



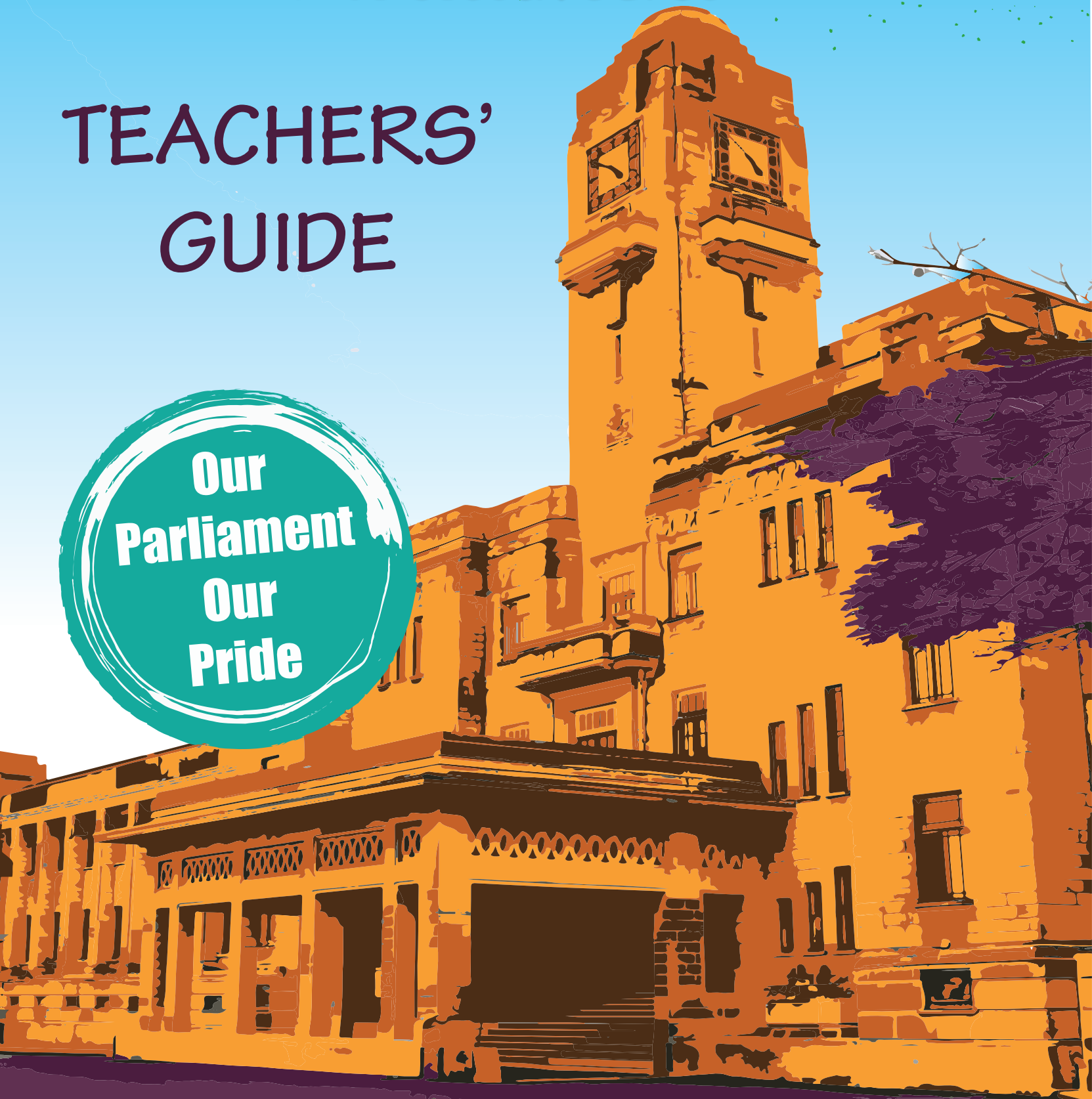
Information cards for schools



# DISCOVER *Parliament*

## TEACHERS' GUIDE

Our  
Parliament  
Our  
Pride



# **DISCOVER PARLIAMENT**

## **TEACHERS' GUIDE**

Civic Education Media Unit  
Parliament of the Republic of Fiji

Suva  
2017





## ⇒ Acknowledgments

---

The Parliament of the Republic of Fiji would like to acknowledge the support of the UNDP Fiji Parliament Support Project, implemented by the UNDP Pacific Office in Fiji and funded by the European Union and the Governments of New Zealand, Australia, and Japan.

Furthermore, a special acknowledgement and appreciation to the Education Services Unit of the New Zealand Parliament for allowing the Fijian Parliament to use the information in the NZ Parliament 'Explore Parliament' cards and Teachers' Guide to produce similar educational resources for the Fijian Parliament.

A special acknowledgement also goes to the Social Studies and Social Science Education officers at the Curriculum Advisory Services (CAS) of the Ministry of Education, Heritage and Arts; and teachers for their participation in the trialling of the Parliament educational materials during the Parliamentary Education workshops organised for teachers in 2015 and 2016.





## ⇒ Contents

---

4	Introduction
8	What is Parliament
10	How do we choose who will represent us?
12	How does Parliament work?
14	How does Parliament make laws?
16	How does Parliament give people a voice in lawmaking?
18	What is Parliament's role in making decisions about money?
20	How is the Government answerable for decisions it makes?
22	How can I participate in the work of Parliament?
24	Glossary

## ⇒ Introduction

### Why use Parliament as a context for learning?

Many young people believe that what happens in Parliament, and what the Government does, has no relevance to their lives. Nothing could be further from the truth. Members of Parliament (MPs) represent every citizen, including those who are not yet able to vote, and the decisions that make today help to shape the Fiji of tomorrow.

By learning about Parliament and how it works, students will see that Parliament is a crucial element in our democracy – ensuring that our laws are just and reasonable and there is accountability in the way our taxes are spent.

They will also see that a healthy democracy needs its citizens, including its young people, to be informed and involved. Students can find ways of participating now – in their schools and communities – and, in doing so, develop the knowledge and confidence to play their part as adult citizens in the future.

### The purpose of this resource

This resource will support you to develop learning programmes for students in in both Primary and Secondary schools and in line with the relevant Syllabi of relevant subjects. It makes connections between:

- The Fiji Parliament, democracy in Fiji, and democratic and parliamentary processes
- The Fijian Curriculum
- The lives of the students.

### Components of this resource

There are three main parts to this resource.

1. Eight student cards, each focused on a particular aspect of Parliament and parliamentary processes. The cards contain key information and activities designed to support student understanding.
2. This teachers' guide, with suggested learning activities aligned to each student card. The activities encourage further exploration of key ideas and concepts and link the ideas and concepts to students' lives.
3. Parliament Education Modules developed by Parliament for different age levels. The notes and activities in those Modules are aligned to the current Social Studies and Social Science Syllabi of the Ministry of Education.
4. Role Play programmes run by the Civic Education and Media Unit of Parliament.

## ⇒ Using this teachers' guide

### Topics

This resource provides teaching and learning ideas for each of the 8 student cards:

1. What is Parliament?
2. How do we choose who will represent us?
3. How does Parliament work?
4. How does Parliament make laws?
5. How does Parliament give people a voice in lawmaking?
6. What is Parliament's role in making decisions about money?
7. How is the Government answerable for decisions it makes?
8. How can I participate in the work of Parliament?

### Links to the Social Science Syllabi

As a context and theme, Parliament sits within the Social Science Syllabi designed as per the Fiji National Curriculum Framework 2012. As stated in the Social Science Syllabi Years 9 and 10 Curriculum Development Unit (2014):

*The Key Learning Area Outcome for Society and Economic Development [SED] states that at the end of the school year, any student who chooses SED must be able to explore and express relationships between people and events in relation to their culture, resources and environment and apply their knowledge and skills to become responsible and productive citizens.*

*The Society and Economic Development [SED] key learning area concentrates on four strands where one is taken by Commercial Studies and Social Science focus on the following three:*

- Social Organization and Processes
- Time, Continuity and Change
- Place and Environment

These 8 cards complement the teaching and learning of a number of sub-strands for all levels from Year 1-13 Social Studies, Social Science and History.

### Concepts

When learning about Parliament, students will encounter and engage with these Social Sciences concepts: citizenship, representation, past, present, future, contributing, belonging, cultural diversity, ethnicity, participation, interaction, rules, laws, roles, rights, responsibilities, leadership, governance, opportunity, systems, customs, and traditions.

Select which concepts you will focus on in your programme.



## Key competencies

Students strengthen their key competencies by using them in many contexts, particularly authentic contexts.

As part of the suggested learning experiences, this teachers' guide includes particular key competencies you could focus on. However, these are not prescriptive; you should select the competency or competencies that your students most need to develop.

Teacher actions that promote student learning.

## Learning experiences

It is recommended that you use the student cards in sequence. Concepts and ideas that are introduced and explained in the earlier cards are often used in the later cards, but without further explanation. For example, the difference between "Parliament" and "the Government" is explained only in Card 1.

The suggested learning experiences for each card are not lesson plans; rather, they suggest how you might go about building the conceptual understandings. It is important that you adapt and modify them before you use them.

## Social inquiry

The learning experiences outlined in the planning resource have potential for social inquiry.

## Values

As they learn about Parliament and its place in our nation, students will have opportunities to reflect on:

- The values on which Fiji's cultural and institutional traditions are based, particularly those that underpin our democracy
- The various kinds of value, such as moral, social, cultural, aesthetic, and economic values and how laws both embody and protect those values
- Their own values and those of other peoples and cultures.

## ⇒ Literacy support

### Concepts and vocabulary pose challenges that need to be managed

Some of the ideas and concepts in this resource are quite sophisticated for many students in years 9 and 10. Care has been taken to ensure that they are described in language that most students will be able to access with some support. English language learners and other students with limited literacy skills will need extra support. This may involve pre-teaching challenging vocabulary and concepts. Some of the activities suggested on the backs of the cards and in this guide will help students to clarify concepts and vocabulary.

### Useful teaching approaches

You may find the following approaches useful:

- Students read the cards in small groups and then discuss and respond to questions that you or the group have set
- Students use a reciprocal teaching approach, engaging in structured discussions of the information and the challenges posed by the text or content
- Students read the cards in pairs, asking each other questions and answering them
- Students follow along as you or a classmate read, asking and answering questions as they do so.

### Using the cues provided by the cards

Many of the headings in the cards are questions that are designed to guide students into the material. The students could skim the headings, make predictions, and then read to find specific information. Alternatively, they could devise their own questions before reading, and then take notes as they read.

### Building knowledge in advance

Unless your students have already learned something about Parliament at school or come from families that regularly discuss politics, they are unlikely to have much prior knowledge of the topic. If this is the case, you could introduce your students to basic information and/or show them streaming or other material from the parliament website. [www.parliament.gov.fj](http://www.parliament.gov.fj)

You could also use information that is readily available on the Internet, in newspapers, and on television to introduce them to ways that Parliament is visible in the various media. They could collect some of this information as a resource and add to it as they learn.

# CARD 1 – What is Parliament?

## Purpose

To investigate what Parliament is and what it does.

## Objective

- Understand how government and parliamentary rule in Fiji operate and affect people's lives.

## Conceptual understanding

The work of Parliament has an impact on our lives.

## Key ideas

- Parliament makes laws on our behalf and approves the spending of tax money.
- Separating the functions of government limits Parliament's power.
- Laws reflect the needs of individuals and groups.

## Key competencies

As your students engage in learning, they will demonstrate and develop these key competencies:

- Relating to others – while working together to come up with new approaches, ideas, and ways of thinking
- Thinking – by exploring and evaluating new information and by constructing new knowledge
- Managing self – by establishing and managing their own learning goals and meeting commitments.

## Building knowledge

Use Card 1 ("What is Parliament?") to help your students build their knowledge of Parliament.

You may need to clarify the distinction between "government", "the Government", and "Parliament" and give your students the opportunity to explore the meaning of the words.

Some of the concepts introduced in the card will be new, and most students will need your support to understand them. The activities suggested on the card will help, as will other activities such as matching words and definitions. (Provide your students with two sets of cards: one set with a word or concept written on each card and one set giving the definitions. Have the students work in pairs to match the cards.)

Adapt the following learning experiences as appropriate so that they align with your teaching and learning objectives.

## Suggested learning experiences

### Focus question 1: What is Parliament and what happens there?

Build on what the students already know about Parliament.

Have them:

- Discuss a picture of a session of Parliament and discuss what happens in Parliament. (If necessary, discuss unfamiliar concepts, for example, "member of Parliament", "Government", "representative", "opposition", and "legislative")

Use a KWL (What I know?/What I want to know/ What I learned?) Chart to review what they know about Parliament and what they want to find out. Students can add to this chart as they learn more about Parliament and can use it to evaluate their growing knowledge.

### Focus question 2: What is the separation of powers and how does it relate to Parliament?

Build on what the students have learned and already know about Parliament.

Have them:

- Discuss the different, clearly defined functions of the three branches of government
- Design a symbol that represents each of the three branches of government
- Complete a three-circle Venn diagram as a way of consolidating this information and considering where overlap occurs. Have students underline those descriptions in the Venn diagram that directly involve Parliament
- Discuss how separating the branches of government work to protect the rights of individuals.

### Focus question 3: How do the groups we belong to shape our ideas?

Make links between the students' own experiences in various groups and the rights and responsibilities they have as group members.

Have them:

- Compile a list of all the groups that they belong to and then discuss:
  - how belonging to these groups affects them
  - how, by their involvement, they affect these groups
- Discuss and record on a class wall chart the many ways that individuals and groups can contribute to their communities.

#### Focus question 4: How does the work of Parliament relate to our own lives?

Make links between Parliament and the students' lives  
Make links between Parliament and the students' lives to help them understand the rights and responsibilities that go with living in a democracy.

Have them:

- Develop a set of questions and then use them to interview their parents, grandparents or elders, relatives, or friends to find out how they see the work of Parliament affecting their lives
- Discuss and record on the class chart (developed earlier in question 3):
  - how the work of Parliament affects the lives of everyone
  - how individuals and groups can influence Parliament and participate in democratic processes
- Form some generalisations about how Parliament affects their lives and the lives of people they know at different ages and different points in their lives.

#### Possible lines of further inquiry

- Access the parliament website, watch Parliament streaming, or visit Parliament so the students gain an understanding of what goes on in parliamentary sessions and how members of the public can participate in parliamentary processes.
- Find out more about a member of Parliament and what he or she has achieved
- Find out what laws Parliament is currently considering that may have impacts on their lives. (For information about laws currently being considered, go to the website [[www.parliament.gov.fj](http://www.parliament.gov.fj)])
- Find out more about Fiji's earlier Parliament. How was it different from today's Parliament? What was the Upper House? What was its purpose? Why was it discarded?
- Research the Westminster system of Parliament and find out how many other countries in the world use some variant of this system.



# CARD 2 – How do we choose who will represent us?

## Purpose

To investigate how people can participate in the democratic process of electing their representatives in Parliament

## Objective

Understand how government and parliamentary rule in Fiji operate and affect people's lives.

## Conceptual understanding

In a democracy, individuals and groups have roles, rights, and responsibilities.

## Key ideas

- Fiji is a democracy.
- We have a say in who represents us in Parliament.
- We have access to the members of Parliament who represent us.

## Key Competencies

As your students engage in learning, they will demonstrate and develop these key competencies:

- Thinking – by exploring and evaluating new information and by constructing new knowledge
- participating and contributing – by exploring the contributions they make to, and the benefits they receive from, participation in groups
- Relating to others – while working together to come up with new approaches, ideas, and ways of thinking.

## Building knowledge

Use Card 2 ("How do we choose who will represent us?") to support your students to build their knowledge about how Fijians elect their parliamentary representatives.

Some of the concepts introduced in the card will be new, and students will need your support to understand them. The activities suggested on the card will help. Further activities are described below.

Adapt the following learning experiences so that they align with your teaching and learning objectives.

## Suggested learning experiences

### Focus question 1: What is democracy and the democratic process?

Build on your students' understanding and knowledge about representation and democracy.

Have the students:

- Create a vocabulary tree for key concepts associated with the election process, including words such as "election", "electors", "voting", "candidates", "members of Parliament", "members of the Opposition", "polling booths", (Students write a key word in a box and then add arrows [branches] to other words associated with that key word)
- Review and discuss in small groups:
  - why someone might want to become an MP
  - how a candidate becomes an MP
- Create a diagram or flow chart that begins with candidate selection and ends with the election of a government.

### Focus question 2: What principles and values underlie Fiji democracy?

Support the students to develop their own understandings and interpretations of democracy and how it relates to them.

Have the students:

- Explore the concept of democracy by unpacking terms such as "accountable", "transparent", and "fair" with the aid of a word bank. (Students draw four boxes. They write the new term in the first box and add its dictionary definition to the second. In the third, they draw a picture of their understanding of the term, and in the final box they explain how the term relates to their life.)
- Use their word bank, and the knowledge they have built so far, to write a short speech for overseas visitors that answers, with evidence or examples, the question "What principles and values underlie Fiji's democratic system?"

### Focus question 3: What do my parliamentary representatives do for me, our community, and our country?

Make links between the role of the institution of Parliament in our democracy and the work of parliamentary representatives in the community.

Students could:

- Identify an MP and create a profile of him or her (who he or she is, what he or she does, and so on)
- Develop questions for their MP. (These questions could relate to how the MP responds to issues and engages with people in his or her community, including how he or she uses social media)
- As a class, submit these questions to their MP in person or by email. (Students could extend their investigation by asking similar questions of MPs from other parties)
- Begin to create a class wall chart on which they record the various ways that individuals and groups can be involved in the democratic process.

### Possible further lines of inquiry

- Investigate the various ways that a Government can be formed.
- Select issues under discussion in Parliament, collect an assortment of news articles and online messages about it, and evaluate this material.
- Identify an issue of concern and plan how to bring this issue to the attention of Parliament.

# CARD 3 – How does Parliament work?

## Purpose

To investigate how organisation and structure enable Parliament to work effectively

## Objective

- Understand how government and parliamentary rule in Fiji operate and affect people's lives.

## Conceptual understanding

To work effectively, Parliament needs to have well defined procedures and structures.

## Key ideas

- People in Parliament have specific roles and responsibilities.
- Parliament has rules and procedures for how things must be done.
- Parliament's organisation and structure support democratic processes.
- The way leadership is acquired and expressed in Parliament is a cornerstone of democracy.

## Key Competencies

As students engage with this topic, they will be demonstrating these key competencies:

- Relating to others – while working together to come up with new approaches, ideas, and ways of thinking
- Thinking – by exploring and evaluating new information and by constructing new knowledge
- Managing self – by establishing and managing their own learning goals and meeting commitments.

## Building knowledge

**Use Card 3 ("How does Parliament work?")** to build your students' knowledge of the organisation and structure of Parliament and the roles of key people.

Support students to build their understanding of the vocabulary and concepts related to this topic. Introduce and explore concept words, for example, "majority", "confidence", "coalition", "oath", "allegiance", and "impartial", that may be unfamiliar to some students.

Adapt the following learning experiences as appropriate so that they align with your teaching and learning objectives.

## Suggested learning experiences

Build on your students' knowledge and understanding of how Parliament works.

Have your students discuss:

- What would happen if there were no rules in the House (for example, when debating bills)?
- Why are the procedures that follow an election set out in such detail?

Students could:

- Participate in a jigsaw activity to find, interpret and represent specific information related to roles, rules, and procedures in Parliament.
- Develop several questions for further inquiry, along with a list of websites that might help them to answer those questions, then pursue the question that interests them most
- Select a current member of Parliament and find out what special roles he or she has (for example, Minister, Parliamentary committee member, party whip)
- Explore how the selected member carries out these special roles and what rules and procedures must be followed. They can speculate on the reasons for these rules and procedures.

## Focus question 2: What role does tradition play in Parliament and in life?

Encourage your students to consider the role that tradition plays in Parliament – and in their own lives.

Have them explore the following questions:

- What are some traditional practices found in Parliament?
- Why are traditions important in Parliament?
- What traditions do you observe in your own life, for example, in your family or at school?

They could then complete a PMI (Plus, Minus, Interesting) Chart for the concept of tradition. This chart is designed to encourage students to think about the plus side, minus side, and interesting things associated with any concept.

**Focus question 3: How can an individual’s leadership capability be developed?**

Support students to make links to their own lives and discuss how they can develop leadership skills.

Have the students explore the following questions:

- How is leadership expressed in the groups to which you belong?
- What rules and conventions guide the leaders in those groups?
- What are your rights and responsibilities as a member of a group?
- How are you encouraged to exercise your rights and responsibilities as a group member?

Students could do one or more of the following:

- Identify and list the skills, knowledge, values, and attitudes they recognise in effective leadership
- Use a thinking grid to identify opportunities in their lives to take on leadership roles and to develop the knowledge, skills, attitudes, and values to be effective leaders. (Thinking grids allow students to identify, compare, analyse, and clarify their thoughts. Across the top row of the grid, they write questions, such as How do I get this role? What is the role? What are the responsibilities? and What attributes are needed for the role? In the left-hand column, they list opportunities that offer leadership roles, such as sports team, club, school, and home, then answer the questions for each in the appropriate section of the grid.)

**Possible lines for further inquiry**

- Investigate how parliamentary processes provide opportunities for Fijians to exercise their responsibilities (for example, by allowing them to contact MPs and make submissions to select committees).
- Research other systems of government (for example, absolute monarchy and dictatorship) and compare our system with these systems.
- Investigate the role of the media in keeping people informed about the work of Parliament and why the media is referred to as the “fourth estate”. Explore the role of bloggers (sometimes referred to as the “fifth estate”) in keeping people informed.



# CARD 4 – How does Parliament make laws?

## Purpose

To understand the process by which Parliament makes laws

## Objective

- Understand how government and parliamentary rule in Fiji operate and affect people's lives.

## Conceptual understanding

Specific processes are needed to ensure that the laws made by Parliament are rigorously debated and scrutinised. This is important because laws affect all Fijians.

## Key ideas

- Rules and laws guide many aspects of our daily lives.
- Parliament follows a rigorous process for making laws.
- All citizens have a responsibility to abide by the law.

## Key Competencies

As your students learn about how laws are made, they will develop and demonstrate these key competencies:

- Thinking – by exploring and evaluating new information and by constructing new knowledge
- participating and contributing – by contributing ideas and reflecting on new learning
- Using language, symbols, and texts – by making meaning from a range of languages, texts, and symbols, of which some will be unfamiliar.

## Building knowledge

Use Card 4 ("How does Parliament make laws?") to build your students' knowledge about how ideas become laws. Given the complex process, they are likely to need support to understand the different stages and why these stages are necessary. Use the activities on the back of the card to reinforce the concepts, processes, and specialised vocabulary.

## Suggested learning experiences

### Focus question 1: Why do we have rules (including unwritten rules) and laws?

Build on your students' existing understanding of what rules and laws are and why we have them.

Have the students discuss the following questions:

- Why do we need rules and laws?
- What makes an effective rule? What are some examples?
- What makes a bad rule? What are some examples?
- What is the difference between a law, a rule, and a custom? What are some examples of each of these? Provide opportunities for the students to clarify the similarities and differences between laws, rules, unwritten rules, and customs by considering, for example, staying inside school boundaries at lunchtime, eating etiquette, and age requirements for driving.

### Focus question 2: Why are new rules and laws created, and why are others changed or abandoned?

Encourage your students to think about protection for people and property, the prevention and resolution of conflict, and social cohesion.

They could then do one or more of the following:

- Identify and discuss the rules they follow at home, in their local community, and in groups they belong to
- Consider the consequences of having no rules or laws by reflecting on what it would be like to have, for example, a game without rules, no road code, and no agreed understandings about acceptable social behaviour
- Discuss how, and by whom, laws and rules are enforced, and who decides that a law has been broken
- Discuss why laws and rules are sometimes changed, and brainstorm examples of amended and repealed laws.

Students could further explore the implications of rules and laws through drama, by drawing cartoon strips of an imagined scenario, or by reading suitable fiction or non-fiction stories.

### Focus question 3: What processes are used to make or change a law?

Choose a law (if possible, a recent law that is of interest to young people) and have your students investigate how it became law. Create a flow chart to illustrate the process.

(For information about laws currently being considered, go to the Parliament website [www.parliament.gov.fj](http://www.parliament.gov.fj))

Ask them to consider these questions:

- Where did the idea for the law come from?
- How was the bill introduced to Parliament?
- What process did Parliament follow to ensure that all aspects of the bill were carefully considered?
- What opportunities were there for differing views to be expressed?
- How did these views influence the final wording of the law

### Possible further lines of inquiry

- Consider current school rules and identify a new rule that might be needed or an existing rule that might be changed. Then:
  - collect any relevant information (the background to the rule, the reason for having it, how long it has been in force)
  - seek the views of students and others (teachers, parents)
  - develop an informed viewpoint on the likely impacts
  - make a decision about the need for the new rule or change
  - advocate for the new or changed rule, if appropriate
  - review what has been achieved and the process used.
- Consider a current school rule and the possible impacts if it were abolished.
- Propose a new school rule (or the removal of a current rule), then have a class debate to decide the merits or otherwise of the proposal.
- Explore how laws affect popular spare-time activities (for example, copyright law and music).
- Undertake an inquiry into examples of amended or repealed laws and explore the reasons behind the changes.
- Undertake an inquiry into how particular laws have had impacts on society (for example, the laws that banned cellphones when driving, that raised the driver licensing age, that made buildings smoke free, or that restricted the sale of fireworks).

# CARD 5 – How does Parliament give people a voice in lawmaking?

## Purpose

To understand what standing committees are and how they work

## Objective

- Understand how government and parliamentary rule in Fiji operate and affect people's lives.

## Conceptual understanding

In a democracy, people must have opportunities to say what they think.

## Key ideas

- Standing committees are a very important part of making sure that new laws are workable and representative.
- Scrutiny of bills before Parliament is the main job of standing committees.
- Any member of the public can make a submission to a standing committee. This is one way that people can have a say in Parliament.

## Key Competencies

As your students learn about standing committees, they will develop and demonstrate these key competencies:

- Participating and contributing – by contributing ideas, gathering opinion, and reflecting on new learning
- Relating to others – by working together, they come up with new approaches, ideas, and ways of thinking
- Managing self – by gaining the confidence to express original ideas.

## Building knowledge

Card 5 ("How does Parliament give people a voice in lawmaking?") to build your students' knowledge about standing committees and their work.

Use the activities on the card to reinforce the concepts, processes, and specialised vocabulary.

## Suggested learning experiences

### Focus question 1: What are standing committees and what do they do?

Build on your students' knowledge and understanding about standing committees.

Have the students discuss these questions:

- What do standing committees do?
- Why does Parliament have them?
- How does the public find out which bills are being considered by standing committees?

Help students develop the understanding that detailed scrutiny cannot be done in the House (and why) and standing committees are where much of that work is done.

### Focus question 2: How are committees important in our lives?

Encourage the students to think about the committees that operate at school, in sports clubs, and in faith/church groups, as well as any other committees they know of.

Ask the students:

- What is the purpose of these committees?
- How do they involve the members of the groups they represent?
- What impacts does their work have on the groups they represent?
- How can people in your class/school/sports group provide opinions and ideas to committees?
- What would happen if these committees did not exist?
- What are your rights and responsibilities as a member of a class/school/sports group when electing a committee or when speaking to a committee?

### Focus question 3: Why are standing committees important in our democratic system?

Students inquire into and participate in the standing committee process.

Have them:

- Look up the quick link "Bills before standing committees" on [www.parliament.gov.fj](http://www.parliament.gov.fj) explore those bills that have upcoming "submissions"
- Choose the bill that is of most interest to them
- Find out what the intent of the proposed law is and why different people have different viewpoints about it
- Come to their own conclusions about the proposed new law and draft some arguments for and against the

Have the students reflect on:

- The strengths and weaknesses of the select committee process in upholding democratic values
- The likelihood of their making a submission about a proposed law in the future
- How they felt, knowing they could be directly involved in the lawmaking process by making a submission.

### Possible lines for further inquiry

- Invite an MP to talk to the class about his or her work on a standing committee.
- Develop a set of rules and guidelines that would allow a school "standing committee" to operate effectively.
- Find out which MPs are on which committees and what bills they are currently considering.



# CARD 6 – What is Parliament’s role in making decisions about money?

## Purpose

To understand the democratic processes involved in approving the use of public money by the Government

## Objective

- Understand how government and parliamentary rule in Fiji operate and affect people’s lives.

## Conceptual Understanding

Parliament scrutinises and approves the spending of tax money on behalf of all Fijians.

## Key ideas

- To implement its policies, the Government must have access to public money.
- Parliament must approve the supply of money to the Government.
- More than half of the members of Parliament must support the supply of public money if the Government is to have “the confidence of the House”.
- Each year, the Government must present a plan (the Budget) in which it outlines how it proposes to spend public money.

## Key Competencies

As your students learn how Parliament approves the spending of tax money, they will develop and demonstrate these key competencies:

- participating and contributing – by contributing ideas and reflecting on new learning
- Using language, symbols, and texts – by making meaning and judgments from a range of languages, symbols, and texts
- Thinking – by being receptive to a range of ideas from a range of sources.

## Building knowledge

Use Card 6 (“What is Parliament’s role in making decisions about money?”) to build your students’ knowledge about how the Government funds its policies and plans. It may be necessary to clarify the terms “supply” and “confidence”. Ensure the students

realise that confidence in this context means that the Government is certain it has the numbers to get its spending approved. Some students may need to explore further the meanings of these two terms.

Use the activities on the card to reinforce the concepts, the processes, and the specialised vocabulary.

## Suggested learning experiences

### Focus question 1: Why does Parliament have to approve the Government’s use of public money?

Build on your students’ knowledge about why Parliament must approve the spending of money.

Have the students discuss these questions:

- Why does Parliament need to approve the supply of money to the Government?
- What would happen if Parliament were not required to approve the supply of money to the Government?
- What might happen if Parliament refused to approve the supply of money to the Government?

### Focus question 2: Where does the Government spend the money it collects as taxes?

In this activity, the students research what happens to taxes.

In pairs, or small groups, have the students brainstorm what they think are the five areas that receive the greatest shares of tax revenue.

Select suitable graphs and images from the Internet that show a breakdown of how the Government spends its money. Check the website of the relevant Fijian government ministry that looks after Budget Use the following questions to encourage the students to explore the information, make comparisons, and draw conclusions about the Government’s priorities.

- Looking back at your brainstorm, what surprises you about the way the Government divides up the money it spends?
- Why do you think the Government spends more in some areas than others?
- What conclusions can you draw from this information about the Government’s priorities for Fiji?

- Do you agree with these priorities? Why/Why not?  
As an extension, have the students compare Budget allocations across two or three recent years.
- Which areas have received increased funding in the past few years?
- Which areas have received less funding?
- Why do you think this might be?

### **Focus question 3: How do economic decisions made by Parliament affect our lives?**

Students research a relevant issue that involves Government funding.

Suggest several current issues that involve Government funding and about which there is disagreement, for example, offering financial incentives for a business to work in Fiji, changing tax rates, and increasing the taxes on cigarettes or alcohol.

Have the students select an issue that interests them and:

- Collect a range of opinions on the issue from parents, teachers, and others in the community, as well as from letters to newspapers, opinion pieces, and news websites
- Create poster presentations on the issue, with a focus on divergent viewpoints and some of the reasons for these viewpoints.

If appropriate, you could invite a member of Parliament to your class and have the students present and explain their findings. The MP could then explain his or her own thinking on the issue and why a particular decision has been made.

### **Focus question 4: What are some differing opinions about the degree to which the Government should be financially involved in our lives?**

Students consider how Government funding decisions affect their lives and possible alternatives to Government funding of essential services.

Have students discuss these questions:

- What areas of your lives involve Government funding?
- How would your lives be affected if the Government did not fund these areas?
- What alternatives are there to Government funding of essential services? What are the advantages and disadvantages of these alternatives?

The students could explore the “small government versus big government” debate and argue a position.

### **Possible further lines of inquiry**

- Find out how the income tax system is structured and how it works.
- Find out what happens if the Government needs additional money before the next Budget.
- Look at an issue such as student loans or funding of medicines and think how a Government could find ways of reducing the cost of these to the taxpayer. Do some research on your issue to see if your ideas have ever been tried.
- Investigate an issue such as the retirement age and look at how changing this might affect Government spending.
- Investigate what is meant by the “political spectrum” and how a party’s position on the spectrum tends to influence its spending decisions.

# CARD 7 – How is the government answerable for decisions it makes?

## Purpose

To understand how Parliament holds the Government accountable for its decisions and its actions

## Objective

- Understand how government and parliamentary rule in Fiji operate and affect people's lives.

## Conceptual Understanding

Holding the Government to account is a key function of Parliament and an important principle of democracy.

## Key ideas

- As representatives of the people, members of Parliament are accountable to the people.
- Spending and lawmaking are two areas where high levels of accountability are expected.
- Parliament has various processes and procedures that are designed to ensure accountability.

## Key Competencies

As your students learn about how Parliament keeps the Government accountable, they will develop and demonstrate these key competencies:

- Using language, symbols, and texts – by understanding the specific language involved in parliamentary processes
- Thinking – by making sense of information and developing understanding
- participating and contributing – by contributing new ideas and reflecting on new learning to support a community of learners.

## Building knowledge

Use Card 7 ("How is the Government answerable for decisions it makes?") to build your students' knowledge of this topic. You may want to refer to the cards: "What is Parliament's role in making decisions about money?" and "How does Parliament give people a voice in lawmaking?" for more detailed examples and information about some of the processes and procedures discussed in this card.

Use the activities on the card to reinforce the concepts, processes, and specialised vocabulary.

Many students may be unfamiliar with the word "accountability" but will understand the concept if they can link it to prior experiences in family, community or formal group situations, such as learning words and actions for a play, turning out for their team, conveying a message correctly, getting to a place on time, and looking after a younger sibling as agreed. Do we always like being held accountable?

## Suggested learning experiences

### Focus question 1: Why is it important that the Government is accountable to Parliament?

Build on your students' knowledge and understanding of accountability.

Have the students discuss these questions:

- Why is holding the Government to account an important function of Parliament?
- What might happen if a Government were not required to be accountable for its decisions and actions?
- What can people do if a Government makes a decision that appears to be against the wishes of the majority of the people?

### Focus question 2: What parliamentary processes keep the Government accountable?

Watch question time in Parliament with your students (on television or online, live or recorded; [www.parliament.gov.fj](http://www.parliament.gov.fj)). As preparation, get them to write questions that they would like answered by watching the broadcast.

Possible questions include:

- What is the purpose of question time?
- Who asks the questions? What is the procedure?
- What sorts of question do members ask?
- What is the purpose of the questions?
- How effective are the questions?
- How do Ministers answer the questions?
- What happens if a Minister doesn't give a reasonable answer?



- Apart from question time, how else can members question Ministers to find out detailed information? After viewing the session, have the students discuss possible answers to their questions and then evaluate the effectiveness of question time.

They could discuss the following questions:

- Was question time what you were expecting?
- Is question time an effective way of keeping the Government accountable?

### **Focus question 3: What is the role of the media in keeping Parliament accountable?**

Provide a range of news stories (print, online), selected blogs, letters to newspapers, editorials, and news clips about recent events in Parliament that are of interest to the students.

Have the students:

- Read and/or view the articles and stories and then discuss them in small groups
- Identify and/or highlight the key issues • Identify a range of viewpoints and explanations
- Express their own opinions.

They could carry out a PMI to collate and evaluate their opinions for and against the issue in question. (Students draw up a three-column chart and note down their ideas under “Plus”, “Minus”, and “Interesting”.)

Ask the students to:

- Consider how the event is explained and portrayed in the various items and by different media
- Discuss why it is important in a democracy to have the activities and decisions of Parliament reported and discussed in the media.

### **Possible further lines of inquiry**

- Find out about the history of Hansard.
- Collect a range of political cartoons on the same current issue. What different viewpoints do they represent?



# CARD 8 – How can I participate in the work of Parliament?

## Purpose

To understand why and how individuals can participate in the work of Parliament.

## Objective

- Understand how government and parliamentary rule in Fiji operate and affect people's lives.

## Conceptual Understanding

As citizens of a democracy, we have rights and responsibilities.

## Key ideas

- A healthy democracy relies on high levels of participation by the public.
- We can all have a say in the shaping of our country and our futures.
- Parliamentary processes encourage involvement by the public.

## Key Competencies

As your students learn about how people can get involved in parliamentary processes, they will develop and demonstrate these key competencies:

- participating and contributing – by being involved in their community and having the confidence to participate in community actions and processes
- Managing self – by taking opportunities to participate in democratic processes
- Relating to others – by recognising, respecting, and valuing diverse opinions in their community.

## Building knowledge

Use Card 8 ("How can I participate in the work of Parliament?") to build your students' knowledge and understanding about the importance of being involved in democratic processes and how they might do this.

Use the activities on the card to reinforce the concepts, processes, and specialised vocabulary.

## Suggested learning experiences

### Focus question 1: Why should everyone get involved in democratic processes?

Students work in groups to consider the consequences of people not being aware of decisions that are made on their behalf.

Have them discuss these questions:

- What might be some of the consequences for lawmaking, spending decisions, and the provision of essential services if a large part of the population didn't vote, were uninformed, or did not get involved in debating issues?
- What would be the risks to democracy if large numbers of voters did not vote?
- What are the effects on Parliament if we get a high proportion of citizens involved and voting in elections?
- Why is it important that all citizens understand the work of Parliament?
- Why is it important that all eligible voters take part in democratic processes?

Have the students debate the statement: "If you don't vote, you can't complain."

### Focus question 2: What is one democratic process that anyone can be involved in?

Students explore the process of putting a petition to Parliament.

Have them:

- Explain what they already know about petitions
- Clarify the purpose of petitions and the process of organising one. (Emphasise that this is one way that people can have a say on an issue and ask for something to be done)
- Research petitions that Fijians have presented to Parliament (see [www.parliament.gov.fj](http://www.parliament.gov.fj) for a list of current and recent petitions). The students could investigate the outcomes of petitions. Did the petitions influence Government decision-making?
- Find out about the rules that govern petitions and discuss likely reasons for these rules
- Discuss why numbers matter for petitions.

### Focus question 3: How can we make a petition?

Students choose an appropriate class or school issue that they feel needs improvement.

Have them:

- Prepare a petition, remembering that it must be addressed to the correct person (board chair, class teacher, or principal) and should clearly state what should be changed and why.
- Carry out a campaign to gather signatures. (They could do this by speaking to classes, advertising around school, creating posters and brochures, and/or staging a debate)
- Arrange a formal hand-over of the petition, possibly with a brief speech and reply
- Ensure that the person who receives the petition considers it and replies in writing.

Have the students evaluate the process – and the outcome – by reflecting on:

- The strengths and weaknesses of the petition process in upholding democratic values at their school and in influencing decisions
- How they felt, knowing that they could be directly involved in school decision-making through organising a petition.

### Possible further lines of inquiry

- Investigate Youth Parliament: what it is, how often it is held, what happens there, and how the students can apply to participate.
- Find out about the achievements of a young person who has made a difference by becoming involved in what happens in their community or the work of Parliament (for example, by becoming a local councillor).

## ⇒ Glossary

- **Act / Act of Parliament** - A law made by Parliament. (See also regulations.)
- **Amendment** - A change to the wording of a motion or Bill that is being considered by the Parliament or a committee.
- **Appropriation Bill** - A Bill that is introduced by the Government to seek authority from Parliament to spend public money and incur liabilities. Details of the Government's spending plans are set out in papers that are presented in association with each Appropriation Bill. (See Estimates.)
- **Appropriation Bill,**  
– See Supplementary Appropriation Bill.
- **Assistant Minister** - A member of Parliament who is part of the Executive but not Cabinet. He or she assists the primary Cabinet Minister in one or more of the Departments or agencies under his or her portfolio. For the purposes of membership of Standing Committees, they are not considered Ministers. This logic is also extended for the purposes of asking questions of Ministers during Question Time.
- **Ayes** - The votes of members of Parliament who vote in support of a motion in the Parliament.
- **Backbencher** - A Member of Parliament who is not a Minister or a leading member of an Opposition party and generally does not occupy a front bench.
- **Budget** - The process for preparing and documenting the Government's economic policies and spending plans each year, resulting in the introduction of the main Appropriation Bill and the delivery of the Budget statement.
- **Budget Statement** - A statement made by the Minister responsible for finance detailing the Government's economic policies and plans for spending public money in the coming financial year. The Budget statement takes the form of a speech in Parliament with no time limit. By convention, at the beginning of the Second Reading Debate, the first speaker is the Opposition spokesperson on finance, who is afforded an equal amount of time as was taken up by the Budget statement.
- **Cabinet** - The central decision-making body of Executive Branch of Government. Chaired by the Prime Minister, the Cabinet is a collective forum for Ministers

to decide significant Government issues.

**Candidate** - Someone who puts his or her name forward for election to Parliament.

- **Caucus** - A collective term for all members of Parliament from the same political party. A caucus meets regularly in private to consider party matters. A caucus may also refer to common interest groups across different parties e.g. Women's Caucus or various friendship groups.
- **Chamber** - The debating chamber, where all the Parliamentarians meet. It has rows of seats and tables in an inverted horseshoe formation facing the Speaker's Chair.
- **Coalition Government** - A type of Government that is formed from more than one party.
- **Committee of the Whole Parliament** - A committee that includes all members of Parliament. The Parliament "resolves itself into committee" to consider certain business in detail. In the case of Bills, this "Committee stage" happens after their second reading, and during this stage members may propose amendments to the text of Bills. Some rules of debate in a committee of the whole Parliament differ from those in the Parliament itself—for example, a member may speak more than once in a debate. During the passage of the National Budget, after the conclusion of the second reading debate on the Appropriations Bill, the Estimates are scrutinised in detail by a special committee of the whole Parliament known as the Committee of Supply.
- **Committee, Select** - See Select Committee.
- **Committee, Special** - See Special Committee.
- **Committee, Standing** - See Standing Committee.
- **Confidence** - The ability of the Government to command majority support in the Parliament, without which another party could seek to form a Government or a general election might be needed.
- **Confidence, Vote Of** - A vote on a motion that determines whether the Government has the confidence of the Parliament. A vote of confidence most often arises from the Motion of no confidence in the Prime Minister, a Motion for early dissolution of Parliament, the debate on the President's Speech, an Appropriation Bill, or a Supplementary Appropriation Bill.



- **Conscience Vote** - A personal vote made by all members of Parliament according to their own conscience rather than along party lines. Section 63(1)(h) of the Constitution of the Republic of Fiji prescribes that a member's seat becomes vacant if the member votes or abstains from voting in Parliament contrary to any direction issued by their political party, unless prior permission is obtained.
- **Constituent** - A person living in an electoral district, called a constituency. In the case of Fiji, the whole country is a single constituency. Also called an 'elector', although the more commonly used term in Fiji is 'voter'.
- **Debate** - A discussion on a Bill or a motion or other item of business before Parliament.
- **Dissolution** - The ending of a Parliament by proclamation, resulting in a general election. (See also proclamation, prorogation, and expiration.)
- **Election** - The process by which electors vote for members of Parliament.
- **Elector** - A person who is eligible to vote in an election. In Fiji, the more commonly used term is 'voter'.
- **Electoral Roll** - The list of names of people who are registered voters.
- **Enact** - To pass an Act of Parliament. (See legislative process.)
- **Enacting words** - The words 'Enacted by the Parliament of the Republic of Fiji' are read out by the Secretary-General to Parliament after reading the long title of the Bill subsequent to the successful passage of the Third/Final Reading. The words 'Passed by the Parliament of the Republic of Fiji on the [day] [month] [year]' are placed at the end of the Act before presentation to President for Assent and after Assent together with the words 'I Assent' at the beginning of the Act declare that the Act is officially a law of the land. Commencement provisions in the Act specify when the law comes into force, and if no date is specified, taken to be upon publication in the Gazette.
- **Estimates** - A detailed statement of how the Government proposes its departments and other agencies will spend public money and incur liabilities in a financial year. This spending must be approved by way

- of an Appropriation Bill.

**Estimates, Supplementary** - See Supplementary

- Estimates.

- **Evidence** - Information given in writing or in person to a select committee.

**Executive** - A decision-making group made up of the Prime Minister and other Ministers. The Government of

- the day forms the Executive.

**Executive Council** - A formal meeting of the President

- with Ministers.

**Expiration** - The ending of a term of Parliament if it exceeds the legal time limit, which is three years from the date set for the declaration of the results after the previous general election. The expiration of a term of Parliament triggers a general election. Parliament almost always is dissolved before expiration. (See also

- dissolution.)

**Financial Review** - Process of scrutiny by the Parliament and its Standing Committee on Public Accounts of Auditor-General's Report for the previous financial year and current operations, of Government departments, offices of Parliament, State enterprises, and

- public organisations.

**Financial Year** - A year as it is set for public finance, currently being the period from 1 August of one

- calendar year to 31 July of the next.

**First Reading** - First presentation of a Bill to Parliament marking the start of the Bill's process towards becoming an Act of Parliament. First reading of the Bill is passed without debate. The Bill is usually referred to a standing committee for consideration after the

- second reading.

**Gallery** - The public seating areas beyond the bar at

- the rear of the Chamber and above the Chamber.

**General Election** - The election held following the end of a term of Parliament, usually every 4 years, to

- elect members of the new Parliament.

**Government** - The political party, or group of political parties, represented in the Parliament the President has approved to lead the country and that has the confidence of the Parliament. The word 'Government' is also used more narrowly to mean the Executive. See Executive.



- **Hansard** - Alternative name for the Fiji Parliamentary Debates, which is a written record of the debates in the Parliament.
- **Hearing of Evidence** - A committee meeting during which members of the public may present information or opinions about an issue.
- **Law** - Binding rules by which society is governed. (See **Bill**, and **Regulations**.)
- **Leader of the Government in Parliament** - The Minister who coordinates Government business in the Parliament.
- **Leader of the Opposition** - The leader of the largest political party in the Parliament that is not part of the Government.
- **Legislation** - Laws, Acts of Parliament, or Bills. (See also regulations.)
- **Legislative process** - The process by which the Parliament considers a Bill before it becomes an Act of Parliament. To be successful, a Bill must be read three times and then given Assent by the President. (There is also a procedure providing for an expedited process as provided for in the Constitution and the Standing Orders).
- **Legislature** - A law-making body.
- **Lobby, Ayes and Noes** - Lobbies on the sides of the Chamber where historically, members of Parliament cast a personal vote. The Ayes (those who support the motion) went to the Ayes Lobby on the Government side of the Chamber. The Noes (those against the motion) went to the Noes Lobby on the Opposition side of the Chamber. This is no longer practiced due to the electronic voting system utilised by the Fijian Parliament. A division is now only required when the electronic voting system is inoperative or the result is challenged. The Secretary-General calls out the names of the members and records each vote before announcing the result.
- **Mace** - A symbol of the Speaker's authority. When the Parliament starts sitting on a sitting day, the Serjeant-at-Arms carries the Mace into the Chamber at the head of the Speaker's procession and places it on the Table after the Prayer to symbolise the Parliament is in session. When the Parliament suspends sitting or convenes into a committee of the whole Parliament,

the Mace is placed in a lower bracket below the Table. See committee of the whole Parliament and Table.

- **Maiden Speech** - The first speech made by a new member of Parliament, when that speech is made during a parliamentary debate.
- **Maiden Statement** - The first speech made by a new member of Parliament, that speech is not made during a parliamentary debate.
- **Member of Parliament (MP)** - A person elected to the Parliament.
- **Minister** - A member of Parliament who is part of the Executive. Ministers are usually responsible for one or more Government departments or agencies.
- **Minister, Assistant** - See Assistant Minister.
- **Minority Government** - A Government formed by a party or coalition of parties that does not have a majority in the House in its own right, but retains the confidence of the Parliament through the support or abstention of members who are not in a Government party.
- **Motion** - A formal proposal put to the Parliament or a committee for debate and usually a vote.
- **Move** - To propose a motion.
- **Musterer** - See Whip.
- **Noes** - The votes of members of Parliament who vote against a motion.
- **Notice of Motion** - Notice of a member's intention to move a motion, the text of which is printed on the Order Paper.
- **Opposition** - Members of Parliament who are not members of the political party or group of political parties in Government, or who have not agreed to support the Government.
- **Order Paper** - The document that sets out the proposed order of business, or agenda, for any one sitting day.
- **Orders Of The Day** - The items of business set down on the Order Paper.

- **Out Of Order** - The term describing any proposal, action, or behaviour that is against the Standing Orders, or rules, of the Parliament.
- **Parliamentary Privilege** - The exercise of certain powers and the claiming of certain immunities for members of Parliament and other people (officers and witnesses) taking part in Parliament's proceedings. Parliamentary privilege is designed to help the Parliament function effectively without outside interference.
- **Part** - A division of a Bill, which contains a group of clauses under a single heading. Not all Bills are structured with parts.
- **Party** - A political group that stands for a defined set of policies and puts candidates forward in elections.
- **Petition** - A document presented to Parliament, signed by one person or a number of people, requesting that a certain course of action be taken (or not be taken). If agreed by more than 40% of all members, the Petition is forwarded to the relevant Standing Committee for their investigation and report back to Parliament, otherwise the Petition is shelved.
- **Point of Order** - A question about whether the proceedings of the Parliament or a committee are within the Standing Orders.
- **Prayer** - On each sitting day, the Speaker reads a prayer to the Parliament before any business begins in Parliament.
- **Presiding Officer** - The Speaker, Chairperson of the committee of the whole Parliament, or another member acting in their place being the person who controls the debate in the Chamber. The chairperson, deputy chairperson or other member chairing as an acting chairperson is the presiding officer for committee meetings.
- **Press Gallery (1)** - The area above the Chamber where accredited media reporters are permitted to sit. Although this is a distinct area in some Parliaments, in Fiji, this area is sometimes also reserved for special guests of the Speaker.
- **Press Gallery (2)** - Collective term for accredited media reporters who report on Parliament's proceed-

ings.

- **Prime Minister** - The Head of the Government, who is usually the leader of the party with the most members of Parliament.
- **Proclamation** - An official declaration of the President, for example, when summoning Parliament to meet for the first time following a general election.
- **Prorogation** - The ending of a session of Parliament by proclamation without triggering a general election. Permits a new session to occur within the same term of Parliament, starting with a further State Opening. (Compare with Dissolution.)
- **Provision** - A general term for an element of a Bill, such as a clause, sub-clause, part or schedule.
- **Questions for Oral Answer** - Also known as Question Time, this is part of general business dealt with by the Parliament each sitting day when members ask oral questions of Ministers, chairpersons of select committees, and other members about matters for which they are responsible. Notice of questions is lodged on the same sitting day that the questions are to be addressed. Question time usually takes more than an hour to complete.
- **Questions for Written Answer** - Questions lodged by members for Ministers to answer in writing, which must relate to matters for which the Ministers are responsible. Replies must be provided within 7 sitting days. If the time is exceeded, the Secretary-General, upon request of the member asking the question, must include the question for oral answer on the Order Paper.
- **Question Time** - See **Questions for Oral Answer**.
- **Reading** - A formal stage in the process of considering a Bill, where the title of the Bill is read out. This must occur three times for a Bill before it is considered to have been passed by Parliament. When the Reading is moved, the short title is read out in the terms of the motion. When the final/Third Reading is successfully concluded, the Secretary-General reads out the long title together with the Enacting Words.
- **Recommit** - To refer a Bill back to the committee of the whole Parliament or a standing or special committee for further consideration.

- **Referendum** - A process for putting a matter of public policy to a vote by the registered voters.
- **Regulations** - Laws made, not by Parliament, but by a person or body whom Parliament has authorised to make those laws, such as a Minister or other designated official. Regulations, which are also known as subordinate legislation or delegated legislation, may be scrutinised by Parliament by the relevant Standing Committee.
- **Resolution** - A formal decision made by Parliament or a parliamentary committee.
- **Responsible Government** - In the Fiji context, the system in which the Government is accountable to the Parliament and must have the support of the majority of the members of Parliament. This accountability can be seen when, for example, Ministers answer parliamentary questions, a committee considers the Government's spending plans, a Government Bill is scrutinised and debated, or the Parliament considers a confidence motion. (See also Confidence.)
- **Ruling** - An authoritative decision made by a presiding officer about a matter of procedure.
- **Schedule** - An appendix to a Bill or Act, often setting out matters that are too detailed to include in the main body of the Bill or Act.
- **Second Reading** - Bill is read the second time and debate is on the principles and merits of the Bill. After Second Reading is successfully concluded, the Bill may be referred to either a standing or special committee for further deliberation in detail.
- **Sections** - Distinct, numbered blocks of text that together form an Act of Parliament. (See clauses.)
- **Select Committee** - manages the business of the Parliament. After an election, the Business Committee, House Committee, Privileges Committee and Standing Orders Committee are automatically convened.
- **Secretary-General** - The Secretary-General to Parliament is the principal procedural advisor to the Speaker and all members and committees of Parliament. He or she is equivalent of a permanent secretary and in that capacity is the chief executive of the office of the Secretary-General to Parliament, the constitutional office comprising the Secretariat of the Fijian Parlia-

ment in charge of the Department of Legislature.

- **Serjeant-at-Arms/Mace Bearer** - The Mace Bearer leads the Speaker into the Chamber each sitting day and carries the Mace. The Serjeant-at-Arms calls the Parliament to order in announcing the entrance of the Speaker's procession. Both officers also assist the Speaker in maintaining order in the Chamber as well the security of the Parliamentary precincts.
- **Session** - A grouping of sitting days from a State Opening of Parliament until the prorogation of Parliament or the end of a term of Parliament.
- **Sitting Day** - A day on which the Parliament meets.
- **Speaker** - The principal presiding officer of Parliament. The Speaker is not a member of Parliament, but must be a person who is eligible to run for Parliament. The Speaker is elected to that role by members of Parliament. The Speaker represents the Parliament in its relations with the President.
- **Special Committee** - a parliamentary committee established by a Resolution of Parliament to undertake a specific task such as an enquiry or to review specific legislation. Membership and duration and other details are generally contained in the terms of the resolution which forms the committee.
- **Standing Committee** - one of 6 parliamentary committees which exercise Parliament's legislative and oversight functions in specific thematic areas defined in the Standing Orders. These include the Standing Committees on - Public Accounts; Social Affairs; Economic Affairs; Natural Resources; Justice, Law and Human Rights; and Foreign Affairs and Defence.
- **Standing Orders** - Rules and procedures observed in the conduct of Parliamentary proceedings.
- **State Opening of Parliament** - The ceremonial occasion when the President delivers his Speech to open a new session of Parliament.
- **Statute** - Another word for a law.
- **Subclause** - A numbered component of a clause, usually in a single sentence. Subclauses become known as 'subsections' when a Bill becomes an Act.
- **Subordinate Legislation** - See Regulations.



- **Supplementary Appropriation Bill** - A Bill that proposes giving the Government authority to spend additional sums of public money and/or incur additional liabilities, beyond what was initially approved in the Appropriation Bill.
- **Supplementary Estimates** - A statement of further amounts to be spent by Government departments, offices of Parliament, State enterprises, and public organisations in the current financial year in addition to the details of spending contained in the initial Estimates. This spending must be approved by a Supplementary Appropriation Bill.
- **Supplementary Order Paper (SOP)** - A paper that is published and circulated to members, showing an amendment or amendments that a Minister or member will propose when a Bill is considered by the committee of the whole Parliament or a standing committee.
- **Table (noun)** - The T-shaped table in front of and below the Speaker's Chair in the Chamber. This is where the Secretary-General sits with other supporting Table (procedural) officers. This is also where parliamentary papers (documents) are placed after 'tabling'.
- **Table (verb)** - To formally present a document to the Parliament.
- **Teller** - The member of Parliament who records the vote cast by each member in a personal vote. There is one teller for the Ayes and one for the Noes.
- **Term of Parliament** - The period from the State Opening of Parliament after a general election until the Parliament ends (either by dissolution or expiration). By law this term may be no longer than four years from the date of its first meeting after a general election.
- **Third Reading** - The last stage (debate) in the passing of a Bill. On being passed, the Bill receives assent. When a Bill has Presidential assent, it becomes law.
- **Title, Long and Title, Short** - The official names of a Bill or an Act of Parliament. Each Bill or Act has a Long Title as well as a Short Title. The Long Title is a descriptive sentence which encompasses the broad objectives of the Bill or Act. The Short Title is how the Bill or Act is more commonly cited. When tabling for First Reading, moved for the Second Reading or Third

Reading debate, the Member moving the debate states the Short Title in the terms of the motion. When the Secretary-General reads out the Title at each Reading, it is the Long Title which is read out.

- **Unicameral** - A description of a Parliament that consists of a single House.
- **Urgency Motion** - A motion pursuant to Standing Order 51 proposing that Parliament deal with a Bill more quickly than otherwise permitted by Standing Orders. If the motion is agreed, the Parliament may pass through more than one stage on that sitting day, and in order to do so may extend its hours beyond the usual time.
- **Voice Vote** - The result of a vote as initially declared by the presiding officer. If no member dissents, the decision is regarded as unanimous. If there is dissent, the matter is voted upon electronically.
- **Vote (1)** - Motion is put to a vote, which can be a voice vote, electronic vote, or division in the event that the electronic voting system is inoperative or result challenged as provided for in the Standing Orders.
- **Vote (2)** - Part of an Appropriation Bill containing details of the authority to spend public money or incur expenses.
- **Vote of Confidence** - See Confidence, Vote of.
- **Whip** - A member who acts as a party manager. A Whip maintains party discipline, ensures party members are all aware of the party's stand or instructions in relation to any issue before Parliament.



## PUBLISHED BY



**PARLIAMENT OF THE  
REPUBLIC OF FIJI**

## CONTACT INFORMATION

Parliament of the Republic of Fiji  
P.O Box 2352

Government Building, Suva

Ph : (679) 322 5600

(679) 330 5811

Fax : (679) 330 5325

Email : [info@parliament.gov.fj](mailto:info@parliament.gov.fj)

Website: [www.parliament.gov.fj](http://www.parliament.gov.fj)

Facebook:

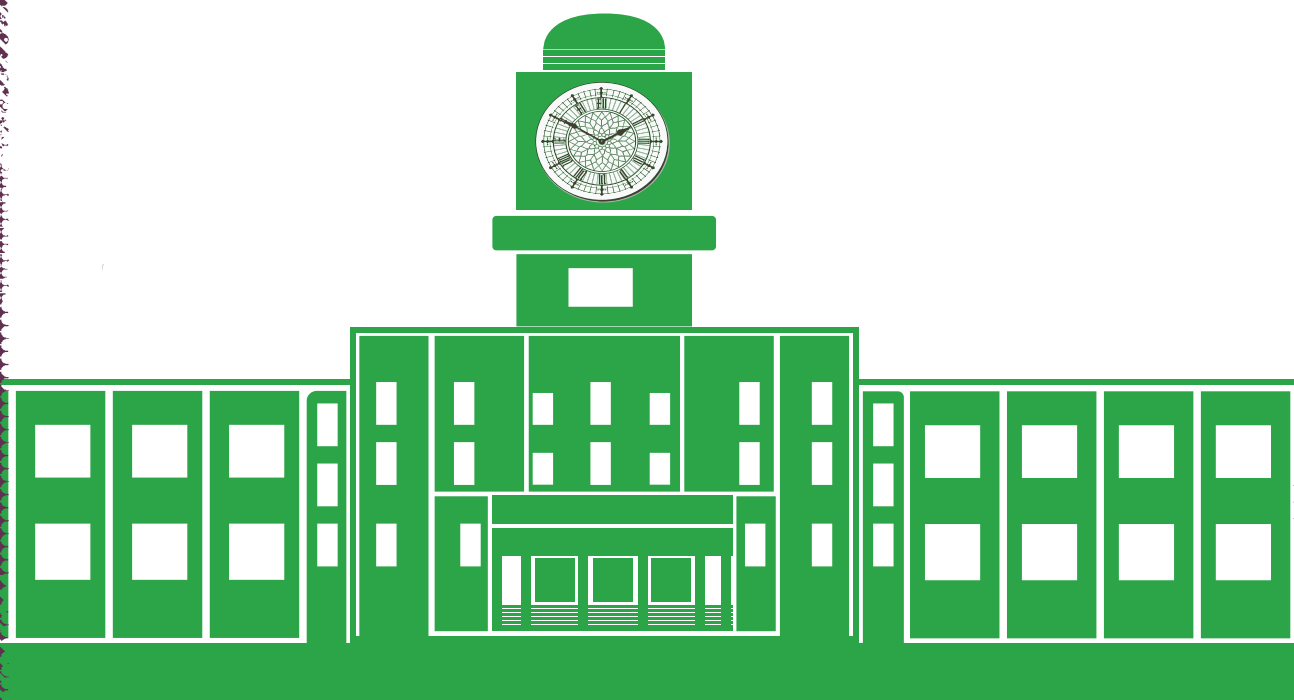
<https://www.facebook.com/fijiparliament>

Twitter: <https://twitter.com/fijiparliament>

## SPECIAL ACKNOWLEDGEMENT



Assistance of the NZ Parliament  
Education Services



*These educational materials has been developed  
through the UNDP, Fiji Parliament Support Project and  
supported by:*



**NEW ZEALAND  
FOREIGN AFFAIRS & TRADE**



From  
the People of Japan



*Empowered lives.  
Resilient nations.*

