

Powering opportunity and energy access on Solomon Islands' Savo Island

 Solomon Islands

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PARTNERS

Archipelago Energy



Australian Government

FUNDING

DFAT

Partners

TOTAL

\$305,624

\$189,162

\$494,786

Overview

In remote island communities, access to reliable, affordable energy remains one of the biggest barriers to economic opportunity. On Savo Island in Solomon Islands, home to around 3,000 people across 13 communities, a new partnership is showing how innovative business models can help change that.

Through Australia's Business Partnerships Platform (BPP), Archipelago Energy has worked with local entrepreneurs to pilot a new approach to off-grid energy that combines renewable power with income-generating opportunities for communities. The initiative has already delivered clean electricity to 96 households for the first time, supporting stronger wellbeing and livelihoods, and contributing to sustainable economic growth.

Rather than focusing on infrastructure alone, the project tested a community-based energy services model, anchored in fish trading, household energy access, and local entrepreneurship, designed to work in remote island contexts where traditional service delivery is not viable.

Highlights



- Improved access to reliable electricity for **96 households** (approx. **480 people**) through pay-as-you-go solar home systems
- Both sites combined feature a **4.8 kW** solar installation supported by **20 kWh** of battery storage powering freezers for fish storage
- The solar home kits plus the fish trading sites have displaced an estimated **6,354 litres** of fossil fuel per year
- An estimated **AUD 23,000** per year is saved in fossil fuels
- 2 local businesses** led by women entrepreneurs established.

Delivery snapshot



- Delivered integrated energy services combining solar home systems, fish cold-chain infrastructure, and digital connectivity (Starlink)
- Enabled early revenue generation through solar kit rentals, fish trading, and small-scale energy-enabled enterprises
- Demonstrated a proof-of-concept for a commercially viable, locally-led off-grid renewable energy services model in remote communities.

Impact

Improved access

The project combined energy infrastructure with a community-based services model to address challenges of traditional service delivery.

- Installed renewable energy systems across two sites on Savo Island, including solar-powered freezers and connectivity infrastructure
- Provided 96 households (480 people) with access to reliable solar energy through solar home kits, with expansion underway
- Created year-round access to energy-enabled services, including lighting, phone charging, refrigeration, and internet.

Inclusive impact

Achieved community-wide benefits by supporting better learning, and increasing income and work opportunities.

- Improved household wellbeing and productivity (e.g. lighting for study and daily activities)
- Enabled income generation opportunities via fish trading, providing a reliable local market
- Lowered financial barriers through a pay-as-you-go rental model accessible to low-income households
- Supported women's economic participation, with women as both entrepreneurs and majority solar kit customers
- Strengthened climate resilience and livelihoods by reducing reliance on diesel and improving income stability.

Sustainability and scale

Rooted in local entrepreneurship and sustainable economic growth, the project is scalable and adaptable to other Solomon Island communities.

- Established a revenue-generating model combining energy services with productive use (fish trading, data services)
- Early evidence of financial viability, with solar rental income and fish trading contributing to operational sustainability
- Designed for scale through network expansion, with plans to grow from 2 to 12+ sites and add services such as electric boat charging
- Commercial viability expected to improve with greater scale, operational efficiencies, and diversified revenue streams
- Ongoing reliance on blended finance and grant support to de-risk early-stage expansion in a challenging market.

Notes from the field

Early implementation highlighted strong community demand for solar energy and income opportunities, alongside challenges including limited experience among local partners, seasonal disruptions to fish supply, and the need for stronger operational systems. The project has generated positive early results and community buy-in but remains small-scale.

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Before this, it was very hard to keep fish fresh or run a small business. Now with reliable power, we can store our catch, sell more and earn a better income. It is helping our community grow and giving young people more opportunities here on the island.

Wendy Ngini, Kaogele site entrepreneur

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Our partnership approach with entrepreneurs who are local agents for household solar kits and fish trading sales is one that is scalable and can be adapted to other communities across Solomon Islands.

John Marsh, Managing Director,
Archipelago Energy

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What's next

The next phase will focus on scaling the model to additional sites, strengthening partner selection and business capability, and improving reliability of fish supply chains. Further testing will refine the commercial viability of the model, alongside continued monitoring and evaluation to inform scale-up decisions.

About the Off-Grid Renewable Energy Partnerships

The Off-Grid Renewable Energy Partnerships are part of the Australian Government's Pacific Climate Infrastructure Financing Partnership (PCIFP), expanding the Australian Infrastructure Financing Facility for the Pacific's (AIFFP) climate investments to deliver renewable energy in remote and rural communities across the Pacific and Timor-Leste. They are pilots for REnew Pacific, AIFFP's \$75 million investment to scale off-grid renewable energy across the region.

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