

## SOLOMON ISLANDS BROADCASTING CORPORATION

Thanks to Martin Hadlow, Associate Professor at the University of Queensland, Brisbane, Australia, and Director of the Centre for Communication and Social Change of the university's School of Journalism & Communication, we have a First Day Cover issued in 1984 in connection with the 20th anniversary of the Asia-Pacific Broadcasting Union, and a booklet about the history of the Solomon Islands Broadcasting Corporation. Martin lived in Honiara, the Solomon Islands, from 1980 to 1984 when he was Head of Development and Training and advisor to the newly established corporation. Under aid funding from the Australian government, he was part of a small team helping the Solomon Islanders to rebuild public service broadcasting in the newly independent nation, primarily by converting the old government SIBS ("service") into the independent SIBC ("corporation").

The new Broadcasting House in Honiara was opened in 1982, and as part of the celebrations Martin wrote the official opening ceremony booklet, which appears below. It included some historical items that he had uncovered along the way. In fact, the information he gathered about the World War II AFRS stations on Guadalcanal, New Georgia, etc. led him to the book he is now writing on the subject.

When, in 1984, the Asia-Pacific Broadcasting Union, of which the SIBC was a member, marked its 20th anniversary, Martin convinced the local philatelic authorities to consider a First Day Cover and some postage stamps to celebrate the event. That cover appears below. The Philatelic Bureau of the Solomon Islands Post Office wanted the stamps to cover "communication through sound," from old to modern. Thus the stamps include one depicting the traditional "talking drums" (the slit-drum used to send messages), shown at the top left of the cover. Martin provided the U.S. Army photograph of the original AFRS station on Guadalcanal ("Radio City"), which appears at the top right. At the lower left is the SIBC continuity studio, with announcer in place (also see p. 8 of the booklet), and at the lower right is a depiction of the new SIBC complex (also see p. 6 of the booklet).

Thanks, Martin, for this interesting historical material.

# OFFICIAL FIRST DAY COVER



# Solomon Islands

20th Anniversary of the Asia-Pacific Broadcasting Union

## Solomon Islands



Village Drums

12C 20th Anniversary of the Asia-Pacific Broadcasting Union

45C 20th Anniversary of the Asia-Pacific Broadcasting Union  
First Day of Issue - 2-7-84  
SOLOMON ISLANDS

## Solomon Islands



Radio City Guesthouse

## Solomon Islands



SIBC Studios Honara Glen

60C 20th Anniversary of the Asia-Pacific Broadcasting Union

\$1 20th Anniversary of the Asia-Pacific Broadcasting Union  
First Day of Issue - 2-7-84  
SOLOMON ISLANDS

## Solomon Islands

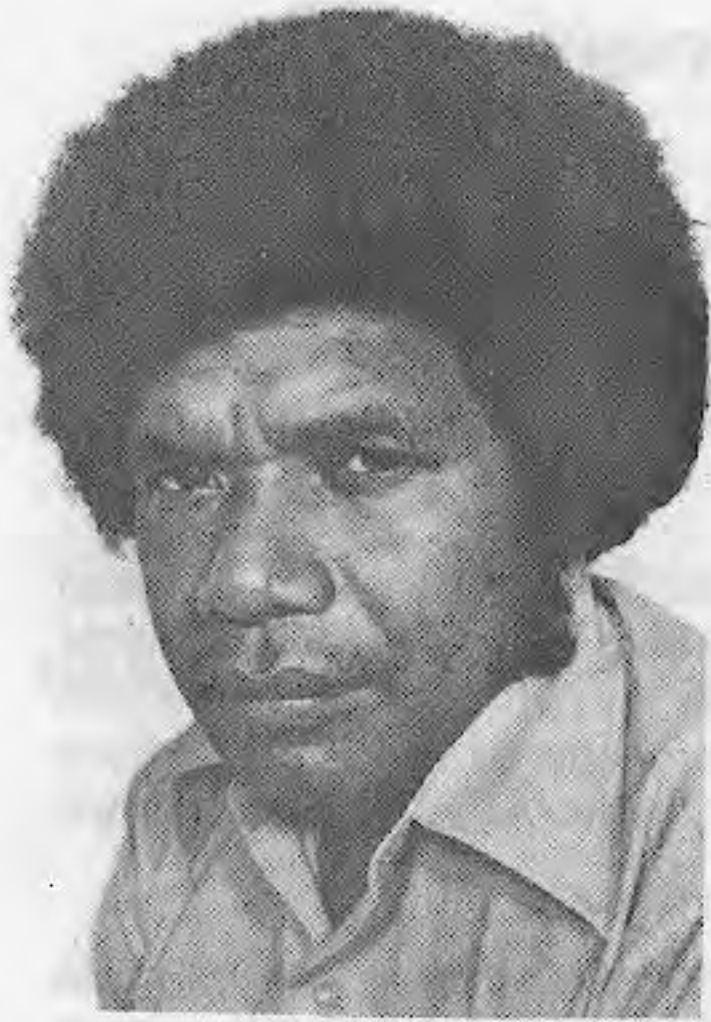


SIBC Broadcasting House

# **Solomon Islands Broadcasting Corporation**



**Broadcasting House,  
Rove, Honiara.  
Official Opening  
7th August, 1982**



**A MESSAGE FROM THE PRIME MINISTER,  
THE HON. S.S. MAMALONI MP:**


**Congratulations SIBC, Radio Happy Isles.**

One of the decisions I took during my time as the first Chief Minister of our country in 1975 was to lay the groundwork for the Broadcasting Service to become a statutory body. This came into fruition on January 1st 1977 after legislation was passed in 1976, under Sir Peter Kenilorea's administration.

The difficulties experienced by my administration at the time were considerable. The advice of the colonial bureaucrats of the day were hardly progressive, and even my drafting instructions to the Legal Department were altered. But we persevered, and I am happy to have paved the way for what has become a very successful broadcast operation.

The facilities the SIBC has today including the beautiful studios complex at Rove, are a happy combination of resolve by our citizens and financial assistance from the Australian Government, for which we are grateful.

Our national broadcaster is meant to be a source of enlightenment and national unity. Maintain this and our country will prosper and progress.

  
S.S. Mamaloni

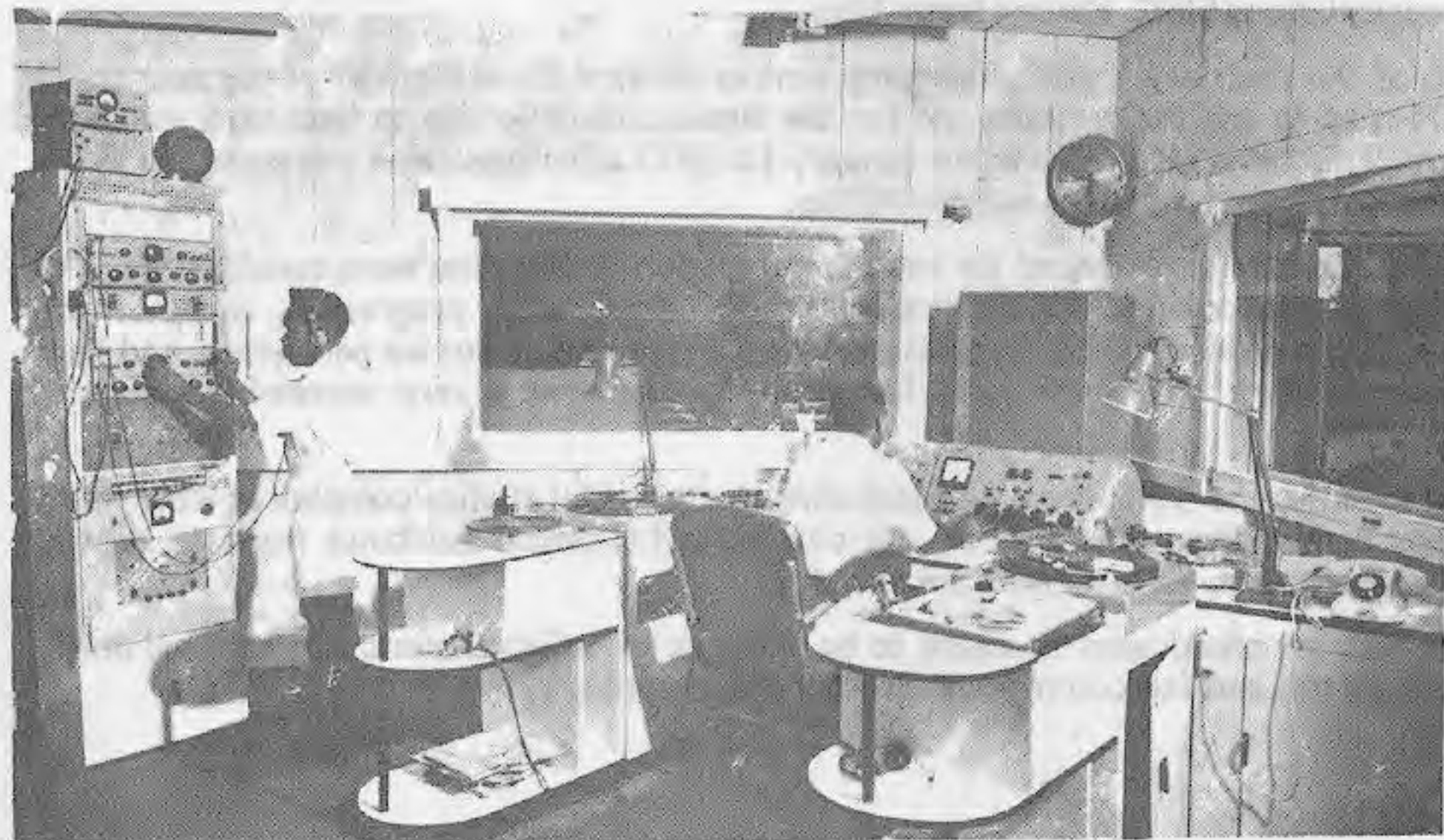
BROADCASTING IN SOLOMON ISLANDS - A BRIEF HISTORY

THE EARLY DAYS.....

When radio station WVUQ crackled into life in June, 1944 it made history. WVUQ was based on Guadalcanal and its first transmission brought radio broadcasting to Solomon Islands. The pioneering WVUQ was soon followed by WVTJ, a broadcasting station established a few months later at Munda on New Georgia.

Both WVUQ and WVTJ were operated by the American military as part of the Armed Forces Radio Service (AFRS). The two stations were primarily intended to present news, music and sporting programmes from home for the great number of American military personnel serving in the Solomon Islands theatre of operations. Both stations were members of the loosely formed grouping of South Pacific AFRS outlets known appropriately as the "Mosquito Network".

In the years immediately following the Second World War, a small group of radio operators and technicians at the Government owned wireless and telegraph station in Honiara began a rudimentary radio broadcasting service for Solomon Islands listeners. The station broadcast a half hour programme of news and music at 9.30 every Sunday morning. The service, operated on a voluntary basis, was intended mainly for expatriate listeners, or those with a good grasp of the English language. With a wireless licence fee of £1.0.0d a year, the Colonial Government was able to report in 1948 that 57 licensed listeners existed in the British Solomon Islands Protectorate.



SIBS main studio 1963. L. Susuta (l) and P. Beni (r). Both are still with the SIBC.

By late 1948, the value of the fledgling broadcasting service was recognised when part of a £1,400.0.0d Colonial Development and Welfare Scheme grant was allocated for the purpose of basic transmitting and studio equipment. The weekly half hour broadcast, acknowledged by Government authorities as "most useful as a means of keeping residents of the territory in touch with local developments", continued for some years and became the cornerstone in the development of an expanded radio system in the country.



His Excellency the Governor-General Sir Baddeley Devesi GCMG

PLAQUE AT BROADCASTING HOUSE

"SIBC Studios, Rove.  
A gift from the Government and people of Australia  
to the Government and people of Solomon Islands.

Officially opened by His Excellency the Governor-General of  
Solomon Islands, Sir Baddeley Devesi GCMG  
on 7 August 1982.

The plaque was unveiled by His Excellency the Australian High  
Commissioner to Solomon Islands.

"Happy is the man who finds wisdom, and the man  
who gets understanding."

Proverbs III : 13

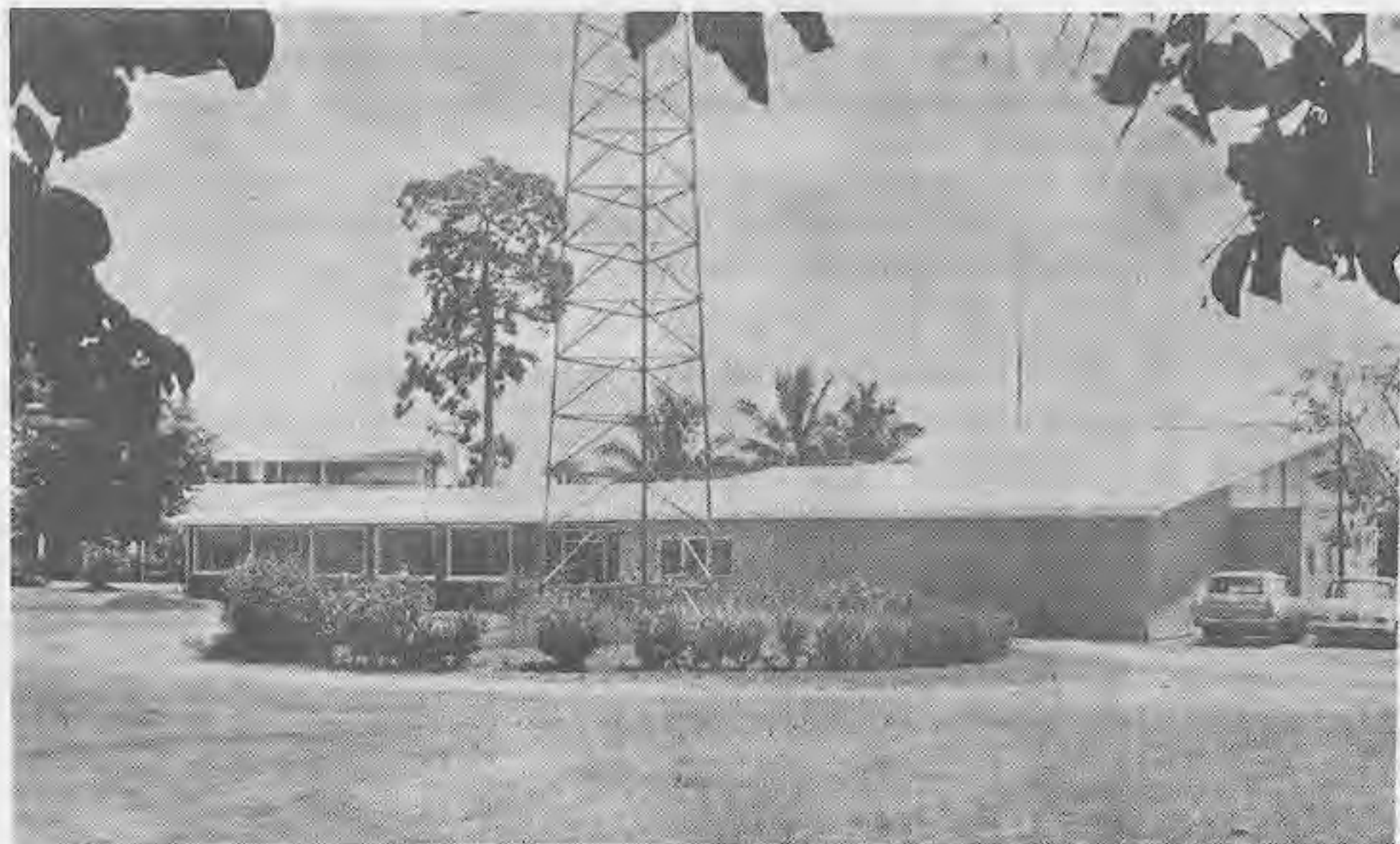


His Excellency the Australian High Commissioner to Solomon Islands  
Mr. Trevor Sofield

## THE SIBS IS FORMED.....

A major step forward took place in September, 1952 when the Solomon Islands Broadcasting Service was inaugurated. Station VQO operating from Honiara on 1030 kilocycles with 400 watts began regular broadcasts six days a week and soon had a loyal evening listening audience for its nightly 6.00 pm to 7.00 pm transmission. It was expected that VQO's low transmitting power would not give full coverage of the country, but SIBS officials were soon delightedly reporting that results had exceeded expectations and only parts of the Western Solomon Islands, southern Guadalcanal and San Cristobal were not able to receive the broadcasts. The nightly, except Sunday, programme line-up included local news, weather and shipping information, sports commentaries, talks and locally recorded music.

As the SIBS developed, a wider listening audience began to be attracted, particularly through extended Wednesday evening broadcasts designed specifically for Solomon Islanders. In a further effort to boost coverage, experimental shortwave transmissions were commenced on Sunday mornings to present news broadcasts to listeners in remote parts of the island chain. By October, 1955 these experimental transmissions had become a regular part of the daily schedule and VQO2 operating with 100 watts on 5960 kilocycles was simultaneously carrying the mediumwave signal from Honiara.



SIBS Broadcasting House, 1972

A report on the future of broadcasting in Solomon Islands was commissioned by the British Secretary of State for the Colonies in the mid-1950's and the results of the study became evident before the decade was out. This watershed report called for the appointment of a small broadcasting staff, the installation of powerful transmitters and the construction of a modern, well equipped studio building. Despite delays in the arrival of equipment, the studio building was completed and the transmitting equipment commissioned within the contract period at a cost of £43,000.0.0d. Broadcasting hours were significantly increased, Pijin news broadcasts extended and a multitude of new rural, educational and medical programmes were produced. On the 5th January, 1959 the new studio complex in Mendana Avenue, Honiara was officially opened by the High Commissioner for the Western Pacific.

The upgrading of programme production facilities had a marked effect on the overall output of the SIBS, and by the early 1960's the Service was presenting regular Schools Broadcasts and had an Advisory Committee to assist in advising on general policy and programme content. The role of the SIBS and its importance to the country was becoming more apparent to Colonial authorities who wrote that "among the widely scattered islands of the Protectorate, with their uncertain and unscheduled shipping communications, broadcasting provides the only practicable channel for quick transmission of news and information".

"AROUND TOWN" and "DISTRICT STORY"  
Thursday at 7.30 Friday at 7.30

with  
BILL BENNETT



Broadcasting Officer, and now  
SIBC Chairman,  
Mr. W. Bennett MBE MM,  
at work in 1967.

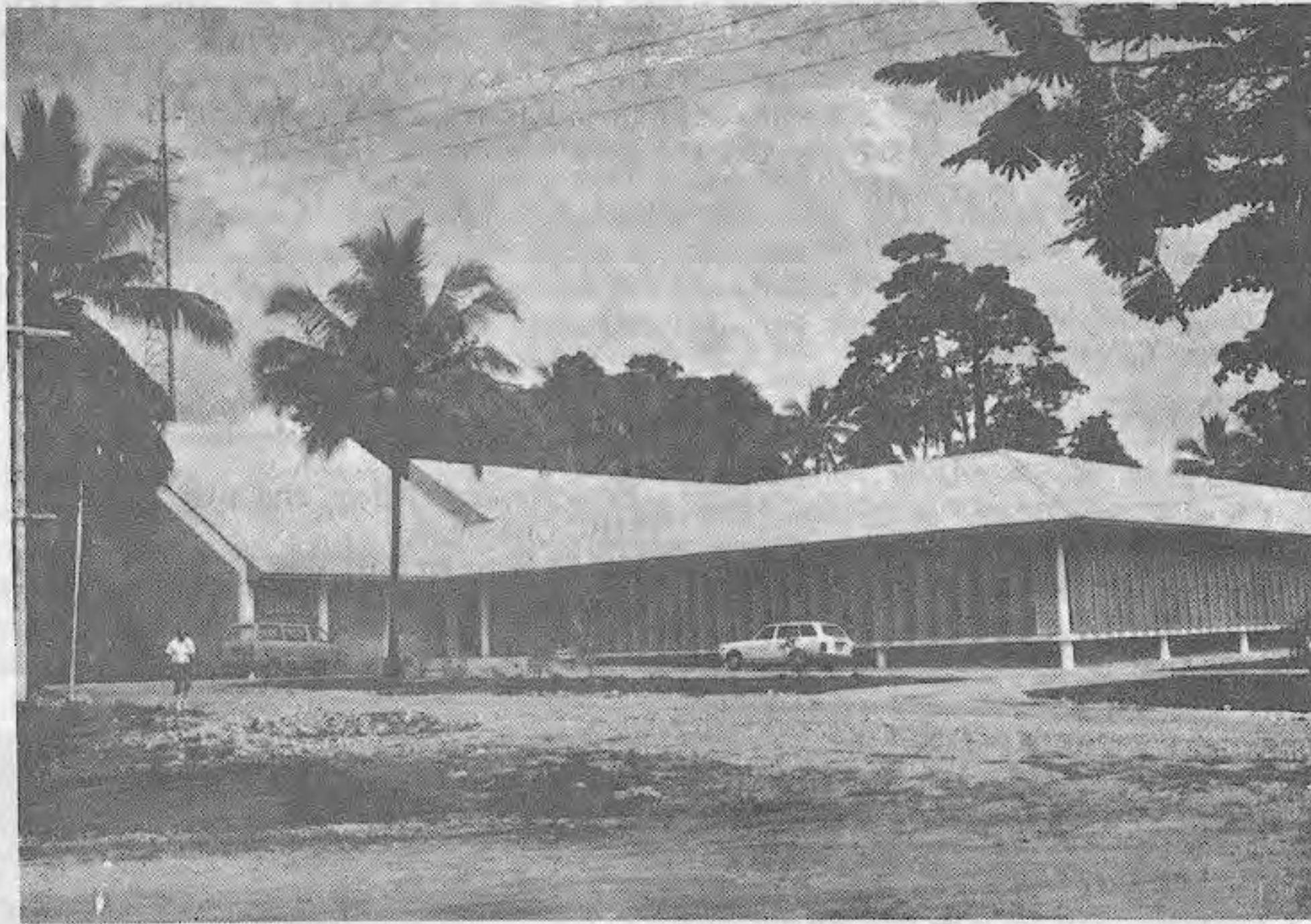
Each week I present two programmes that show the life of our community here in the Solomons. DISTRICT STORY features the people of the districts talking about their work usually in the form of a straight talk or interview in the studio. AROUND TOWN is often an outside broadcast featuring people and events around our capital town Honiara. Both programmes present stories of our Solomon Island people to the people. They are your programmes about you and your friends.  
BILL BENNETT

## BROADCASTING DEVELOPS.....

The 1960's saw the SIBS moving ahead swiftly in a number of significant areas. Commercial advertising was introduced, a full-time Schools Broadcasting Officer was appointed and special outside broadcasts of events of particular interest within the Protectorate began to find a place in the programme schedule. An enlarged programme commitment placed a heavy burden on available studio facilities and in 1965, only six years after the studios were opened, alterations and additions were underway to provide more office and studio space. Service messages, which today are such an important part of everyday broadcasting, also became a daily feature of the SIBS in the 1960's and a published programme guide called "Preview" with a circulation of about 3,500 copies was printed every two months. Staff training was intensified and more responsibility began to be handed over to Solomon Islands broadcasting officers.

As the SIBS moved into the 1970's, it had a staff establishment of 16 and was on the air for more than 77 hours each week. The breadth and scope of programming was becoming more varied and the Service was undertaking more ambitious programme assignments. For example, the visit by the Duke and Duchess of Kent was covered from six different outside broadcast points in the Honiara area, as well as live reports from Gizo, Auki and Kira Kira. Material on the visit was also fed to London where it was used that same day on the BBC "Radio Newsreel" programme.

The role of the SIBS was again recognised by the Colonial Government when, in its sixth Development Plan, it noted that "broadcasting should be a sounding board to the people so that they hear themselves reflected in the programmes and develop an awareness of themselves, of their problems and of each other". The Plan indicated the role of the SIBS as being "to maintain broadcasting as a public service and to make such improvements in the operation as will enable it to reflect more fully the life of the community as a whole with an especial regard to both academic and adult education".



**SIBC BROADCASTING HOUSE, ROVE, HONIARA.  
SOLOMON ISLANDS.**

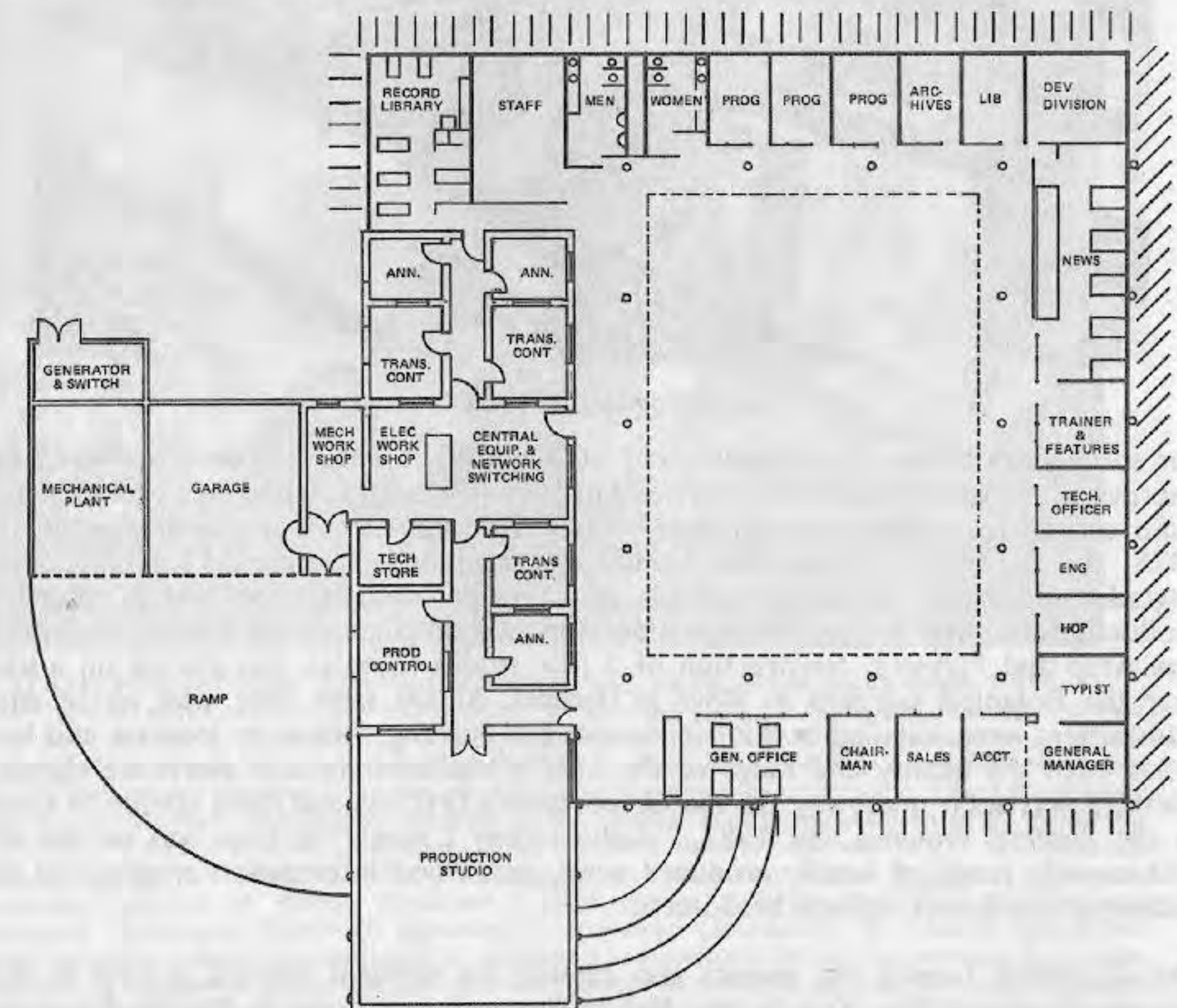
<b>PROJECT CONSULTANTS:</b>	<b>OVE ARUP AND PARTNERS</b>
<b>ARCHITECT:</b>	<b>ANCHER, MORTLOCK AND WOOLLEY</b>
<b>ELECTRICAL:</b>	<b>LINCOLNE SCOTT AND ASSOCIATES</b>
<b>STUDIO:</b>	<b>QUANTUM ELECTRONICS</b>
<b>SUPERVISING ARCHITECT:</b>	<b>CHARLES C. STEVENSON</b>
<b>CONTRACTOR:</b>	<b>CONCRETE INDUSTRIES LIMITED</b>

### FACTS ABOUT THE NEW SIBC BROADCASTING HOUSE COMPLEX

Total floor area, including courtyard	1790 sq m
Floor area of technical wing (including library)	440 sq m
Floor area of production studio	132 sq m
Floor area of service (plant, switch etc)	160 sq m
Floor area of offices and toilets, staff room etc	615 sq m
Courtyard	575 sq m
Compound area	7000 sq m
Total roof surface area	1950 sq m
Total roof volume (between ceiling and sheets)	3040 cu m
Highest point of roof (production studio)	11,5 m
Window louvres	2500
Sun shutters	132
Aluminium roof louvres	850 m

Three air conditioning units, one to technical area, one to production studio and P.A.B.X. and one standby.

35KVA standby generator for essential services.



**FLOOR PLAN OF THE NEW SIBC  
BROADCASTING HOUSE COMPLEX**

## A CORPORATION IS ESTABLISHED.....

In the rapidly changing political climate of the 1970's, radio broadcasting in Solomon Islands attracted increased Government attention. As a medium of mass communication, radio was seen as a valuable developmental tool and an instrument of change. To assist in broadcasting's evolution, the SIBS was moved out from under the wing of Government in a Broadcasting Ordinance passed by the Solomon Islands Legislative Assembly on the 22nd September, 1976. The Solomon Islands Broadcasting Corporation was born. As a corporate body the SIBC began effective operations in early 1977 and was given a wide range of responsibilities. It was charged, in part, with providing "adequate transmission of news and current affairs from within the Solomon Islands and in other parts of the world".



SIBC Studios 1982

For some years before the establishment of the SIBC, a need had been perceived to improve broadcasting studios and office facilities in Honiara, while extensions of the radio service to include regional stations had also come under active discussion. In 1978, the Australian Government committed aid funds of some A\$1.6 million to upgrade studio and technical facilities and provide administrative and programme production training and expertise. Under the overall guidance of project engineers Ove Arup and Partners, construction of a new studio complex was started on a site near the Botanical Gardens at Rove in Honiara. At the same time, new aerials and transmitters were installed at the Henderson transmitting station to increase and improve both the quality and range of the SIBC's mediumwave and shortwave signals. Planning was soon underway on the Corporation's first regional radio station at Gizo in the Western Province. By 1981, "Radio Happy Lagoon" at Gizo was on the air with a wide range of locally produced news, music and information programmes in additions to relays of national broadcasts.

The Australian funded aid project also catered for regional stations at Lata in the Temotu Province, Kira Kira in the Makira Province and Auki in Malaita Province. By the early part of 1982, staff housing and an office had been established at Lata, with full studio and aerial construction pending. An SIBC journalist was based at Auki, while land acquisition problems had delayed the Kira Kira operation.



SIBC BOARD, AUGUST 1982

Left to right: A.B. Wickham (SIBC General Manager & Secretary to the Board); F. Wa'ahero; E. Gagahe; Ms M. Abana; W. Bennett MBE MM (Chairman); G.B. Gatu MP; W. Tello; J. Fifi'i MBE. Inset: M. Sibisopere (Deputy Chairman).



SIBC STAFF, AUGUST 1982 (Photograph taken in main studio, Broadcasting House, Rove).

Left to right: (front) P. Beni (Library Officer); D. Linga (Announcer/Presenter); R. Taro (Supervisor Development Progs); T. Tebabaki (Supervisor Accounts); J. Simiu (Driver); N. Ladomea (Announcer/Presenter); L. Susuta (Supervisor Special Duties); G. Ngatulu (Secretary); J. Teakeni (Accounts Clerk); C. Rathamana (Trainee Engineer); K. Halukeni (Receptionist). (seated) J. Tora (Announcer/Presenter); C. Stennett (Announcer/Presenter); D. Takana (Technical Assistant); C. Horiwapu (Commercials Officer); G. Sulc (Engineer); T. Ne'e (Senior Announcer/Presenter); P. Mae (Deputy General Manager); A.B. Wickham (General Manager); G. Richardson (Chief Engineer); C. Manele (Announcer/Presenter); P. Kaunga (Producer Current Affairs); B. Basia (Supervisor Presentation); P. Orudiana (Supervisor Features). (standing) J. Konainao (Journalist); M. Hadlow (News/Programme Trainer); J. Kilua (Accountant); J. Vandaka (Commercials Officer/Announcer); A. Inomae (Journalist); G. Dapelebo (Journalist); G. Siapu (Programmes Officer); G. Tora (Trainee Engineer); W. Sisimia (Programmes Officer); J. Fa'ali (Cleaner). MISSING - Honiara: D. Angiki (News Editor); E. Halae (Accounts Clerk); L. Dagi (Cashier); D. Palapu (Programmes Officer). Gizo: T. Vildam (Station Manager Gizo); P. Roster (Announcer/Presenter); C. Toma (Cashier). Auki: S. Seke (Journalist). Lata: I. Pagetaoa (Programmes Officer).



## SIBC PROGRAMMES

As Solomon Islands national broadcasting network, the SIBC is acutely aware of its responsibilities to both urban and village listeners. The breadth and scope of its programming reflects the importance the SIBC places on its role as the nation's most effective medium of mass communication.

With the majority of its listeners living in non-urban areas, the SIBC is particularly conscious of the requirement to provide news, information and entertainment relevant to the needs of village dwellers. The thirst for local, national and international news is insatiable and the SIBC has geared its major staff resources in this area. Daily news bulletins encompassing stories from villages, provinces, the nation and the world are presented in two languages ten times a day.

To provide more background information to the daily news, two locally produced current affairs programmes are presented in the evening broadcasting schedule. *SOLOMON ISLANDS REPORT* (7.10 pm Monday-Friday) and *WORLD BLONG IUMI* (8.00 pm Monday-Friday) are backed up by two daily editions of the international current affairs programme *FOUR CORNERS* (9.10 am and 1.10 pm Monday-Friday). *INTERNATIONAL REPORT* (6.40 pm Monday-Friday) brings overseas news to Solomon Islands listeners, while a round-up of the week's international events is heard in the half-hour feature *WORLD NEWS IN REVIEW* (8.30 pm Saturday). Village news and views is presented twice a week in *CALLING PROVINCES* (9.30 pm Tuesday and Thursday).

Development broadcasting is another high priority programming area and a new staffing Division has been created to work in this field. Development is seen as involving whole families and villages, and not merely those people who work the land or fish the sea. In broadly based information programmes, the SIBC offers listeners throughout the nation an opportunity to share in the development knowledge held by Honiara based extension workers and experts in rural, fisheries and business fields. The development programmes also encourage a sharing of experiences amongst those involved in the development process.



Master Control Room and News/Current Affairs Section, Broadcasting House, Rove, 1982.

*FARMERS MAILBAG* (9.10 pm Tuesday) answers questions directly related to pasture, crop or stock improvement; *FISAMAN KONA* (6.40 pm Monday) talks about new fishing trends and techniques; *BISNIS TOKTOK* (8.15 pm Friday) addresses itself to the small scale entrepreneur; *MARKET REPORT* (8.30 pm Friday) presents market prices, currency exchange rates and other information; *THE SOLOMON ISLANDS*

*FARMER* (6.40 am Friday) is a dramatised serial about a man called Kirori and his efforts to develop his land; *DEVELOPMENT NEWS AND VIEWS* (6.40 am Thursday) talks of new innovations and technology of interest to Solomon Islanders; while the flagship of the development fleet, *FARMERS MAGAZINE* (8.15 pm Thursday) looks at all aspects of agriculture and farming.

These development features are backed up by snor "commercial style" spots promoting important aspects of daily life such as clean water supplies, medical care and so on. *WOMEN'S MAGAZINE* (8.15 pm Tuesday) caters for the many and varied interests of women throughout the nation; while the *RADIO DOCTOR* (8.15 pm Monday) gives basic medical advice and first-aid tips.

SIBC is heavily committed to service programmes such as *SHIPPING MOVEMENTS* (three times daily); *SERVICE MESSAGES* (7.30 pm daily); *AIRCRAFT INFORMATION* (10.40 am daily); *WEATHER FORECASTS* (12.35 pm and 6.00 pm daily); *ANTI-MALARIA MESSAGES* (7.25 pm daily); and *JOB VACANCIES* (6.15 pm three times weekly).

In the sphere of culture and education, the SIBC transmits daily *SCHOOLS BROADCASTS* (9.30 am) and cultural segments such as *CUSTOM STORY* (8.00 pm Saturday) and the daily *CUSTOM INTERLUDE* (1.30 pm) which features traditional Solomon Islands music.

Religious broadcasting also plays an important part in the SIBC programme schedule with *MORNING DEVOTIONS* (6.15 am daily); *THE BIBLE AND YOU* (10.25 pm daily); direct broadcasts from Churches of the *SUNDAY SERVICE* (7.30 am Sunday) and many other musical and spoken word religious programmes.

Sports programmes, including "live" broadcasts of matches and events, are heard every week. A recent highlight was a direct satellite link to Honiara from Spain for the final of the *WORLD CUP* soccer match.

The extent of entertainment programmes offered to the nation is also very wide, from *STRING BAND HIT PARADE* (9.15 pm Saturday) to *LISTENERS REQUESTS* (4.05 pm daily); the *NATIONAL BANK QUIZ* (8.30 pm Tuesday) to *HITS FROM THE INTERNATIONAL TOP 40* (11.00 am Saturday).

Radio's special qualities as a medium of instant communication are also often exploited by the SIBC in regular outside broadcasts using the Corporation's Range Rover OB Unit. In times of natural disasters such as cyclones and earthquakes, the SIBC stands ready to play its vital role in both the passage of messages and the dissemination of news and information.

The SIBC's regional radio station at Gizo, "Radio Happy Lagoon", broadcasts a unique selection of music and information programmes to Western Province listeners from its modern, well equipped studios in the centre of the town. SIBC offices at Auki in Malaita Province and Lata in Temotu Province ensure a regular flow of news, interviews and taped music is sent back to Honiara for broadcast nationally. In addition, SIBC producers and journalists make extensive tours to remote parts of all seven Provinces on a regular roster, as finances permit.

As a commercial broadcasting system, the SIBC is also able to assist businessmen throughout the country and overseas to promote and sell their products and services. The SIBC itself is an entrepreneur in the music field. The Corporation has nurtured and encouraged local artists through the recording, production and sales of a number of music cassettes which give a true representation of the writing and playing talents of Solomon Islanders.



**"Radio Happy Lagoon", SIBC studios at Gizo, Western Province, 1981.**

**SIBC TECHNICAL INFORMATION**

**HENDERSON TRANSMITTING STATION**

**MEDIUMWAVE**

**Main transmitter:** TBC 10KW (1035 kHz)

**Standby transmitter:** STC 5KW

**Antenna:** Directional array, 2 x 309 feet masts.

**SHORTWAVE**

**Main transmitters:** TBC 10KW (5020 kHz)

TBC 10KW (9545 kHz)

**Standby transmitter:** STC 5KW (5020 kHz)

**Antenna:** Four phased Dipoles 186 feet (5020 kHz)

Two phased Dipoles 123 feet (9545 kHz)

**GIZO, WESTERN PROVINCE**

**Main transmitter:** TBC 10KW (945 kHz)

**Antenna:** Single mast 309 feet.

**LATA, TEMOTU PROVINCE**

**Main transmitter:** TBC 5KW (1386 kHz)

**Antenna:** Single mast 309 feet.

*Photographs: Chris Taboua, Govern-  
ment Information  
Service, Un Tak Fook.*

*Written and prepared by: M. Hadlow*

*Printed by the Government Printer,  
Honiara, Solomon Islands.*