# Operation Helpem Fren

## Facts about the Solomon Islands

- **Location** – South Western Pacific
- **Population** – 500,000 (second largest of the Pacific Island states after Fiji)
- **Life Expectancy** – 71.82 (relatively high)
- **Religion** – mainly Christian
- **Language** – Solomons English (official language) and Solomons Pijin (a mixture of English and local languages, more commonly used)

## Brief historical background

- In the late 1990s ethnic tensions between rival groups led to violence and a coup (an overthrow of the government).
- Following this, there was a breakdown of law and order.
- The economy had largely failed.
- The Solomon Islands were described as a ‘failed state’.
- The Solomon Islands Government had no way of restoring order.
- In April 2003, the Solomon Islands Prime Minister, Sir Allan Kemakeza, wrote to the Australian Prime Minister, John Howard, asking for help.
- At a meeting of other Pacific Island countries, Australia proposed a plan to restore order.
- The Solomon Islands Parliament agreed to this.
- The Secretary-General of the United Nations commended it as a good plan.