

River Waters Act [Cap 135]

LAWS OF SOLOMON ISLANDS

[Rev. Edition 1996]

CHAPTER 135

RIVER WATERS

ARRANGEMENT OF SECTIONS

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RIVER WATERS

19 of 1964
6 of 1968
LN 46A of 1978
LN 88 of 1978

AN ACT TO PROVIDE FOR THE CONTROL OF RIVER WATERS AND FOR THE
EQUITABLE AND BENEFICIAL USE THEREOF AND FOR MATTERS INCIDENTAL
THERE TO AND CONNECTED THEREWITH

[30th December 1964]

Short title and application

LN 46A of 1978

1. This Act may be cited as the [River Waters Act](#), and shall apply to such part or parts of Solomon Islands, including any river or part thereof, as the Minister may by order declare.

Interpretation

LN 46A of 1978

2. In this Act, except where the context otherwise requires -

"inspector" means a person appointed to be an inspector pursuant to section 3(1);
"river" includes any watercourse whether natural or artificial and any dam, lake, pond, swamp, marsh or other body of water forming part of that watercourse.

Appointment and powers of inspectors

LN 46A of 1978

3.- (1) A person may be appointed to be an inspector for the purposes of this Act.

(2) In addition to any other powers conferred upon him, an inspector may at any reasonable time, and upon production of his authority if demanded, enter and inspect any land or premises, other than a dwelling-house, for the purpose of ascertaining whether the provisions of this Act or the conditions of any permit or easement thereunder granted are being complied with.

Power to prohibit erections in flood channels etc

LN 46A of 1978

4. The Minister may by order prohibit the construction or siting of any building, structure or erection in the flood channel of any river or in any place in which it appears to him that such building, structure or erection may impede, or obstruct, or otherwise affect the flow of a river.

Offences in relation to rivers

5. Any person who, except under and in accordance with the terms and conditions of a permit issued under this Act-

- (a) by means of a ditch, drain, channel, pipe or any other means whatsoever, diverts any water from a river;
- (b) fells any tree so that it falls into a river or river bed;
- (c) in any manner obstructs or interferes with a river or river bed;
- (d) builds any bridge, jetty or landing stage over or beside any river;
- (e) damages or interferes with the banks of any river; or
- (f) contravenes any order made under section 4 of this Act,

shall be guilty of an offence and without prejudice to the provisions of section 6, shall be liable to a fine of two hundred dollars or to imprisonment for six months or to both such fine and such imprisonment:

Provided that nothing in this section shall apply to the diversion of water by any person for domestic purposes.

Removal of obstruction, restoration of banks etc

6. -(1) An inspector may in writing order any person, whether or not such person has been prosecuted under the preceding section, to remove any construction, works, installation, bridge, jetty, landing stage, building, structure, erection or tree, built, installed, sited or felled, or to repair any damage caused, by that person in contravention of the preceding section, within such reasonable time as shall be specified.

(2) Any person who fails to comply with any written order given under the preceding subsection shall be guilty of an offence and liable to a fine of one hundred dollars or to imprisonment for three months or to both such fine and such imprisonment.

(3) Without prejudice to any prosecution under the preceding subsection, where any person fails to comply with any written order given under subsection (1), any inspector may himself effect or cause to be effected the removal or repair and the reasonable cost thereof shall be a civil debt due to the Government by the person in default, and may be sued for and recovered by the Attorney-General or any inspector.

Permits to divert water

7.-(1) Upon application therefor made to him in the prescribed form, if any, and upon submission of such information, maps and plans as he may require, the Minister may grant to any person a permit to divert water from any river and such permit shall be published in such manner as he may determine.

(2) In granting any permit under this section the Minister shall have regard to the existing use of water and shall safeguard such existing use of water as far as appears to him to be practicable and consistent with the provisions and purposes of this Act.

(3) The permit shall specify the river and that part thereof from which water may be diverted, the quantity thereof and such other terms and conditions as the Minister may impose.

(4) Every permit shall, unless sooner cancelled, remain in force for the period therein provided, or where no period is so provided, until it is cancelled.

(5) The permit may authorise the construction of dams, weirs, races and any other works whatsoever for the purpose of diverting the quantity of water authorised.

(6) Nothing in this section, nor any permit issued thereunder shall confer upon the holder of such a permit any right or legal authority to enter upon any other person's land or to do anything therein or thereupon without that other person's authority, but no action shall lie in respect of the diversion of water under and in accordance with a permit issued under this

section.

(7) Any person who used water from a river at the time a permit was granted to divert water from that river, may sue and recover from the holder of the permit damages arising out of the failure to comply with or the breach of any term or condition of a permit, as if such term or condition formed part of a valid contract subsisting between such person and the holder of the permit.

Other permits

LN 46A of 1978

8.-(1) The Minister or, subject to the directions of the Minister, any inspector may in writing grant permits authorising, subject to the provisions of this Act and any regulations made thereunder and to such terms and conditions as shall be therein specified, any of the acts specified in paragraphs (b), (c), (d) and (e) of section 5.

(2) Nothing in this section nor in any permit granted thereunder shall confer upon the holder of such a permit any right or legal authority to enter any other person's land or to do anything therein or thereupon without that other person's authority.

Power to grant easements

6 of 1968, s. 240

LN 46A of 1978

9.-(1) Any person who has been granted a permit under section 7 to divert water or to construct works, or who is applying or has applied for such a permit, may, if he has been unable to secure upon terms the Minister considers to be reasonable, such rights and licences as may be necessary to divert water or construct the works, apply to the Minister in the prescribed form, if any, for the grant of such easements as may be necessary.

(2) The Minister may require the applicant to submit maps, plans and any other information he may consider relevant, and upon such inquiry, if any, as he may consider to be necessary, and notwithstanding the provisions of any other law, in particular sections 179 and 241 of the Land and Titles Act, the Minister may by certificate in writing grant any easement over or in respect of any land, upon such terms and conditions including the amount of compensation payable as shall be specified.

Cap 133

Registration of easements

6 of 1968, s. 240

LN 46A of 1978

10.-(1) No grant of an easement under this Act shall be valid until -

(a) it has been registered or recorded in accordance with the provisions of this section; and
(b) all compensation ordered to be paid has been paid to the persons entitled thereto or into court.

(2) The grantee of an easement under this Act shall procure and annexe to the certificate of

grant, a plan approved and signed by or on behalf of the Surveyor-General for the purpose of this section.

(3) (a) Upon production to him of the certificate of grant of an easement and the plan approved and signed by or on behalf of the Surveyor-General, payment of the prescribed fee (if any), and, where compensation has been ordered to be paid, upon production of proof of the payment thereof in accordance with subsection (1) (b), the Registrar of Titles shall -
(i) where the easement burdens registered land, register it in the land register; and
(ii) where the easement burdens unregistered land, record it in such manner as will enable it to be registered in the land register upon the land which it burdens becoming registered land.
(b) In this subsection "land register", "registered land" and "unregistered land" shall have the meanings ascribed to them in the Land and Titles Act.

Cap. 133

Suspension etc., of permits and easements by the Minister

LN 46A of 1978

11.- (1) The Minister may at any time without prior notice and without assigning any reason, suspend any permit or easement granted under this Act for a period not exceeding two months upon any single occasion.

(2) Subject to section 12 the Minister may cancel or alter any permit or easement upon such terms and conditions as he thinks fit, including the payment to the Government of such sums as may be necessary to meet in whole or in part any compensation payable under subsection (4):

Provided that in the case of an easement the cancellation or alteration shall be effected by means of a written certificate.

(3) The Minister shall forthwith, upon the cancellation or alteration of any easement, serve upon the Registrar of Titles a copy of the relevant certificate; and the Registrar of Titles shall register or record such certificate in the manner provided in section 10(3).

6 of 1968, s.240

(4) Except where the suspension, cancellation or alteration of any permit or easement has been occasioned by the default or misconduct of, or requested by, the grantee thereof, or where an easement has not been used for three years, the Government shall compensate the grantee of every permit, or easement in respect of any loss arising from the suspension, cancellation or alteration of the permit or easement.

(5) In this section "Minister" shall in relation to a permit issued by an inspector, include that inspector and every other inspector.

Notice to be given prior to grant etc. of permits and easements

LN 46A of 1978

12.- (1) No permit or easement shall be granted, cancelled or altered unless one month's notice of the application therefor or of the intention so to do and an opportunity to make representations thereon shall have been given to every person who, in the opinion of the

Minister or an inspector, as the case may be, is likely to be adversely affected by such grant, cancellation or alteration:

Provided that nothing in this subsection shall apply -

- (i) to any person who has requested or consented to the grant, cancellation or alteration, or
- (ii) in the case of the cancellation of an easement that has not been used for three years.

(2) Upon payment of the prescribed fee by the applicant, notice under this section shall be given by the Minister or an inspector.

(3) Where the Minister or inspector considers that it is not possible to give notice to every person required to be given notice under subsection (1) without involving such delay or expense as would be unreasonable in the particular circumstances, the Minister or inspector may post the notice or cause it to be posted in a conspicuous position on or near the land affected.

Authority to enter land

13.-(1) An inspector may issue to any person a written authority authorising him to enter and inspect any land or premises, other than a dwelling-house, for the purpose of securing data or drawing maps and plans that may be required for the purpose of making application for the grant of a permit or easement under this Act.

(2) Every such authority shall be issued subject to the condition that all reasonable steps are taken to avoid any inconvenience to the owners and the occupiers of the land entered.

(3) An inspector may in writing at any time cancel any authority issued under this section and the cancellation shall take effect upon notification thereof to the person to whom the authority was issued.

Presumptions

14. Where any water is diverted, or any tree is felled, or any obstruction, interference or building takes place or any damage is caused in contravention of section 5, the owner and the occupier of any land benefiting from such diversion, felling, obstruction, interference, building or damage, shall, in any proceedings under this Act, be presumed, in the absence of any evidence to the contrary to have caused or effected the diversion, felling, obstruction, interference, building or damage as the case may be.

Liability for damage

15. No permit or authority granted under this Act shall exempt any person from liability in respect of any damage occasioned by such person to any property, nor shall any easement so granted exempt any person from liability in respect of any damage that does not necessarily result from the due exercise of that easement.

Provisions relating to appeals

16.-(1) Any person who claims that he is entitled to be compensated under the provisions of this Act and has not been so compensated, or who is dissatisfied with the amount of compensation awarded to him under the provisions of this Act may appeal, where the amount of compensation or additional compensation claimed does not exceed five hundred dollars, to a Magistrate's Court, and in all other cases, to the High Court.

(2) Every appeal under this section shall be filed within three months of the grant, cancellation or suspension of any permit or easement or the award of compensation, as the case may be.

(3) No appeal shall lie to any court against the grant, cancellation or suspension of any permit or easement or against the refusal to grant, cancel or suspend any permit or easement.

Payment into Court

17.-(1) Where any compensation is payable or ordered to be paid under the provisions of this Act and the identity of the person or persons entitled to such compensation is not known, or is in doubt or is disputed, the compensation may be paid, where it does not exceed five hundred dollars, into a Magistrate's Court, and in all other cases into the High Court.

(2) Upon being so paid the compensation shall be irrebuttably presumed to have been paid to the person or persons thereto entitled, and such presumption shall not be questioned in any proceedings whatsoever.

(3) Any person claiming to be entitled to payment of the whole or any part of compensation so paid into Court may, within twelve years of the payment into Court, make application to the Court for the payment to him of the compensation or part thereof.

(4) The Court may of its own motion or upon application by a claimant order the whole or part of any sum paid into Court under this section, to be paid to any person or persons.

(5) Where any compensation paid into Court under this section has not been paid out within twelve years, it shall be credited to and form part of the Consolidated Fund.

LN 88 of 1978.

Miscellaneous offences

18.-(1) Any person who contravenes or fails to comply with any of the terms and conditions of any permit or attached to any easement under this Act, not being a term or condition requiring the payment of compensation, shall be guilty of an offence and liable to a fine of one hundred dollars.

(2) Any person who -

(a) obstructs any other person in the due exercise of that other person's rights or licences under any permit or easement granted under this Act; or

(b) obstructs any inspector in the due exercise of his powers under this Act,

shall be guilty of an offence and liable to a fine of one hundred dollars or to imprisonment for

three months or to both such fine and such imprisonment.

Power to make regulations

19. The Minister may make regulations for the better carrying out of the provisions and purposes of this Act, and without prejudice to the generality of the foregoing such regulations may -

- (a) prescribe fees for the doing of anything by this Act required or authorised to be done;
- (b) provide penalties not exceeding a fine of one hundred dollars or imprisonment for three months or both such fine and such imprisonment.

RIVER WATERS

Subsidiary Legislation

THE RIVER WATERS (MATANIKO AND WHITE RIVERS) ORDER (Section 1)

LN 146/1967

[7th December 1967]

It is declared that the Act shall apply to that part of Solomon Islands described in the Schedule hereto.

SCHEDULE

The Mataniko River and the White River and all those rivers, creeks and streams or parts thereof emptying into the Mataniko River or the White River or tributaries thereof and being within an area bounded as follows-

Commencing at a point on the north coast of Guadalcanal Island being the point of intersection of the right bank of the Mataniko River and high water mark; thence by a straight line grid bearing 159° to a point grid reference Eastings 1,994,757 feet, Northings 29,373,450 feet; thence by a straight line grid bearing $236^{\circ} 30'$ to a point grid reference Eastings 1,984,914 feet Northings 29,366,888 feet; thence by a straight line grid bearing 270° to a point grid reference Eastings 1,965,229 feet, Northings 29,366,888 feet; thence by a straight line grid bearing 0° to a point grid reference Eastings 1,965,229 feet, Northings 29,383,293 feet; thence by a straight line grid bearing 38° to a point being the point of intersection of the left bank of the White River with high water mark; thence by the line of high watermark eastwards to the point of commencement; the whole being delineated and edged red upon Plan Number 1470 deposited in the office of the Commissioner of Lands, Honiara.

THE RIVER WATERS (MBALISUNA) ORDER

(Section 1)

LN 95/1969

[24th November 1969]

It is declared that the Act shall apply to that part of Solomon Islands described in the Schedule hereto.

SCHEDULE

That part of the Mbalisuna River and the adjoining area of land edged red on Plan No. 1854 held in the office of the Commissioner of Lands and Surveys in Honiara.

LN 48/1972

THE RIVER WATERS (NGALIMBIU) ORDER

(Section 1)

LN 65/1974

[13th December 1974]

It is declared that the Act shall apply to that part of Solomon Islands described in the Schedule hereto-

SCHEDULE

That part of the Ngalimbiu River and the land adjoining within the area edged red on Plan number 2034 held in the office of the Commissioner of Lands, Honiara.

THE RIVER WATERS (LUNGGA) ORDER

(Section 1)

LN 110/1976

[10th December 1976]

It is declared that the Act shall apply to that part of Solomon Islands described in the Schedule hereto-

SCHEDULE

(The following description and grid references refer to map numbers 7729 I, 7729 II, 7829 III and 7829 IV of Edition 1 produced by the American Army Map Service in 1956 at a scale of 1 : 50,000.) That part of the Lungga River and all creeks and streams thereof emptying into the said part of the Lungga River or tributaries thereof and being within an area bounded as follows: -

Commencing at a point in Iron Bottom Sound at grid reference East 614, North 8961; thence by a straight line on a grid bearing of 180 degrees to a grid point; reference East 614, North 8958; thence by a straight line on a grid bearing of 143° 26' to a grid point reference East 615, North 8956; thence by a straight line on a grid bearing of 180 degrees to a grid point reference East 615, North 8954; thence by a straight line on a grid bearing of 225 degrees to a grid point reference East 611, North 8950; thence by a straight line on a grid bearing of 243 ° 26' to a grid point reference East 609, North 8949; thence by a straight line on a grid bearing of 270 degrees to a grid point reference East 607, North 8949; thence by a straight line on a grid bearing of 216°52' to a grid point reference East 604, North 8945; thence by a straight line on a grid bearing of 270 degrees to a grid point reference East 593, North 8945; thence by a straight line on a grid bearing of 0 degrees to a grid point reference East 593, North 8948; thence by a straight line on a grid bearing of 90° to a grid point reference East 598, North 8948; thence by a straight line on a grid bearing of 72° 11' to a grid point reference East 604, North 8952; thence by a straight line on a grid bearing of 90 degrees to a grid point reference East 609, North 8952; thence by a straight line on a grid bearing of 45 degrees to a grid point reference East 611, North 8954; thence by a straight line on a grid bearing of 63° 26' to a grid point reference East 613, North 8955; thence by a straight line on a grid bearing of 0 degrees to a grid point reference East 613, North 8957; thence by a straight line on a grid bearing of 341° 34'to a grid point reference East 612, North 8960; thence by a straight line on a grid bearing of 0 degrees to a grid point reference East 612, North 8961; thence by a straight line on a grid bearing of 90 degrees to the point of commencement, the whole being delineated and edged in red upon Plan Number 2094 deposited in the office of the Commissioner of Lands, Honiara.

THE RIVER WATERS (MAMARA RIVER) ORDER

(Section 1)

LN 8/1979

[6th April 1979]

It is declared that the Act shall apply to that part of Solomon Islands described in the Schedule hereto-

SCHEDULE

That part of the Mamara River being within an area bounded as follows-

Commencing at a point East of the Livestock Development Authority's water intake at grid reference East 597330 North 8960350; thence by a straight line on a grid bearing 322° to a point at grid reference East 597280 North 8960414; thence by a straight line on a grid bearing $229^{\circ} 29'$ to a point at grid reference East 597170 North 8960320; thence by a straight line on a grid bearing 270° to a point at grid reference East 597050 North 8960320; thence by a straight line on a grid bearing 180° to a point at grid reference East 597050 North 8960225; thence by a straight line on grid bearing 90° to a point at reference East 597180 North 8960225; thence by a straight line on grid bearing $50^{\circ} 12'$ to the point of commencement, the whole being delineated and edged in red on Plan Number 2158 deposited in the office of the Surveyor-General, Honiara.
