

2019 NATIONAL POPULATION AND HOUSING CENSUS PROJECT



Telephone: (677) 28881/23951/21427
Fax: 677- 23775;
Website: <https://www.statistics.gov.sb>

Census Office | National Statistics Office,
Ministry of Finance and Treasury
P.O. Box G6, Honiara, Solomon Islands
Email: Dkimie@mof.gov.sb



Government of
Solomon Islands

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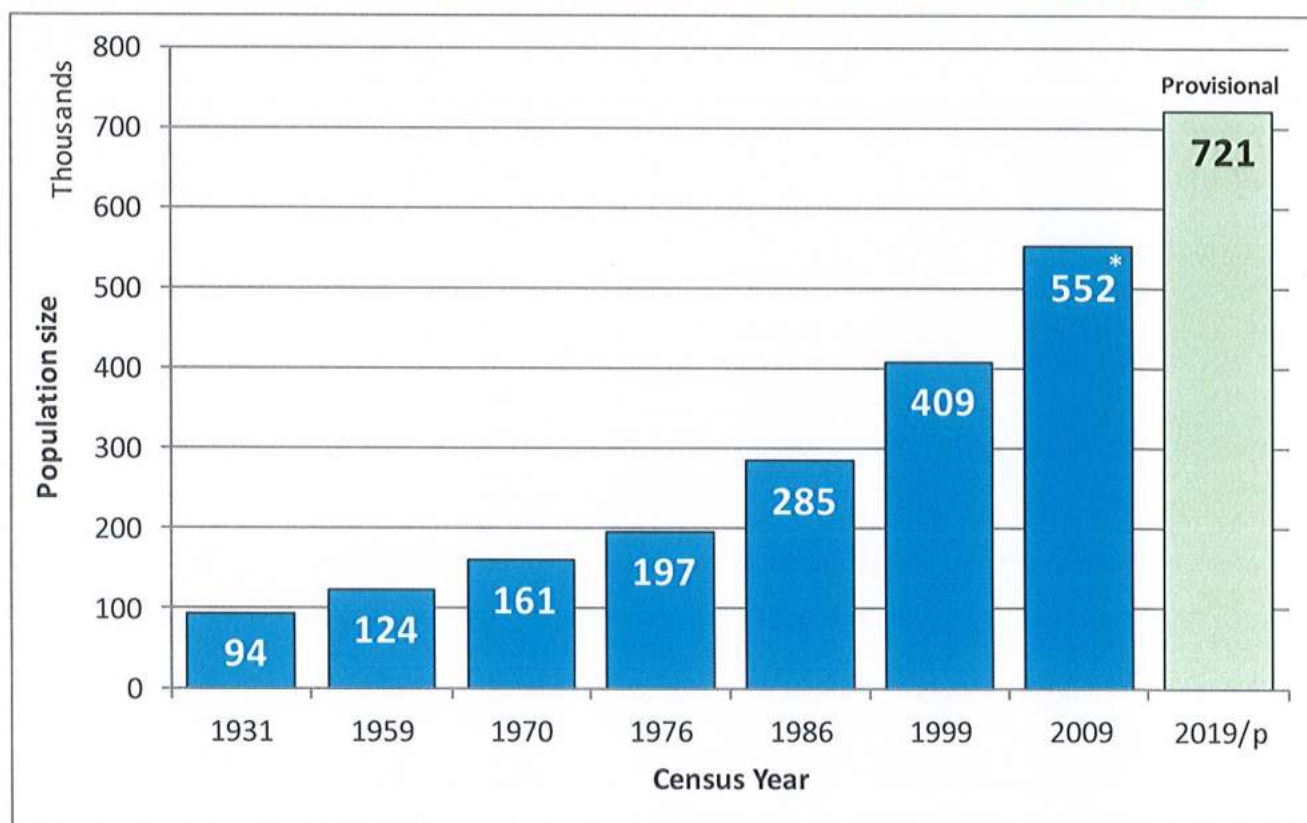
16 November, 2020

Provisional Count 2019 National Population and Housing Census

Population Size and Trend

The Solomon Islands provisional population count based on the recent 2019 National Population and Housing Census as of the midnight ('Census Night') of 24 November, 2019 is approximately **721,455**. This represents the absolute number of people residing in approximately **124,247 private households and 1,034 institutions**.

Figure P1: Provisional Total Population Size and Trend, Solomon Islands: 1931-2019



The country's population has increased to close to eight times the size in 1931, and over three times the size since independence in 1978 (Figure P1).

The 2019 Census provisional count records an increase of 169,930 people (30.8%) since the last 2009 Census. This increase represents an average annual growth rate of 2.7% for the period 2009-2019, or an increase of 17,000 people per year.

Table P1: Provisional Total Population Size and Change, Solomon Islands: 1999, 2009, 2019

| Province | Total Population Size | | | Population Change | | | | | |
|------------------------|-----------------------|----------------|----------------|-------------------|----------------|--------------|-------------|------------------------|-------------|
| | | | | (Number) | | (Percent, %) | | Av. Annual growth rate | |
| | 1999 | 2009* | 2019/p | 1999-2009 | 2009-2019/p | 1999-2009 | 2009-2019/p | 1999-2009 | 2009-2019/p |
| Solomon Islands | 409,042 | 551,525 | 721,455 | 142,483 | 169,930 | 34.8 | 30.8 | 3.0 | 2.7 |
| Choiseul | 20,008 | 26,372 | 30,619 | 6,364 | 4,247 | 31.8 | 16.1 | 2.8 | 1.5 |
| Western | 62,739 | 76,649 | 94,209 | 13,910 | 17,560 | 22.2 | 22.9 | 2.0 | 2.1 |
| Isabel | 20,421 | 26,158 | 30,399 | 5,737 | 4,241 | 28.1 | 16.2 | 2.5 | 1.5 |
| Central | 21,577 | 26,051 | 30,326 | 4,474 | 4,275 | 20.7 | 16.4 | 1.9 | 1.5 |
| Rennell-Bellona | 2,377 | 3,041 | 4,091 | 664 | 1,050 | 27.9 | 34.5 | 2.5 | 3.0 |
| Guadalcanal* | 60,275 | 106,023 | 154,150 | 45,748 | 48,127 | 75.9 | 45.4 | 5.6 | 3.7 |
| Malaita* | 122,620 | 152,307 | 173,347 | 29,687 | 21,040 | 24.2 | 13.8 | 2.2 | 1.3 |
| Makira-Ulawa | 31,006 | 40,419 | 52,006 | 9,413 | 11,587 | 30.4 | 28.7 | 2.6 | 2.5 |
| Temotu | 18,912 | 21,362 | 22,132 | 2,450 | 770 | 13.0 | 3.6 | 1.2 | 0.4 |
| Honiara* | 49,107 | 73,143 | 130,176 | 24,036 | 57,033 | 48.9 | 78.0 | 4.0 | 5.8 |

* See End Notes

National population growth has slowed from 3.0% (1999-2009) to 2.7% (2009-2019) reflecting changes in the annual growths of provincial populations. During these inter-censal periods, the majority of provinces recorded lower annual growth rates except for Honiara, Rennell-Bellona, and Western provinces.

During 2009-2019 and across provinces, Honiara recorded the fastest annual growth of 5.8% with an increase of 57,033 people (78.0%) since 2009 or 5,700 people per year. This is followed by Guadalcanal, driven by an annual growth of 3.7% with an increase of 48,127 people (45.4%) since 2009 or 4,800 people annually. The province with the slowest annual population growth (0.4%) is Temotu where growth continues to slow down even from 1999-2009.

Changes in population size at the provincial level shows Malaita recording the highest population of 173,347 (24.0%), followed by Guadalcanal with 154,150 (21.4%) and Honiara with 130,176 (18.0%) people. The least populated province is Rennell-Bellona with 4,091 (0.6%) people.

Population density, a key measure of population concentration and dispersion basically shows the relationship between the population and land area (Table P2). With the total land area of the Solomon Islands of 30,407 square kilometres (following previous census report), the 2019 population (crude) density is 24 persons per square kilometre. Although this is relatively low by regional standards, it has progressively increased from 18 to 24 persons per square kilometre since 2009.

Table P2: Provisional Total Population Density, Solomon Islands: 1999, 2009, 2019

| Province | Land Area (km ²)** | Total Population | | | Population Density | | |
|------------------------|--------------------------------|------------------|----------------|----------------|--------------------|-----------|-----------|
| | | 1999 | 2009* | 2019/p | 1999 | 2009* | 2019/p |
| Solomon Islands | 30,407.3 | 409,042 | 551,525 | 721,455 | 13 | 18 | 24 |
| Choiseul | 3,837.3 | 20,008 | 26,372 | 30,619 | 5 | 7 | 8 |
| Western | 7,509.0 | 62,739 | 76,649 | 94,209 | 8 | 10 | 13 |
| Isabel | 4,136.2 | 20,421 | 26,158 | 30,399 | 5 | 6 | 7 |
| Central | 615.3 | 21,577 | 26,051 | 30,326 | 35 | 42 | 49 |
| Rennell-Bellona | 670.7 | 2,377 | 3,041 | 4,091 | 4 | 5 | 6 |
| Guadalcanal* | 5,336.3 | 60,275 | 106,023 | 154,150 | 11 | 20 | 29 |
| Malaita* | 4,224.7 | 122,620 | 152,307 | 173,347 | 29 | 36 | 41 |
| Makira-Ulawa | 3,187.7 | 31,006 | 40,419 | 52,006 | 10 | 13 | 16 |
| Temotu | 868.4 | 18,912 | 21,362 | 22,132 | 22 | 25 | 25 |
| Honiara* | 21.9 | 49,107 | 73,143 | 130,176 | 2,244 | 3,343 | 5,950 |

** See End Notes

Honiara, the capital of the country, is the most highly concentrated area recording the highest population density of 5,950 people per square kilometre compared to all other provinces. This is close to twice the size recorded in 2009 and close to three times the size recorded in 1999. Rennell-Bellona records the lowest density of 6 persons per square kilometre.

Population Distribution

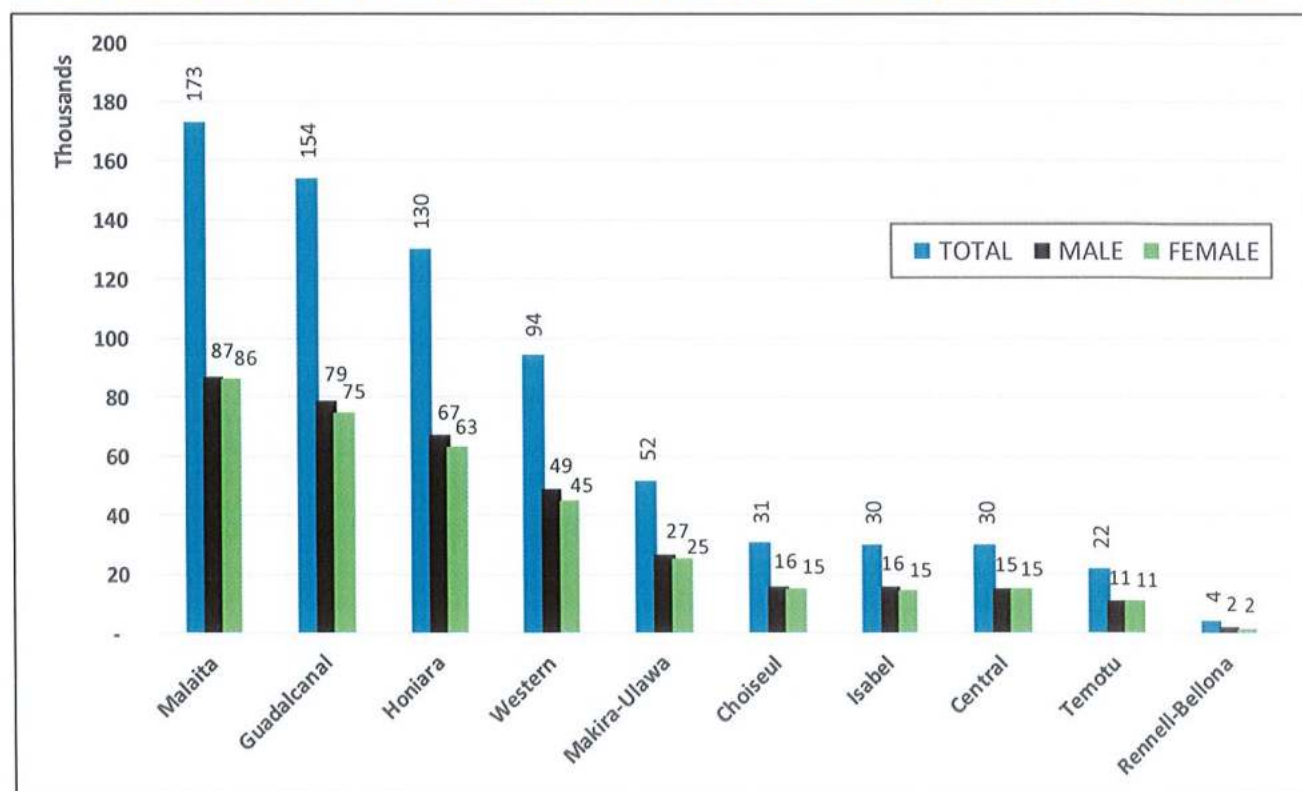
The distribution of the population by province and sex shows that out of the total population of 721,455 people enumerated, there are 369,252 males (51.2%) and 352,204 females (48.8%) (Table P3, Figure P2). This represents a sex ratio of 105 at the national level which means that there are 105 males for every 100 females in the country.

While there are slightly more males than females across the majority of provinces, only Temotu province records a slightly lesser number of males than females with a sex ratio of 97.

Table P3: Provisional Total Population by Province, Sex and Sex Ratio, Solomon Islands: 2019

| Province | Total Population, Sex, Sex Ratio | | | | | |
|------------------------|----------------------------------|----------------|-------------|----------------|-------------|------------|
| | Total | Males | % | Females | % | Sex Ratio |
| Solomon Islands | 721,455 | 369,252 | 51.2 | 352,204 | 48.8 | 105 |
| Choiseul | 30,619 | 15,767 | 51.5 | 14,852 | 48.5 | 106 |
| Western | 94,209 | 49,061 | 52.1 | 45,148 | 47.9 | 109 |
| Isabel | 30,399 | 15,836 | 52.1 | 14,563 | 47.9 | 109 |
| Central | 30,326 | 15,432 | 50.9 | 14,894 | 49.1 | 104 |
| Rennell-Bellona | 4,091 | 2,259 | 55.2 | 1,832 | 44.8 | 123 |
| Guadalcanal | 154,150 | 79,093 | 51.3 | 75,057 | 48.7 | 105 |
| Malaita | 173,347 | 87,004 | 50.2 | 86,343 | 49.8 | 101 |
| Makira-Ulawa | 52,006 | 26,830 | 51.6 | 25,176 | 48.4 | 107 |
| Temotu | 22,132 | 10,905 | 49.3 | 11,227 | 50.7 | 97 |
| Honiara | 130,176 | 67,064 | 51.5 | 63,112 | 48.5 | 106 |

Figure P2: Provisional Total Population Size by Province and Sex, Solomon Islands: 2019



Provincial populations in 2019 continue to grow with varying annual growth rates (Figure P3, Table P1), although three provinces (Choiseul, Isabel and Central) recorded approximately similar growth (1.5%). Honiara recorded the fastest growth (5.8%) followed by Guadalcanal (3.7%) and Rennell-Bellona (3.0%). These three provinces reported growths above the national average.

Figure P3: Provisional Average Annual Population Growth Rate (2009-2019) by Province, Solomon Islands

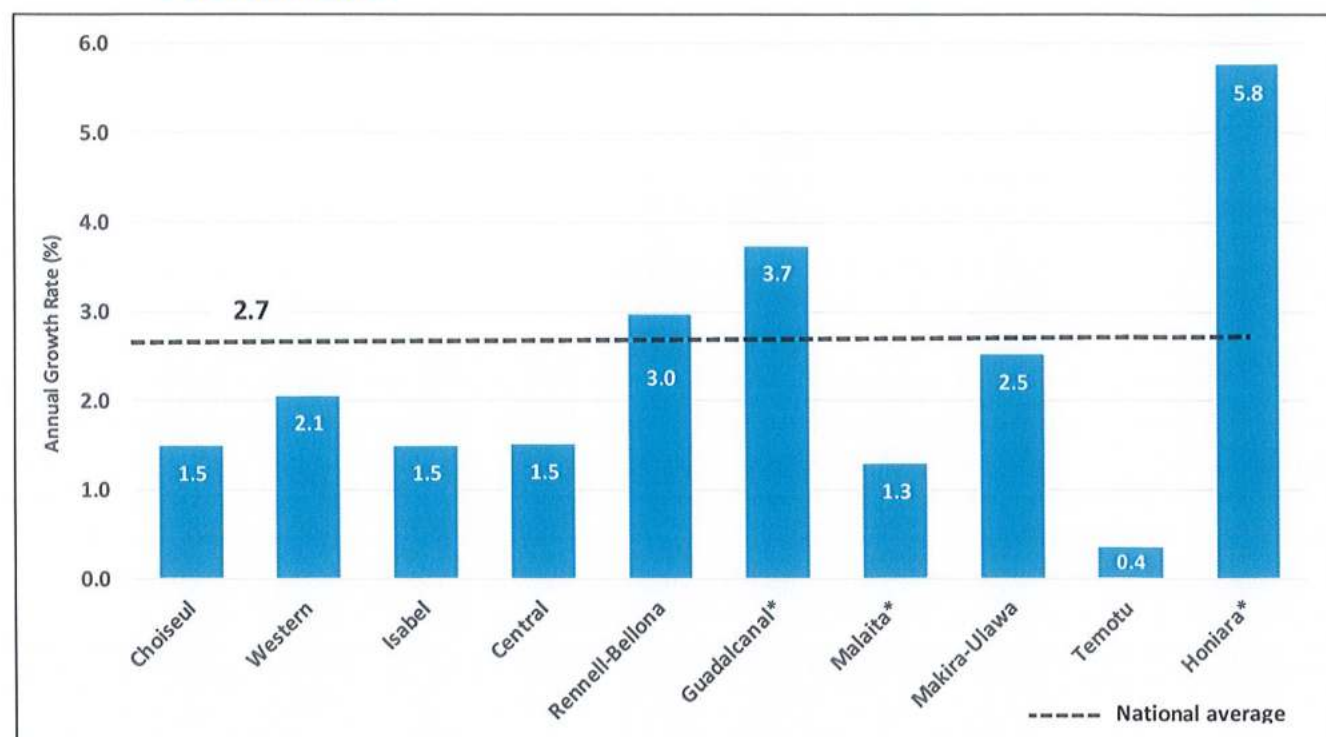


Table P4. Ranking of Provisional Population, Solomon Islands: 2019, 2009, 1999

| Province` | Percent (%) of Population, 2019/p | Ranking | | |
|-----------------|-----------------------------------|---------|-------|------|
| | | 2019/p | 2009* | 1999 |
| Malaita | 24.0 | 1 | 1 | 1 |
| Guadalcanal | 21.4 | 2 | 2 | 3 |
| Honiara | 18.0 | 3 | 4 | 4 |
| Western | 13.1 | 4 | 3 | 2 |
| Makira-Ulawa | 7.2 | 5 | 5 | 5 |
| Choiseul | 4.2 | 6 | 6 | 8 |
| Isabel | 4.2 | 7 | 7 | 7 |
| Central | 4.2 | 8 | 8 | 6 |
| Temotu | 3.1 | 9 | 9 | 9 |
| Rennell-Bellona | 0.6 | 10 | 10 | 10 |

Table P4 shows the ranking of provincial population by population size. The three largest populated provinces from 1999 to 2009 were Malaita, Western and Guadalcanal. In 2009, Guadalcanal and Western provinces swapped ranks with Guadalcanal taking the second place and Western the third spot. In 2019, Honiara has risen to third place taking over from Western which has now dropped to fourth place.

Malaita province continues to be ranked first place since 1999, and even as far back as the 1970s.

Urban and Rural Distribution

Our description of an urban area is limited by international standards. Following from the 2009 Census and for purposes of analysis, our distinction of urban areas includes Honiara (capital of the country), and all provincial administrative centres except Rennell-Bellona.

Urban population increased from 109,082 in 2009 to approximately 184,832 in 2019, representing a higher annual growth rate of 5.3% or an increase of 75,750 people (Table P5). Urban growth outpaces by close to three times the growth in rural areas.

Table P5: Provisional Total Population Size and Change by Urban-Rural Area, Solomon Islands: 1999, 2009, 2019

| Province | Urban-Rural Population Size | | | Urban-Rural Population Change | | | | | |
|------------------------|-----------------------------|----------------|----------------|-------------------------------|----------------|--------------|-------------|------------------------|-------------|
| | | | | (Number) | | (Percent, %) | | Av. Annual Growth Rate | |
| | 1999 | 2009* | 2019/p | 1999-2009* | 2009-2019/p | 1999-2009* | 2009-2019/p | 1999-2009* | 2009-2019/p |
| Solomon Islands | 409,042 | 551,525 | 721,455 | 142,483 | 169,930 | 34.8 | 30.8 | 3.0 | 2.7 |
| Urban | 63,732 | 109,082 | 184,832 | 45,350 | 75,750 | 71.2 | 69.4 | 4.1 | 5.3 |
| Rural | 345,310 | 442,443 | 536,623 | 97,133 | 94,180 | 28.1 | 21.3 | 1.9 | 1.9 |

The proportion of the population residing in urban areas continues to increase since 1976, and from close to 20% in 2009 to 26% in 2019. Similarly, the reverse trend is observed in the progressive decline in rural population (Figure P4).

Figure P4: Provisional Percentage of Total Population by Urban and Rural Areas, Solomon Islands: 1976-2019

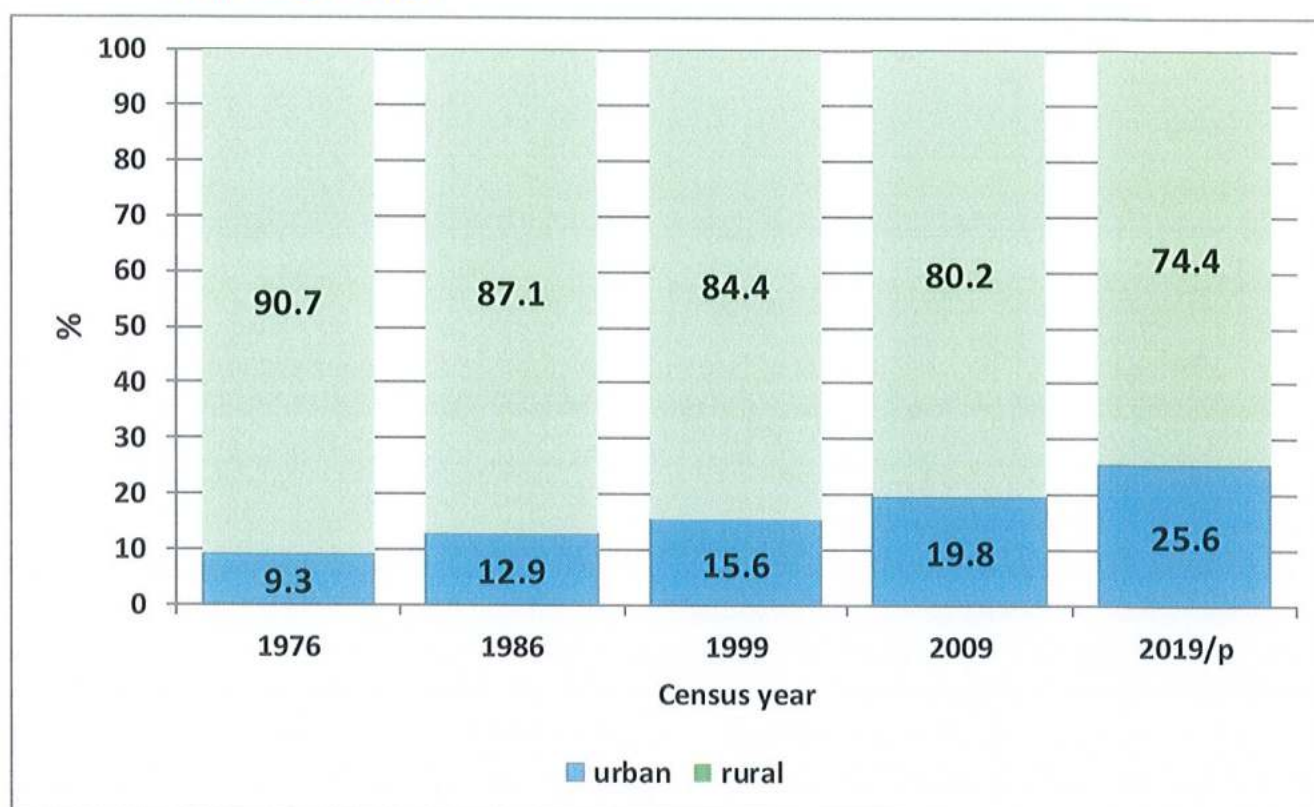


Table P6: Provisional Urban-Rural Area Population by Province, Solomon Islands: 2019

| PROVINCE | All Areas | | Urban | | Rural | |
|------------------------|----------------|------------|----------------|-------------|----------------|-------------|
| | Number | % | Number | % | Number | % |
| Solomon Islands | 721,455 | 100 | 184,832 | 25.6 | 536,623 | 74.4 |
| Choiseul | 30,619 | 100 | 909 | 3.0 | 29,710 | 97.0 |
| Western | 94,209 | 100 | 13,628 | 14.5 | 80,581 | 85.5 |
| Isabel | 30,399 | 100 | 829 | 2.7 | 29,570 | 97.3 |
| Central | 30,326 | 100 | 1,431 | 4.7 | 28,895 | 95.3 |
| Rennell-Bellona | 4,091 | 100 | - | 0.0 | 4,091 | 100.0 |
| Guadalcanal | 154,150 | 100 | 28,395 | 18.4 | 125,755 | 81.6 |
| Malaita | 173,347 | 100 | 6,695 | 3.9 | 166,652 | 96.1 |
| Makira-Ulawa | 52,006 | 100 | 1,542 | 3.0 | 50,464 | 97.0 |
| Temotu | 22,132 | 100 | 1,227 | 5.5 | 20,905 | 94.5 |
| Honiara town council | 130,176 | 100 | 130,176 | 100.0 | - | 0.0 |

Close to 26% of the population live in areas that are defined as urban compared to 74% who reside in rural areas (Table P6). In 2019, Honiara, the capital and commercial hub of the country comprised of over two-thirds of all urban residents, excluding residents in the adjoining urban areas of Guadalcanal.

Going Forward: Release of Final Figures

The provisional figures provide a snapshot of the population size, change and related indicators for immediate policy, planning and decision-making purposes.

The final results will include a more detailed analysis with an expanded set of social, demographic and economic indicators such as population by age distribution, youth, women, religion, mortality and fertility, economic activity and labour force.

The final figures are expected to slightly vary from the provisional figures depending on the data processing and validation exercise currently being progressed.

The final analysis report is planned for release during third-fourth quarter of 2021. The impact of the Covid-19 on normal government operations including census priorities may affect the proposed timely release of the report.

End Notes:

For the purpose of this release:

* Population adjusted for an undercount of 8.3% in 2009 (population: 515,870), at national and sub-national levels only. Unadjusted annual growth rates were 3.4% (2009-2019) and 2.3% (1999-2009). Sub-national level adjustments have been weighted against populations for Guadalcanal, Malaita and Honiara (assumed moderate-high under-enumeration in 2009). Caution is advised as this is subject to review in the final analysis.

** Figures for land area follow from the 2009 Census report for comparison purposes. This will be updated in the final analysis where necessary.

P = provisional estimate. The figures are based predominantly on registration counts.

Following from previous statistical reporting, Honiara (capital of country) is treated as a province.

Census undertaking in the Solomon Islands is challenging given the logistics, costs and geography. There are constraints in field enumeration and data quality, however, data collected represents the best national estimate at the time (Census night).

Acknowledgements

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Further Information, Contact:

Census Commissioner

2019 Census Project Office | Solomon Islands National Statistics Office

Ministry of Finance and Treasury; Po Box G6, Honiara

Phone # 677-23951; 28881; 27835 Fax # 677- 23775

Email: dkimie@mof.gov.sb or SocialDemography@mof.gov.sb

NSO website: <https://www.statistics.gov.sb>



AUTHORISED BY

DOUGLAS KIMI

GOVERNMENT STATISTICIAN AND CENSUS COMMISSIONER

