



Chamber News

Monthly Newsletter of the Solomon Islands Chamber of Commerce and Industry **March 2010**

2010 - Another “new” beginning?

I have been asked by our CEO, Calvin Ziru, to write an intro to this month's Chamber Newsletter. First off, let me welcome everyone to 2010. If you're reading this you have weathered the financial storms of 2009. Maybe it'll be better in 2010. Maybe not. I'm willing to hang around and see how it all turns out.

We still have many challenges in regards to the development of the Private Sector. Our economy is statistically sound but inherently flawed. Our National Leaders do not see the world through the same filters as the Private Sector. We have agreed upon priorities in lobbying for Labour Law and Tax Law reform but have gained no traction here. Of course, this being an election year, our chances are slim that we'll get anything done this year. Yet I am optimistic for the SICCI.

The good news? After a lot of work and much running around we have qualified for an EU Grant worth a little more than SBD\$1,000,000.00. This Grant is for the development of SICCI as a Private Sector vehicle. Money will be spent in

strengthening the SICCI's professional capacity, expanding and enhancing the services that SICCI provides and shall see the development of Provincial Chambers.

You have all met, I hope, Calvin Ziru. I feel C.Z. is the rock we can build a strong Chamber upon. He has the training; he has the ability; he has the willingness. All he needs is the Member's support ... and their money.

Even though we have a million to invest (over 3 years) in developing the Chamber we still need to pay our basic way. And this is done through

Membership Subscription. What do we get for our investment in the SICCI? I'd say, for me and my businesses, the SICCI is the last point of common sense in a land of beautiful confusion. We saw some success last year in fighting the Parliamentarian Entitlements issue. We lost on the increase in the number of Parliamentarian seats. We have a very strong voice regionally. And, with a new government coming in soon, we will be positioned to take up our list of priorities and start lobbying the SIG, again, soon.

So, as a gentle reminder folks, Membership fees due now. If you have any questions about your membership please give Calvin a direct communication at sicci@solomon.com.sb. So, where to from here. Another year. More fun. More smiles. More tears. Life is interesting. The Solomons is a good place to be and, even though we have our problems, we do have a chance to make a difference. To right some of the possible wrongs. To support each other and contribute to a better tomorrow.

I look forward to seeing everyone at the upcoming AGM on 26 March 2010.

All the best for 2010

**Mike Hemmer
Chairman**

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Events

ADB/SICCI Workshop
17 March

SICCI AGM
31 March

Open Year Cocktail
16 April

PIPSO Sub-Regional
Meeting
April TBC

Want an event to be listed
in Chamber News?
Email the details to
sicci@solomon.com.sb

PHAMA looks into improving market access for Solomon Islands

Market access is one of the biggest obstacles experienced by most developing economies in the region, including the Solomon Islands. The lack of facilities and technical experiences has prevented countries like ours from developing products and commodities for export into bigger markets including Australia and New Zealand. With initiatives like the PICTA and PACER Plus negotiation currently underway, a similar program established between the government of Solomon Islands together and AusAID has also been set up in the Solomon Islands, called the 'Pacific Horticulture and Agriculture Market Access Program' or PHAMA. In its first rounds of consultations with local stakeholders, PHAMA held a 2 day workshop on 24

Recently, as part of its consultative program, PHARMA held its first 2-day workshop in Honiara from 23-24 February 2010 at Iron Bottom Sound Hotel where it introduced to stakeholders the terms of reference of the program and its intentions to help address specific market access issues for identified priority products in the Solomons Islands. According to facilitators PHAMA will work closely with other supply chain projects and programs where particular market access issues exist such as the Rural Livelihood Program (RLP/AusAID) and the Pacific Agribusiness Research & Development Initiatives (PARDI/ACIAR). During the workshop, participants discussed issues concerning the Identification of current market access issues, Development of a process for ranking market access issues, Development of an action plan processing the top 1-2 priorities and Market access institutional arrangements for the Solomon Islands.

Workshop participants officers from the Ministry of Commerce, Industry and Employment, Ministry of Agriculture and Livestock, Ministry of Forest and Ministry of Foreign Affairs and External Trade and SEMA and Kokonut Pacific. SICCI was represented by Mr Bryan Keniasina, Project Officer.

SICCI maintains that 17 New Seats Unreasonable

The Solomon Islands Chamber of Commerce and Industry has criticized the Constituency Boundaries Commission Report and recommendation for the introduction of 17 new parliamentary seats. CEO, Calvin Ziru in a brief media release on Tuesday 2 March 2010 said that the report did very little to explain and justify the rationale behind the 17 new seats. "The report appears to only provide data and statistics, but does little to rationalize any of the new seats. Whilst it appears that the primary rationale behind the recommendations is the 'distribution of population', there are clearly provinces and constituencies that do not require new seats, based on this rationale". Mr Ziru acknowledged that whilst a number of constituencies appear to deserve the attention of the Commission, the Solomon Islands is not economically ready for expanding Parliament.

The Solomon Islands Chamber of Commerce maintains that under the current economical crises and the struggling financial state of the government, introducing new seats in parliament is not only unreasonable, but irresponsible. In reference to the apparent dispute over what it actually costs, Mr Ziru said that there are two separate costs associated to the new seats; the first was the administration costs associated with the salaries and entitlements of Members. The second and larger cost was the constituency development funds provided for the development and benefit of the constituency. Whilst the former cost is within the vicinity of \$4.0m to \$6.0m per annum per parliamentarian, the latter is in excess of \$60.0m per annum.

Workshop on new Companies Act to begin

The new Companies Act 2009 is expected to commence by mid 2010. Although there is the strong possibility of delay related to the setting up the new companies registry, commencement of the Act is said will assist Solomon Islands business ranking and the government is working extremely hard to meet this target. Assisting the government through the Ministry of Commerce, Industry and Immigration is the Business Law and Administration Reform Committee (BLAR) established to develop business and law reforms proposals for the Solomon Islands, which comprises representatives from the government, the World Bank Organization, the Asian Development Bank Group and the private sector. The Committee is the think-tank established to advice the government on related reforms that will improve the Solomon Islands competitiveness in business.



Creating and running a Company under the new Companies Act: An Introduction

Presented as part of the Ministry of Commerce, Industry and Employment's continuing reform of the private sector, in association with the Solomon Islands Chamber of Commerce and Industry and the Asian Development Bank



The following subjects will be presented:

- What do I need to do to register a company?
- What kind of companies can I register?
- What do I need to re-register an existing company?
- What do I need to submit to the registry?
- What are the new model rules for companies and should I adopt them?
- What duties do I have as a director?
- What rights do I have as a shareholder?
- How do I deal with company charges?
- Other changes relating to meetings, solvency of your company and reporting requirements.

This Workshop is open to Members and affiliates of the Chamber of Commerce.

Date: Wednesday 17 March 2010
Time: 8.30am – 10.30am
Location: King Solomon Hotel

RSVP by Monday 16 March 2010 to Calvin
on sicci@solomon.com.sb or 39542
Tea and coffee will be served.

New Zealand Businesses Plan Solomon Islands Tour

The Solomon Islands Chamber of Commerce and Industry is planning to host a delegation of business representatives from the New Zealand Pacific Business Council (NZPBC) in a Business Tour later on this year. While discussions on this are still underway, the desire for their to be greater industrial links between New Zealand and Melanesian countries like the Solomon Islands, is supported by this recent project. Mr Sharoon Nabi of Ullrich Aluminium Co Ltd. and a representative of NZPBC in a brief visit to Honiara in February indicated its support for such initiatives between NZPBC and Solomon Islands through SICCI.

“NZPBC comprises business house representatives who have the capacity to travel to the Solomon Islands and promote their business to this country. It is an opportunity for our organizations to network and see how maybe we can help each other grow in the region” said Mr Nabi.

It is most likely that a show-and-tell style event will take place in the middle of this year.

People’s Survey 2009 says Starting Business now harder than before

Starting up a business in Solomon Islands continues to be a challenge for many Solomon Islanders according to the 2009 People’s Survey says. The findings of the survey which was launched by Acting Prime Minister, Hon. Fred Fono outlined that of the 5053 respondents, 27% said conditions for starting a business were better than two years ago. Although twenty-eight percent said that business conditions were the same, 29% said they were worse and 15% did not know. Thirty per cent of the respondents said they had tried to start a business in the past two years. Of this thirty percent, 90% said they had experienced problems. The survey also highlighted that men found it easier to start a business than women.

The survey also noted that 13% of respondents said work opportunities for youth were better compared with two years ago, 33% said opportunities were the same and 47% said opportunities were worse. Following a question posed by H.E. Mark Ramsden, NZ High Commissioner on whether the findings of the survey was consistent with the view of the private sector, Calvin Ziru, Chief Executive Officer of the Solomon Islands Chamber of Commerce and Industry (SICCI) said that whilst the details of why the average Solomon Islander found starting business difficult would be different from SICCI’s member, the issues were the same. Mr Ziru said that SICCI agreed and supported the findings of the survey. SICCI continues to highlight challenges to business growth as being associated with infrastructures, energy and communication.



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NZ assistance boost Solomon Islands Fisheries Division

A fisheries support package by the Government of New Zealand has enhanced the functions of the Solomon Islands Ministry of Fisheries and Marine Resources (MFMR). Fisheries Minister, Hon. Nollen Leni on Friday highlighted the latest improvements when he took delivery of his Ministry's new office building along the Kukum Highway from the visiting New Zealand Foreign Affairs Minister Honourable Murray McCully.

Mr Leni said the building symbolizes the strength of Solomon Islands relationship with New Zealand and is part of the revised New Zealand Government fisheries support package called – "Mekem Strong Solomon Islands Fisheries".

"My Government is very grateful for this assistance and it pleases me that in the spirit of partnership we have jointly developed and will jointly implement this package. This is an exciting time for Solomon Islands fisheries," Mr Leni said.

The country's Fisheries and Marine resources are extremely important sources of government revenue in view of the declining ability of the forestry sector to generate revenue for Solomon Islands.

"The Government is actively looking for sustainable sources of economic growth. We believe that our fisheries and marine resources when sustainably managed will produce enduring economic benefits that will carry us forward," Mr Leni said.

With assistance from New Zealand over the past three years, the Ministry of Fisheries has tackled some apparently insurmountable problems they have faced.

The improvements included the new office complex, proper systems and practices as well as staff capacity development. The Ministry also has a vision for the future and is well advanced on developing policies and strategies.

"I look forward to building a prosperous future for the Solomon Islands in partnership with Aotearoa – the land of the long white cloud".

Government seeks Korean investor in fisheries

The Government is well in advance into talks with a reputable Korean global fishing company to invest in a new cannery here. Minister of Fisheries, Nollen Leni on Friday has announced this new project on Friday which cabinet has earlier endorsed. The cannery is expected to employ approximately 3000 Solomon Islanders and attract other credible investors into the country.

The national government appreciates the importance of investment led development and of a policy environment that enables the practical application of developments.

"My Ministry has been working on incentives to attract fisheries investors to our shores and last week Cabinet endorsed our work," Mr Leni said.

Among other highlights of the Ministry, Mr Leni said his team was also instrumental in turning Soltai around and setting it on the path to profitability. Soltai is now pumping \$SBD15 million a year in the form of wages and over the next 12 months the figure will likely rise by a further 50%. In the past two years, the Ministry has more than doubled access fee revenue from foreign fishing vessels and now contribute some \$SBD110 million to consolidated revenue.



Sweeten the deal : tips for cocoa exporters.

PITIC Sydney has contacts in over thirty companies in the Pacific Islands cocoa industry, and we know there are more out there we have yet to meet. For these reasons we have developed literature on the successful exporting of valuable product to the rest of the world. The guide, "Exporting Cocoa from the Pacific Islands" is available from our website at www.pitic.org.au and here are a few key pieces of information from it.

Australia is a net importer of cocoa. This means that imported cocoa does not necessarily compete with domestic product because local Australian growers do not produce enough cocoa to meet demand.

Australia has a small number of cocoa producers, and by world standards they only grow a small amount. To get the best price for their cocoa, Australian producers have adopted a niche or boutique attitude toward their product



Pacific Islands fishing paradise offers brand new adventures for all anglers.

South Pacific Islands have always conjured up visions of adventure and this spirit is still strong in the twenty-first century. There are very few unique adventures that are still undiscovered, but among the remote reefs and atolls of the Pacific, adventure is still to be found, with some of the best game fishing in the world recently discovered around the Marshall Islands, Kiribati and Niue.

Ride out into the vast seas and skies to challenge the wildest big game fish in the world. Lasso a Wahu by the tail, or mix the careful art of lagoon spear fishing with the thunderous, roaring exhilaration of snagging an enormous tuna out in the deep blue on an extreme South Pacific fishing adventure.



Venui Vanilla : a Vanuatu export success story

Venui Vanilla was established in 1987 by Piero Bianchessi. Initially, his main interest was vanilla production, but his passion for tropical agriculture soon led him to begin cultivating other spices with a focus on sustainable farming practices, advanced processing techniques and quality standards.

Today, Venui Vanilla represents the spearhead of the Vanuatu Spices Network, a group of more than 200 organic-certified* producers spread over seven Vanuatu islands, organized under the umbrella of the Farm Support Association (FSA).

Venui Vanilla’s tailor-made processing facilities expertly handle the crops grown both at Venui Farm and by the Spices Network, turning them into a unique range of boutique high quality goods and fostering a sustainable, small-farmer friendly and equitable trade.

Pacific investment heating up : KUTh looks into Fiji, Vanuatu and PNG.

KUTh Energy is an Australian power company that PITIC has been assisting with their move to invest into the Pacific Islands. KUTh has energy projects slated for Vanuatu, Fiji and Papua New Guinea.

KUTh Energy uses a modern, green power generating method known as Enhanced Geothermal System (EGS) which, at its most simple, means drilling down into the hot ground, piping down water then using the heated water that comes back up to create electricity. The water is recycled over and over and no carbon is released into the atmosphere.

This simple but clever way of creating cheap and clean energy is big news for the Pacific because it actually works better in the Islands than in the company’s homeland.



“Over 40 years experience of doing business in Solomon Islands”





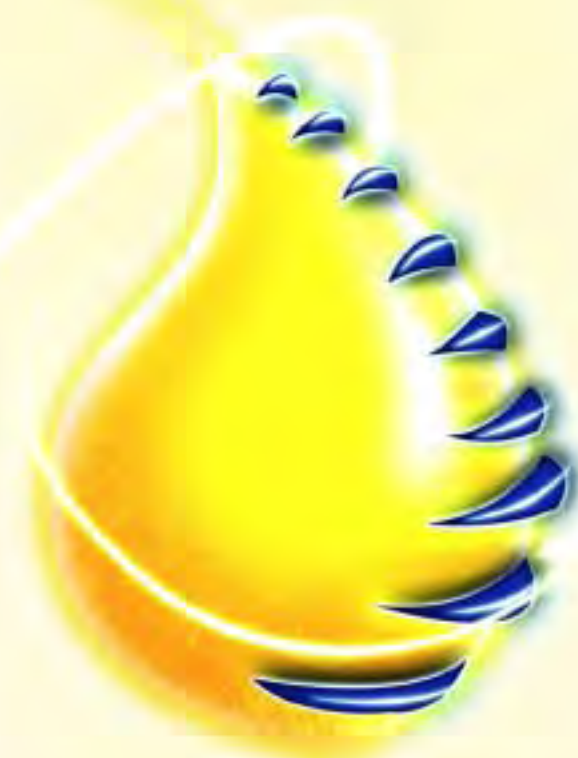
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VACANCIES

SICCI seeks to recruit suitably qualified individuals for the following positions:

1. PROJECT OFFICER (ADVOCACY AND REPRESENTATION)

The Project Officer will be responsible for the implementation, monitoring and evaluation as well as the further development of the Advocacy and Representative functions of the organisation. The recruitment of a dynamic Project Officer is crucial to ensure that the core Advocacy and Representative capacity are consistently implemented.

Duties and responsibilities

- Coordinate SICCI's advocacy and representative program
- Undertake policy analysis and development of advocacy strategies;
- Monitoring and evaluation of the implementation of advocacy plans and strategies
- Regular communication with and reporting to on new development
- Develop publication and relations with media
- Direct lobbying of members and stakeholders.
- Representation of SICCI at various workshops, briefings and other meetings

Qualifications & Experience

- BA in economics, commerce, business, political science, development studies or other related to the job.
- Minimum 3 years working experience
- Excellent or fluent in English
- Knowledge of and experience with research used for advocacy
- Excellent research, writing and policy analysis skills with strong oral and interpersonal skills
- Knowledge of and experience with advocacy approaches
- Experience in leading and managing teams, designing and managing programmes and projects with thorough knowledge of the project management cycle;
- Demonstrated ability to provide high quality advice at the highest levels; and,
- Good administrative, project and information management skills with ability to use a range of computing software.

2. ADMINISTRATIVE ASSISTANT

The Administrative Assistant is responsible for providing administrative and clerical services in order to ensure effective and efficient operations. The Administrative Assistant reports to the Chief Executive Officer and is responsible for providing administrative and clerical services.

Duties and responsibilities

- Provide administrative and financial support to ensure that the SICCI Office operations are maintained in an effective, up to date and accurate manner
- Provide support to the Chief Executive Officer to ensure that the SICCI Office is provided with the resources to make effective decisions
- Maintain confidential records and files
- Provide receptionist services and perform other related duties as required

Qualification and experiences

- Diploma in banking and finance or other related to the job.
- Minimum 3 years working experience
- Knowledge of office administration and bookkeeping procedures
- Ability to maintain a high level of accuracy and confidentiality concerning financial and membership files;
- excellent interpersonal skills, analytical and problem solving skills and decision making skills
- attention to detail and high level of accuracy
- high organizational skills and effective written communications skills
- computer skills including the ability to operate spreadsheet and word processing programs

The successful applicant will be remunerated an attractive salary package, according to their qualification and performance. This amount includes all mandatory deductions (for example, NPF, PAYE, housing, home leave passage, etc) and all other allowances and entitlements. The position is for an initial period of 12 months with a possible further extension for a similar period.

Interested applicants should send a covering letter clearly outlining qualifications, experiences, their CV, including names and contacts of three (3) referees to: **Vacancy – Project Officer, Solomon Islands Chamber of Commerce & Industry, PO Box 650, Honiara, Solomon Islands** or deliver applications to the **SICCI Office, 2nd Floor, NPF Building, Honiara, Solomon Islands**. For inquiries please contact email sicci@solomon.com.sb or call (+677) 39542.

Applications should be submitted no later than 4:30 pm, Friday 26th March, 2010



Creating and running a Company under the new Companies Act: An Introduction

This is an introductory seminar for the private sector and will deal with key aspects of the new Companies Act targeting those looking to set up a new company and for those already running a company.

The following subjects will be presented:

- What do I need to do to register a company?
- What kind of companies can I register?
- What do I need to re-register an existing company?
- What do I need to submit to the registry?
- What are the new model rules for companies and should I adopt them?
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