

SOLOMON ISLANDS

IMPACT STORIES

APTC 
AUSTRALIA-PACIFIC
TECHNICAL COLLEGE
CREATING SKILLS FOR LIFE

Australian
Aid 



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About the Australia-Pacific Technical College

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Message from the **Australian High Commissioner to Solomon Islands**

Australia recognises that high quality education is key to achieving sustainable and prosperous development. Helping people access good education and skills improves their lives and their families' livelihoods. It also ensures there is a skilled workforce available to support economic growth.

Australia is pleased to support the Australia-Pacific Technical College to deliver high quality education in Solomon Islands. For ten years, the Australia-Pacific Technical College's presence in Solomon Islands has significantly contributed to the Technical and Vocational Education and Training sector. Initially, the Australia-Pacific Technical College provided scholarships for Solomon Islanders to study at training institutions in other Pacific countries. It has come a long way and is now delivering high quality training in-country in collaboration with national training institutions, major training providers and private sector partners.

Since 2007, 1,205 Solomon Islanders have graduated from the Australia-Pacific Technical College with internationally recognised technical qualifications. This is a great achievement for these individuals and the Australia-Pacific Technical College. These graduates are contributing to the country's development by working as carers, mechanics, builders, office-managers, educators, electricians, engineers, tourism officers, painters,

chefs, plumbers, tilers and youth workers. Over the years, the Australia-Pacific Technical College has developed its partnerships with national institutions such as the Solomon Islands National University and the Don Bosco Technical Institute. In more recent times, the Australia-Pacific Technical College has also collaborated with private sector partners such as the Solomon Islands Chamber of Commerce and Industry and Solomon Power. Through these relationships the Australia-Pacific Technical College is linking training with industry to ensure students develop relevant skills that will make a lasting contribution to the development of the Solomon Islands.

As we mark the tenth anniversary of the Australia-Pacific Technical College's operations in the Solomon Islands, we acknowledge the many Solomon Islanders and Australians who have worked hard to establish such a significant initiative. The Australia-Pacific Technical College has achieved much in the education and training of Pacific Islanders. As a result, Solomon Islands is benefiting from a more skilled, more productive and more employable workforce across many industries. The success of the Australia-Pacific Technical College can be seen in the way that quality education and training is changing many lives for the better.

**His Excellency
Mr Roderick Brazier**



Message from the **Chief Executive Officer**

At the Australia-Pacific Technical College, success extends beyond the number of men and women who gain internationally recognised qualifications.

In a region where relationships matter, the Australia-Pacific Technical College has embraced a partnering approach, working with governments, Technical and Vocational Education and Training institutions and the private sector to ensure that the Australia-Pacific Technical College training meets labour market demands and produces job-ready graduates.

Thriving communities and societies have one thing in common – a skilled, qualified and capable workforce. Technical and vocational skills are in high demand across the region; in trades, hospitality, tourism, health and community industry sectors. Without these formal qualifications, Pacific Island workers can find themselves stalled on the career ladder. But success is also measured by the lasting impact of the difference that learning can make in the lives of individuals, their families and communities.

This collection of graduate profiles from the Solomon Islands highlight the impact of

learning at the Australia-Pacific Technical College on individuals and communities, and the contribution to strengthening Technical and Vocational Education and Training across the Pacific.

There are many more stories of success that could have been told, that could have been highlighted in this publication. The process of selecting the stories to be told was not an easy one. I wish to extend my gratitude to all those who so willingly shared their stories and who gave their time to allow the writers to conduct interviews and research.

I wish to thank the Australian Government for their support. I also thank the Pacific Island Governments and people who have worked with the Australia-Pacific Technical College to realise the results you will read about in the following pages.

On behalf of all at the Australia-Pacific Technical College, I hope you enjoy reading these stories. We look forward to continuing to work collaboratively to enhance opportunities for the citizens of the Pacific Island Countries that we serve.

Denise O'Brien
Australia-Pacific Technical College



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FEDERATED STATES OF MICRONESIA

PALAU

PAPUA NEW GUINEA

SOLOMON ISLANDS

AUSTRALIA

GOAL

Contribute to a more prosperous Pacific driven by a skilled, competitive and productive workforce

11152
Total Graduates

40%
FEMALE
GRADUATES

60%
MALE
GRADUATES

14
Pacific
Island
Countries

5
Campus
Locations

MARSHALL ISLANDS

NAURU

KIRIBATI

TUVALU

SAMOA

COOK ISLANDS

VANUATU

FIJI

TONGA

NIUE

A man with dark, curly hair, wearing a blue polo shirt and an orange high-visibility safety vest, is focused on a task in a workshop. He is looking down and to the right, with his right arm extended. The background shows a corrugated metal ceiling and a window. The text is overlaid on the lower left of the image.

“ I would see people doing painting and decorating and I was interested. I wanted to go to the Australia-Pacific Technical College to learn about the trade ”

Mr David Maekiki



NO BARRIER TO SUCCESS

The Australia-Pacific Technical College has a strong inclusive focus that ensures equal access to technical and vocational training for people with disabilities from across the Pacific.

Graduating with Certificate III in Painting and Decorating from the Australia-Pacific Technical College in 2014, was a big step-up for hearing-impaired Mr David Maekiki's career.

Mr Maekiki started working with Solomon Islands Ports Authority as a volunteer in 2003. After 11 years, he decided to upskill at the Australia-Pacific Technical College.

"I would see people doing painting and decorating and I was interested. I wanted to go to the Australia-Pacific Technical College to learn about the trade."

He surprised his employer with his new skills on his return home from his studies.

"I had new skills when I came back to work for the Solomon Islands Ports Authority. From the training, I learned things like painting and decorating the walls, mixing different colours and I even improved my English."

Mr Maekiki said that prior to his training, sometimes he would be criticised because of his lack of skills. All that has now changed.

"After going to the Australia-Pacific Technical College, my level of skills on the job went up. Even my supervisors told me that my standard of work had gone up. I even began to teach people back at my workplace and they were also surprised."

Turning 'disability into ability' in the workplace

"The management at Solomon Islands Ports Authority gave me the opportunity to be a carpentry supervisor to oversee painting works," he added.

Teaching people on the finer points of painting and decorating has become part of Mr Maekiki's new role. He is determined to excel as a painting professional and mentor.

"I want to continue my work as a supervisor to help people improve their skills in painting and decorating. I want to help them learn and know about this trade."

Mr Maekiki was inspired by what he experienced during his time studying at the Australia-Pacific Technical College. He said that the teachers and students treated him with respect and provided him with support in his learning.

Now he wants to help other people with disabilities in his community to improve their skills, especially those that want to take up painting careers.

"Even though I have a disability, I thank the Australia-Pacific Technical College for giving me the opportunity to go to Fiji to complete my program. I have certainly learned a lot," he said.

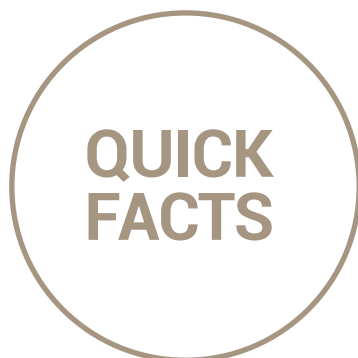
The same can be said about Mr Benedict Esibaea. His hearing impairment did not hold him back from completing Certificate III in Wall and Floor Tiling at the Australia-Pacific Technical College in 2014.

He was encouraged to look for overseas training opportunities to learn about tiling work and that search led him to the Australia-Pacific Technical College.

He found his training useful and highly relevant to the projects he has undertaken since his return to the Solomon Islands. In addition, he was very pleased to have the support of disability specialist teachers to assist him with his learning.

After his training, Mr Esibaea worked as a volunteer and is now employed by Kokonut Pacific. He was engaged in construction works at the new ANZ Bank building in Honiara, and is currently working on projects at the Hideaway Resort.

Mr Esibaea plans to set up his own tiling business in the Solomon Islands and is eager to share the skills he learned at the Australia-Pacific Technical College. He encourages other Solomon Islanders to pursue training at the Australia-Pacific Technical College if they would like to gain practical skills.



MIND OVER MATTER PAVES BRIGHTER FUTURE



“At the Australia-Pacific Technical College, I learned how to do different ways of tiling, surface preparing and working in an organised and efficient manner. Before my training, I did not know how to do all these things”

Mr Francis Maneari

A fellow student with a similar disability, Certificate III in Wall and Floor Tiling graduate, Mr Francis Maneari developed a desire to help people with disabilities realise their own dreams.

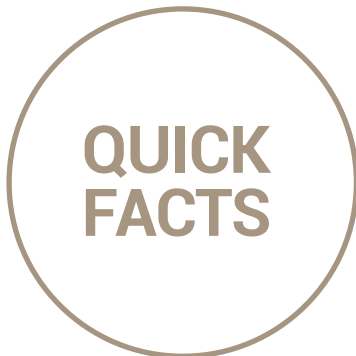
Reflecting on his learning experience at the Australia-Pacific Technical College, Mr Maneari said he learned many new skills.

“At the Australia-Pacific Technical College, I learned how to do different ways of tiling, surface preparing and working in an organised and efficient manner. Before my training, I did not know how to do all these things.”

Mr Maneari is pursuing further studies where he is learning basic accounting to broaden his knowledge on doing business.

He appreciates the training he received at the Australia-Pacific Technical College and the supportive role of trainers who motivated him to pursue further studies to help people with disabilities.

Mr Maneari, who has worked as a carpenter and tiler, said his disability does not deter him from his dream of becoming a teacher to help people with disabilities improve in their studies and have a brighter future.



189
Pacific Islanders

with Certificate III in
Wall and Floor Tiling
qualification

14
**Solomon Islands
Nationals**

with Certificate III in
Wall and Floor Tiling
qualification



Mr Nolan Parairua receives the prestigious Queen's Young Leader Award presented by Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II

YOUTH ADVOCATE RECEIVES NATIONAL AND INTERNATIONAL ACCOLADE

Australia-Pacific Technical College graduate, Mr Nolan Parairua is an accomplished individual who has received national and international accolades for his efforts in bringing change in the lives of young Solomon Islanders.

As a dedicated youth worker, Mr Parairua joined Oxfam International as a volunteer for three years, where he learned how to work with communities and youth groups.

In 2010, Mr Parairua established the Solomon Islands Youth Strive Investors for Liberty Association to work with young Solomon Islanders and help them manage social and economic challenges.

In 2012, Mr Parairua took up the opportunity to study Certificate IV in Youth Work at the Australia-Pacific Technical College. He saw this as an opportunity to advance his knowledge and skills to help local youth.

Since graduating, Mr Parairua has applied the skills he gained to help youth who are suffering from substance abuse and other health and personal safety issues.

His Association has received positive feedback from communities and this has led to invitations from other communities that would like to be part of the information and awareness sessions that have been developed.

He attributes the knowledge he gained from the Australia-Pacific Technical College helped him to be able to create the vision, mission and strategy for his Association.

He shares the information and knowledge he acquired about forming associations with other communities looking to do the same.

A year after completing his studies at the Australia-Pacific Technical College, Mr Parairua was bestowed with the Solomon Islands National Youth Award. This award is given to young people who have contributed and made an impact within the community.

A key highlight in Mr Parairua's career was in 2016 when he was recognised by Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II, through the Queen's Young Leader's Award. He was one of 60 youth leaders from across the British Commonwealth and the only Solomon Islander. The award was for his outstanding work towards advancing the interests and development of youth.

"The award was inspirational and touching because from all around the Commonwealth came together to share their thoughts on what they do in our own countries."

Mr Parairua has set his sight on registering youth groups in places such as Malaita where he says the youth population count has increased significantly.

At present, he works with 50 community groups through his Association, helping them to register so they can seek support in the form of project funding from government and other donors.

His aim is to occupy youth with activities that contribute positively to the community and empower them to be responsible members of society who can help their communities and themselves. He has registered 10 youth groups in the eastern and western islands, and his latest project is working with youth in Guadalcanal.

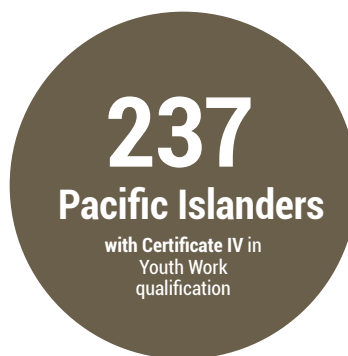
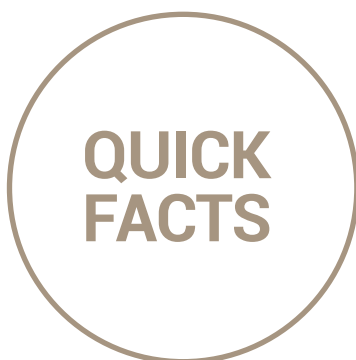
Mr Parairua's devotion to youth work and development continues to earn him international recognition.

In September 2016, he met and shared experiences with youth leaders from other countries at the 'One Young World' program held in Canada.

He was also very delighted to meet high ranking officials, including the former Secretary-General of the United Nations, Mr Kofi Annan.

Looking back at his achievements, Mr Parairua is a great example to youth, demonstrating they can realise and create opportunities and not wait for them to happen. He has come a long way since dropping out of school in Form Six.

"I am proud to be one of the first in the Solomon Islands to get the Certificate IV in Youth Work at Australia-Pacific Technical College."





“ It helped broaden my management knowledge and skills which enabled me to perform efficiently in my role at my workplace ”

Mr Douglas Doli



BUILDING LEADERS OF TOMORROW

Solomon Islands is a developing country with a need for a highly skilled and competitive workforce that can meet the demands of a wide range of industries. This is where the Australia-Pacific Technical College is stepping in to provide Solomon Islands nationals the opportunity to undertake international training in professional fields and contribute to their country's development.

A new area in which the Australia-Pacific Technical College is making an impact is providing training to Solomon Islands nationals in leadership and management.

The Australia-Pacific Technical College started delivering the Certificate IV in Leadership and Management program at its Solomon Islands Campus in February 2016.

This has opened the door for employees across small and large enterprises to obtain an internationally recognised qualification.

Australia-Pacific Technical College's Country Manager in the Solomon Islands, Ms Pamela Morgan said that there is a real challenge in the workplaces to get middle-managers to effectively lead and manage a team to make any significant difference in their organisations in the Solomon Islands.

"The assumption is that if someone is good at their job, they naturally have leadership and management skills but that is untrue. It requires the right training for people to develop the skills they need to lead and manage in a professional work environment."

Training leaders in the workplace to empower and influence people

The Certificate IV in Leadership and Management program is helping address this need. The program is designed to reflect the role of individuals working as developing and emerging leaders and managers in a range of enterprise and industry contexts.

“As a result of the training, there has been good feedback from the industry about employees who undertook the Certificate IV in Leadership and Management, putting their new skills into practice at the organisations they work for,” Ms Morgan said.

Mr Douglas Doli, who works at Kokonut Pacific Solomon Islands, is one of the graduates of the Certificate IV in Leadership and Management program.

He started his career in Kokonut Pacific's Warehouse Department straight after leaving school and worked his way up to the position of

a warehouse department supervisor, managing a team of five people.

“After completing the program, I came back to my workplace and identified things that I could improve in our operations, such as completing the workflow, better managing my team members and having proper time management to help my co-workers continue as part of the organisation.”

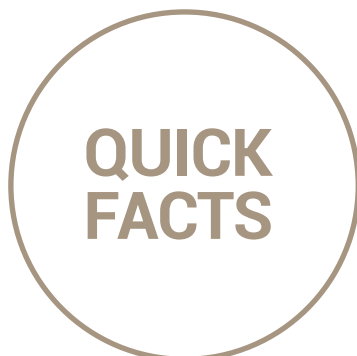
“It helped broaden my management knowledge and skills which enabled me to perform efficiently in my role at my workplace,” Mr Doli added.

Mr Doli believes that as a manager, it is critical to be trained to have the necessary leadership and management skills. “It is important because these skills help us at our workplaces to be a good leader who is able to make sound decisions and have the skills to manage successful organisations.”



“ **The assumption is that if someone is good at their job, they naturally have leadership and management skills but that is untrue. It requires the right training for people to develop the skills they need to lead and manage in a professional work environment** ”

Ms Pamela Morgan



CHANGE OF LEADERSHIP STYLE BOOSTS MORALE



“ The most important thing that I learned from the training was to listen to what my team members have to say because they are actually the ones who are doing the work. It has taught me to listen more than to try and tell my staff what to do ”

Ms Lyndel Silas

For another graduate of the Certificate IV in Leadership and Management program and an employee of the state-owned enterprise, Solomon Power, Ms Lyndel Silas, the training has made a difference to her leadership style.

Ms Silas explained that before her training, the approach she took to manage her team was very upfront and rigid. However, that changed after she acquired new knowledge from the Australia-Pacific Technical College.

“The most important thing that I learned from the training was to listen to what my team members have to say because they are actually the ones who are doing the work. It has taught me to listen more than to try and tell my staff what to do,” she said.

Ms Silas explained that the change in her leadership style has encouraged her team to express themselves and take ownership of their work. She noticed instant changes in their attitude towards their work.

“Now my staff feel that they can do the job freely and make the decisions themselves and also feel valued. The environment is a bit more at ease,” she said.

“After I have given them the opportunity to think and make decisions themselves, I observed they were more relaxed and performed better because they had more confidence and knew they were doing the right thing and no one was there looking,” she added.

Ms Silas said as a female leader and manager with Solomon Power, the Certificate IV in Leadership and Management program boosted her confidence working in a male-dominated environment.

“It is important that as women, we help each other to improve and express the ideas that we have. I am certain that the knowledge we gained from the Australia-Pacific Technical College can help change a lot of these workplaces,” she added.



“ I learned new skills like time management and maintaining high standards and planning my work to be more productive ”

Mr Joseph Fira

BUILDING CAPACITY TO 'POWER' A NATION

The Australia-Pacific Technical College's collaboration with Solomon Power is helping build the capacity of tradespeople within the organisation.

Mr Joseph Fira is a direct beneficiary of the partnership between Australia-Pacific Technical College and Solomon Power. He graduated with a Certificate III in Engineering - Mechanical Trade (specialising in Diesel Fitting) qualification in 2016.

Mr Fira, a Senior Mechanical Fitter at Solomon Power since 2000, said his interest in diesel fitting started when he was a small kid.

"I used to go around watching some of the neighbours fixing their vehicles and that is when I started building my interest in this trade."

Mr Fira said his role includes carrying out service, maintenance of engines, and assisting his team leaders when they identify a problem.

His training enabled him to do his work more confidently.

"The Australia-Pacific Technical College provides a high level of training. I learned new skills like time management and maintaining high standards and planning my work to be more productive. I am more confident now working with engines," he said.

Mr Fira, who is from the Makira Province in the Solomon Islands, said his future plan is to start a business in his trade and his Australia-Pacific Technical College training will help him do that.

Solomon Power is the only electrical utility organisation in Solomon Islands, generating, transmitting and distributing electricity to about 15,000 customers.

The General Manager Corporate Services at Solomon Power, Ms Arieta Cama said the organisation realised that there was a need for employees to have the appropriate skill sets that met the demands of a changing work environment.

As a result, the collaboration with the Australia-Pacific Technical College came about and Solomon Power agreed to send three staff to be trained by the Australia-Pacific Technical College every semester since 2015.

Two electrical employees are sent to undertake the Certificate III in Electrotechnology Electrician in Papua New Guinea and one diesel fitting employee to undertake Certificate III in Engineering - Mechanical Trade (specialising in Diesel Fitting) program in Fiji.

Ms Cama believes the Australia-Pacific Technical College training has a significant impact in how they run their business at Solomon Power.

"We have people who have been through Australia-Pacific Technical College programs and returned with new skills that they bring to the organisation. Not only do they articulate better in the way they hold themselves but the significant impact they are having on their colleagues," she said.

"They are passing on their skills to others. Because of this we are not only sending staff to study technical programs, we have also started sending people for leadership development programs as well," she added.

Australia-Pacific Technical College's Country Manager in the Solomon Islands, Ms Pamela Morgan said through the collaboration, the Australia-Pacific Technical College is able to assist Solomon Power to develop its workforce as well as modernise the whole organisation.



“ We have people who have been through Australia-Pacific Technical College programs and returned with new skills that they bring to the organisation. Not only do they articulate better in the way they hold themselves but the significant impact they are having on their colleagues ”

Ms Arieta Cama

“ Last year, we had a pathway for our students from Certificate II in Life Skills who went on to do a Certificate II in Hospitality offered by Australia-Pacific Technical College, which was not available for students before ”

Father Moise



PARTNERING FOR TRAINING EXCELLENCE

Ensuring the delivery of quality training to Solomon Islands nationals in the area of technical and vocational education is the cornerstone of the partnership between the Australia-Pacific Technical College and Don Bosco Technical Institute in Henderson.

The two institutions have a long-standing relationship that has focused not only on developing the capacity of Don Bosco Technical Institute's staff and its facilities, but also its curriculum in the areas of automotive, carpentry and more recently, hospitality.

Don Bosco Technical Institute Principal, Father Moise believes the partnership is now contributing towards enhanced pathways for students of the institution as those who have undertaken a certificate II level course are able to pursue higher qualifications.

In 2016, the two institutions jointly delivered the Certificate II in Hospitality to 22 workers of the hospitality industry in the Solomon Islands. The students were trained at the newly refurbished Isles Café.

“Last year, we had a pathway for our students from Certificate II in Life Skills who went on to do Certificate II in Hospitality offered by the Australia-Pacific Technical College, which was not available to students before,” Father Moise said.

“The hospitality facility has been upgraded by the Australia-Pacific Technical College to an Australian standard so when people come around, they see the state-of-the-art facility which cannot be found anywhere else.”

Father Moise highlighted that another reason the Don Bosco Technical Institute is happy about collaborating with the Australia-Pacific Technical College is because it provides the opportunity for its staff to upgrade their qualification.

"For most of our local teachers who have graduated from the Australia-Pacific Technical College, it gives them a sense of pride because they have Australian qualifications and are able to demonstrate their skills and experience in the areas in which they teach," he said.

Staff capacity development is an area in which Don Bosco Technical Institute would continue to develop with the Australia-Pacific Technical College, said Father Moise.

"We are offering facilities to Australia-Pacific Technical College and they are helping us so much financially as well as materially," he explained.

Australia-Pacific Technical College's Country Manager in the Solomon Islands, Ms Pamela Morgan said the partnership with Don Bosco Technical Institute has largely been through their staff, enhanced facilities and equipment, and also their students.

The Australia-Pacific Technical College also delivers Certificate III in Carpentry from the Australia-Pacific Technical College Skills Barn at Don Bosco Technical Institute.

WHAT ARE THEY SAYING?

Insights from Australia-Pacific Technical College's graduates



"I found out about the Australia-Pacific Technical College from some of my colleagues. I wanted to upskill myself, to learn more about the hospitality sector and gain more knowledge which will help me in the future. My trainers were very helpful. I learned how to operate a coffee machine, how to make beds, and communicate with customers. Learning at the Australia-Pacific Technical College has helped me understand about hospitality better." **Ms Kartini Khalid**, Certificate II in Hospitality



"I joined the Australia-Pacific Technical College as I wanted to know more about the hospitality industry and the services I can offer as a professional worker. The Australia-Pacific Technical College has a high standard of training and I feel more confident to go out and join the workplace." **Ms Ruth Marjorie**, Certificate II in Hospitality



“ We must be strong and put in more effort in our work and studies. It is important that more women enter into trades and work alongside men ”

Ms Rose Koreia



CAREERS OPEN FOR WOMEN IN TRADE

With ongoing development and infrastructure projects, skilled tradespeople are in demand in the Solomon Islands. The door of opportunity is open to women to take up trades careers, especially in areas that have been traditionally dominated by men.

The Australia-Pacific Technical College has been promoting women in trades which has helped graduates like Ms Rose Koreia to take on the challenge of stepping into trades.

Her career in trade started when she took an electrical course at the Solomon Islands National University before moving on to complete her apprenticeship at the Solomon Islands Ports Authority in 2009. After completing her apprenticeship, she was offered full-time employment at the Solomon Islands Ports Authority.

Recognising the potential that Ms Koreia had, her employer provided her with an opportunity to further upskill her capabilities by supporting her to undertake the Certificate III in Electrotechnology Electrician qualification at the Australia-Pacific Technical College in 2016.

"I went to the Australia-Pacific Technical College because I wanted to upgrade my knowledge and skills. I knew that an Australia-Pacific Technical College qualification is internationally recognised so it was an opportunity I did not want to miss," she said.



Providing equal opportunity
for women to excel in
trades careers

Other than the electrical skills she developed during her training, she also learned about safety-related work procedures as well as communication and computer skills that are helping her in her workplace.

Since returning from her training, Ms Koreia has been working as an assistant electrician with the Solomon Islands Ports Authority. She is responsible for installing, repairing and maintaining electrical systems and equipment for the Solomon Islands Ports Authority and its clients.

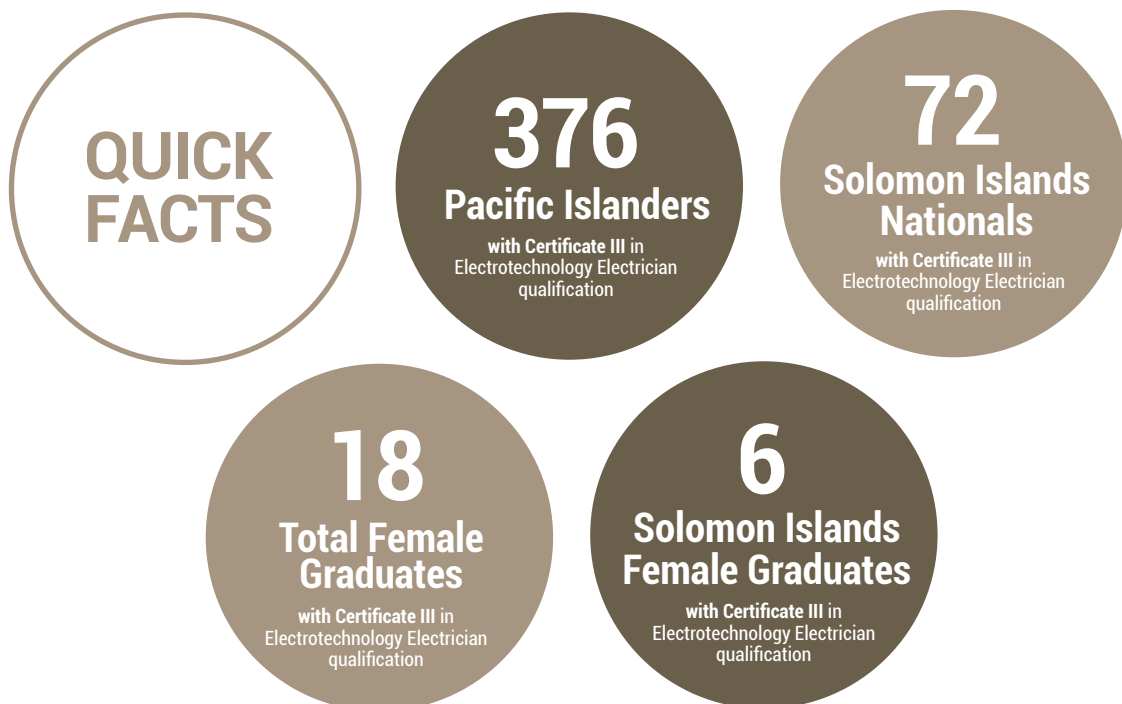
Ms Koreia is the only woman employee in the engineering department at the Solomon Islands Ports Authority.

"I have been working and studying with mostly males in the classroom and at work so I did not find it a huge challenge to work with men. I just concentrate on my work and my male workmates help me and we respect each other," she said.

Ms Koreia has some advice for other women who may be interested in trades.

"We must be strong and put in more effort in our work and studies. It is important that more women enter into trades and work alongside men."

Ms Koreia's plan is to study further in the future. "I am happy that I went through the Australia-Pacific Technical College as it was a gateway for me so that I can go for more study opportunities."



“ My Australia-Pacific Technical College training was intensive but fun at the same time. It was at an Australian standard ”

Ms Nancy Maetao



A PASSION FOR PLUMBING

Just like Ms Koreaia, more Solomon Islands women are taking up training opportunities in trades provided by the Australia-Pacific Technical College. One such example is Ms Nancy Maetao, a qualified industrial arts teacher who never gave up on her ambition of becoming a plumber.

Her interest in plumbing goes back to her childhood days, observing her uncle who was a plumber. She said living in the village helped her to pick up basic plumbing skills as women who stay at home, often attend to most plumbing works like fixing water leaks or broken pipes.

She later decided to give up her job as a teacher to expand her plumbing skills because she could utilise these skills to help women in her community.

She was motivated to apply to the Australia-Pacific Technical College where she completed Certificate III in Plumbing. She now works for the Solomon Islands Water Authority.

Ms Maetao believes she has gained invaluable trade skills from her training at the Australia-Pacific Technical College that has built her confidence as a plumber.

Learning about the types and sizes of pipe fittings has been useful for Ms Maetao at her job at the Solomon Islands Water Authority.

“My Australia-Pacific Technical College training was intensive but fun at the same time. It was at an Australian standard. We all shared our different skills to help each other out,” she added.

Being in a class full of males, did not discourage Ms Maetao. She said her male classmates were supportive and helped her during the training.

Ms Maetao says she enjoys being a plumber despite it being branded a “dirty job”. She encourages other women to take up trades like plumbing because it is a fulfilling career.



“ I gained a new confidence in myself after the training. I now have the confidence to work on my own and even supervise ”

Mr Ashley Ipo



WORK EXPERIENCE SHAPES TEACHER

An internationally recognised qualification helps improve employment prospects in local and international markets. This has been true for Australia-Pacific Technical College graduates like Mr Ashley Ipo, who has worked abroad and has now returned to his country to share his new experience and skills.



Mr Ipo was always eager to apply his skills and industry knowledge in the workforce. This determination paid off, when he landed a construction job in Nauru in 2016. The project involved assembling work for the construction of two commercial multi-storey buildings consisting of around 40 rooms.



Mr Ipo describes his work experience as “fruitful” enabling him to put into practice the skills he learned from the Certificate III in Carpentry program at the Australia-Pacific Technical College.

Graduates of the Certificate III in Carpentry program learn about construction work in residential and commercial building and develop the skills needed to work as qualified carpenters and joiners in the building and construction industry. Students learn everything from reading and interpreting plans and specifications, using carpentry tools and equipment to dismantling formwork and finishing concrete.

His learning journey began at the Solomon Islands National University. After his studies, Mr Ipo was on the lookout for further opportunities to continue his education in carpentry. In 2014, this search led Mr Ipo to the Australia-Pacific Technical College.

Practical training for improved learning

"I saw that the Australia-Pacific Technical College was delivering its training in a way that was very beneficial to students. Students were given close attention by the trainers, who were hands-on and always happy to assist in learning. I was closely mentored by teaching staff to achieve all my competencies," he said.

Reflecting on his own experience, Mr Ipo said that the key difference he found after his training at the Australia-Pacific Technical College was that he felt more equipped with the right knowledge and skills to go out to industry.

"I gained a new confidence in myself after the training. I had the confidence to work on my own and even supervise."

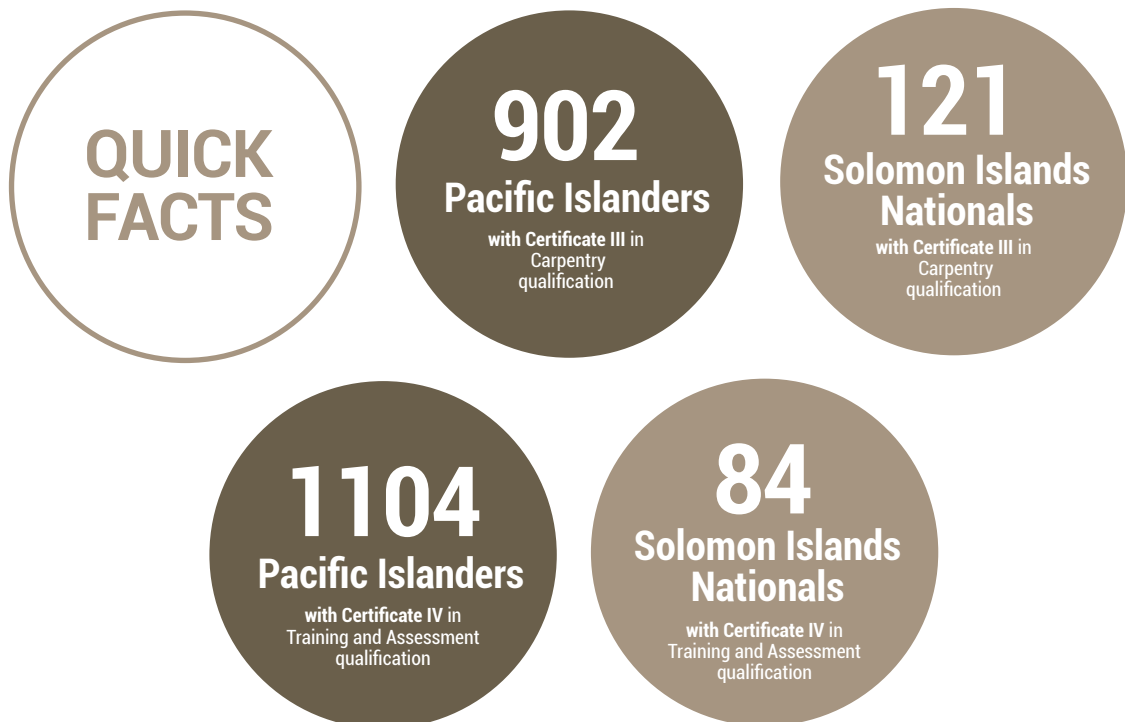
As part of the Certificate III in Carpentry program, Mr Ipo also learned about occupational health and safety requirements, policies and procedures in the construction industry.

Students like Mr Ipo understand and appreciate the emphasis placed on safety at the workplace, which he said is really important, as it can save lives.

Mr Ipo is now back home, helping upskill his fellow citizens at the College. His experience as a student helped him to transition into his new role as a tutor for the carpentry program.

"The skills I have learned have helped me a lot in my role. The practical skills I learned have assisted me in teaching and assisting my students. As a tutor, my role includes assisting the trainer to supervise students in their practical work; provide support to students as well as delivering training to students in the presence of the trainer."

He believes that his learning days are definitely not over and has set his sights on one day becoming a trainer.



BRINGING LEARNING OPPORTUNITIES CLOSER TO HOME



“ Training is organised when there is a demand from the communities and is tailored to meet their needs ”

Mr Cherry Galokepoto

Australia-Pacific Technical College graduate Mr Cherry Galokepoto has been leading efforts to bring learning and training opportunities to rural communities to encourage positive skills development in the Choiseul Province in Solomon Islands.

Mr Galokepoto is the current President and Executive Chairman of the Solomon Islands Association of Vocational Rural Training Centres.¹

Since graduating with Certificate IV in Training and Assessment in 2014, he was motivated to support his community through a learning centre for the younger generation to value and treasure.

This led him to start the Virulata Community Learning Centre to train and upskill communities with skillsets they can use to assist them in their daily living.

Mr Galokepoto said that while the Solomon Islands Association of Vocational Rural Training Centres offers a more structured and formal curriculum, the Virulata Community Learning Centre takes on a less formal approach.

“Training is organised when there is a demand from the communities and is tailored to meet their needs.”

Mr Galokepoto said that his learning centre is helping fill the need for community members who find it too far and expensive to travel to Honiara to take up studies. The learning centre caters for day students who come from nearby local villages and the training runs for four to five hours.

“If the villagers decide they want to learn sewing then we offer a sewing program. We identify the resource people and they are the ones who organise and deliver the training,” he said.

Reflecting on his own experience, Mr Galokepoto said that the training he received at the Australia-Pacific Technical College enabled him to prepare, assess and evaluate program frameworks for five main programs that he runs at the centre. This, he said, has always been a skill he treasures and often uses in the running of his learning centre.

He encourages students to consider the Australia-Pacific Technical College for further studies.

¹ The organisation was formed and is administered by five churches in the Solomon Islands including the Roman Catholic Church, the United Church, the South Sea Evangelical Churches, the Anglican Church and the Seventh Day Adventist Church.



“ There are competitors out there for me but I am ready for them because I am a qualified person in my field especially being a graduate of the Australia-Pacific Technical College ”

Mr Clement Oikali



SKY'S THE LIMIT FOR ASPIRING ENTREPRENEUR

Like many others, Mr Clement Oikali is aspiring to be a successful entrepreneur in his small business venture called Rao Multi Traders. His dream was only realised after he completed his qualification from the Australia-Pacific Technical College.



Mr Oikali did not complete his high school education and is someone who has had to work his way up. After leaving school, he found a job at a refrigeration company in Honiara. This is where he picked up skills and technical knowledge about air conditioning and refrigeration systems, working alongside experienced technicians.



When the opportunity arose for him to study at the Australia-Pacific Technical College, Mr Oikali grabbed it with both hands. In 2016, he graduated with Certificate III in Air-conditioning and Refrigeration.

Mr Oikali explained that his training helped him gain a better understanding of the industry and the best practices of his trade, making him a confident worker. "Before when I did practical work, sometimes I had to try and guess the solution. After my training, I was able to better understand what I was doing. This gave me more confidence."

The skills he learned motivated him to start his own business. "I started my own business using the skills I have learned at the Australia-Pacific Technical College such as how to organise work, time management, how to manage money and also the technical skills which I now use in my everyday work."

Encouraging innovation and change through entrepreneurship

Going back to studies was not easy for Mr Oikali who found it challenging at first.

The training, he said, was intensive as it covered a lot of topics and included many assignments that had to be completed to fulfil the course requirement.

He acknowledges the level of support he received as a student from the trainers and staff at the Australia-Pacific Technical College and said the trainers are masters in their courses.

One of the reasons, Mr Oikali explained that he always wanted to run a business is because it will enable him to help people who need jobs.

While Mr Oikali is currently managing his business on his own, in the near future, he hopes to employ others.

He said that the market for air-conditioning and refrigeration service providers in the Solomon Islands is very competitive given the high demand for these services but he is happily self-employed.

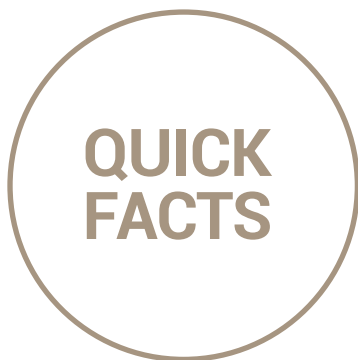
"Working for others is sometimes quite difficult. Sometimes we experience different kinds of things, sometimes we are not satisfied with some of the things such as income. I decided to run my own business and experience what it is like to do things for yourself and I wanted to contribute to this country's economy."

Studying at the Australia-Pacific Technical College grew his self-confidence to start his own business and he is working to expand his clientele base.

"There are competitors out there for me but I am ready for them because I am a qualified person in my field especially being a graduate of the Australia-Pacific Technical College."

Mr Oikali encourages other individuals to take on entrepreneurship despite the initial establishment challenges.

He believes entrepreneurs should pursue further studies as he did with the Australia-Pacific Technical College, as it will help them in their business.



TWO-TIME GRADUATE BECOMES EARLY CHILDHOOD CHAMPION



“ My qualifications really helped me a lot. It motivated me and made a difference in my career. After my training, I had the confidence to talk and interact with others and to be better in my work. ”

Ms Grace Piko

The Australia-Pacific Technical College is helping achieve more inclusive learning outcomes for children through quality and well-trained early childhood education and care teachers.

Graduates like Ms Grace Piko, who have a passion for improving the quality of early childhood education in the Solomon Islands, are making a difference.

She is the current President of the Honiara Early Childhood Association and also the Director of Faith Christian Academy School.

Her childhood upbringing influenced her decision to pursue a career in early childhood education and care.

Being the eldest sibling, her primary school education ended prematurely as she had to stay home and care of her younger siblings. This experience developed her passion to take care of children.

Today, Ms Piko is a two-time graduate of the Australia-Pacific Technical College, having successfully completed her Certificate III in

Children's Services and Diploma of Children's Services.

"My qualifications really helped me a lot. It motivated me and made a difference in my career. After my training, I had the confidence to talk and interact with others and to be better in my work," she said.

From her training, she learned to teach and prepare a healthy environment for children which meant caring for their hygiene and overall wellbeing. She introduced healthy habit initiatives in her kindergarten and has been influential in implementing the same in other early childhood centres.

During her studies, Ms Piko improved her communication skills, especially with adults in her working group and in the professional bodies she is a member of.

She encourages other Solomon Islands women and men in the field of early childhood education to pursue their formal training with the Australia-Pacific Technical College.

TRAINING ENABLES BETTER SKILLED TEACHERS

The Certificate III in Early Childhood Education and Care program at the Australia-Pacific Technical College provides learning opportunities for individuals seeking to pursue a career as early childhood educators in kindergartens, as pre-school assistants, village or mobile playgroup coordinators, nannies and even resort and holiday program workers.

Early Childhood Education Coordinator for the Central and Eastern Malaita province with the Ministry of Education and Human Resource Development in the Solomon Islands, Mr Duddley Siufimae acknowledges the importance of early childhood education programs and the benefits it brings to communities.

He acknowledges the role of the Australia-Pacific Technical College in delivering training to teachers in the rural communities. One of the biggest differences he notices with these

teachers is how quickly they apply their new skills to their teaching methods.

“Early childhood education programs are very important as the benefits to our communities are endless. A key aspect we have learned from the Australia-Pacific Technical College is the ‘care’ element in early childhood education.”

“We can see that it is really benefitting our children in the communities in the way that the Australia-Pacific Technical College has helped us with the training,” he added.

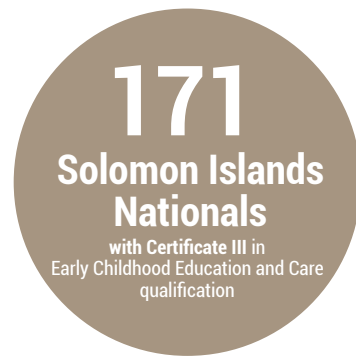
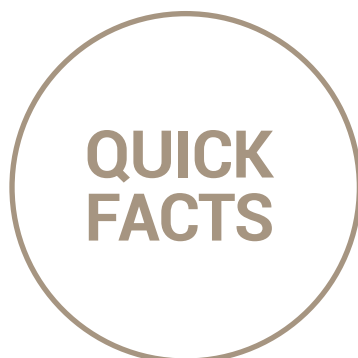
Mr Siufimae said while many primary schools are yet to introduce early childhood education, other schools have leaped ahead and introduced early childhood education to help young boys and girls prepare for primary education.

He believes that the demand for more early childhood educators is positive for those seeking to pursue a career in this field.



“ We can see that it is really benefitting our children in the communities in the way that the Australia-Pacific Technical College has helped us with the training ”

Mr Duddley Siufimae



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