



## Parliament of the Republic of Fiji

# PARLIAMENT OF FIJI A BRIEF INTRODUCTION

The Parliament of the Republic of Fiji is vested with the authority and power to make laws for the State.

### History

- The first attempt to set up a government based on the principles of Westminster System happened at Nasova, Levuka in 1871 by Ratu Cakobau. It was then called the Kingdom of Fiji.
- In 1874 Fiji was ceded to Great Britain. From 1874 to 1970 the Executive Council and the Legislative Council were established.
- Fiji gained independence in 1970 and the Legislative Council became the Parliament of Fiji.
- Since independence, Parliamentary rule was interrupted by political instability - two in 1987, 2000 and 2006.

### Members of Parliament

- Parliament consists of the 50 Members (this number is subject to change).
- The President only comes to Parliament during the state opening of Parliament, and participates in the law-making process by assenting to the Bills after being passed by Parliament.

### Why do we need a Parliament?

Parliament is the cornerstone of any democracy. This is a system of government in which the citizens exercise power to elect representatives from among themselves to form a governing body which we call Parliament. Democracy is sometimes referred to as "the rule of the majority."

### What does Parliament do?

1. It amends and passes laws.
2. It represents the people.
3. It holds the Government to account (oversight).

### Term of Parliament

4 years from the date of its first meeting after a general election of the members of Parliament.

### General Elections and Voting Age

- Elections are held every 4 years
- MPs are elected by a multi-member open list system of proportional representation in a single national electoral roll.
- Voting age is 18 years and above.
- Voters need to be registered to be eligible to vote.

### Elections in the Parliament

During the first Parliament sitting after a general elections, the following positions are elected:

1. Speaker
2. Deputy Speaker
3. Prime Minister (if no one political party has won more than 50% of the total number of seats)
4. Leader of the Opposition

**Note.** The President is also elected in the Parliament when a vacancy arises.

### Parliament Sitting Dates/Parliament Calendar

- The Business Committee draws up a Parliament Sitting Calendar, and is approved by Parliament.
- The Parliament is usually opened in September after prorogation (time between legislative sessions).
- The Parliament sitting weeks are marked on the calendar which is available on the Parliament Website/ Parliament APP.

### The Parliament Secretariat

This consists of the:

- Secretary-General to Parliament
- Deputy Secretary-General to Parliament
- Director Legislative
- Director Corporate
- 13 Units (Library & Research, Hansard, Inter-Parliamentary, Civic Education & Media, Committees, Tables, IT, Training & Quality Management, Registry & Stores, Policy & Planning Research, Assets & Management, Accounts, Administration & Human Resources)

### Location of Parliament

Government Buildings, Constitution Avenue, Suva (Opposite Albert Park).

#### Parliament Website

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



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

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Parliament of the Republic of Fiji



Parliament App