



Pacific Festival of Arts kicks off with traditional ceremonies of welcome

By Online Editor

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Hundreds of people were treated to a range of traditional Solomon Islands dances and spectacular fireworks early Monday morning as the traditional welcome ceremonies for the Pacific Festival of Arts kicked off in Honiara at the A-E Oval in Ranadi, reports national broadcaster, SIBC.

Amongst this morning's highlights were the colourful fireworks, a traditional pan pipe group from South Malaita and the Western Province Tomoko display at sea.

Delegates from participating countries joined locals as early as 3am at Oval beach to witness the traditional ceremonies, which began at 5am.

The traditional welcome included the presentation of shell money and carvings to participating countries from the host country, Solomon Islands.

Amongst the national and regional dignitaries that attended today's traditional welcome ceremony were Prime Minister Gordon Darcy Lilo and Madam Bronwyn Lilo, Culture Minister Samuel Manetoali and the Vice President of Kiribati, Teima Onorio .

The formal welcome ceremony will be held this afternoon at Lawson Tama.

Meanwhile, millions of people globally will have the opportunity to watch live and highlights video content from Solomon Islands when the opening ceremony of the 11th Festival of Pacific Arts starts on Monday.

For the first time in its history Festival of Arts Solomon Islands will be streamed LIVE for free on the Internet on a daily basis allowing viewers to see the Solomon Islands hosted event.

With assistance from SPC and Mai TV Fiji the Festival of Pacific Arts committee was able to put in place the technical capability to ensure this event set new standards.

SPC and One News Solomon Islands providing content and Mai TV Fiji has supplied the

streaming server and technical know-how to get all the footage online as well as TV stations around the Pacific.

Festival Director Robert Au says with the use of a satellite uplink facility and satellite space the event is being sent to broadcasters such as NITV Australia, NBC Papua New Guinea, Blue SKY Communications in Samoa and a host of other broadcasters including Niue, Guam and Vanuatu.

Other TV broadcasters including Television New Zealand and France TV's regional station RFO from New Caledonia are also in Honiara.

It is expected that more than 3000 artists and cultural practitioners from 27 Pacific countries will be in Honiara for the next two weeks to showcase their arts and cultures making it Solomons' largest tourism event ever. It has the theme "Culture in Harmony with Nature."

The 27 participating Pacific island countries and territories include: American Samoa, Australia, Cook Islands, Easter Island, Federated States of Micronesia, Fiji Islands, French Polynesia, Guam, Hawaii, Kiribati, Marshall Islands, Nauru, New Caledonia, New Zealand, Niue, Norfolk Island, Northern Mariana Islands, Palau, Papua New Guinea, Pitcairn Islands, Samoa, Solomon Islands, Tokelau, Tonga, Tuvalu, Vanuatu and Wallis and Futuna.

The festival is recognised as a major international cultural event, and is the largest gathering in which Pacific peoples unite to gain respect for and appreciation of one another within the context of the changing Pacific.

SOURCE:SIBC/PACNEWS