiries contact our
Membership & Services Officer,
Naomi Mara on phone 39542/39543 or email
services@solomonchamber.com.sb*

“Let’s work together to make Solomon Islands a technology smart and progressive country”

SICCI is pleased to introduce to its members, Mr Moses Tadokata. Moses will be working with the Chamber for five (5) months as the ICT Strategy Analyst. He will be a support for Chamber members, facilitating group discussions, documenting feedback from members in capitalising on the undersea cable.

Earlier in October, Moses sat down with the **SICCI Media & Communications Desk** to talk briefly about his professional background, what he hopes to achieve with SICCI and his views of the undersea cable and the Solomon Islands private sector.

Can you give a brief professional background of yourself?

I was previously employed by the ANZ bank, Solomon Islands National Provident Fund (SINPF), and the Central Bank of Solomon Islands (CBSI). My family migrated to Australia 2000 and for the last 13 years I was working for Djerriwarrh Health Services, a medium to large Health organisation in Victoria, Australia. I work as a senior IT technical officer in the ICT department of 5 people, servicing 1 hospital and 7 medical centres. There are about 1,000 staff that this unit supports.

What is your role with SICCI?

I am here on a five months Australian Volunteer Program assignment with the Chamber. My role at SICCI is to provide the members some understanding of the opportunities for businesses with the arrival of the undersea cable.

What do you hope to achieve during your time with SICCI?

To assist SICCI and the members realise the huge opportunities for businesses from the arrival of the fibre optic cable through information forums and showcasing digital systems.

I will be communicating with the Solomon Islands Government, the Australian Government and the fibre stakeholders to promote solutions for gaps that if implemented, will enhance Chamber members’ businesses.



Mr Moses Tadokata, SICCI’s ICT Strategy Analyst is on a five months mission to provide to members some understanding of the opportunities for businesses with the arrival of the undersea cable.

What are your views of the undersea cable and Solomon Islands private sector?

The Fibre optic project is a revolution in Technology here in the Solomon Islands. It will be a game changer for not only the private sector but the whole of Solomon Islands. We need to work together and create a working National ICT structure, with laws and policies that create a competitive, safe and profitable working environment for everyone.

For a start, these are some of the important things that need to be in place, if businesses were to maximise the opportunities with the undersea cable.

Firstly, we need to have a National ICT body and arms for setting up cyber laws and policies for all the sectors in the Solomon Islands. The National ICT body then creates governance standards for ICT use in the country.

Information sessions to educate the public/business on this ICT revolution and the public/business responsibilities around securely collecting, storing and processing the data collected.

The above should be able to provide the

business operating in the Solomon Islands the confidence to perform their business operation in the new environment.

Lastly, the price on the data and voice plans from our service providers should reflect the funding that is invested on the project. This might take some negotiation but hopefully we can have the best price for the best speed possible within the pacific region.

Let us all put our hands together and contribute to make Solomon Islands a technology smart and progressive country.

To get the discussions started, Moses is collating business experiences to understand how we can support members in preparing for the start of the fibre optic cable.

SICCI members are encouraged to answer a set of questionnaires which was sent out to members by email. This will help inform a presentation on the fibre optic cable for members.

Please contact our Membership & Services Officer on services@solomonchamber.com.sb or phone 39542 if you have questions on this survey or the fibre optic cable.

KNOW YOUR BOARD

SICCI Board Members for 2019/2020



CHAIR

Jay Bartlett
Director
Hatanga Ltd



VICE CHAIR

David Rupokets
Managing Director
Capitol Construction



Belinda Botha
Owner Operator
Dive Munda



Sir Bruce Saunders
Managing Director
AG & J Blums



Craig Gibsone
General Manager
GPPOL



Hilda Lamani
Manager
Star Supplies Company



Ricky Fuo'o
General Manager
Tropical Glass Aluminium (TGA)



Uta Temahua
Head of Human Resources
Solomon Telekom



Sohaib Mahmood
Country Head
ANZ Solomon Islands



Frank Wickham
General Manager
NFD

MEET THE SICCI TEAM



Atenasi Ata
Chief Executive Officer (CEO)



Nelson Kere
Executive Officer



Shaun Konaga
Administrative Manager &
Assistant Finance Officer



John Ta'amora
Advocacy Officer



Naomi Mara
Membership & Services Officer



Philip Lilomo
Media & Communications Officer



Ruth Maetala
IFC/SICCI Gender Coordinator



Moses Tadokata
ICT Strategy Analyst



POSITION VACANT
Export Industry Development
Officer (EIDO)



John Wopereis
YECISI Coordinator



Chantelle Lincoln
YECISI Organisational
Development Adviser



Irish Melaume
YECISI Membership &
Communications Officer



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6. Reply with **'3'** for **Top Up Services**
7. Reply with **'2'** for **SIEA**
8. Enter **Cash Power Meter Number**
9. Enter the amount
10. Reply with **'1'** to **confirm**

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2. For non-POB customers – you can top up on your Cashpower by creating an e-purse account and depositing money into your e-purse account at any of the following POB agents in Honiara only:

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E2N Shop Town ground plaza;
POB - Hyundai mall branch**

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6. Enter amount (Minimum \$50)
7. Enter meter Number
8. Confirm: **90**
9. Receive SMS with Cash power token number
10. Enter the token number into the meter

