



**Minister for Agriculture, Rural and Maritime Development,  
Waterways and Environment**

**Honorable Dr. Mahendra Reddy**

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**RESPONSE TO WRITTEN QUESTION**

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Parliament  
Government Buildings  
SUVA

(August 06, 2019)

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**Oral Question No. 159/2019**

In light of recent concern that centers on the people of Votua pertaining to the black sands mining in Ba, the following provide the response to the questions raised on who conducted the EIA and community consultations; the dates of consultations; the places of consultation; people consulted from the people of Votua and Nawaqarua and any concerns raised pertaining to the black sands mining in Ba.

**Response**

Honorable Speaker, the Hon. Prime Minister, the Hon. Leader of the Opposition and the Honorable Members, I thank the Honourable member for raising the question.

Honorable Speaker, any proposal for mining, reclaiming of minerals and dredging or excavation of river beds requires an Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) Process to be undertaken as required under the Environment Management Act 2005.

Amex Resource Limited (ARL), the proponent, submitted an EIA application to the Department of Environment on March 25, 2011. Following a scoping exercise by the Department, a Terms of Reference (TOR) dated May 5, 2011 was issued to the company for an Environmental Impact Assessment to be undertaken.

Honorable Speaker, Amex Resource Limited submitted the EIA Report to the Department of Environment on September 22, 2011. Honourable Speaker, the EIA study was undertaken by a Registered EIA Consultant Dr. Paulo Vanualailai of Envi-Green Pacific Consultancy Limited and Mr Mosese Bati of E-Care Environment Consultants. The consultants registered area of expertise are in Coastal Processes, Infrastructure (Environmental Engineering), General Environment Management (Marine) and Fisheries.

Honorable Speaker, following a review process that included the public consultations, the EIA report was approved on December 13, 2011.

Honorable Speaker, the Terms of Reference included the need for a social assessment to be undertaken as part of the EIA. An integral part of the social study was to identify how the development would impact community values and community life and the overall social organization of the communities residing in the area.

Honorable Speaker, as part of the social assessment, house to house interviews and public consultations with local communities and villagers who use the adjacent qoliqoli was carried out.

Honourable Speaker, a Socio Economic Questionnaire was circulated to neighboring residents and businesses within a 1km periphery of the mining area. This would include all the villages as well.

Honorable Speaker Sir, in addition community consultations was conducted with the three (3) Yavusa of the Vanua of Votua which included the Yavusa Narai, Yavusa Balavu and Yavusa Nadua.

Honorable Speaker the first public consultation was held at the District Office in Ba on September 24, 2011 from 10.30am to 1.30pm where 50 people attended which included members of Sasa and Nalaga community, two Yavusa Heads, representatives from the Fijian Affairs Board, Provincial Administrator Ba and District Officer - Ba.

Honorable Speaker Sir, the second public meeting in relation to the EIA was held at the Votua Village Hall on October 20, 2011 from 8.15pm where 40 people attended.

Honorable Speaker, concerns raised during both meetings included the impact of mining on current source of income and livelihood; access to their fishing grounds; compensation payment; the restoration and rehabilitation of the site; employment opportunities with preferential treatment for the youths of Votua; the joint venture between Amex Resources Limited and Vanua of Votua; funding for housing and education; provision of boats and engine to the Vanua Votua and lease

arrangement to be shared between Amex Resources Limited and Vanua Votua.

Honorable Speaker Sir, environmental concerns raised during the public consultations was addressed through the mitigation measures in the EIA report.

Honorable Speaker Sir, an Environmental and Performance Bond of \$200,000.00 was paid by Amex Resource Limited to the Mineral Resource Department on June 18, 2012. Honorable Speaker, environmental bonds is a cost against restoration, improvement or remediation work on any area; compensation for loss or damage to property or income; or preventative or remedial action.

Honorable Speaker Sir, we are aware that the company through Lands Department also paid the qoliqoli compensation.

Honorable Speaker, the Honorable Prime Minister, the Honourable Leader of the Opposition, Honourable Ministers, Honourable Members, I Thank you.

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