

To: SINU Senior Management

From: ICT Director, Solomon Islands National University (SINU)

Date: Friday 16th May, 2025

**Subject: Report on recent near DataCenter Fire incident leading to Network
 Outage and Mitigation Measures**

1. Incident Overview

SINU experienced an extended internet and network outage lasting nearly a week, beginning last Sunday 11th of May. The outage was triggered by a near-fire incident in the Data Center when one of the Uninterrupted Power Supplies (UPS) caught fire, releasing smoke into both the Data Center and ICT Office last Sunday afternoon.

Prompt action was taken when I inspected the Data Center during a power outage in Honiara to ensure the Data Center was operational. Upon discovering the smoke, I immediately shut off power to the Data Center and because I could not locate a Fire Extinguisher, I contacted the ICT Principal Network Administrator, Augustine Mamamo to call the Fire Service, who responded swiftly. Fortunately, shutting off the power source contained the situation before the fire escalated and caused further damage to the DataCenter.

2. Root Causes

- Both UPS units in the Data Center had pre-existing charging issues and had been flagged for replacement since 2023.
- Despite requests for procurement for new UPS units in 2023, the prolonged delays in procurement meant continuous delays in their replacement. However, in 2024 when ICT engaged with SIG ICTSU to move the SINU DataCenter to their premises at Lengkiki, ICT did not continue with requests for new UPSs.
- The absence of an appropriate electrical fire extinguisher in the ICT Office and the DataCenter also posed an additional risk.

3. Restoration Efforts

Due to the unavailability (out of stock) of replacement UPS units in Honiara, ICT engaged ABC Electrical to refurbish the remaining functional UPS by replacing its batteries with new ones of equivalent specifications that were sourced locally in Honiara. Rigorous testing was conducted to ensure the safety and stability of Data Center equipment. After these testing and confident that the temporary set up would be sufficient to maintain operations of the DataCenter, full network services were restored by Thursday afternoon (after 3 PM).

4. Current Temporary Measures

The Data Center is currently operating on a single refurbished UPS, with ICT staff conducting **24/7 monitoring** to mitigate risks. These include:

- Rostering ICT staff for round-the-clock Data Center surveillance (until after the DataCenter migration to Lengkiki is completed).

- Submitting an urgent request for two new UPS units from overseas (motion being prepared for UTB approval).

5. Long-Term Solution: Data Center Migration

To prevent future outages, ICT is fast-tracking the relocation of SINU's Data Center to the SIG ICTSU premises at Lengakiki. The following steps are underway:

- **Test Migration:** Scheduled for next week to validate the process.
- **Full Migration:** Upon successful testing, ICT will request Senior Management to approve a 2-working-day shutdown (likely a Friday and the following Monday) to complete the migration and conduct thorough testing on both days including the weekend.

Expected Outcomes

Once the Data Center is fully migrated to Lengakiki, SINU will benefit from:

- Eliminating recurring network outages caused by aging infrastructure.
- Enhanced network reliability and quality under SIG ICTSU's managed environment.

6. Requested actions from Senior Management

- Expedite approval and funding for the new UPS procurement.
- Support the proposed 2-day shutdown for migration upon ICT's confirmation.
- Review fire safety protocols, including the provision of electrical fire extinguishers in all SINU critical spaces such as ICT and other buildings.

7. Conclusion and word of thanks

Although, the network outage was disruptive, it highlighted urgent infrastructure vulnerabilities. The proposed migration to Lengakiki is a sustainable solution to these challenges. ICT appreciates Senior Management's support in prioritizing our planned measures to safeguard SINU's digital operations.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank the following people who answered my emergency call on that Sunday afternoon and arrived on scene to provide assistance:

- Chief Security Officer - **Jack Balaga** and his security team.
- Director Properties & Facilities - **Moffat Selo** and his Electrical team.
- ICT Staff - **Augustine Mamamo & Abednigo Pitisopa**.

With kind regards,



Dean Foy
Director ICT,
SINU