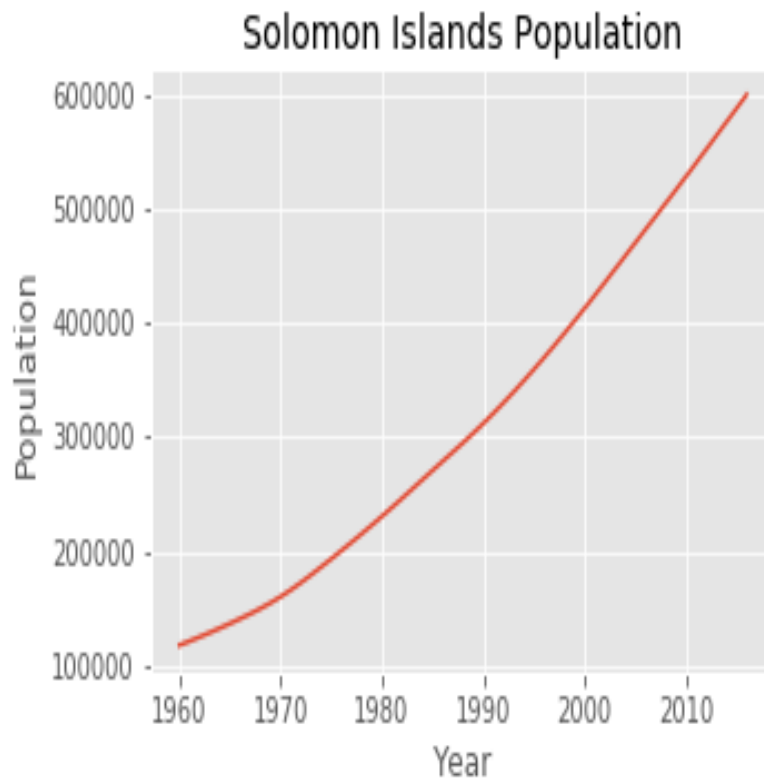


Solomon Islands



Solomon Islands is a sovereign country consisting of six major islands and over 900 smaller islands in Oceania lying to the east of Papua New Guinea and northwest of Vanuatu and covering a land area of 28,400 square kilometres (11,000 sq mi). The country's capital, Honiara, is located on the island of Guadalcanal. The country takes its name from the Solomon Islands archipelago, which is a collection of Melanesian islands that also includes the North Solomon Islands (part of Papua New Guinea), but excludes outlying islands, such as Rennell and Bellona, and the Santa Cruz Islands. The islands have been inhabited for thousands of years. In 1568, the Spanish navigator Álvaro de Mendaña was the first European to visit them, naming them the Islas Salomón. Britain defined its area of interest in the Solomon Islands archipelago in June 1893, when Captain Gibson R.N., of HMS Curacoa, declared the southern Solomon Islands a British protectorate. During World War II, the Solomon Islands campaign (1942–1945) saw fierce fighting between the United States and the Empire of Japan, such as in the Battle of Guadalcanal. The official name of the then British Crown Colony was changed from "the British Solomon Islands Protectorate" to "Solomon Islands" in 1975. Self-government was achieved in 1976; independence was obtained two years later. Today, Solomon Islands is a constitutional monarchy with the Queen of Solomon Islands, currently Queen Elizabeth II, as its head of state. Rick Houenipwela is the current prime minister.

== Name == In 1568, the Spanish navigator Álvaro de Mendaña was the first European to visit the Solomon Islands archipelago, naming it Islas Salomón ("Solomon Islands") after the wealthy biblical King Solomon. It is said that they were given this name in the mistaken assumption that they contained great riches. During most of the period of British rule the territory was officially named "the British Solomon Islands Protectorate". On 22 June 1975 the territory was renamed "The Solomon Islands". When the Solomon Islands became independent in 1978 they retained the name. The definite article, "the", is not part of the country's official name but is sometimes used, both within and outside the country.

== History ==

=== Early history === It is believed that Papuan-speaking settlers began to arrive around 30,000 BC. Austronesian speakers arrived c. 4000 BC also bringing cultural elements such as the outrigger canoe. Between 1200 and 800 BC the

ancestors of the Polynesians, the Lapita people, arrived from the Bismarck Archipelago with their characteristic ceramics. === European contact (1568) === The first European to visit the islands was the Spanish navigator Álvaro de Mendaña de Neira, coming from Peru in 1568. The people of Solomon Islands were notorious for headhunting and cannibalism before the arrival of the Europeans. Missionaries began visiting the Solomons in the mid-19th century. They made little progress at first, because "blackbirding" (the often brutal recruitment or kidnapping of labourers for the sugar plantations in Queensland and Fiji) led to a series of reprisals and massacres. The evils of the labour trade prompted the United Kingdom to declare a protectorate over the southern Solomons in June 1893. In 1898 and 1899, more outlying islands were added to the protectorate; in 1900 the remainder of the archipelago, an area previously under German jurisdiction, was transferred to British administration, apart from the islands of Buka and Bougainville, which remained under German administration as part of German New Guinea. Traditional trade and social intercourse between the western Solomon Islands of Mono and Alu (the Shortlands) and the traditional societies in the south of Bougainville, however, continued without hindrance. Missionaries settled in the Solomons under the protectorate, converting most of the population to Christianity. In the early 20th century several British and Australian firms began large-scale coconut planting. Economic growth was slow, however, and the islanders benefited little. Journalist Joe Melvin visited in 1892, as part of his undercover investigation into blackbirding. In 1908 the islands were visited by Jack London, who was cruising the Pacific on his boat, the Snark. === Second World War === With the outbreak of the Second World War most planters and traders were evacuated to Australia and most cultivation ceased. Some of the most intense fighting of the war occurred in the Solomons. The most significant of the Allied Forces' operations against the Japanese Imperial Forces was launched on 7 August 1942, with simultaneous naval bombardments and amphibious landings on the Florida Islands at Tulagi and Red Beach on Guadalcanal. The Battle of Guadalcanal became an important and bloody campaign fought in the Pacific War as the Allies began to repulse Japanese expansion. Of strategic importance during the war were the coastwatchers operating in remote locations, often on Japanese held islands, providing early warning and intelligence of Japanese naval, army and aircraft movements during the campaign. Sergeant-Major Jacob Vouza was a notable coastwatcher who, after capture, refused to divulge Allied information in spite of interrogation and torture by Japanese Imperial forces. He was awarded a Silver Star Medal by the Americans, which is the United States' third-highest decoration for valor in combat. Islanders Biuku Gasa and Eroni Kumana were the first to find the shipwrecked John F. Kennedy and his crew of the PT-109. They suggested using a coconut to write a rescue message for delivery by dugout canoe, which was later kept on Kennedy's desk when he became President of the United States. The Solomon Islands was one of the major staging areas of the South Pacific and was home to the famous VMF-214 "Black Sheep" Squadron commanded by Major Greg "Pappy" Boyington. "The Slot" was a name for New Georgia Sound, when it was used by the Tokyo Express to supply the Japanese garrison on Guadalcanal. Of more than 36,000 Japanese on Guadalcanal, about 26,000 were killed or missing, 9,000 died of disease, and 1,000 were captured. === Independence (1978) === Local councils were established in the 1950s as the islands stabilised from the aftermath of the Second World War. A new constitution was established in 1970 and elections were held, although the constitution was contested and a new one was created in 1974. In 1973 the first oil price shock occurred, and the increased cost of running a colony became apparent to British administrators. Following the independence of neighbouring Papua New Guinea from Australia in 1975, the Solomon Islands gained self-government in 1976. Independence was granted on 7 July 1978. The first Prime Minister was Sir Peter Kenilorea, and Solomon Islands retained the Monarchy. In September 2012, the Duke and Duchess of Cambridge visited the islands to mark the 60th anniversary of the accession of Queen Elizabeth II. === Ethnic violence (1998–2003) === Commonly referred to as the tensions or the ethnic tension, the initial civil unrest was mainly characterised by fighting between the Isatabu Freedom Movement (also known as the Guadalcanal Revolutionary Army) and the Malaita Eagle Force (as well as the Marau Eagle Force). (Although much of the conflict was between Guales and Malaitans, Kabutaulaka (2001) and Dinnen (2002) argue that the 'ethnic conflict' label is an oversimplification.) In late 1998, militants on the island of Guadalcanal began a campaign of intimidation and violence towards Malaitan settlers. During the next year, thousands of Malaitans fled back to Malaita or to the capital, Honiara (which, although situated on Guadalcanal, is predominantly populated by Malaitans and Solomon Islanders from other provinces). In 1999, the Malaita Eagle Force (MEF) was established in response. The reformist government of Bartholomew Ulufa'alu struggled to respond to the complexities of this evolving conflict. In late 1999, the government declared a four-month state of emergency. There were also a number of

attempts at reconciliation but to no avail. Ulufa'alu also requested assistance from Australia and New Zealand in 1999 but his appeal was rejected. In June 2000, Ulufa'alu was kidnapped by militia members of the MEF who felt that, although he was a Malaitan, he was not doing enough to protect their interests. Ulufa'alu subsequently resigned in exchange for his release. Manasseh Sogavare, who had earlier been Finance Minister in Ulufa'alu's government but had subsequently joined the opposition, was elected as Prime Minister by 23–21 over Rev. Leslie Boseto. However Sogavare's election was immediately shrouded in controversy because six MPs (thought to be supporters of Boseto) were unable to attend parliament for the crucial vote (Moore 2004, n.5 on p. 174). In October 2000, the Townsville Peace Agreement, was signed by the Malaita Eagle Force, elements of the IFM, and the Solomon Islands Government. This was closely followed by the Marau Peace agreement in February 2001, signed by the Marau Eagle Force, the Isatabu Freedom Movement, the Guadalcanal Provincial Government, and the Solomon Islands Government. However, a key Guale militant leader, Harold Keke, refused to sign the agreement, causing a split with the Guale groups. Subsequently, Guale signatories to the agreement led by Andrew Te'e joined with the Malaitan-dominated police to form the 'Joint Operations Force'. During the next two years the conflict moved to the Weathercoast of Guadalcanal as the Joint Operations unsuccessfully attempted to capture Keke and his group. New elections in December 2001 brought Sir Allan Kemakeza into the Prime Minister's chair with the support of his People's Alliance Party and the Association of Independent Members. Law and order deteriorated as the nature of the conflict shifted: there was continuing violence on the Weathercoast while militants in Honiara increasingly turned their attention to crime and extortion. The Department of Finance would often be surrounded by armed men when funding was due to arrive. In December 2002, Finance Minister Laurie Chan resigned after being forced at gunpoint to sign a cheque made out to some of the militants. Conflict also broke out in Western Province between locals and Malaitan settlers. Renegade members of the Bougainville Revolutionary Army (BRA) were invited in as a protection force but ended up causing as much trouble as they prevented. The prevailing atmosphere of lawlessness, widespread extortion, and ineffective police prompted a formal request by the Solomon Islands Government for outside help. With the country bankrupt and the capital in chaos, the request was unanimously supported in Parliament. In July 2003, Australian and Pacific Island police and troops arrived in Solomon Islands under the auspices of the Australian-led Regional Assistance Mission to Solomon Islands (RAMSI). A sizeable international security contingent of 2,200 police and troops, led by Australia and New Zealand, and with representatives from about 20 other Pacific nations, began arriving the next month under Operation Helpem Fren. Since this time some commentators have considered the country a failed state. However, other academics argue that rather than being a 'failed state', it is an unformed state: a state that never consolidated even after decades of independence. In April 2006, allegations that the newly elected Prime Minister Snyder Rini had used bribes from Chinese businessmen to buy the votes of members of Parliament led to mass rioting in the capital Honiara. A deep underlying resentment against the minority Chinese business community led to much of Chinatown in the city being destroyed. Tensions were also increased by the belief that large sums of money were being exported to China. China sent chartered aircraft to evacuate hundreds of Chinese who fled to avoid the riots. Evacuation of Australian and British citizens was on a much smaller scale. Additional Australian, New Zealand and Fijian police and troops were dispatched to try to quell the unrest. Rini eventually resigned before facing a motion of no-confidence in Parliament, and Parliament elected Manasseh Sogavare as Prime Minister. === Earthquakes === On 2 April 2007 at 07:39:56 local time (UTC+11) an earthquake with magnitude 8.1 occurred at hypocenter S8.453 E156.957, 349 kilometres (217 miles) northwest of the island's capital, Honiara and south-east of the capital of Western Province, Gizo, at a depth of 10 km (6.2 miles). More than 44 aftershocks with magnitude 5.0 or greater occurred up until 22:00:00 UTC, Wednesday, 4 April 2007. A tsunami followed killing at least 52 people, destroying more than 900 homes and leaving thousands of people homeless. Land upthrust extended the shoreline of one island, Ranongga, by up to 70 metres (230 ft) exposing many once pristine coral reefs. On February 6, 2013, an earthquake with magnitude of 8.0 occurred at epicentre S10.80 E165.11 in the Santa Cruz Islands followed by a tsunami up to 1.5 metres. At least nine people were killed and many houses demolished. The main quake was preceded by a sequence of earthquakes with a magnitude of up to 6.0. == Politics == Solomon Islands is a constitutional monarchy and has a parliamentary system of government. Queen Elizabeth II is the Monarch of the Solomon Islands and the head of state; she is represented by the Governor-General who is chosen by the Parliament for a five-year term. There is a unicameral parliament of 50 members, elected for four-year terms. However, Parliament may be dissolved by majority vote of its members before the completion of

its term. Parliamentary representation is based on single-member constituencies. Suffrage is universal for citizens over age 21. The head of government is the Prime Minister, who is elected by Parliament and chooses the cabinet. Each ministry is headed by a cabinet member, who is assisted by a permanent secretary, a career public servant who directs the staff of the ministry. Solomon Islands governments are characterised by weak political parties (see List of political parties in Solomon Islands) and highly unstable parliamentary coalitions. They are subject to frequent votes of no confidence, leading to frequent changes in government leadership and cabinet appointments. Land ownership is reserved for Solomon Islanders. The law provides that resident expatriates, such as the Chinese and Kiribati, may obtain citizenship through naturalisation. Land generally is still held on a family or village basis and may be handed down from mother or father according to local custom. The islanders are reluctant to provide land for nontraditional economic undertakings, and this has resulted in continual disputes over land ownership. No military forces are maintained by Solomon Islands although a police force of nearly 500 includes a border protection unit. The police also are responsible for fire service, disaster relief, and maritime surveillance. The police force is headed by a commissioner, appointed by the governor-general and responsible to the prime minister. On 27 December 2006, the Solomon Islands Government took steps to prevent the country's Australian police chief from returning to the Pacific nation. On 12 January 2007, Australia replaced its top diplomat expelled from Solomon Islands for political interference in a conciliatory move aimed at easing a four-month dispute between the two countries. On 13 December 2007, Prime Minister Manasseh Sogavare was toppled by a vote of no confidence in Parliament, following the defection of five ministers to the opposition. It was the first time a prime minister had lost office in this way in Solomon Islands. On 20 December, Parliament elected the opposition's candidate (and former Minister for Education) Derek Sikua as Prime Minister, in a vote of 32 to 15. === Judiciary === The Governor General appoints the Chief Justice of the Supreme Court on the advice of the Prime Minister and the Leader of the Opposition. The Governor General appoints the other justices with the advice of a judicial commission. The Judicial Committee of the Privy Council (based in the United Kingdom) serves as the highest appellate court. The current Chief Justice is Sir Albert Palmer. Since March 2014 Justice Edwin Goldsbrough has served as the President of the Court of Appeal for Solomon Islands. Justice Goldsbrough has previously served a five-year term as a Judge of the High Court of Solomon Islands (2006–2011). Justice Edwin Goldsbrough then served as the Chief Justice of the Turks and Caicos Islands. === Foreign relations === Solomon Islands is a member of the United Nations, Interpol, Commonwealth, Pacific Islands Forum, South Pacific Commission, International Monetary Fund, and the European Union/African, Caribbean, and Pacific (ACP) countries (EEC/ACP) (Lomé Convention). The political stage of Solomon Islands was influenced by its position regarding the Republic of China (ROC) and the People's Republic of China (PRC). Solomon Islands gave diplomatic recognition to the Republic of China (Taiwan), recognising it as the sole-legitimate government of all of China, thus giving Taiwan vital votes in the United Nations. Lucrative investments, political funding and preferential loans from both the Republic of China and the People's Republic of China have increasingly manipulated the political landscape of the Solomon Islands. Relations with Papua New Guinea, which had become strained because of an influx of refugees from the Bougainville rebellion and attacks on the northern islands of Solomon Islands by elements pursuing Bougainvillean rebels, have been repaired. A 1998 peace accord on Bougainville removed the armed threat, and the two nations regularised border operations in a 2004 agreement. === Military === Although the locally recruited British Solomon Islands Protectorate Defence Force was part of Allied Forces taking part in fighting in the Solomons during the Second World War, the country has not had any regular military forces since independence. The various paramilitary elements of the Royal Solomon Islands Police Force (RSIPF) were disbanded and disarmed in 2003 following the intervention of the Regional Assistance Mission to Solomon Islands (RAMSI). RAMSI has a small military detachment headed by an Australian commander with responsibilities for assisting the police element of RAMSI in internal and external security. The RSIPF still operates two Pacific class patrol boats (RSIPV Auki and RSIPV Lata), which constitute the de facto navy of Solomon Islands. In the long term, it is anticipated that the RSIPF will resume the defence role of the country. The police force is headed by a commissioner, appointed by the governor general and responsible to the Minister of Police, National Security & Correctional Services. The police budget of Solomon Islands has been strained due to a four-year civil war. Following Cyclone Zoe's strike on the islands of Tikopia and Anuta in December 2002, Australia had to provide the Solomon Islands government with 200,000 Solomon dollars (\$50,000 Australian) for fuel and supplies for the patrol boat Lata to sail with relief supplies. (Part of the work of RAMSI includes assisting the Solomon Islands government to stabilise its budget.) === Administrative divisions === For

local government, the country is divided into ten administrative areas, of which nine are provinces administered by elected provincial assemblies and the tenth is the capital Honiara, administered by the Honiara Town Council. [1] excluding the Capital Territory of Honiara === Human rights === There are human rights concerns and issues in regards to education, water, sanitation, women and persons who identify as lesbian, gay, bisexual or transgender. Homosexuality is illegal in the Solomon Islands. == Geography == Solomon Islands is an island nation that lies east of Papua New Guinea and consists of many islands: Choiseul, the Shortland Islands; the New Georgia Islands; Santa Isabel; the Russell Islands; Nggela (the Florida Islands); Malaita; Guadalcanal; Sikaiana; Maramasike; Ulawa; Uki; Makira (San Cristobal); Santa Ana; Rennell and Bellona; the Santa Cruz Islands and the remote, tiny outliers, Tikopia, Anuta, Fatutaka and Falkie Atoll. The country's islands lie between latitudes 5° and 13°S, and longitudes 155° and 169°E. The distance between the westernmost and easternmost islands is about 1,500 kilometres (930 mi). The Santa Cruz Islands (of which Tikopia is part) are situated north of Vanuatu and are especially isolated at more than 200 kilometres (120 mi) from the other islands. Bougainville is geographically part of the Solomon Islands archipelago but politically part of Papua New Guinea. Falkie Atoll, which is closer to Bougainville than to Choiseul, is part of the nation of Solomon Islands. === Climate === The islands' ocean-equatorial climate is extremely humid throughout the year, with a mean temperature of 26.5 °C (79.7 °F) and few extremes of temperature or weather. June through August is the cooler period. Though seasons are not pronounced, the northwesterly winds of November through April bring more frequent rainfall and occasional squalls or cyclones. The annual rainfall is about 3,050 millimetres (120 in). === Ecology === The Solomon Islands archipelago is part of two distinct terrestrial ecoregions. Most of the islands are part of the Solomon Islands rain forests ecoregion, which also includes the islands of Bougainville and Buka; these forests have come under pressure from forestry activities. The Santa Cruz Islands are part of the Vanuatu rain forests ecoregion, together with the neighbouring archipelago of Vanuatu. Soil quality ranges from extremely rich volcanic (there are volcanoes with varying degrees of activity on some of the larger islands) to relatively infertile limestone. More than 230 varieties of orchids and other tropical flowers brighten the landscape. The islands contain several active and dormant volcanoes. The Tinakula and Kavachi volcanoes are the most active. == Economy == Solomon Islands' per-capita GDP of \$600 ranks it as a lesser developed nation, and more than 75% of its labour force is engaged in subsistence and fishing. Most manufactured goods and petroleum products must be imported. Until 1998, when world prices for tropical timber fell steeply, timber was Solomon Islands' main export product, and, in recent years, Solomon Islands forests were dangerously overexploited. Other important cash crops and exports include copra and palm oil. In 1998 gold mining began at Gold Ridge on Guadalcanal. Minerals exploration in other areas continued. In the wake of the ethnic violence in June 2000, exports of palm oil and gold ceased while exports of timber fell. The islands are rich in undeveloped mineral resources such as lead, zinc, nickel, and gold. Solomon Islands' fisheries also offer prospects for export and domestic economic expansion. A Japanese joint venture, Solomon Taiyo Ltd., which operated the only fish cannery in the country, closed in mid-2000 as a result of the ethnic disturbances. Though the plant has reopened under local management, the export of tuna has not resumed. Negotiations are underway that may lead to the eventual reopening of the Gold Ridge mine and the major oil-palm plantation. Tourism, particularly diving, is an important service industry for Solomon Islands. Tourism growth is hampered by lack of infrastructure and transportation limitations. Solomon Islands Government was insolvent by 2002. Since the RAMSI intervention in 2003, the government has recast its budget. It has consolidated and renegotiated its domestic debt and with Australian backing, is now seeking to renegotiate its foreign obligations. Principal aid donors are Australia, New Zealand, the European Union, Japan, and the Republic of China. Recently, Solomon Islands courts have re-approved the export of live dolphins for profit, most recently to Dubai, United Arab Emirates. This practice was originally stopped by the government in 2004 after international uproar over a shipment of 28 live dolphins to Mexico. The move resulted in criticism from both Australia and New Zealand as well as several conservation organisations. The Solomon Islands dollar (ISO 4217 code: SBD) was introduced in 1977, replacing the Australian Pound Sterling. Its symbol is "SI\$", but the "SI" prefix may be omitted if there is no confusion with other currencies also using the dollar sign "\$". It is subdivided into 100 cents. However, barter system and local shell money are still prevalent in some remote parts of the country. Shell money is the traditional currency of the Pacific Islands. In the Solomon Islands, it can be bought at the Honiara Central Market. === Energy === A team of renewable energy developers working for the South Pacific Applied Geoscience Commission (SOPAC) and funded by the Renewable Energy and Energy Efficiency Partnership (REEEP), have developed a scheme that allows local

communities to access renewable energy, such as solar, water and wind power, without the need to raise substantial sums of cash. Under the scheme, islanders who are unable to pay for solar lanterns in cash may pay instead in kind with crops. == Demographics == As of 2016, there were 599,419 people in Solomon Islands. === Ethnic groups === The majority of Solomon Islanders are ethnically Melanesian (94.5%). Polynesian (3%) and Micronesian (1.2%) are the two other significant groups. There are a few thousand ethnic Chinese. === Languages === While English is the official language, only 1–2% of the population speak English. The lingua franca is Solomons Pijin, which is related to the Tok Pisin of Papua New Guinea, but which has no official status. The number of local languages listed for Solomon Islands is 74, of which 70 are living languages and 4 are extinct, according to Ethnologue, Languages of the World. Melanesian languages (predominantly of the Southeast Solomonian group) are spoken on the central islands. Polynesian languages are spoken on Rennell and Bellona to the south, Tikopia, Anuta and Fatutaka to the far east, Sikaiana to the north east, and Luaniua to the north (Ontong Java Atoll, also known as Lord Howe Atoll). The immigrant population of Gilbertese (i-Kiribati) speaks a Micronesian language. === Religion === The religion of Solomon Islands is mainly Christian (comprising about 92% of the population). The main Christian denominations are: the Anglican Church of Melanesia 35%, Roman Catholic 19%, South Seas Evangelical Church 17%, United Church in Papua New Guinea and the Solomon Islands 11% and Seventh-day Adventist 10%. Other Christian denominations are Jehovah's Witnesses, and The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints (LDS Church). Another 5% adhere to aboriginal beliefs. The remaining adhere to Islam, the Baha'i Faith. According to the most recent reports, Islam in the Solomon Islands is made up of approximately 350 Muslims, including members of the Ahmadiyya Muslim Community. === Health === Female life expectancy at birth was at 66.7 years and male life expectancy at birth at 64.9 in 2007. 1990–1995 fertility rate was at 5.5 births per woman. Government expenditure on health per capita was at US\$99 (PPP). Healthy life expectancy at birth is at 60 years. Blond hair occurs in 10% of the population in the islands. After years of questions, studies have resulted in the better understanding of the blond gene. The findings show that the blond hair trait is due to an amino acid change of protein TYRP1. This accounts for the highest occurrence of blond hair outside of European influence in the world. While 10% of Solomon Islands people display the blond phenotype, about 26% of the population carry the recessive trait for it as well. === Education === Education in Solomon Islands is not compulsory and only 60 percent of school-age children have access to primary education. From 1990 to 1994, the gross primary school enrolment rose from 84.5 percent to 96.6 percent. Primary school attendance rates were unavailable for Solomon Islands as of 2001. While enrolment rates indicate a level of commitment to education, they do not always reflect children's participation in school. Efforts and plans made by the Department of Education and Human Resource Development to expand educational facilities and increase enrolment have been hindered by a lack of government funding, misguided teacher training programs, poor co-ordination of programs, and a failure of the government to pay teachers. The percentage of the government's budget allocated to education was 9.7 percent in 1998, down from 13.2 percent in 1990. Male educational attainment tends to be higher than female educational attainment. The University of the South Pacific has a Campus in Solomon Islands while the University of Papua New Guinea has also established a foothold in the country at Guadalcanal. == Culture == The culture of the Solomon Islands reflects the extent of the differentiation and diversity among the groups living within the Solomon Islands archipelago, which lies within Melanesia in the Pacific Ocean, with the peoples distinguished by island, language, topography, and geography. The cultural area includes the nation state of Solomon Islands and the Bougainville Island, which is a part of Papua New Guinea. The Solomon Islands includes some culturally Polynesian societies which lie outside the main region of Polynesian influence, known as the Polynesian Triangle. There are seven Polynesian outliers within the Solomon Islands: Anuta, Bellona, Ontong Java, Rennell, Sikaiana, Tikopia, and Vaeakau-Taumako. In the traditional culture of the Solomon Islands, age-old customs are handed down from one generation to the next, allegedly from the ancestral spirits themselves, to form the cultural values of the Solomon Islands. === Media === Radio Radio is the most influential type of media in Solomon Islands due to language differences, illiteracy, and the difficulty of receiving television signals in some parts of the country. The Solomon Islands Broadcasting Corporation (SIBC) operates public radio services, including the national stations Radio Happy Isles 1037 on the dial and Wantok FM 96.3, and the provincial stations Radio Happy Lagoon and, formerly, Radio Temotu. There are two commercial FM stations, Z FM at 99.5 in Honiara but receivable over a large majority of island out from Honiara, and, PAOA FM at 97.7 in Honiara (also broadcasting on 107.5 in Auki), and, one community FM radio station, Gold Ridge FM on 88.7. Newspapers There is one daily newspaper Solomon Star and one

daily online news website Solomon Times Online (www.solomontimes.com), 2 weekly papers Solomons Voice and Solomon Times, and 2 monthly papers Agrikalsa Nius and the Citizen's Press.

Television There are no TV services that cover the entire Solomon Islands, but satellite TV stations can be received. However, in Honiara, there is a free-to-air channel called One Television, and rebroadcast ABC Asia Pacific (from Australia's ABC) and BBC World News. As of Dec 2010, residents could subscribe to SATSOL, a digital pay TV service, re-transmitting satellite television. === Music ===

Traditional Melanesian music in the Solomon Islands includes both group and solo vocals, slit-drum and panpipe ensembles. In the 1920s, bamboo music gained a following. In the 1950s, Edwin Nanau Sitori composed the song "Walkabout long Chinatown", which has been referred to by the government as the unofficial "national song" of the Solomon Islands. Modern Solomon Islander popular music includes various kinds of rock and reggae as well as island music. === Literature ===

Writers from Solomon Islands include the novelists Rexford Orotaloa and John Saunana and the poet Jully Makini. === Sport ===

Rugby Union is played in Solomon Islands. The Solomon Islands national rugby union team has been playing internationals since 1969. It took part in the Oceania qualifying tournament for the 2003 and 2007 Rugby World Cups, but failed to qualify on each occasion. National teams in association football and the related futsal and beach soccer have proved among the most successful in Oceania. The Solomon Islands national football team is part of the OFC confederation in FIFA. They are currently ranked 184th out of 209 teams in the FIFA World Rankings. The team became the first team to beat New Zealand in qualifying for a play-off spot against Australia for qualification to the World Cup 2006. They were defeated 7–0 in Australia and 2–1 at home. On 14 June 2008, the Solomon Islands national futsal team, the Kurukuru, won the Oceania Futsal Championship in Fiji to qualify them for the 2008 FIFA Futsal World Cup, which was held in Brazil from 30 September to 19 October 2008. Solomon Islands is the futsal defending champions in the Oceania region. In 2008 and 2009 the Kurukuru won the Oceania Futsal Championship in Fiji. In 2009 they defeated the host nation Fiji, 8–0, to claim the title. The Kurukuru currently hold the world record for the fastest ever goal scored in an official futsal match. It was set by Kurukuru captain Elliot Ragomo, who scored against New Caledonia three seconds into the game in July 2009. They also, however, hold the less enviable record for the worst defeat in the history of the Futsal World Cup, when in 2008 they were beaten by Russia with two goals to thirty-one. The Solomon Islands' beach soccer team, the Bilikiki Boys, are statistically the most successful team in Oceania. They have won all three regional championships to date, thereby qualifying on each occasion for the FIFA Beach Soccer World Cup. The Bilikiki Boys are ranked fourteenth in the world as of 2010, higher than any other team from Oceania. === Cultural issues/concerns ===

The Solomon Islands has one of the highest rates of family and sexual violence (FSV) in the world with 64% of women aged 15–49 having reported physical and/or sexual abuse by a partner. As per a World Health Organization (WHO) report issued in 2011, the causes of Gender Based Violence (GBV) are multiple, but it primarily stems from gender inequality and its manifestations. The report stated "In Solomon Islands, GBV has been largely normalized: 73% of men and 73% of women believe violence against women is justifiable, especially for infidelity and "disobedience," as when women do "not live up to the gender roles that society imposes." For example, women who believed they could occasionally refuse sex were four times more likely to experience GBV from an intimate partner. Men cited acceptability of violence and gender inequality as two main reasons for GBV, and almost all of them reported hitting their female partners as a "form of discipline," suggesting that women could improve the situation by "[learning] to obey [them]." Another manifestation and driver of gender inequality in Solomon Islands is the traditional practice of bride price. Although specific customs vary between communities, paying a bride price is considered similar to a property title, giving men ownership over women. Gender norms of masculinity tend to encourage men to "control" their wives, often through violence, while women felt that bride prices prevented them from leaving men." Another report issued by the WHO in 2013 painted a similarly grim picture. In 2014, the Solomon Islands officially launched the Family Protection Act 2014 aimed at curbing domestic violence in the country. While numerous other interventions are being developed and implemented in the healthcare system as well as the criminal justice system, these interventions are still in their infancy and have largely stemmed from Western protocols. Therefore, for these models to be effective, time and commitment is needed to change the cultural perception of domestic violence in the Solomon Islands. == See also ==

Lau Lagoon List of birds of the Solomon Islands Outline of Solomon Islands Visa policy of Solomon Islands == References ==

== External links == Department of Prime Minister and Cabinet "Solomon Islands". The World Factbook. Central Intelligence Agency. Moore, Clive. "Solomon Islands Historical Encyclopaedia 1893–1978". Latest Earthquakes – United States Geological Survey