



STANDING COMMITTEE ON ECONOMIC AFFAIRS

Consolidated Report on the Review of Tourism Fiji 2013 and 2014 Annual Reports



PARLIAMENT OF THE REPUBLIC OF FIJI
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Chairperson's Foreword

The Standing Committee on Economic Affairs is pleased to submit to Parliament, the consolidated Review report of the Tourism Fiji 2013 and 2014 Annual Reports.

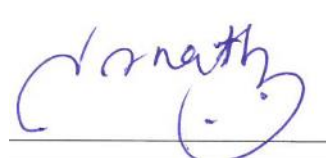
We are all aware of the extremely significant role the tourism industry has played towards Fiji's economy. Not only has it brought in revenue for the nation, it has also provided employment to thousands of Fijians. In fact, in 2014 itself, Fiji welcomed a record 692,350 international visitors and tourism earnings was valued at \$1.5bn by the Fiji Bureau of Statistics.

Over the years, Tourism Fiji has introduced and executed various initiatives and programmes in its efforts to market Fiji to the world. In 2013 itself, Tourism Fiji launched the global brand campaign, "Fiji – Where Happiness Finds You" after extensive research which indicated there was something about the genuine warmth and welcoming nature of Fijian people that enriched peoples' visit to Fiji and left an enduring impact. While in 2014, Tourism Fiji launched its new online travel agent specialist training programme. The new Fiji Matai Specialist Programme and website was the destination training programme for tourism partners selling Fiji.¹

The Committee commends Tourism Fiji for continued progress towards increasing Fiji's market share through their various campaign strategies and suggests that Tourism Fiji's reports be inclusive of their progress towards achieving the Sustainable Development Goals relevant to them.

Finally, I would like to thank our Committee Members who were part of the team that produced this report: - Deputy Chairperson Hon. Veena Bhatnagar, Hon. George Vegnathan, Hon. Inosi Kuridrani and Hon. Ro Filipe Tuisawau. I also take this opportunity to acknowledge and thank the Parliamentary Staff who have given us invaluable support.

On behalf of the Standing Committee on Economic Affairs, I commend the Review of the Tourism Fiji 2013 and 2014 Annual Reports to Parliament.



Chairperson – Hon. Vijay Nath

¹ 2013 and 2014 Tourism Fiji Annual Reports

1.0 Introduction

1.1 Background

Tourism Fiji is a statutory body fully funded by the Fiji Government and is the destination marketing arm of the Fijian Government. Tourism Fiji is governed by the Tourism Fiji Act 2009 which specifies its role as: “Tourism Fiji is to ensure that the Fiji Islands is promoted and marketed as a tourist destination for the purpose of maximizing sustainable and long-term benefits to the Fiji Islands” The tourism industry has contributed significantly to Fiji’s economy and is the country’s largest foreign exchange earner. The industry provides employment directly and indirectly to many Fijian people and is the fastest growing industry in terms of employment.

Tourism Fiji has a global team that undertake marketing and promotional activities to attract international visitors to Fiji. Their offices in 2014 were located in Australia, New Zealand, North America (USA & Canada) and South Korea.

Committee Remit and Composition

The Committee is made up of five (5) Members of Parliament, three (3) of which are Government members and two Opposition members. According to Section 109(2) (a) the Standing Committee is responsible to look into matters related to economic development, finance, banking and taxation.

2.0 Findings and Recommendations

1. The Committee is aware of the critical importance of key visitor statistics as highlighted in the reports and therefore recommends for Tourism Fiji to include in its future reports, a summary of key visitor statistics for a period of at least five (5) to ten (10) years prior to and including the year of the report.
2. Further to the above, the Committee noted that the report is activity based reporting and recommends that this be expanded to include details on Key Performance Indicators, including Overseas Regional Offices performance, and the achievement of those under the period of review.
3. The Committee acknowledges Tourism Fiji for the various campaigns they undertook during the period of review such as the global brand campaign, “Fiji – Where Happiness Finds You” and launch of their website in 2013, Tourism Expo and Matai Programme in 2014. These campaigns contributed positively towards tourist arrivals in Fiji.
4. The Committee commends Tourism Fiji for exploring social media and digital marketing as means of increasing market share. With internet and e-commerce activity on the rise, the use of digital tools greatly assists in marketing Fiji to the world.

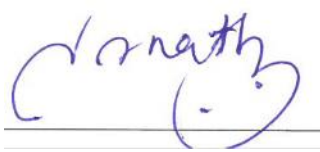
3.0 Gender Analysis

The Committee understands the importance of gender equality and suggests that Tourism Fiji while strategizing and undertaking any new initiatives consider the impacts and benefits for both genders alike.

4.0 Conclusion

To conclude, the Committee commends the overall performance of Tourism Fiji and acknowledges their contribution towards Fiji's economy during the period under review and encourages continued progress towards exploring other avenues to enhance its market sustainability.

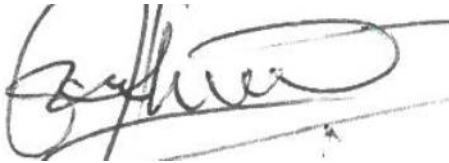
Members Signature

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Hon. Vijay Nath (Chairperson)

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Veena Bhatnagar', written over a horizontal line.

Hon. Veena Bhatnagar (Deputy Chairperson)

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'George Vegnathan', written over a horizontal line.

Hon. George Vegnathan (Member)

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Inosi Kuridrani', written over a horizontal line.

Hon. Inosi Kuridrani (Member)

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Ro Filipe Tuisawau', written over a horizontal line.

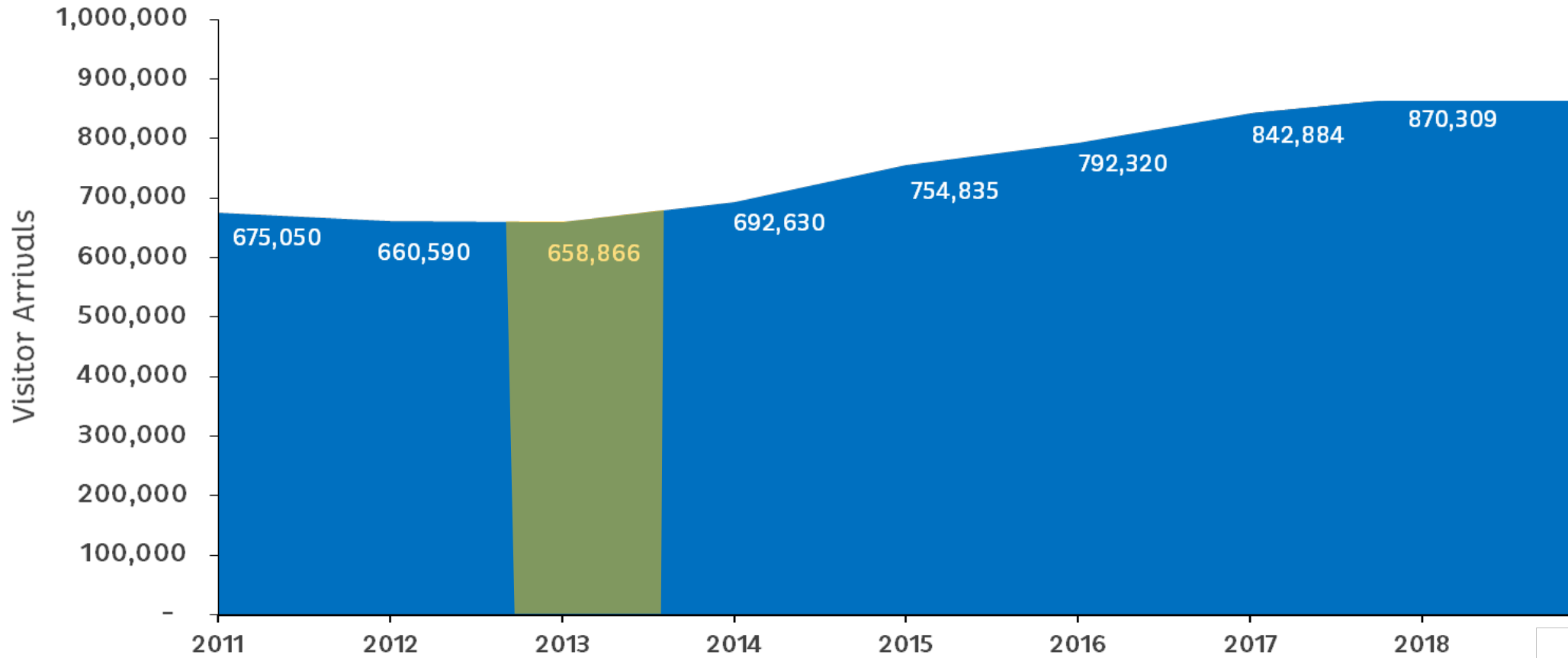
Hon. Ro Filipe Tuisawau (Member)

Tourism Fiji Annual Report 2013 - 2014

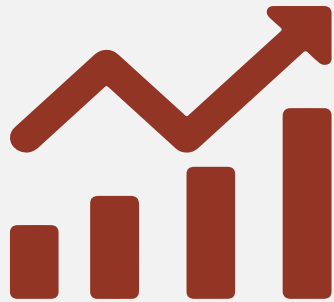


Presentation to
The Standing Committee on
Economic Affairs

Visitor Arrivals – 2013



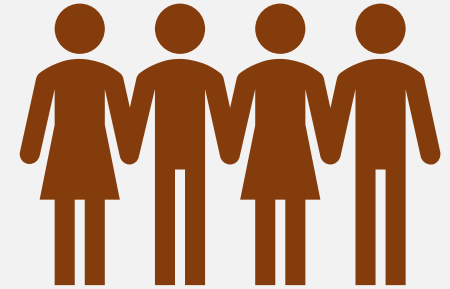
Our Core Objectives for 2013



**Rebuild growth
following natural
disasters**



**Continue to develop
new brand**



**Structural changes to
strengthen team**



Key Successes

**Global
Brand
Launch**

**Structural
Efficiencies**

**Growth in
Visitor
Earnings**

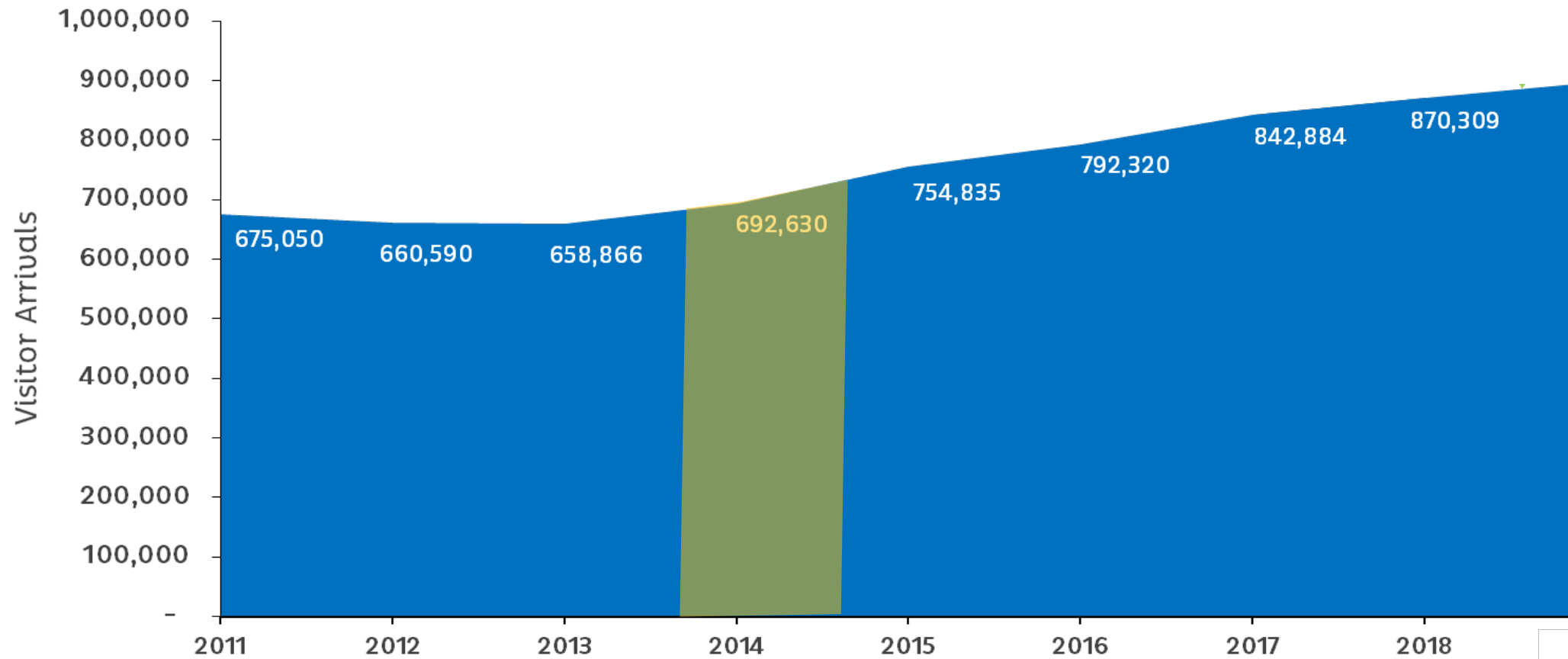


Key Challenges

**Natural
Disaster
Recovery**

**Slight drop
in arrivals**

Visitor Arrivals - 2014



Our core objectives for 2014



**Continuation of
Brand
Development**



**Enhance
Business
Capabilities**



**Grown Industry
Focus**



**Develop Online
Capability**



Key Successes

**FTE
Launch**

**Niche
Market
Launch**

**Matai
Programme
Launch**



Key Challenges

**Leadership
Changes**

Vinaka
Vakalevu



[VERBATIM REPORT]

VIRTUAL MEETING OF THE STANDING COMMITTEE ON ECONOMIC AFFAIRS

ANNUAL REPORT

Tourism Fiji Annual Report 2013-2014

ENTITY: Tourism Fiji

VENUE: Small Committee Room

DATE: Tuesday, 2nd March, 2021

VERBATIM NOTES OF THE MEETING OF THE STANDING COMMITTEE ON ECONOMIC AFFAIRS HELD AT THE SMALL COMMITTEE ROOM (WEST WING), PARLIAMENT PRECINCTS, GOVERNMENT BUILDINGS ON 2ND MARCH, 2021 AT 10.30 A.M.

Interviewee/Submittee: Tourism Fiji

In Attendance:

- | | | |
|--------------------------|---|--------------------------------|
| 1. Mr. Robert Thompson | - | Acting Chief Executive Officer |
| 2. Mr. Vimlesh Deo Magan | - | Chief Finance Controller |
| 3. Ms. Emma Campbell | - | Director of Marketing |
-

MR. CHAIRMAN.- First to the Acting CEO, Mr. Robert Thompson, welcome on board, Sir, I give the floor to you. *Vinaka*.

MR. R. THOMPSON.- *Bula vinaka* Mr. Chairman and Honourable Members of the Standing Committee. It is a pleasure for us to be here with you today. As mentioned my name is Robert Thompson, I am currently holding the acting position of Chief Executive Officer for Tourism Fiji having taken over from the former CEO at end of 2020. With me today are our Chief Financial Controller, Vimlesh Magan and our Director of Marketing, Emma Campbell who joined the organisation in 2019. My team and I are happy to answer any questions and provide clarifications on the Annual Reports for Tourism Fiji for 2013 and 2014 and look forward to the conversations.

MR. CHAIRMAN.- Thank you very much for the introduction, Mr. Thompson. I believe you have a presentation for us and we will request you to take us through the presentation, please. After the presentation, we will impose some questions, probably where we can interact and ask questions. We expect whatever you have, you can tell us or probably at a later stage, we will write to you to sort out the other information.

MR. R. THOMPSON.- Absolutely. Am I alright to take control of the presentation or you will be broadcasting it?

SECRETARIAT.- That is fine, you can take control of the presentation. Go ahead.

MR. CHAIRMAN.- There will be some interruption, I understand, due to the weather in the Western side.

MR. R. THOMPSON.- Sure.

MS. E. CAMPBELL.- So we thought we would start just by giving an overview of visitor arrivals from 2013. As you can see in 2013, there was a slight decline on visitor arrivals and that was attributed to the fact that there was a number of natural disasters in 2012 and with that it means obviously our industry had some time to rebuild any damage to the properties to ensure that we could get back to that sort of growth phase. A slight decline in visitor arrivals however what we did see was a slight increase in investments in that year.

MR. R. THOMPSON.- Our core objectives for 2013 were to rebuild the growth following the natural disasters experienced towards the end of 2012. We also look to continue developing the new brand for Fiji as a destination, we have included 2013 and we look to strengthen the teams through structural change here in the office and around the world with regard to what the officers look like and how our destination was represented particularly with reference to Europe and UK.

Key successes: For 2013, we successfully launched the new global brand. We are happy to have this view with (11.44.58) all of our international markets. We did achieve structural efficiencies, we had a few changes with regard to our representation offices in UK and Europe. As potential markets for future growth, we look to strengthen our offering in those markets with regard to relationships. As I mentioned earlier while we did experience a slight decline in arrivals based on damage to our facilities, the growth and visitors earnings was slight the opposite.

Key Challenges: Again was the natural disaster recovery that took sometimes throughout 2013 for us to both assist in the, for our properties and our partners here Fiji but also with regard to press and making sure that we were communicating externally that we were in for recovery by the middle of the year and into high season which obviously then related to the slight drop in arrivals. Moving into 2014.

MS. E. CAMPBELL.- So in 2014 saw that fantastic work done during 2013 really come into fruition and we achieved strong growth in 2014 which kick started many years of growth which was lovely to see. In terms of the work that we have done in 2012 by launching the new brand, continuation of that process in 2013 and an ongoing process in 2014, we really saw that the brand “Fiji - , “Where Happiness Finds You”, we have risen it to global audiences and ensuring that we could achieve that continued growth.

Do you mind talking on the other objectives?

MR. R. THOMPSON.- Sure. In terms of enhancing our business capabilities, we look to achieve (*glitch in recording*) our website platform and a number of other programmes that we had in-house. We have growth in industry focus, we were looking to make sure that we increase engagement with our key stakeholders here in Fiji but also the industry in market in Australia and New Zealand and our other key source markets.

As mentioned, the business capability is one of the key focuses for us was to develop our online capabilities so to make sure that we had a market leading web-platform that allowed us to communicate efficiently with our global audiences but also to be able to allow our partners here in Fiji to highlight themselves within that platform.

With industry engagement, in particular, was the launch of Fijian Tourism Expo (FTE). This was a slight change in our direction, we had previously run events in collaboration with the private enterprise called DFDE. That was a regional-focussed event which had its strengths but there was an appetite to highlight Fiji as an independent standalone sales initiative behind FTE. It was at very success with a sell out in fact for our international buyers.

What we also looked to do was to start a conversation around our Niche Markets within Fiji, some of our small, medium enterprises within certain niches such as diving and sailing.

We launched our own independent programmes for those to great success. The Matai Programme launched was a key for us in terms of our sales development within region. Whatever allowed us to do was to train our travel agent partners in market to be able to understand Fiji properly and to know how to sell it efficiently to different consumer groups. So that launch to a great success and to large subscription levels across all of our key markets.

The key challenge for 2014 was leadership change with regards to the changes in CEO and also changes in the board and this continued throughout 2014. That brings me to the end of our presentation.

MR. CHAIRMAN.- Thank you so much Mr. Thompson and Ms. Campbell for the presentation. We will open the floor for questions now. Just a quick one, on slide No. 4, the structural efficiency, it worked very well for you, is it not?

MR. R. THOMPSON.- It did.

MR. CHAIRMAN.- If you look at the graph, it really worked very well in 2014. The steps that you took are really commendable.

MR. R. THOMPSON.- Appreciate that.

MR. CHAIRMAN.- I will open the floor for questions. Honourable Veena Bhatnagar?

HON. V.K. BHATNAGAR.- Thank you very much, Mr. Chairman. Once again a very warm welcome to the Acting CEO, Mr. Robert Thompson, Madam Emma Campbell and of course Mr. Vimlesh Magan. A very good morning and *ni sa bula vinaka*. Looking at the 2013 and 2014 Reports. First of all thank you for your presentation and specifically looking at the Visitor Arrivals from 2013 onwards, a slight decline in 2013 which I believe was due to the cyclone in 2012.

Otherwise, if I look at the graph, 2013 onwards, the graph goes upwards. There has been a consistent increase in visitor arrivals and I must congratulate Tourism Fiji for your hard work, all the strategies and plans put in place.

Basically, when I was looking at all your strategies and plans in place, it is really amazing. You left no stones unturned, so basically you did your job right and were continuous and after that, what happened, everyone knows.

Normally, I do not have any questions because it is pretty old report, 2013 and 2014, but looking at your amazing upward graph, what do you contribute this positivity too specifically? I know there have been many contributing factors, but what would be your most successful strategy or plan in place which really got you going upwards?

MR. R. THOMPSON.- *Vinaka* Honourable Member and thank you for the compliments. As mentioned, this was quite some time ago but looking back over the years in terms of what the base was that was created in 2013 to allow for that growth, it was quite clearly the structural changes on one side to allow us an efficient team to be able to work together. Bringing some of the representations in-house into our team allowed us to then be able to own a little bit more of what we were doing in some of those regions which have shown strong growth since then.

HON. V.K. BHATNAGAR.- What were those challenges you faced during those two years - 2013 and 2014?

MR. R. THOMPSON.- I think the recovery from the natural disasters given we had *Cyclone Evan* as well as the two floods in 2012 were quite significant. I think the damage to property causes a number of issues for us. One obviously being capacity on the ground and (*glitch in recording*) no time to build towards changing that the conversation from disaster recovery to a destination where happiness is promoted.

HON. V.K. BHATNAGAR.- Mr. Chairman, just one more, I read about your Matai Programme and also your online programme. Was there a positive contribution through online promotion and your Matai Programme?

MR. R. THOMPSON.- Yes, prior to that, we had a platform that was what you were consider a static website and that is a wonderful global promotion tool with regard to being (*glitch in recording*) allowed us, was to make it more dynamic, integrated into a lot of the different marketing initiatives that we launched that year as well as being able to tie that into the *Matai* Programme and the benefits for our selling partners.

The realities that are called is bringing tourism into Fiji and to those travel agents that are at frontline are one of the most important people in the entire system for us, so being able to provide the Matai Programme that they know exactly what they are selling and at the same time, the online platforms help drive that business came together in quite a positive way which allow back growth.

HON. V.K. BHATNAGAR.- Thank you, Mr. Thompson.

MR. CHAIRMAN.- Thank you Honourable Veena Bhatnagar. Honourable Tuisawau, your question, Sir.

HON. RO F. TUISAWAU.- *Bula* Mr. Thompson and team, can you hear me properly?

MR. R. THOMPSON.- Yes.

HON. RO F. TUISAWAU.- As introduced by Mr. Chairman, I am in the Opposition, so I re-digest the questions a bit. Just on the annual reports, what is the latest annual report you have produced? This is 2013-2014.

MR. R. THOMPSON.- Correct, we were currently sitting on our reports through to 2016-2017 financial year with Office of the Auditor General (OAG) but we are in process now of finalising our 2019 report by the end of May. We prioritise the finalisation.

HON. RO F. TUISAWAU.- There were some issues in the delay in those reports?

MR. R. THOMPSON.- There were a number of issues, but the two main ones were the leadership changes that we experience just prior to those stats and the other one was, we had a fire in the head office here in Fiji in 2015 which delayed a lot of process and in fact once the hold up for the future years submissions.

HON. RO F. TUISAWAU.- Okay thank you, the other question was raised by Honourable Bhatnagar on the Matai Programme which is a market leader and above any competition.

HON. RO. F. TUISAWAU.- Alright, I will stop there for now and then may be some other questions later.

MR. CHAIRMAN.- Thank you, Honourable Tuisawau. Can we have a question from Honourable Inosi Kuridrani?

HON. I. KURIDRANI.- *Vinaka*, Acting CEO and the team. Overall from my understanding, most of these hotels and business related companies are overseas-based as everything like bookings and payments is done on line and most of this money is held back in overseas. When tourists come to Fiji, they spend few dollars only in Fiji and go back, what will be the average dollar percentage from your experience that this tourist dollar is been held back overseas and what percentage is being spent in Fiji?

MR. R. THOMPSON.- *Vinaka*, Honourable Member. I might take it further. It is a global situation in terms of the structure of the tourism industry. We have a number of parties that are in the distribution chain of tourism that take their proportion of the percentage. But as a general rule within tourism. At the frontline, the retail agents that I mentioned earlier who are the first, they will take anywhere between a 5 percent to 10 percent commission. The wholesaler will take anywhere between a 10 percent to 20 percent commission on top of that then the bulk of it is split between all of the different parties, so Fiji Airways or the airline related to the package will get a portion then hotels and the various excursions that are there.

Here in Fiji, with the likes of Sigatoka River Safari through to anyone that operates a business in Denarau, Nadi or Sigatoka, they will take a 100 percent of the sale in that situation.

HON. I. KURIDRANI.- Thank you.

MR. CHAIRMAN.- Thank you, Honourable Kuridrani. A question from Honourable George Vegenathan.

HON. G. VEGNATHAN.- Thank you, Mr. Chair. I just like to thank the board for being here today and making this presentation. I am quite satisfied with what they have presented to us. Might be a bit noisy because we have heavy rain out here in Labasa. Anyway, I just like to thank the board for being there. We can see the progress that they have made after the cyclones in 2012, 2013, 2014 and the trends looks upward and we hoping for the best for the coming years. That is all I have to say, Mr. Chair.

MR. R. THOMPSON.- *Vinaka*.

MR. CHAIRMAN.- Thank you, Honourable Vegenathan. Any more questions, Honourable Members?

HON. I. KURIDRANI.- Just another one, Mr. Chair.

MR. CHAIRMAN.- Yes, Honourable Kuridrani.

HON. I. KURIDRANI.- Just in support of that question that I asked about the percentage of tourist dollars that have been spend in Fiji because I come from the Coral Coast and I live with hotel workers. Most of these hotel workers do quite a big job but they are underpaid all the time. Like the workload has doubled over the years but the rate they are paid remains the same. It seems that the hotel owners, management are not paying them in relations to the work that they do. Is there enough money to pay the workers according to the job that has been done because it does not seem to be paid according to the workload that is being done. That is just my observation and that is why I am asking. Is that a problem that most of these tourist dollars are being held back in overseas and tourists are just coming in with a few dollars to spend here and that is why the hotels are unable to pay the workers accordingly?

MR. CHAIRMAN.- Thank you for your question, Honourable Kuridrani but your question is pointing more towards probably towards the Ministry of Employment but if the team wants to answer that, I do not mind. We can draft the question which you have just read and send to Ms. Komal. I will be more than happy to send it to the relevant ministry to get that minimum wage bracket you are talking about but over to the team. I will give Mr. Thompson and probably Mr. Magan, probably you want to comment on it.

MS. E. CAMPBELL.- Yes, in 2014 projected total tourism earnings were valued at \$1.5 billion and we hear your (*glitch in recording*) as we work to review that Fiji Tourism strategy beyond 2021 and that is certainly something that we could consider and we will speak to our ministry and arrange looking at the impact of tourism dollars within Fiji.

HON. I. KURIDRANI.- Thank you.

MR. CHAIRMAN.- Ms. Campbell, thank you very much for your answer. If you look at this room here today, you will find gender balance, you will see more ladies than men. Five ladies and only four men here in the room. Would you like to mention anything about gender equality or Sustainable Development Goals (SDG)? Anything on such, your SDG features which you probably missed out in your presentation today.

MS. E. CAMPBELL.- Mr. Chairman, that is a fantastic point and actually for 2013 and 2014, we did not report on that but I can 100 percent commit to reporting on equality across the business from now. We have a very strong equality policy and some absolutely phenomenal women working for us here at Tourism Fiji.

MR. R. THOMPSON.- If I may, Honourable Chair, the proportions here are quite similar in the office. Definitely it swings towards stronger women in marketing.

MR. CHAIRMAN.- I agree, with the nature of your business, that is warranted. We do your but we do request that in your upcoming reports if you can figure out how the SDG is taken into account and its relevancy and of course, the gender balance which I mentioned earlier.

HON. RO F. TUISAWAU.- Just related to that, when you look at sustainable tourism, you would have a strategic plan. I am not sure whether it is still running from that time. How do you as a marketing, how do you factor that in into your marketing equation, sustainable tourism environment, et cetera, probably related to the compliance, et cetera when you are marketing.

MS. E. CAMPBELL.- In relation to 2013 and 2014 which are the reports that we are focusing on for now, there was not a huge focus on sustainability back then, however, it is something that we are seeing huge desires from our consumers and something that we are considering moving forward and would be welcomed, happy to have that conversation.

HON. RO F. TUISAWAU.- Alright. So the current strategic plan is from what year to what year; the one you currently have?

MS. E. CAMPBELL.- From Tourism Fiji perspective, our strategic plan is to 2022. It was developed pre-COVID and so we are working with a definite strategy at the moment before market re-entry and again, happy to speak through that at some time.

MR. CHAIRMAN.- Thank you, Ms. Campbell, for your answer. Just from the annual reports, the 2013 and 2014, what were some of the major challenges and threats faced? Would you like to elaborate on that?

MR. R. THOMPSON.- The biggest challenge at that time and then Mr. Magan can further my statement is, it was probably to do with the leadership changes and the fact that there were challenges in completing them on time, I think would probably be the biggest, outside of the natural disasters, the recovery at 2013 and then the successes in 2014, I think the biggest challenge would have been the leadership change. Would you agree?

MR. V.D. MAGAN.- Yes.

MR. CHAIRMAN.- Thank you. Honourable Members, any other questions for the team? Honourable Ro Tuisawau, your question, Sir.

HON. RO F. TUISAWAU.- In terms of marketing, we know that we have the main tourism areas like Nadi et cetera. In USA 2013 and 2014, I know there was a report on Sun Coast, maybe after that, in terms of those areas, Sun Coast, Vanua Levu and the outer islands. Can you explain maybe within the period of the report what the focus was? Was it part of your marketing strategy and also in terms of consultation with the stakeholders especially the tourism operators in developing those? How do you work in association with the stakeholders including the Ministry of Tourism? Thank you.

MR. R. THOMPSON.- With regards to 2013 and 2014, there was not at that time too many formalised destination marketing office like the Sun Coast is now. But as stated (*glitch in recording*) the climate which is major part behind the niche marketing approach in 2014. Be near these are some destinations within Fiji have a focus on diving or focus on various of the niche groupings which was the beginning of the process for us to engage with them. With regard to the stakeholders being the Ministry of Tourism, I think we took a lot of their actioned from the Ministry of Tourism's overall strategic plan which I believe is just for that time and build our strategies on top of that in any consultation with the Ministry to make sure that we were working towards the overall objectives for a number of different Government's priority.

MR. CHAIRMAN.- Thank you for your answers. There is one question from Honourable Veena Bhatnagar.

HON. V.K. BHATNAGAR.- Thank you Mr. Chairman and thank you Mr. Thompson. Actually this is a specific question on the launch of the global brand campaign in Fiji - Where

Happiness Finds You.” I would like you to elaborate on that particular campaign plus I believe there were structural changes to the organisation in 2013 to strengthen Tourism Fiji. So basically, what all did you do to enhance your visitor arrivals and of course the revenue?

MS. E. CAMPBELL.- Thank you, Mr. Chairman. From 2013 perspective, there was multiple and grand campaigns in each of our respective markets. In Australia there was a major focus on outdoor advertiser which we found very effective. If you are driving in your car and you see a huge billboard or a bus go past with Fiji on the side is highly compelling. So each of the markets have their own budgeting strategies and to really get the new brand visible across the board, we find that it was highly successful. We would then forward that to the Ministry of Trade and often our key partners have large budgets to also promote our destination. So we make sure that the message was aligned with them so that we can (*glitch in recording*). That sort of covers all what we get from brand activity perspective.

The next part of the question was around structural changes.

MR. R. THOMPSON.- Mr. Magan, would you like to comment to those?

MR. V.D. MAGAN.- In 2012 the outcome of our OAG Audit and their recommendation was given to us and we took that into consideration. So our focus ...

MR. CHAIRMAN.- Sorry, Mr. Magan we lost you. We had some disruption, would you want to repeat that, please?

MR. V.D. MAGAN.- The report for 2012, OAG has kind of commented and they did an analysis with us where they found out like if we have direct offices rather than just having representative office that would be more effective in tourism marketing. So what Tourism Fiji took as a strategy from there is to open offices in UK and Europe rather than having representative office. A big advantage, the Tourism Fiji offices directly in UK and Europe assisted 100 percent focus on Fiji marketing whereas representative offices were kind of having the other accounts with the other

SECRETARY.- Just a second we have a bit of a glitch going on, we will just migrate to another one.

MR. V.D. MAGAN.- .(*glitch in recording*) and Japan as well.

MR. CHAIRMAN.- Thank you. Just another question. If you look at your 2013 Annual Report on page 10. How effective was your trade show?

MR. R. THOMPSON.- With regard to page 10. At that time in 2013 and 2014 (*glitch in recording*)

(*Virtual disruption*)

MR. R. THOMPSON.- (*glitch in recording*) had quite a series of them for a number of reasons. They either spoke to different consumer groups or allowed us to converse with our travel trade to make sure that they were within the Matai Programme, joining the Matai Programme or advertising Fiji.

MR. CHAIRMAN.- Thank you. Honourable Tuisawau your question, Sir?

HON. RO F. TUISAWAU.- Thank you. In terms of the marketing side, as a national organisation, that is fine. In terms of regional marketing, how do you blend in to the activities, I think it is Pacific Tourism now, used to be South Pacific Tourism Organisation. I believe they conduct regional marketing. How do you blend into that in those years? Do you think, it is effective or is it more effective just nationally as compared to regionally? Thank you.

MR. R. THOMPSON.- Sure, in those years I was not with Tourism Fiji but was with another regional destination organisation and knew the involvement of Tourism Fiji within the region and the benefits of regional promotion. I cannot comment directly with regards to the involvement at that time but to the greater context, the regional promotion of the South Pacific is something that allows us to collectively compete with the likes of South East Asia and other competitive destinations whose marketing budgets are greater than all of our South Pacific marketing budgets put together. So, regional is absolutely important.

MR. CHAIRMAN.- Thank you. Any other question, Honourable Members?

HON. RO F. TUISAWAU.- Yes. Just going into the financials of 2013 and 2014. I just noticed a bit of a variation there, for example, in the 2013 one.

MR. CHAIRMAN.- Page 20 of your report.

HON. RO F. TUISAWAU.- Surplus in the 2013. In 2012 it was \$299,000 and that surplus increased to \$2.7 million. Is there an explanation for that? There were other variations I noticed.

MR. V.D. MAGAN.- I think I missed the line that you are referring to?

MR. CHAIRMAN.- It is on page 20 of the 2013 Annual Report.

HON. RO F. TUISAWAU.- On page 20 of the 2013 Annual Report – the Surplus from Operations which increased from \$209,000 to \$2.7 million.

MR. V.D. MAGAN.- Yes. Certainly, we will acknowledge that there was a typo error in there. It is just on that Annual Report but on the OAG Report it is all 100 percent clear, everything was there, it is just a typo error on the Annual Report. So, we will surely send out the full 2013 Report on where there is no typo error in it. Just for your reference on that

HON. RO F. TUISAWAU.- Okay. You also mentioned, through you, Mr. Chairman, your overseas offices; Sydney, Auckland, Los Angeles.

MR. R. THOMPSON.- I think we lost you for a second there, sorry Honourable Member.

HON. RO F. TUISAWAU.- Sorry, just to repeat that, in terms of the overseas offices, do they have a separate reporting template to you in terms of the budget they are allocated, their accounts and also in terms of monitoring and evaluation, their objectives or performance indicators and how have they achieved that. Because I noticed in the report, it is sort of general

rather than to specific performance indicators which would be useful when we are looking at these kinds of reports. Probably a comment from you on that?

MR. R. THOMPSON.- Thank you, Honourable Member. Yes, the KPIs and the SLAs or the Service Level Agreement that we have with the Ministry of Tourism has quite a comprehensive list of KPIs that we work towards from a collective global approach to answer that question. Those KPIs and SLAs were available from MCTTT directly with reference to those financial years. We do set an agreement every year with them based on what we perceive we will achieve with regard to the budget is made.

Once the budget is allocated and confirmed, which has happened on quite a lot of negotiations, those KPIs are signed off between the Ministry and Tourism Fiji.

HON. RO F. TUISAWAU.- Okay, just a last one Mr. Chairman, in terms of the statistics, it is just a suggestion that we would have statistics over a period of time for example, the last ten years and then summarise the ones you have there; key visitor statistics, visitor arrivals, length of staying, length of stay by country, average spent. It would be useful to have that summarised over the ten years on a table just to enable the Committee when we look at it, “in the last decade this is the picture in terms of the deliverables by Tourism Fiji.” So just those and sorry, I know it is 2013 and 2014. I thought I would make the presentation more interesting by grilling you a bit more, but thank you very much for responses today. *Vinaka*.

MR. CHAIRMAN.- Just one more question from my end. If you look at the 2013 Annual Report, particularly on page 30, on professional fees, there is huge variance. Probably Mr. Magan would be in the right position to answer the question.

MR. R. THOMPSON.- We might had a slightly different printout, I apologise. One moment, please.

MR. CHAIRMAN.- Do not worry, there are some network issues as well, we will probably write to you at a later stage and get clarification. That is all from my end, Honourable Inosi Kuridrani or Honourable Vegnathan?

HON. G. VEGNATHAN.- Nothing from my end, Mr. Chair.

MR. CHAIRMAN.- Thank you so much, Honourable Vegnathan. Thank you for connecting from Labasa. Honourable Kuridrani connecting from Nadi.

HON. I. KURIDRANI.- Just another question. Sir, my concern is that the Government has been depending on tourism regarding its economic development. The tourism industry as we all know is very vulnerable to external shocks.

In your Annual Report for 2013 and 2014 financial year, were there some strategies in place to be implemented so that it can revitalise the economy from these external shocks? Since your Ministry is still not updated with its annual reports, are those strategies in compliance?

MR. R. THOMPSON.- If I can ask the Honourable Member to repeat the question please because I could not get the full question.

MR. R. THOMPSON.- Honourable Member, I am not sure that I can comment on the strategies of the MCTTT at that point, the Ministry of Tourism as it was. I might defer to them for the answer to that question, if that is alright.

MR. CHAIRMAN.- I request Mr. Magan to look at your *viber* message and we have a final questions from Honourable Bhatnagar.

HON. V.K. BHATNAGAR.- Thank you, Mr. Chair. Actually I do not have a question but as I have mentioned before these are pretty old Reports 2013 and 2014. Those days were good days, I believe looking at you know positive trend the progress but currently as we all know that the tourism industry has been heavily impacted by COVID-19 pandemic. So, I just pray that things will get better and we are looking forward to the other latest reports which already been done the 2018/2019 may be looking at those reports we would be able to indulge further into discussions because that would be the latest reports. So, I am looking forward to the latest reports. I wish you well, thank you so much.

MR. R. THOMPSON.- *Vinaka*, Honourable Member. Mr. Chair, we do have the other page now so we can comment on that.

MR. V.D. MAGAN.- In 2011 and 2012, at that time Tourism Fiji underwent a marketing audit and then test on the brand research so all those things were costing kind of the amounts that shown in year 2012. By the end of 2012 the brand was launched, marketing audits and research has completed hence there was not much professional fees required to be paid out to any external parties. Hence, there was a huge decrease in the professional fees.

MR. CHAIRMAN.- Great! Thank you so much, Mr. Deo for taking the question from your *Facebook* platform. I just text that question to you and thank you for that clarification. That probably brings to the end of this session.

On behalf of the Standing Committee on Economic Affairs, I take this opportunity to thank you, Mr. Thompson, Mr. Deo and Ms. Campbell for your presence and probably next time if things get better we will invite you to Parliament to the Small Committee Room and probably have a face to face questions and answers.

Probably we will join you in Nadi to know the system better. But at this point in time, I take this opportunity, on behalf of the Committee, our secretariat, our team, thank you very much and all the best coping with this pandemic. I understand there is a huge ask as our economy is, majority of our, what we call, is dependent on the tourism industry and we wish you all the best. Any final words from your end, we will appreciate.

MR. R. THOMPSON.- *Vinaka*, Honourable Chair and Honourable Members. That is very much appreciated and yes, we are very conscious of the rollouts and the plans that we have and reliance of our own people on the activities that we choose, so we welcome you, for the next report, into Nadi and look forward to next chats.

MR. CHAIRMAN.- Lovely. We are expecting that. Parliament session is from March 22. We expect a few reports if it is done and dusted from your end to the Parliament and we will probably from the Speaker's end, we will receive it and then probably we will

communicate more on this. Thank you very much for joining us from Nadi. A big *vinaka vakalevu*. All the best.

The Committee adjourned at 11.20 a.m.