



SOLOMON AIRLINES RETURNS TO MALAITA

News / Airports / Routes



Further spreading the benefits of international tourism across the Solomon Islands and providing a vital air link for the people of Malaita Province, Solomon Airlines has resumed flights into the provincial capital of Auki.

The national carrier has commenced operation of three weekly services ex-Honiara on Mondays, Wednesdays and Fridays using a combination of its Twin Otter and Islander aircraft on the route.

Announcing the news, General Manager Operations & Commercial, Gus Kraus acknowledged the efforts the Solomon Islands government, the Malaita Provincial Government and local landowners have gone to in ensuring the return of what he described as “a much needed air service” between Honiara and Auki.

“We also see this as a huge opportunity to open up the province to the benefits of tourism so it goes without saying we are very excited with this long-awaited development,” Mr Kraus said.

Mr Kraus said he was hopeful the airline would be able to employ its Dash 8 aircraft on the route in the not too distant future.

“More work is required on the runway before we can start flying the Dash 8 into Auki,” he said.

“But we are hopeful following recent discussions with the Malaita Provincial Government, we will see this further opportunity bearing fruit in the near future.”

Solomon Airlines’ CEO, Captain Ron Sumsum and marketing manager, Colin Sigimanu flew into

Auki on the airline's first service this week where it was met by the Premier of Malaita Province, the Hon. Peter Chanel Ramohia who officiated at a formal event welcoming the resumption of air services.

Malaita constitutes one of the largest of the Solomon Islands nine provinces. Its capital city, Auki, has a population of close on 9000 people.

The province is known as a 'cultural jewel', famed for its traditional production of the highly prized 'Shell Money' which still exists as an alternative form of currency and plays a key role in traditional wedding dowry payments.

The Malaitan people are also known for their Pan Pipe orchestras and their ability to 'call' sharks.

Flights between Honiara and Auki take just 30 minutes.

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