



KIBCA

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MEDIA RELEASE

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Walkers Discover New Pool Caused by Landslide on Kolombangara

Walkers on Kolombangara Island have discovered a new 400m-long pool blocking access to the inside of the Kolombangara crater. The pool was formed by an earthquake and resulting landslide in June 2010.

“It’s only now that the surface of the river bank below the landslide has been stable enough to walk,” said Andrew Cox, KIBCA spokesperson.

Late last year, KIBCA Technical Officer, Andrew Cox, and a party of three others walked up the Vila River from Imbu Rano Lodge. They reached the pool after walking for about five hours.

“We were surprised to see so much sediment squeezed through a narrow gully below the north-east face of Mt Rano. It was hard walking on the sharp rocks amongst the soft sediment. Places were like quicksand.”

“Then we were amazed to find a new 400m-long pool where the Vila River passed through a narrow gorge and ran into the piled up sediment,” said Mr Cox.

“The new pool was 4m deep and lined with high cliffs. The only way to pass to the inside of the crater was a long swim. By the time we had swum back and forth a few times we were getting very cold. We didn’t expect to be getting cramps and mild hypothermia in Solomon Islands.”

“The pool was created by debris from a large landslide triggered by a major earthquake that rocked the Solomon Islands on 26 June 2010. Most of the north face of Mt Rano fell away into the Vila River valley. The earthquake of magnitude 6.7 was centred off Makira.”

“After the earthquake in June, KFPL sent a party to inspect the area to investigate why the Vila River had stopped flowing. They saw that the north-east face of Mt Rano had fallen away and discovered a deep channel of dirt and rock in the Vila River below the landslide. Because of the soft deep sediment, the party was unable to reach the pool,” said Mr Cox.

“The landslide sediment, now in an 800m long plume along the Vila River, is causing major headaches for the 1,000 residents of Ringgi and KFPL that provides drinking water to the township.”

“After heavy rain, the fine sediment enters the river and causes the water along the full length of the river to become cloudy and chocolate-coloured. As a result, the drinking water supply for Ringgi becomes unusable, sometimes for days at a time.”

“KIBCA invites visitors to come and see the landslide debris and new pool. The blockage might be washed away soon if Kolombangara receives sustained heavy rains, but for now it makes some of the most exciting walking in the country.”

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