



MEDIA RELEASE

Visit by the Governor-General of the Solomon Islands

This week's visit to Norfolk Island by the Governor-General of the Solomon Islands marked a new high point in the historic relationship between the people of the two communities. Sir Nathaniel Waena indicated that he had greatly enjoyed his visit, during which he was able to renew his family links with Norfolk Island. The Speaker of the Legislative Assembly, David Buffett, said that he was delighted that it had been so successful.

Sir Nathaniel and Lady Waena were able to meet many local people at a range of formal and informal events, and to explore some of Norfolk Island's colourful history and magnificent scenery.

Sir Nathaniel and his party arrived late in the afternoon of Sunday 22nd May, and attended a celebration service at the St Barnabas Chapel that evening. The event was of special significance because Sir Nathaniel's grandfather attended the College of St Barnabas. The Governor General read one of the Scripture lessons and later in the service gave a moving address to the large congregation in which he acknowledged the special role of the Melanesian Mission in promoting education and developing Christian values in the Solomon Islands. He brought greetings from the people of the Solomon Islands to the whole Norfolk Island community and welcomed the ongoing relationship, which he believed to be soundly based on Christian principles.

There were a number of very successful events during the Governor-General's visit, many of them centering on the history of Norfolk Island, the role of the Melanesian Mission and Sir Nathaniel's family ties with the island. These included visits to the Kingston and Arthur's Vale Historic Area and the Norfolk Island Museums, as well as opportunities to inspect historic photographs, artefacts and documents. Sir Nathaniel and Lady Waena also enjoyed a picnic with local families, a visit to Cyclorama and some free time to visit shops and scenic attractions.

The Governor-General and Lady Waena were guests of His Honour the Administrator during their stay, and met a large number of community leaders at a reception at Government House on Monday 23rd May. Sir Nathaniel thanked all islanders for their

warm welcome and hospitality, and again stressed the strong historic and religious ties between the Solomon Islands and Norfolk Island. He also thanked those nations, especially Australia, which were providing tangible support and financial aid to help the Solomon Islands to recover from the social and financial crisis which it had suffered for several years.

At the Government House reception, Sir Nathaniel presented the Administrator with a highly prized neck ornament made of fine shells known in the Solomon Islands as a *maiufu* (literally “a net of diamond shape”).

The Governor-General departed late on Tuesday 24th May, taking with him some gifts from Norfolk Island and the best wishes of our community to the people of the Solomon Islands.

David E Buffett
Speaker

27th May 2005