

BOARD OF MARINE INQUIRY INTO THE MV ANJEANETTE CASUALTY

Established under sections 84 and 86 of the Shipping Act 1998

PUBLIC INFORMATION AND HEARING BUNDLE

1. Introduction

The purpose of this *Public Information and Hearing Bundle* to provide members of the public and media with accessible information about the casualty being examined and the scope and process of the Marine Inquiry.

The Marine Inquiry was caused by the Director of the Solomon Islands Maritime Authority under sections 84 and 86 of the Shipping Act 1998, following completion of a preliminary investigation. The Board was appointed under Director's Decision No. 114-2026 to independently inquire into the casualty in accordance with its Terms of Reference.

The documents included in this Bundle are:

- Casualty Overview;
- Composition and brief profiles of the Board;
- Explanation of the Inquiry process;
- Annex 1, General Notice of Inquiry;
- Annex 2, Director's Decision No. 114-2026, including the Terms of Reference; and
- Annex 3, Gazette Notice establishing the Board of Marine Inquiry.

The inclusion of any document in this Bundle does not mean that the Board has accepted the accuracy of every statement contained in it. The Board will independently receive, examine and assess the evidence before making findings and recommendations.

2. Casualty Overview

On 4 July 2026, the Solomon Islands-registered cargo-passenger vessel MV ANJEANETTE suffered a fire while berthed at Wate 2 domestic jetty, Point Cruz, Honiara. The vessel was preparing for a scheduled voyage to Rennell and Bellona Province.

The fire spread through the vessel and could not be brought under control while the vessel remained alongside the wharf. MV ANJEANETTE was subsequently towed from the port area and sank on 5 July 2026. The vessel and the cargo remaining onboard were lost. One person who had reportedly been onboard before the fire was subsequently reported missing and is presumed to have died.

The Board of Marine Inquiry has been established to independently examine the circumstances of the fire, emergency response, towing, sinking, total loss of the vessel and presumed loss of life, together with the other matters specified in its Terms of Reference.

3. Composition of the Board

- **Mr Leonard B. Chite** – Chairperson | Legal Practitioner and Former Principal Magistrate. Mr Leonard B. Chite is the Managing Principal of Bridge Legal & Consultancy Firm and a former Principal Magistrate of the Central Magistrates Court. He has experience conducting contested hearings, assessing evidence, applying procedural fairness and preparing reasoned decisions. He holds a Master of Laws from the University of Hawai'i at Mānoa.
- **Mr Simon I. Wame** – Member | Marine Engineer and Maritime Educator. Mr Simon I. Wame is Head of the Marine Engineering Department at the Solomon Islands Maritime College. He is an experienced marine engineer, former shipboard chief engineer and maritime educator, with professional experience in vessel operations, maintenance, engineering management and maritime training.
- **Mr George Tatireta** – Member | Marine Engineer and Maritime Casualty Investigator. Mr George Tatireta is a marine engineer, ship inspector and maritime casualty investigator with the National Maritime Safety Authority of Papua New Guinea. His experience includes marine casualty investigation, ship inspection, engineering certification, safety-management auditing and the application of international maritime conventions and codes.

The three members collectively provide legal, procedural, operational, engineering and marine casualty investigation expertise. The Board acts independently in determining its procedure, assessing evidence and preparing its findings and recommendations.

The Solomon Islands Maritime Authority provides administrative, logistical and records-management support to the Board in its capacity as Secretariat, without influencing the Board's independent proceedings, findings or recommendations.

4. Inquiry Process

The Marine Inquiry will proceed through the following stages:

- **Evidence preparation:** the Board reviews the Preliminary Investigation Report and all available evidence, identifies issues for inquiry, determines evidence gaps and organises witnesses and documents for hearing.
- **Identification and notification of participants:** the Board identifies interested parties, witnesses and persons whose conduct may be examined, and provides the appropriate notices, information and participation rights.
- **Hearings:** the Board receives and tests evidence through public or private hearings, examines witnesses and receives documents and submissions relevant to the Terms of Reference.;
- **Analysis and procedural fairness:** the Board analyses the evidence, develops findings and recommendations, and provides affected persons with an opportunity to respond to any proposed adverse conclusions before the report is finalised.
- **Final report:** the Board prepares and submits its final report to the Director, setting out its findings, conclusions and recommendations to improve maritime safety and prevent similar casualties.

BOARD OF MARINE INQUIRY INTO THE MV ANJEANETTE CASUALTY

Established under sections 84 and 86 of the Shipping Act 1998

GENERAL NOTICE OF MARINE INQUIRY

The Board of Marine Inquiry into the MV ANJEANETTE casualty has been established under Decision No. 114-2026.

Public hearing details

Dates	Times	Venue	Public access
14-17 September 2026	09:30 – 12:30 14:00 – 16:00	SIMA office, Point Cruz	Open unless otherwise directed; seating will be limited.

Purpose

The Inquiry will examine the matters in its Terms of Reference, including the circumstances of the fire, sinking and presumed loss of life, relevant operational and response issues, and recommendations.

Participation or relevant information

A person or organisation with a direct and substantial interest, relevant evidence, or possible exposure to findings may write to the Secretariat by Tuesday 8 September 2026, explaining the interest, information held and participation requested. The Board decides the extent of participation.

Public attendance

- Hearings are open to the public unless otherwise directed.
- Public observers may attend subject to seating capacity.
- Advance registration is required.
- Registration closes on Tuesday 8 September at 4pm.
- Public observers should arrive 30 minutes before the session.
- Admission will require identification and completion of an attendance register.
- Public observers must comply with the Chairperson's directions.
- Registration does not confer participation rights.

Conduct and restrictions

- No photography, recording or disruption unless authorised.
- Confidential or private evidence is not open to the public.
- The timetable may change by direction of the Board.

Contact

Secretariat: contact@sima.gov.sb | 21535 | SIMA Office, Commonwealth Street, Point Cruz, Honiara.

DECISION No. 114-2026

28 August 2026

Causing a Marine Inquiry and Appointment of a Board of Marine Inquiry into the Very Serious Marine Casualty involving MV ANJEANETTE

I, Director of the Solomon Islands Maritime Authority (SIMA), having considered the Preliminary Investigation Report into the very serious marine casualty involving ANJEANETTE dated 3 August 2026, and acting under sections 84 and 86 of the Shipping Act 1998, the Shipping (Marine Inquiries and Investigations) Regulations 2011, and the Solomon Islands Maritime Authority (Modification of Existing Regulations) Maritime Order 2021, cause a Marine Inquiry to be held into the fire, sinking and total loss of MV ANJEANETTE and the presumed loss of life arising from that casualty.

1. Background

MV ANJEANETTE, a Solomon Islands registered cargo-passenger vessel, suffered a major fire while berthed at Wate 2 domestic jetty, Point Cruz, Honiara, on 4 July 2026.

The casualty involved the total loss and subsequent sinking of the vessel off Ngella on 5 July 2026, the destruction of cargo, risk of marine pollution, and the presumed loss of life of Mr. Joseph Tauto, a contracted welder reportedly onboard at the time of the fire.

A preliminary investigation was caused by SIMA Decision No. 089-2026 dated 5 July 2026 and conducted by appointed Authorised Officers. The preliminary investigation commenced on 6 July 2026 and was completed on 24 July 2026.

The completed Preliminary Investigation Report dated 3 August 2026 has been submitted to the Minister for Infrastructure Development for information in accordance with the 2011 Regulations.

2. Grounds for causing a Marine Inquiry

Having regard to the Preliminary Investigation Report and the criteria in the 2011 Regulations, I am satisfied that a Marine Inquiry is justified because:

- the casualty is a very serious marine casualty involving total loss of a ship and presumed loss of life;
- the preliminary investigation identified possible grounds for further inquiry into safety issues, possible failures of duty, possible breaches of law, and possible failure to observe accepted maritime practice and international obligations;
- there remain matters requiring independent examination, including cargo acceptance and stowage, dangerous goods and other fire-risk cargo, control of persons onboard, watchkeeping, emergency communication, port response, towing, pollution risk, and the circumstances concerning the missing person;
- the circumstances of the casualty require a comprehensive independent inquiry in the national interest and to support Solomon Islands maritime safety governance and international maritime obligations.

3. Decision to cause a Marine Inquiry

I hereby cause a Marine Inquiry to be conducted into the casualty involving MV ANJEANETTE under sections 84 and 86 of the Shipping Act 1998 and Part 4 of the Shipping (Marine Inquiries and Investigations) Regulations 2011.

4. Appointment of Board of Marine Inquiry

I appoint the following persons to constitute the Board of Marine Inquiry under section 86 of the Shipping Act 1998 and Regulation 12 of the 2011 Regulations, as modified by the Solomon Islands Maritime Authority (Modification of Existing Regulations) Maritime Order 2021:

Role	Name	Description
Chairperson	Mr. Leonard B. Chite	Private lawyer; Managing Principal, Bridge Legal and Consultancy Firm
Member	Mr. Simon I. Wame	Head of Engineering Department, Solomon Islands Maritime College
Member	Mr. George Tatireta-	Incident Investigations Officer, National Maritime Safety Authority of Papua New Guinea

The Board is appointed to conduct the Marine Inquiry in accordance with the Terms of Reference set out in the Annex. The appointment remains in effect until the Board has submitted its final report to the Director and completed any clarification or supplementary work reasonably requested by the Director in relation to that report.

All costs related to the establishment of the Board and conduct of the Marine Inquiry are borne by SIMA.

Thierry Nervale

Director SIMA



Annex – Terms of Reference

1. The Board shall inquire into and report on the following matters:
 - a. the circumstances, sequence of events and causes or contributing factors relating to the fire, explosions, sinking and total loss of MV ANJEANETTE;
 - b. the circumstances relating to the reported missing person, Mr Joseph Tauto, who is presumed to have died as a result of the casualty;
 - c. cargo acceptance, cargo documentation, loading, stowage, dangerous goods, fire-risk cargo, use of accommodation spaces for cargo, and compliance with applicable maritime requirements;
 - d. the control, recording and accounting of all persons onboard, including crew, contractors, workers, visitors and other non-crew persons;
 - e. manning, certification, seafarer employment arrangements, watchkeeping, fire patrols, crew preparedness and senior command arrangements while the vessel was loaded at berth;
 - f. initial firefighting, abandonment of the vessel, emergency communications, port response, decisions to tow the vessel, salvage options, search and rescue coordination, pollution risk and marine pollution response;
 - g. whether any failure of duty, misconduct, breach of law or non-compliance with maritime obligations may have contributed to the casualty or response;
 - h. safety issues requiring corrective action by the owner, operator, master, crew, charterer, cargo interests, SIMA, the Solomon Islands Ports Authority (SIPA), Fire and Rescue Service, Royal Solomon Islands Police Force or any other relevant person or agency;
 - i. recommendations required to prevent similar casualties and strengthen domestic maritime safety, response coordination and regulatory oversight.

Procedure, independence and fairness

2. The Board shall conduct the Marine Inquiry in accordance with the Shipping Act 1998, the 2011 Regulations, the principles of natural justice and procedural fairness, and the objectives of the IMO Casualty Investigation Code.
3. The Chairperson and Members shall act independently and shall not be subject to direction in relation to the Board's findings, conclusions or recommendations.
4. Persons whose conduct is likely to be called into question or who may be adversely affected by the inquiry shall receive notice and be afforded the rights provided under section 86 of the Shipping Act 1998 and the 2011 Regulations.
5. The Board may conduct public hearings and may receive evidence in private where justified by confidentiality, procedural fairness, safety, employment consequences, public interest or other special circumstances.
6. The Board shall provide draft adverse findings or relevant report extracts confidentially to any affected person, company or agency before finalising any adverse conclusion, and shall consider any response received.

Interested parties and notice

7. The Board and SIMA shall use Annex 1 of the Preliminary Investigation Report as the initial list of interested parties for the purpose of notice and procedural rights, including the owner/operator, master, officers, crew, non-crew persons, charterer and cargo interests, family or representative of the missing person, SIPA/Harbour Master, Fire and Rescue Service, Police, SIMA personnel where relevant, and any person or agency likely to be affected by findings or recommendations.

Administrative arrangements

8. SIMA shall provide administrative and secretariat support to the Board, including venue, records management, communication with witnesses, notices and logistical arrangements.
9. SIMA officers and other technical personnel may assist the Board as advisers or through evidence where requested, but shall not participate in determining the Board's findings.
10. The Board may request expert advice, documents, records, witness statements, transcripts, photographs, videos, logs, certificates and other evidence relevant to the inquiry.
11. All evidence, reports and draft findings shall be handled consistently with the confidentiality requirements of the 2011 Regulations.
12. The Board shall prepare a draft report and final report in accordance with Regulation 16 of the 2011 Regulations, as modified by the 2021 Maritime Order.
13. The final report shall be submitted to the Director of SIMA as soon as practicable after completion of the inquiry.
14. The Director shall consider the findings and recommendations, determine an implementation action plan, and keep the Minister informed of the report and post-inquiry actions.

Commencement

15. This Decision takes effect on the date it is signed. The appointment and causing of the Marine Inquiry may also be notified by publication in the Solomon Islands Gazette.

SHIPPING ACT 1998

(No. 5 of 1998)

MARINE INQUIRY INTO MV ANJEANETTE CASUALTY AND APPOINTMENT OF BOARD OF MARINE INQUIRY

I, Thierry Nervale, Director of the Solomon Islands Maritime Authority, give notice of the following:

1 Marine Inquiry

Under section 84(c) of the *Shipping Act 1998*, a Marine Inquiry is caused into the fire that occurred onboard the Motor Vessel Anjeanette ("MV Anjeanette") at the Wate 2 domestic jetty, Point Cruz, Honiara, on 4 July 2026, the subsequent sinking and total loss of the vessel off Ngella on 5 July 2026, and the presumed loss of life arising from the casualty.

2 Appointment of Board of Marine Inquiry

Under section 86(1) of the *Shipping Act 1998*, the following persons are appointed to the Board of Marine Inquiry ("the Board") to conduct the Marine Inquiry:

- (a) Leonard B. Chite, as the Chairman;
- (b) Simon I. Wame, as a member;
- (c) George Tatireta, as a member.

3 Term of Marine Inquiry and appointments

The term of the Marine Inquiry and the appointments is on and from 1 September 2026 to and including 31 October 2026.

4 Terms of reference

The Board shall inquire into and report on the following matters:

- (a) the circumstances, sequence of events and causes or contributing factors relating to the fire, explosions, sinking and total loss of MV Anjeanette;
- (b) the circumstances relating to the reported missing person, Joseph Tauto, who is presumed to have died as a result of the casualty;
- (c) cargo acceptance, cargo documentation, loading, stowage, dangerous goods, fire-risk cargo, use of accommodation spaces for cargo, and compliance with applicable maritime requirements;
- (d) the control, recording and accounting of all persons onboard, including crew, contractors, workers, visitors and other non-crew persons;
- (e) manning, certification, seafarer employment arrangements, watchkeeping, fire patrols, crew preparedness and senior command arrangements while the vessel was loaded at berth;
- (f) initial firefighting, abandonment of the vessel, emergency communications, port response, decisions to tow the vessel, salvage options, search and rescue coordination, pollution risk and marine pollution response;
- (g) whether any failure of duty, misconduct, breach of law or non-compliance with maritime obligations may have contributed to the casualty or response;
- (h) safety issues requiring corrective action by the owner, operator, master, crew, charterer, cargo interests, the Solomon Islands Maritime Authority, the Solomon Islands Ports Authority, Fire and Rescue Service, Royal Solomon Islands Police Force or any other relevant person or agency;
- (i) recommendations required to prevent similar casualties and strengthen domestic maritime safety, response coordination and regulatory oversight.

5 Conduct of Marine Inquiry

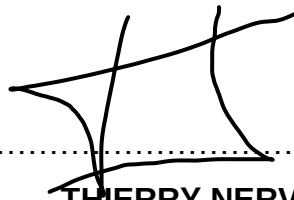
The Board must conduct the Marine Inquiry in accordance with the *Shipping Act 1998* and the *Shipping (Marine Inquiries and*

Investigations) Regulations 2011.

6 Report

The Board must make a report in writing to the Director of the Solomon Islands Maritime Authority by 31 October 2026.

Dated 1 September 2026.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'Thierry Nerval', written over a horizontal dotted line.

THIERRY NERVALE
DIRECTOR OF SOLOMON ISLANDS MARITIME AUTHORITY