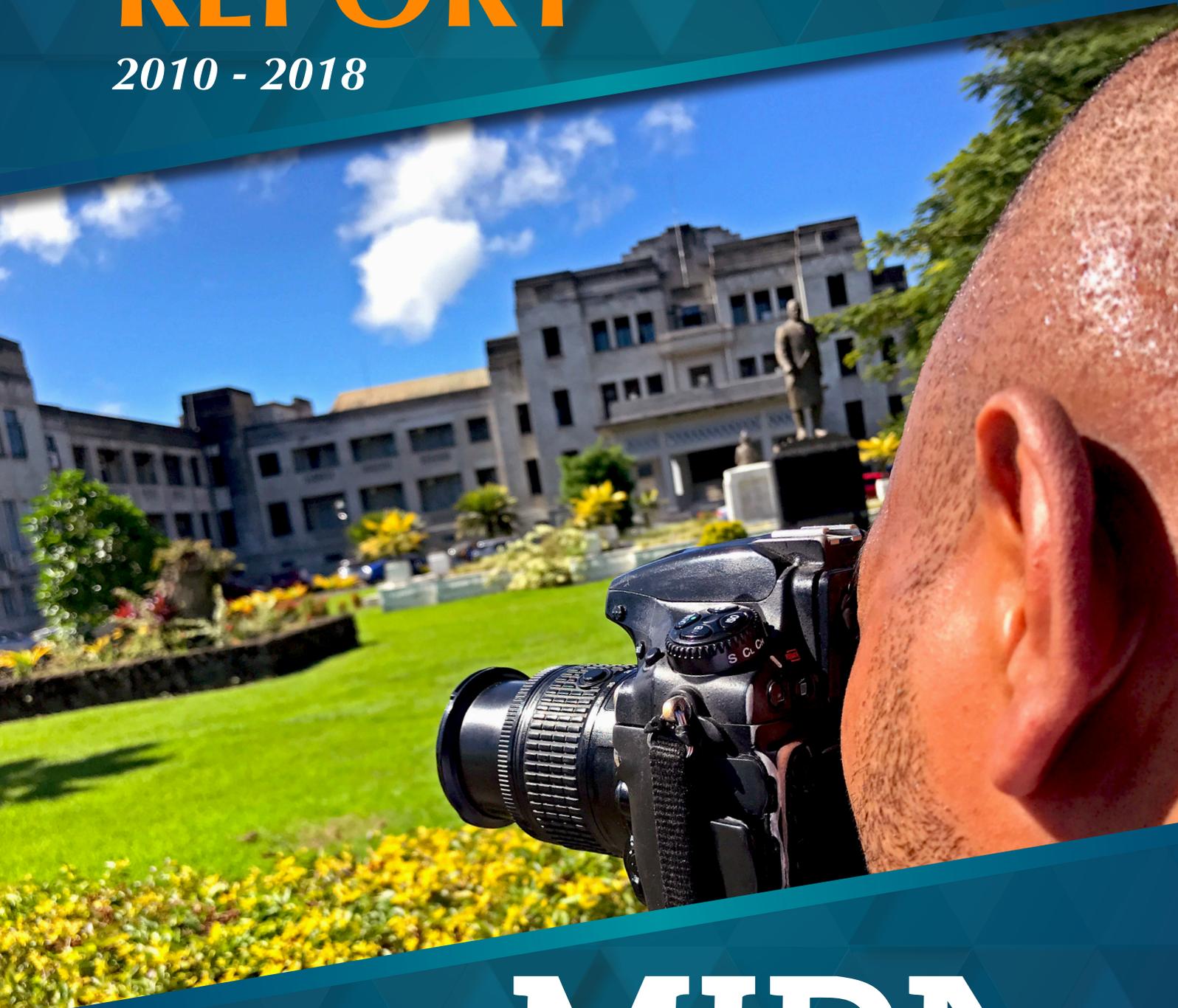


*CONSOLIDATED*  
**ANNUAL  
REPORT**

*2010 - 2018*



**MIDA**

MEDIA INDUSTRY DEVELOPMENT AUTHORITY OF FIJI





# Table of Content

**Legislative Framework**

**Functions of the Media Industry Development Authority**

**Powers of the Authority**

**The Authority and the Media Tribunal**

**Letter to the Honourable Minister**

**Chairperson's Report**

**Media organisations registered under the Media Industry Development Act of 2010**

**Monitoring Compliance**

**Developing Media Standards**

**The Authority and the Fijian General Elections**

**Press Freedom and the Right to Political Expression**

**Financials**

# **Legislative Framework**

**Section 17. (1) of the Fijian Constitution expressly provides that every person has the right to freedom of speech, expression, thought, opinion and publication, which includes-**

- (a) freedom to seek, receive and impart information, knowledge and ideas;
- (b) freedom of the press, including print, electronic, and other media;
- (c) freedom of imagination and creativity;
- (d) academic freedom and freedom of scientific research.

(2) Freedom of speech, expression and thought, opinion, and publication does not protect-

- (a) propaganda for war;
- (b) incitement to violence or insurrection against this Constitution; or
- (c) advocacy of hatred that-
  - (i) is based on any prohibited ground of discrimination listed or prescribed under section 26; and
  - (ii) constitutes incitement to cause harm.

(3) to the extent that this is necessary, a law may limit or may authorize the limitation of, the rights and freedoms mentioned in subsection (1) in the interests of-

- (a) national security, public safety, public order, public morality, public health or the orderly conduct of elections;
- (b) the protection or maintenance of the reputation, privacy, dignity, rights or freedoms of other persons, including-
  - (i) the right to be free from hate speech, whether directed against individuals or groups; and
  - (ii) the rights of persons injured by inaccurate or offensive media reports to have a correction published on reasonable conditions established by law.
- (c) preventing the disclosure, as appropriate, of information received in confidence;
- (d) preventing attacks on the dignity of individuals, groups of individuals or respected offices or institutions in a manner likely to promote ill will between ethnic or religious groups or the oppression of, or discrimination against, any person or group of persons;
- (e) maintaining the authority and independence of courts;
- (f) imposing restrictions on the holders of public offices;
- (g) regulating the technical administration of telecommunications; or

Section 17 (3) (h), also places a limitation in the interests of-

making provisions for the enforcement of media standards and providing for the regulation, registration and conduct of media organisations

The Media Industry Development Authority of Fiji ('Authority'), an independent statutory body established under the *Media Industry Development Act of 2010*, gives effect to the provisions under section 17 (3) (h) of the Fijian Constitution.

# **Functions of the Media Industry Development Authority**

**Pursuant to Section 8 of the *Media Industry Development Act 2010*, the functions of the Authority are—**

- (a) to encourage, promote and facilitate the development of media organisations and media services in Fiji;
- (b) to advise and make recommendations to the Minister on matters, measures and regulations related to or connected with the media;
- (c) to facilitate the provision of a quality range of media services in Fiji which serves the national interest;
- (d) to ensure that media services in Fiji are maintained at a high standard in all respects and, in particular, in respect of the quality, balance, fair judgement and range of subject-matter of their content;
- (e) to ensure that nothing is included in the content of any media service which is against public interest or order, or national interest, or which offends against good taste or decency and creates communal discord;
- (f) to promote local content in print and broadcast media; and
- (g) to perform such other matters as the Authority may determine to be in the interests of the media and in furtherance of the objects of this Act.

# **Powers of the Authority**

## **Section 9 of the *Media Industry Development Act 2010* confers to the Authority the powers to:**

- (a) conduct research and investigations necessary for the improvement and development of media in Fiji;
- (b) develop and monitor codes of practice relating to content or technical standards for media services or to standards of fair market conduct in the media industry, and monitor compliance with such codes;
- (c) subject to the approval of the Minister—
  - (i) enter into joint ventures or partnerships with other media authorities, international agencies or private organisations for the purpose of promoting media services;
  - (ii) enter into such contracts as may be necessary or expedient for the purpose of discharging its functions or duties;
  - (iii) become a member or an affiliate of any international body, the functions or duties of which are similar to those of the Authority;
  - (iv) acquire and dispose of any property, whether movable or immovable, which the Authority thinks necessary or expedient for the purpose of carrying out its functions or duties;
  - (v) incorporate companies for the purpose of performing things ancillary to its functions or duties;
- (d) provide training schemes, whether by itself or with the co-operation of other persons or bodies as the Authority thinks fit, for the officers and employees of the Authority and others concerned with media services;
- (e) monitor compliance with the ethical standards of the print and broadcast media in accordance with the Media Code of Ethics and Practice;
- (f) monitor the advertising practices of the print and broadcast media in accordance with the
- (g) monitor compliance by television broadcasters with the Television Programme Classifications Code;
- (h) oversee the development, implementation, maintenance and review of the media codes;
- (i) provide registration to every media organisation that intends to provide media services in Fiji;
- (j) refer to the Tribunal complaints brought by the public against media organisations alleging a breach of the media codes; and
- (k) refer to the Tribunal complaints brought to the Minister by members of the public or public officers or other Ministers against media organisations alleging a breach of the media codes.

# **The Authority and the Media Tribunal**

## Composition of the Authority

The Authority is established under section 3 of the Media Industry Development Act of 2010 and consists of a chairperson and 5 other members, appointed by the Minister. Section 4(2) of the Act requires that in appointing the five other members of the Authority, the Minister shall ensure that they comprise the following-

- (a) the Solicitor-General or his or her nominee;
- (b) one person representing the interests of consumers in Fiji, particularly in relation to food and nutrition;
- (c) one person representing the interests of children in Fiji;
- (d) one person representing the interests of women in Fiji; and
- (e) one person with expertise or experience in journalism and/or the media industry.

## Media Tribunal

Section 44 (1) of the Media Industry Development Act of 2010 establishes the Media Tribunal. As per section 44 (2) of the Act, the Tribunal has the jurisdiction, powers and functions conferred on it by the Act or any other written law. The Tribunal consists of a Chairperson who is appointed by the President on the advice of the Attorney General and is qualified to be a Judge under section 105 of the Fijian Constitution.

Pursuant to section 50 (1) of the Act, the Tribunal has the jurisdictional powers to-

- a) hear and determine complaints referred by the Authority;
- b) hear and determine complaints referred by the Authority on behalf of a complainant;
- c) hear and determine complaints referred by a complainant;
- d) adjudicate on actions for breach of media codes; and
- e) adjudicate on matters relating to media disputes.

## Independence of the Tribunal

Pursuant to section 50(3) of the Act, in the performance of its functions or the exercise of its powers, the Tribunal is not subject to the directions or control of any other person or authority, provided that the Minister may issue policy, administrative and financial guidelines to the Tribunal and the Tribunal must act in accordance with any guidelines given by the Minister.

The Media Tribunal and the Authority are independent of each other.

**Letter to the  
Honourable Minister**

18 July 2019

**The Honourable Attorney-General  
Government of the Republic of Fiji  
Level 7, Suvavou House  
Suva**

Dear Sir,

**Re: Media Industry Development Authority Annual Report 2010-2018**

Pursuant to section 15 of the Media Industry Development Act of 2010, I am pleased to submit the Media Industry Development Authority's consolidated Annual Report for the year ending 31 December 2010 to 31 December 2018.

Yours sincerely,

Ashwin Raj  
**Chairperson**

# **Chairperson's Report**



I am pleased to present the Media Industry Development Authority's consolidated Annual Report for the period 2010 to 2018 as required by section 15 of the Media Industry Development Act of 2010.

The report documents the work of the Authority in the registration, monitoring compliance with the media code of ethics and practice prescribed under the Media Industry Development Authority Act of 2010, and the development of media organisations and services in Fiji. It also attests to the Authority's engagement with both local and foreign media during the two general elections in 2014 and in 2018 in ensuring that the media understood and adhered to the requirements of covering campaigns and the election process within the framework of section 118 of Electoral Act of 2014.

A free, responsible, accountable and robust media is critical in fostering a culture of deep and deliberative democracy. Unlike many other constitutional jurisdictions that deem the guaranteeing of freedom of speech, expression and publication to entail implicitly freedom of the press, the Fijian Constitution through its Bill of Rights, unequivocally recognises freedom of the press as pivotal in the materialization of freedom of speech, expression, thought, opinion and publication.

No country guarantees unfettered freedom without responsibility and Fiji is no exception. Whilst guaranteeing freedom of speech, expression, thought, opinion and publication, the Fijian Constitution expressly prohibits any speech, opinions or expressions inter alia, that is tantamount to propaganda of war; incitement of violence or insurrection against the Constitution; or advocates hatred based on any prohibited grounds of discrimination such as race, culture, ethnic or social origin, sex, gender, sexual orientation and gender identity, language, economic, social or health status, disability, age, and/or religion. These rights are subject to limitation through law in the interests of national security, public safety, public order, public morality or the orderly conduct of elections and in upholding:

- the right to be free from hate speech (an expression in whatever form that encourages or has the effect of encouraging discrimination on the grounds mentioned earlier)
- the rights of persons injured by inaccurate or offensive media reports to have a correction published on reasonable conditions established by law
- preventing the disclosure of sources
- preventing attacks on the dignity of individuals or groups in a manner likely to promote ill will between ethnic or religious groups or the oppression of or discrimination against individuals or groups.

The State is constitutionally obliged to make provisions for the enforcement of media standards and the regulation, registration and conduct of media organisations. The limitations to freedom of speech, expression and publication in the Fijian Constitution on the prohibited grounds of discrimination listed in its Bill of Rights are in consonance with General Recommendation No. 35 (CERD/C/GC/35) of the International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination on *Combating Racist Hate Speech*.

Fiji's long history of racial intolerance, institutionalized racism and abuse of special affirmative action measures has taught us that the media can be pivotal in either perpetuating fragmentation to feed its insatiable appetite for profit or promoting racial understanding and cohesiveness. What is needed is a strong, well-trained and confident media that does not exercise self-censorship. Media training to ensure that the media understands the perimeters between free speech and limitations on free speech in accordance with international law. The jurisprudence of the European Court of Human Rights is instructive. Again, Fiji is not an exception. Advanced liberal democracies such as the United Kingdom adopted a model of audited self-regulation subsequent to the Leveson Inquiry, with the audit being undertaken by the State.

Contrary to the criticisms made by some commentators and politicians who have described the Media Industry Development Act of 2010 as draconian, the media code of ethics and practice under the Act is integral in upholding human dignity, maintaining public decency, protecting victims of sexual violence, hate speech and the invasion of privacy of ordinary citizens apart from promoting the fundamental journalistic values of fairness, accuracy and balanced reporting including the protection of journalistic sources. Members of the public, government statutory bodies, civil society organisations, businesses, members of parliament, law enforcement agencies and media organisations have lodged complaints with the Authority alleging breach of the media code of ethics and practice, relating to invasion of privacy, unfair and impartial reporting, subterfuge, use of strong language, insensitive reporting about sexual crimes, deceptive practices and breach of code of practice for advertising. As the conduit between people and power, the media must embody the principles of transparency and accountability.

Since its establishment, the Media Industry Development Authority (MIDA) has called for balanced, accurate and evidence-based reporting encouraging quality of journalism that is ethical and follows internationally recognized protocols of responsible journalism. To ensure accountability and transparency in regulating the conduct of the media, the Media Industry Development Act 2010 also provides for an independent media tribunal (independent of the Media Industry Development Authority), presided by a High Court Judge, to adjudicate on breaches of media codes or matters relating to media dispute.

MIDA has actively encouraged the mainstream media (both print and broadcast) to report freely and critically public opinion and views including those which are critical of Government, within the bounds of responsible journalism. MIDA's consistent call for the exercise of self-regulation, and continuous education of the media is in consonance with UNESCO's call towards "strengthening national legislative framework, the training of journalists to build capacity and to advance media and information literacy" and supporting "media independence by promoting professional standards and self-regulation" in its report on *World Trends in Freedom of Expression and Media Development*.

Fiji does enjoy a free and robust media landscape. Political bias must not be confused and equated with press freedom. Otherwise, we would not have seen, as this Annual Report documents, the publication of a plurality of dissenting voices including the voices of ordinary citizens openly critical of government and its policies as much as they are critical of opposition political parties in the columns of dailies without any reprisal. It attests to the extent to which Fiji enjoys freedom of the press including the right to political expression without fear of reprisal, recrimination and self-censorship and the existence of a plurality of political perspectives on contentious issues such as workers' rights, the state of our economy and democracy, independence of institutions, racism, electoral laws, governance, civil service reforms and ironically reports on the suppression of media freedom. Fiji must continue to develop its own jurisprudence on freedom of expression that balances its constitutional safeguards for the protection of freedom of speech, expression, thought, opinion and publication including freedom of the press with the justifiable limitations prescribed in law.

A longitudinal assessment of the rankings compiled by Reporters Without Borders on the world press freedom index, based on the six general criteria: pluralism, media independence, environment and self-censorship, legislative framework, transparency and infrastructure, attests to the considerable strides Fiji has made over the years in strengthening press freedom rising in ranks from 107 to 93 in 2015, 80 in 2016, going up 13 ranks in 2017 to 67 and another 10 ranks to 57 in 2018. The independent report of the Multinational Observer Group on the 2018 Fijian General Election also noted that the Fijian media "facilitated some robust debate, especially on television and radio. Parties and candidates were generally able to convey their political messages to the electorate.

I would like to express my gratitude to the Fijian media including the Fijian Media Association, the Fijian Government, civil society organisations and development partners such as Pacific Media Assistance Scheme (PACMAS), United Nations Development Programme, the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR) for their collective commitment towards raising the standard of media in Fiji through an ethic of constructive engagement.

Thank you

Ashwin Raj  
**Chairperson**

**Media organisations  
registered under the Media  
Industry Development Act of 2010**

Pursuant to section 33 (1) of the Media Industry Development Act of 2010, every media organisation that provides or intends to provide media services in Fiji must be registered as per the requirements set out in part 6 of the Act.

### Summary of Registered Media Organisations and Freelance Reporters

No.	Date Received	Media Company Name	Media Type
1.	21/07/2010	Fiji Television Ltd	Television
2.	22/07/2010	Fiji Times Ltd	Newspaper
3.	26/07/2010	Mai TV (Fiji) Ltd	Television
4.	26/07/2010	Communications Fiji Limited	Radio
5.	27/07/2010	Active Media Publications Ltd	Magazine
6.	27/07/2010	Chew Publishing	Magazine
7.	27/07/2010	Munro Leys	Internet services
8.	27/07/2010	Island Business International	Magazines (Note 2)
9.	27/07/2010	Sun (Fiji) News Limited	Newspaper
10.	27/07/2010	Fiji Broadcasting Corporation Ltd	Radio
11.	28/07/2010	Australian and New Zealand Banking Corporation	Internet service
12.	29/07/2010	Webmasters Ltd	Internet service
13.	03/08/2010	Media Entertainment	Radio
14.	13/08/2010	City Star	Newspaper
15.	13/08/2010	Adventist Media Network (Fiji)	Internet service, magazine, radio & television
16.	16/08/2010	The Island Express	Newspaper
17.	09/09/2010	Mix FM	Radio
18.	14/10/2010	Concept Pacific (Fiji) Ltd	Magazine

19.	18/10/2010	Pulse Vision Limited	Radio
20.	28/10/2010	The Jet	Newspaper
21.	17/06/2011	ALSA Ltd	Magazine (Note 2)
22.	06/01/2012	Mailife Magazine	Magazine
23.	14/05/2010	Republika Media Limited	Magazine
24.	06/06/2012	Western Herald	Newspaper
25.	12/07/2013	The Stallion	Newspaper
26.	04/03/2014	Viti Vou	Newspaper
27.	01/05/2014	Femlink Pacific	Radio, internet service and e-bulletin
28.	21/05/2014	Xinhua News Agency	International News Agency
29.	23/07/2014	Pacific Pencil Ltd	Magazine
30.	05/08/2014	Robert Matau	Freelance
31.	25/08/2014	Cards Feejee Ltd	Magazine
32.	27/08/2014	Radio Pasifik-USP	Radio
33.	27/08/2014	Wansolwara-USP	Internet service
34.	01/09/2014	Business Melanesia	Magazine
35.	15/09/2014	Chinese Media (Fiji) Ltd	Newspaper
36.	14/10/2014	Paclink Publication	Magazine
37.	22/05/2015	Pacific Island News Association	Internet service
38.	03/12/2015	Radio Gyan Vani (Fiji)	Internet radio
39.	10/02/2016	Newswire	Internet service (Note 3)
40.	06/06/2016	Enthuse Media	Audio visual broadcast and print
41.	16/06/2016	Front Page Limited	Newspaper, magazine, radio & television
42.	31/08/2016	Friistyle Marketing	Magazine
43.	25/05/2017	Freelance	ABC News
44.	03/03/2017	The Lighthouse Publication	Magazine
45.	03/10/2017	Northern Herald	Newspaper

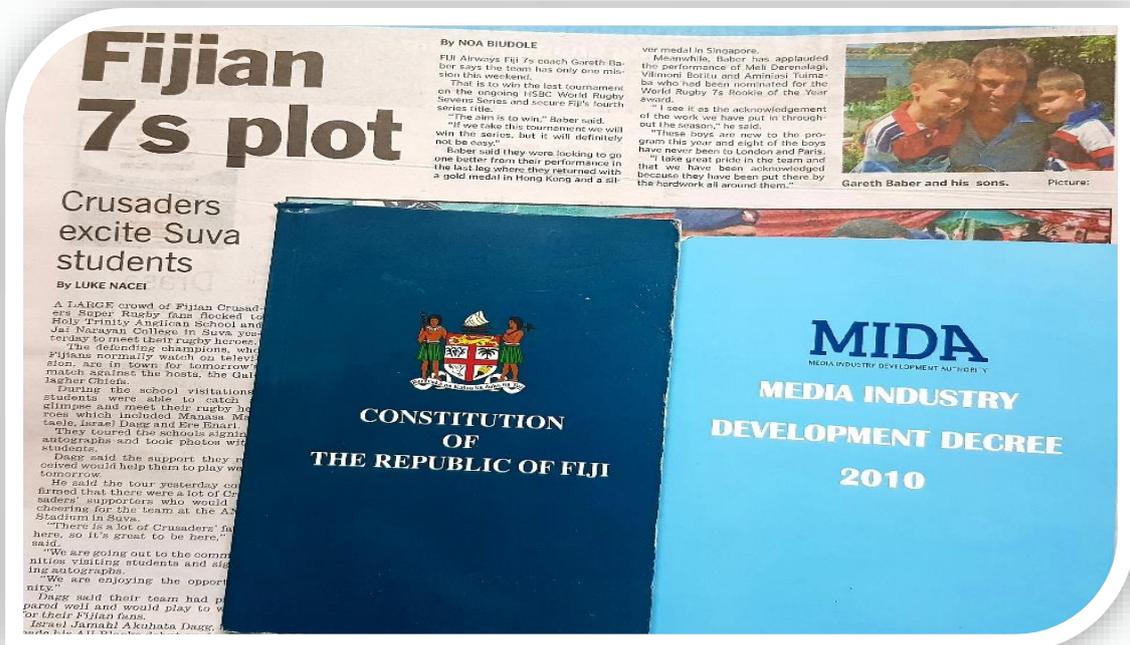
Note 1: Front Page Ltd no. 41 on the list, acquired Islands Business International.

Note 2: Mailife magazine no. 22 on the list, acquired ALSA Ltd.

Note 3: Front Page Ltd no. 41 on the list, acquired Newswire.

# **Monitoring Compliance**

# Complaints received by the Authority



The Authority, consistent with Section 9 (e) has a legal obligation to monitor compliance with the ethical standards of the print and broadcast media in accordance with the Media Code of Ethics and Practice. Section 9 (f) and (g) of the Act further mandates the Authority to:

- monitor the advertising practices of the print and broadcast media in accordance with the Advertising Codes
- monitor compliance by television broadcasters with the Television Programme Classifications Code

The Authority also has the powers to investigate breaches of the Media Code of Ethics and Practice. Pursuant to section 25 of the Media Industry Development Act 2010, the Authority may conduct an investigation if there are reasonable grounds for suspecting that any provision of the Act or any provision of the media codes has been infringed and may refer the matter to the Media Tribunal for determination.

Section 53 (1) of the Act provides that any person or entity may make a complaint against any media organisation to the Authority regarding the failure on the part of any media organisation to comply with the provisions of the Media Industry Development Act 2010, including non-compliance with any media codes. Moreover, section 53 (3) stipulates that a complaint may be made against the media organisation or any employee, officer, agent or servant of that media organisation for non-compliance of the media codes.

A total of **one hundred and three complaints** were received, independently assessed and investigated by the Authority during the period 2010 to 2018. This included complaints in relation to alleged breach of section 17 under Bill of Rights in the Fijian Constitution, breach of Media

Code of Ethics and Practice, Schedule 1 [section 18 (1)] and General Code of Practice for Advertisement, Schedule 2 [section 18(2)] of the Media Industry Development Act 2010. The nature of complaints range from inaccurate reporting, acts to mislead and distort information, unfair reporting, invasion of privacy, denial of the right to reply, religious vilification, deceptive practices, subterfuge, use of indecent and strong language, blatant breach of code of practice when reporting crimes of sexual nature to unethical advertising.

Despite the numbers of complaints made and the statutory powers given to the Authority and the Tribunal, the Authority has preferred a constructive dialogue with media agencies over a punitive prosecutorial role. Such an approach in the Authority's view, is more likely to achieve an enduring and partnership approach to media regulation.

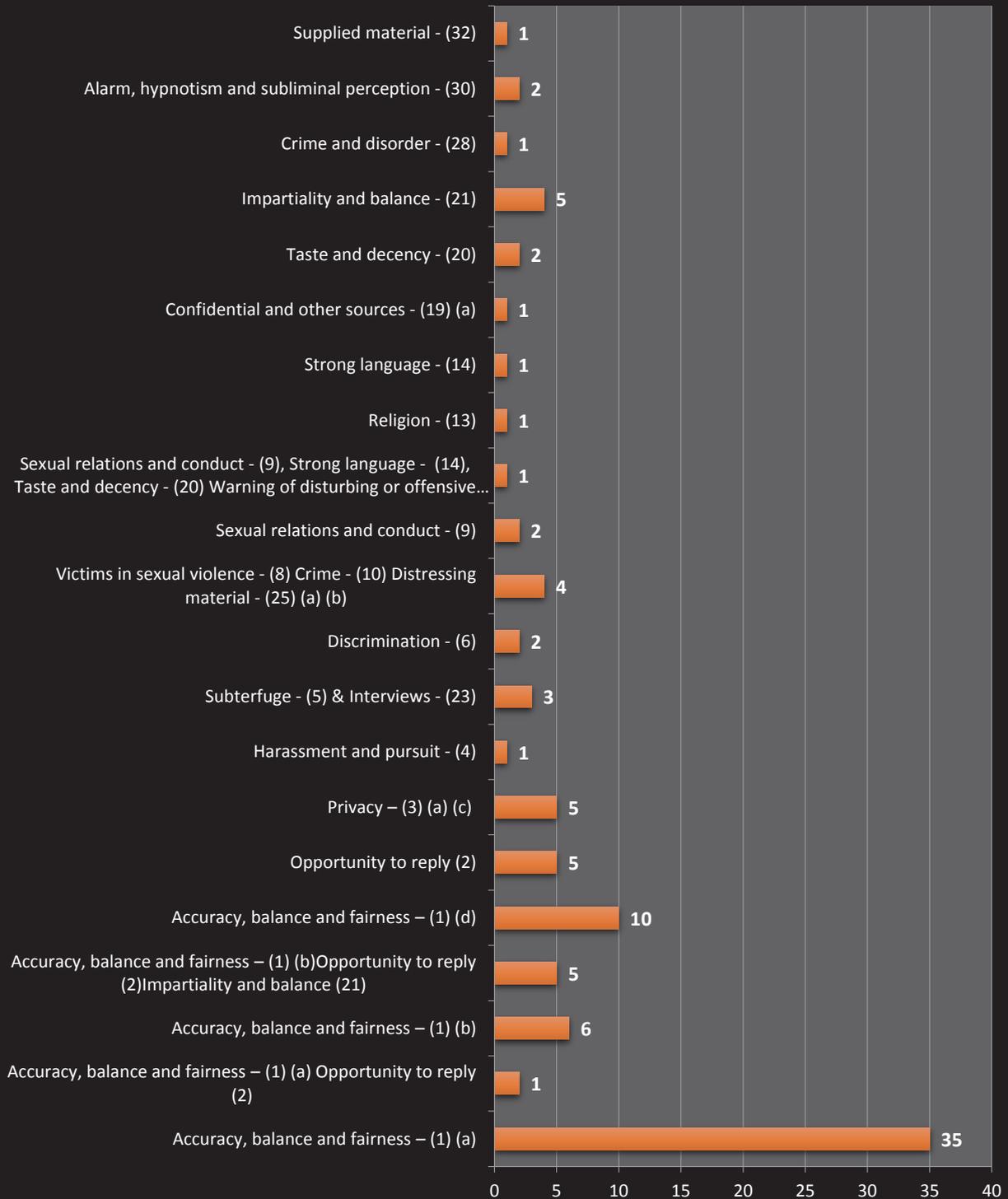
Although section 54 of the Act, for instance, confers to the Authority, the powers to carry out an investigation against any media organisation for failure on the part of any media organisation to comply with the provisions of the Act, including non-compliance with any media codes, even though no complaint has been made or lodged by any person or entity, powers under section 54 of the Act were never used by the Authority. In the interest of balanced, fair and accurate reporting, the Authority wrote to media organisations, seeking retraction and correction of stories which were inaccurate and misleading and crucially giving media organisations the right to reply. The Media Tribunal has never been convened.

# Complaints Received by the Authority

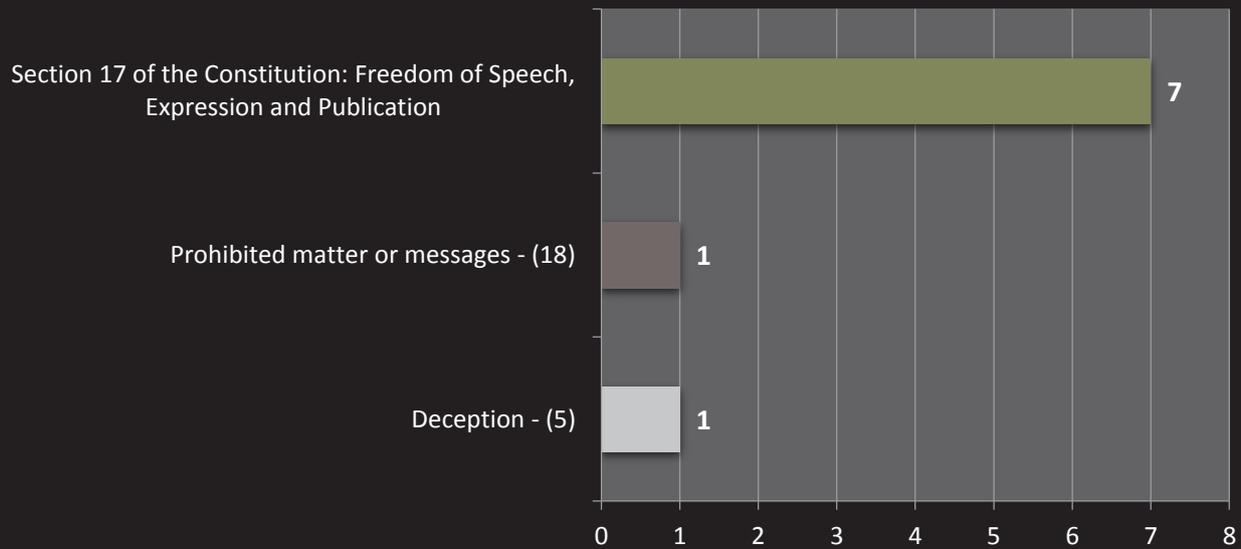
Schedule 1 (Section 18 (1)) Media Code of Ethics and Practice										
Nature of Complaints:	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	TOTAL (per nature of complaints)
Accuracy, balance and fairness – (1) (a)		3	6	1	12	9	2	2		35
Accuracy, balance and fairness – (1) (d)			5							5
Opportunity to reply (2)										
Impartiality and balance (21)										
Accuracy, balance and fairness – (1) (b)				4			2			6
Accuracy, balance and fairness – (1) (a)									1	1
Opportunity to reply (2)										
Accuracy, balance and fairness – (1) (d)			3	1	1	2	1	1		10
Opportunity to reply (2)				2		1	2			5
Privacy – (3) (a) (c)						1	2	2		5
Harassment and pursuit - (4) (a)				1						1
Subterfuge - (5)		1	1					1		3
Interviews - (23)										
Discrimination - (6) (b)		1					1			2
Victims in sexual violence - (8) (a) (b)						2		2		4
Crime - (10) (a)										
Distressing material - (25) (a)										
Sexual relations and conduct - (9)					1		1			2
Sexual relations and conduct - (9)		1								1
Taste and decency - (20)										
Religion - (13)	1									1
Strong language - (14)							1			1
Confidential and other sources - (19) (a)					1					1
Taste and decency - (20)						1		1		2



## Complaints of breach of the Media Code of Ethics and Practice



## Complaints of breach of the General Code of Ethics for Advertisements & Section 17 of the Constitution (Freedom of Speech, Expression and Publication)



## Media Code of Ethics and Practice – Schedule 1 (Section 18 (1))

### Sub-section 1 (a) - Accuracy, balance and fairness

***Newspapers and magazines, radio and television broadcasting organisations, web sites and internet newsletters, and journalists working for them, shall report and interpret news and current affairs honestly. They shall aim to disclose all known relevant facts and shall take care not to publish material which is inaccurate, misleading or distorted by wrong or improper emphasis or any other factor.***

The Authority received thirty-five complaints of the alleged breach of sub-section (1) (a) of the media code of ethics and practice under the Act. Allegations included inaccurate reporting, misleading or distorting information by wrong or improper emphasis. In one of the matters, it was alleged that a media organisation had misled the public by misquoting an increase in fuel prices. In another case, a political party accused a print media organisation of mischievous reporting while in another matter, a complaint was lodged against a media organisation for televising a story on medical negligence and showing pictures of a medical clinic not implicated in the story.

Other complaints included a complaint against a foreign media company for allegedly misleading and distorting information; an independent electoral management body lodged a complaint against a print media organisation for misleading, and a lack of accuracy and balance in an article about the location of polling venues resulting in confusion amongst voters; a political party representative lodged a complaint against a journalist for irresponsible and inaccurate reporting on the outcome of a party meeting during the build-up to 2014 general-election ; a law firm had lodged a complaint on behalf of its client (a timber retailer) against a print media organisation for allegedly impugning the client's company in an article through false and misleading reporting; staff union of a tertiary institution lodged a complaint against a journalist for poor standard of reporting, incorrect information and failure to research on subject matter; a media organisation lodged a complaint against another media organisation for misleading and unethical reporting about the media organisation's audit report. The aggrieved media organisation's responses were also not published.

A government department lodged a complaint against a print media organisation for fabricated and unsubstantiated claims and misleading the readers about the shortage of medicine; a complaint was received from a funeral services company against a print media organisation for misreporting a story about the release of a deceased person's body by a morgue attendant; a law firm on behalf of an investment company lodged a complaint against a print media organisation for incorrect and misleading publication of a picture showing an island resort which was not cited in the actual article. A trade union body lodged a complaint against a print media organisation for bias reporting and misrepresentation of facts and a Member of Parliament had lodged a complaint against a print media organisation for incorrect and unfair reporting of his statement during a parliamentary standing committee sitting.

The head of a school expressed concern over a story published by a media organisation relating to a student sustaining an injury at school. The school head claimed the media organisation had misled its readers by using inaccurate information.

### Other complaints included:

- A complaint was received from a school head regarding a letter published by a newspaper in its open column. The letter was about a Parental Teachers Association (PTA) meeting at a school in which a parent made remarks about how an English teacher was pronouncing the alphabet 'e'. While the name of the school was not mentioned, its location was given. The school head clarified that there was no said PTA meeting as mentioned and the letter writer was not a parent.
- A complaint was received from a youth leader against a journalist for allegedly misrepresenting his comments concerning the Fijian flag, in particular, the use of the term, 'disrespect'. The media organisation, however, responded stating that the use of the word, 'disrespect' was accurate and appropriate as "respect simply means to consider something or someone in high regard. Disrespect is the opposite of that ideal".
- A complaint was received from a government department about a poll conducted by an agency for a print media organisation on the subject of *unemployment in Fiji*. The complainant alleged the news story based on the outcome of the poll had false information which could potentially mislead the public.
- A complaint was received from a government department against a freelance reporter who allegedly reported that the Fijian media had failed to report on an outbreak of a disease. The complainant provided more than ten newspaper articles and press release that were issued concerning the outbreak. The freelance reporter had allegedly failed to check the facts of the story and as a result, listeners of an international radio broadcast were misled.
- A complaint was received from a mobile network company against a television company about a 'correction' on a 'Personality of the Year' story in which the complainant alleged that the correction was inaccurate and misleading.
- A complaint was received from a statutory body against a print media organisation for inaccurate reporting on the regulation of prices for dairy products.
- A complaint was received from a political party against a print media organisation for allegedly distorting their political party statement and further misleading the readers by running a correction which was ambiguous.
- A government department lodged a complaint against a journalist for allegedly misleading the readers by using a statement made by a law enforcement agency at another time. The media organisations also failed to allow the law enforcement agency to make fresh statements regarding the issue. This was also in breach of section 18 (1)(d).

- A government ministry lodged a complaint against a print media organisation for alleged inaccurate, false and misleading reporting when covering World Press Freedom Day. It is alleged the media organisation reported out of context when reporting a response from the government. There was also an alleged breach of section 18 (1) (23) (a).
- A government department lodged a complaint against a print media organisation for misrepresenting the poultry industry in Fiji.
- A Member of Parliament lodged a complaint against a print media organisation.
- A tertiary institution lodged a complaint against a print media organisation for allegedly publishing incorrect information and failing to correct it.
- A complaint was lodged by a sporting body against a print media organisation concerning coverage on the outcome of its annual general meeting. The Authority instructed all media outlets to exercise caution and adhere to the media code of ethics and practice.
- A government statutory body lodged a complaint against a print media organisation for misleading the readers about the services provided by the organisation.
- A government minister lodged a complaint against a print media organisation for factual inaccuracies, lack of balance and fair reporting.
- A political party representative lodged a complaint against a journalist for name-calling, irresponsible and biased reporting.
- A political party representative lodged a complaint against a journalist and the journalist's employer for allegedly publishing an inaccurate and misleading news story. The complainant claimed that the news story was a deliberate attempt to defame and discredit him as an officeholder of a political party by allegedly sensationalising a private matter between the complainant's company and a government statutory body with factually incorrect statements.
- A complaint was lodged by a government statutory body against a journalist for allegedly misreporting information from the official website of the statutory body. According to the complainant, the journalist had acted unethically.
- A media organisation lodged a complaint against another media outlet for allegedly distorting and manipulating the content of a press conference regarding a programme televised on the channel of the complainant's media organisation.
- A government department lodged a complaint against a print media organisation for failing to publish the response of a cabinet minister in a news story.

- A complaint was received against a print media organisation for misspelling the name of a government minister.

#### **Sub-section 1 (d)- Accuracy, balance and fairness**

*(Media organisations have a duty to be balanced and fair in their treatment of news and current affairs and their dealings with members of the public.*

#### **Sub-section 2 - Opportunity to reply**

*Media organisations have an obligation to give an opportunity to reply to any individual or organisation on which the medium itself comments editorially.*

#### **Sub-section 21 - Impartiality and balance**

*Media organisations shall show fairness at all times, and impartiality and balance in any item or programme, series of items or programmes or in broadly related articles or programmes when presenting news which deals with political matters, current affairs and controversial questions.*

Five complaints were received from a government department against a print media organisation for alleged breach of the above sections of the media code of ethics and practice.

#### **Summary of complaints:**

- The media organisation had failed to report the response of the government department responsible for public advisories during natural disasters. The story was misleading and lacked balance
- A trade unionist lodged a complaint against a publisher and editor of a print media organisation for allegedly publishing a misleading news story concerning the use of an official vehicle. The unionist claimed the media organisation had failed to verify facts while quoting a Cabinet Minister's comments on the brand of the vehicle in question. The unionist also raised concern over the media organisation's failure to publish his response to the claims.
- A complaint was lodged against a media organisation which had failed to include a significant detail on the commitment by the State to provide essential food items to infants' post - cyclone Winston.
- A media organisation had reported a news story on retirement age policy of the State. This media company reported the comments of the unionists but failed to seek a response from the State and other stakeholders.

- The response of the State was not reported in a matter where a trade unionist raised his concerns on state-regulations in relation to the media.
- A media organisation had failed to seek a response from the State in relation to a news story on the banking sector. As a result, the story was misleading and lacked balance.
- A media organisation reported comments of the former Prime Minister questioning the independence of the Fijian Election's Office but failed to report on a media release circulated by the Department of Information.

### **Sub-section 1 (b) - Accuracy, balance and fairness**

*If a significantly inaccurate, misleading or distorted statement is published or broadcast, it must be corrected promptly with due prominence and, where appropriate, an apology must be published or broadcast.*

The Authority received six complaints concerning the alleged breach of sub-section (1) (b) of the media code of ethics and practice. The allegations included unprofessional conduct by a foreign correspondent for misreporting on the issue of free media in Fiji; an independent body with prosecutorial powers lodged a complaint against a media organisation for misrepresentation of facts while reporting a court proceeding; a government department lodged a complaint against a print media for failing to print a correction following the publication of an inaccurate news story; a concerned member of the public complained that a print media organisation reported inaccurate information about charges laid against him and failed to run an apology and a correction despite the concerned media being notified and a member of public lodged a complaint against a print media organisation for inaccurate and misleading reporting in relation to students walking one and half mile to reach the examination hall in a village. According to the complainant, the students were instead transported in a vehicle to their examination hall. An independent electoral body lodged a complaint against a print media for allegedly misrepresenting the organisation's name after several reminders. However, the news organisation continued to misrepresent.

### **Sub-section 1 (a) - Accuracy, balance and fairness**

*Newspapers and magazines, radio and television broadcasting organisations, web sites and internet newsletters, and journalists working for them, shall report and interpret news and current affairs honestly. They shall aim to disclose all known relevant facts and shall take care*

*not to publish material which is inaccurate, misleading or distorted by wrong or improper emphasis or any other factor.*

### **Sub-section 2 - Opportunity to reply**

*Media organisations have an obligation to give an opportunity to reply to any individual or organisation on which the medium itself comments editorially.*

A law firm on behalf of its client lodged a complaint against a print media organisation for allegedly publishing an inaccurate, misleading and distorted news story about a business-house. The law firm alleged that the media organisation had not given its client an opportunity to reply.

### **Sub-section 1 (d) - Accuracy, balance and fairness**

*Media organisations have a duty to be balanced and fair in their treatment of news and current affairs and their dealings with members of the public.*

The Authority received ten complaints about the alleged breach of sub-section 1 (d) of the media code of ethics and practice. The allegations included preferential reporting of political party stories by media organisations. A complainant alleged that he was not paid his dues for his contribution to the columns of a print media organisation.

Other complaints included allegations of professional misconduct by journalists. A complainant alleged that a television service provider failed to publish the television programme guide and a government department lodged a complaint against a media organisation for failing to include any response from Government on a news story.

A politician through his lawyer advised a print media organisation to refrain from publishing a judgment in relation to the client as they were filing an application for appeal. The complainant had copied the Authority but not lodged a complaint.

A government department lodged a complaint against a print media organisation for alleged breach of ethical standards and wilful intention to deceive by publishing a letter in the open column on withdrawal of a tertiary scholarship of a student because of his political interests and agenda.

A Member of Parliament had expressed concern over a print media organisation's failure to publish his response fairly concerning a news-story. The complainant had copied the Authority in his correspondence with the media organisation but did not lodge a formal complaint to the Authority.

A government statutory body lodged a complaint against a print media organisation, labelling it as 'unprofessional' for failing to assist a public office with information into a matter of national interest.

### **Sub-section 2 - Opportunity to reply**

*Media organisations have an obligation to give an opportunity to reply to any individual or organisation on which the medium itself comments editorially.*

Five complaints were received for alleged breach of sub-section (2) of the media code of ethics and practice. The allegations included: a Non-Governmental-Organisation (NGO) representative alleged that a media organisation published false and misleading information over a project. It was alleged that the media organisation had failed to provide the NGO an opportunity to reply; a media organisation lodged a complaint against another media outlet in relation to the breach of right to reply. A government ministry had lodged a complaint against a television company for failing to seek a response from the ministry in relation to a news story they had televised and a complaint was lodged by a government department against a print media organisation for allegedly failing to report the state's response to the issue of media freedom in Fiji.

A media organisation had also lodged a complaint against another media outlet for failing to include a response from them in a news story about their procurement policies.

### **Sub-section 3 (a) and (c) Privacy**

*(a) - Publication, whether electronic or traditional, or broadcasting, of information, including pictures, about the private lives or concerns of individuals without their consent is acceptable only if a legitimate public interest outweighs their normal right to privacy.*

*(c) - "In the public interest" is not synonymous with "of interest to the public". The public interest relied upon to justify investigation must be serious and proper public interest and not mere curiosity. Entry into public life does not disqualify individuals from the right to privacy about their private affairs, except where the circumstances of these are likely to affect their performance of, or fitness for, the public roles they hold or seek.*

The Authority received five complaints about the alleged breach of the code on privacy. The allegations included: a member of public complained against a web based media for publishing a photograph which defamed him and he became a subject of troll; a lawyer lodged a complaint on behalf of his client against a print media organisation for publishing the client's photograph with the story titled, "Rape accused to take plea" when his client was incidentally at the courthouse to observe the case and was not the accused.

In another case, a medical professional lodged a complaint against a media organisation for using his photograph in an article on a fake doctor who was apprehended and was to appear in court. This was posted on the news website and shared by others with 2 million views.

The Authority received a complaint against a media organisation for publishing a photograph without the complainant's consent.

A member of public lodged a complaint against a broadcast media organisation for allegedly defaming her character by playing a private message on air without her consent.

#### **Sub-section 4 (a) - Harassment and pursuit**

*Media organisations must not seek interviews, information or pictures by intimidation or harassment. Nor should the media invade individuals' privacy by deception, eavesdropping or covert technological means (including the taking of pictures in private places by long lens photography).*

The Authority received a complaint concerning harassment and pursuit whereby a journalist was alleged to have sought information by intimidation and harassment during the course of his duty.

#### **Sub-section 5 - Subterfuge**

*Media organisations must use straightforward means to obtain information and pictures and must identify themselves when doing so. Use of subterfuge, false identity or covert recording can be justified only in rare circumstances where the material sought ought to be published in the public interest and could not be obtained in any other way.*

The Authority received three complaints about alleged subterfuge. A media organisation lodged a complaint against another media organization alleging subterfuge and deceptive practices (subsection 22 of media code of ethics and practice) over the broadcast of a rugby commentary, questioning whether it was live or a sham as the commentator was not present at the venue of the game. The media company broadcasting the commentary retorted by stating "that radio commentaries had broadcast the event as it happened in real time 'off-tube'".

The Authority also received a complaint in relation to the breach of subsection 23 on interviews coupled with allegations of subterfuge. A law enforcement agency lodged a complaint against a print media journalist for conducting an interview with the agency without disclosing the context of the interview. The complainant stated that the manner in which the comments were obtained was unethical as it was under the pretext of another subject. A complaint was lodged by a staff of a tertiary institution against a media

organisation in relation to alleged subterfuge as the interview was conducted in an unfair and dishonest manner.

#### **Sub-section 6 (b) – Discrimination**

*Media organisations shall not refer to a person’s gender, ethnicity, colour, religion, sexual orientation, or physical or mental illness or age in a prejudicial or pejorative context except where it is strictly relevant to the matter reported or adds significantly to readers’’, viewers’’, or listeners’’, understanding of that matter.*

Two complaints were received for alleged breach of sub-section 6 (b) of the media code of ethics and practice. A complaint was received from a government department against a print media organisation for allegedly identifying two convicts by their ethnicity instead of nationality raising concerns that ethnic profiling conforms to a particular stereotype. In another case, a political party representative lodged a complaint against a print media organisation for publishing material which was bordering on discrimination in particularly stereotyping LGBTI persons.

#### **Sub-section 8 (a) and (b) - Victims in sexual cases**

*(a) Media organisations must not identify victims of sexual assaults or publish or broadcast material likely to contribute to their identification even when free by law to do so.*

*(b) Media organisations shall not identify children either as victims or witnesses in cases alleging sexual offences.*

#### **Sub-section 10 (a) - Crime**

*(a) Crime and anti-social behaviour, especially involving violence, should not be glamorised or reported, portrayed or detailed in a manner which, on reasonable judgement would be likely to encourage or incite or experiment.*

#### **Sub-section 25 (a) - Distressing material**

*(a) Editors, producers and broadcasters of news, current affairs and documentary programmes and articles shall take particular care in deciding whether the inclusion of graphic detail and intensity of violent or distressful material is warranted by its relevance and add to public understanding of the subject.*

Four complaints were received from a civil society organisation and a law enforcement agency against a print media organisation for the alleged breach of the above sections of the media code of ethics and practice. A women’s organisation lodged a complaint against the media organisation for exposing the identity of a rape victim and for being insensitive while reporting on the case.

The article had explicit descriptions of how the victim was found; the sensitivities around rape case and the effect of publication on the public as the article contained graphic details

which described the intensity and distress of the victim's state. The women's organisation also lodged a complaint against the same print media organisation for reporting on the alleged rape and murder of a child. Concerns were raised regarding the headline identifying the deceased.

A law enforcement agency also lodged a complaint expressing concern over the breach of section 8 (a) and section 10 (b) of the media code of ethics and practice in a case in which a print media organisation had reported the identity of a nine-year old victim of sexual violence. A youth leader lodged a complaint against a print media organisation for allegedly publishing a headline which identified a rape victim who was a child.

#### **Sub-Section 9 – Sexual Relations and Conduct**

*Sexual relations and conduct When reporting or portraying sexual activity and conduct, media organisations must be keenly aware of the danger of publishing or broadcasting material that affronts or offends public decency or the likely audience or readership. Particular regard should be paid to the context of publication and time of transmission.*

Two complaints were received by the Authority for the alleged breach of the above section. In one case, a complaint was received from a government ministry against a web-based news organisation about a story titled, 'Never leave daughter in dad's care'. The complainant alleged that the story offended public decency and that particular regard should be paid to the context in which a story is published. In another case, a member of public expressed dismay over a television company for allegedly sensationalising news by giving graphic details of a sexual act between two individuals when reporting a murder story. The complainant stressed that the news piece was inappropriate given the timing of the news bulletin as most households in Fiji sit with their children to watch the local news at that time.

#### **Sub-section 9 - Sexual Relations and Conduct**

*When reporting or portraying sexual activity and conduct, media organisations must be keenly aware of the danger of publishing or broadcasting material that affronts or offends public decency or the likely audience or readership. Particular regard should be paid to the context of publication and time of transmission.*

#### **Sub-section 20 - Taste and decency**

*Media organisations shall recognise socially accepted general standards of decency and taste in language and behaviour, bearing in mind the context in which the language and behaviour occur (including humour, satire and drama) and, for broadcasters, the timing of transmission and likely audience of the programme.*

A complaint was received from a teacher against two radio presenters for using vulgar language, discussing pornographic website addresses, using distasteful language (obscenity), making prank calls to the listeners and advising students to play truancy and engage in love-affairs. According to the complainant, these remarks were made during the peak time.

### **Sub-section 13 (b) – Religion**

*(b) Journalists and broadcasters shall avoid intentionally giving offence to believers of all faiths by casual, gratuitous and expletive references to deities, which are unnecessary or unjustified by the context.*

A complaint was received from a member of the public against a journalist for allegedly reporting a story the complainant claimed was false, untrue and unscientific premised on articles from Hindu holy books.

### **Sub-section 14 – Strong Language**

*Media organisations shall avoid gratuitous use of strong swear words or obscene or blasphemous language in copy or broadcasts. Publication or broadcasting of these in direct form can be justified only in rare cases when it is essential to readers or audiences understanding of the story reported or the dramatic development of a programme. In such cases care must be taken in choosing the context and scheduling of the material concerned to avoid unnecessarily causing offence to its likely readers or audience.*

A complaint was lodged by a Fijian citizen residing in New Zealand against a media organisation for alleged name-calling and derogatory comments including concerns about the context and scheduling of the material by journalists to avoid causing offence to its likely readers or audience.

### **Sub-section 1 (d) - Accuracy, balance and fairness**

*(d) Media organisations have a duty to be balanced and fair in their treatment of news and current affairs and their dealings with members of the public.*

### **Sub-section 19 (a) - Confidential and other sources**

*(a) Journalists of all media organisations have an obligation to protect confidential sources of information, and to respect confidences knowingly and willingly accepted in the course of their occupation.*

A complaint was received from a government department against a print media organisation for allegedly threatening to publish the contents of complaints and concerns filed by the government, in confidence with the media organisation, regarding the media organisation's editorial coverage.

### **Sub-section 20 - Taste and decency**

*Media organisations shall recognise socially accepted general standards of decency and taste in language and behaviour, bearing in mind the context in which the language and behaviour occur (including humour, satire and drama) and, for broadcasters, the timing of transmission and likely audience of the programme.*

The Authority received two complaints concerning alleged use of indecent language and humour by two broadcast organisations. In one matter, a concerned citizen lodged a complaint against the announcers of a local Hindi radio station for ridiculing a deceased on their show by discussing the theft of the remains (ashes) of the deceased. A complaint was also received against an overseas based Hindi radio station for allegedly mocking Fijian mothers on their show. In both cases, the complainants had expressed concern over the unprofessional conduct of the announcers.

#### **Sub-section 21 - Impartiality and balance**

*Media organisations shall show fairness at all times, and impartiality and balance in any item or programme, series of items or programmes or in broadly related articles or programmes when presenting news which deals with political matters, current affairs and controversial questions.*

The Authority received four complaints concerning impartiality and balance. In one complaint, a women's organisation lodged a complaint against a print media organisation for publishing comments of a high-profile public office holder without carrying balancing or qualifying statements. The comments related to violence against women. A government department lodged a complaint regarding a print media organisation in relation to unfair reporting on the cost of holding general election in a day and a political party lodged a complaint against a print media organisation for mischievous and false publication on payment of pension. A complaint was received from a former politician residing abroad against a media organisation for unfair and bias reporting by omitting the former politician's comments in relation to non-payment of rent.

#### **Sub-section 28 - Crime and disorder**

*Programmes or articles likely to promote civil insurrection or encourage crime or public disorder must not be broadcast or published.*

A political party lodged a complaint against a print media organisation and the leader of another political party who was quoted in a news story which the complainant claimed could lead to political incitement and public disorder.

#### **Sub-section 30 (i) - Alarm, hypnotism and subliminal perception**

*Media organisations must refrain from publishing or broadcasting, except as legitimate entertainment or information, any material which, when considered whole—*

*(i) Simulates news or events in print, sound or pictures in such a way as to mislead or alarm its audience;*

The Authority received two complaints from a government statutory body against a print media organisation for publishing an article which according to the complainant could

potentially cause alarm or panic and would have obstructed the complainant's dispensation of his organisational mandate.

A government department lodged a complaint against a print media organisation for publication of a story about a mobile network allegedly monitoring calls, wire-tapping and eavesdropping. It was alleged that the media organisation had quoted a foreign media report highlighting that 760 warrants for the legal interception of communications metadata were issued in Fiji in 2013 for phone numbers, addresses, device locations and time of calls and messages.

#### **Sub-section 32 - Supplied material**

*Where a strong editorial reason warrants the inclusion in any article, programme or video or other recorded material supplied by or on behalf of official bodies, commercial companies or campaigning organisations, its source should be clearly labelled in print or on air in sound or vision.*

A print media allegedly lodged a complaint against another print media for publishing a photograph taken by the print media without giving any credit. However, the print media that published the picture stated that it was supplied to them by a sports team representative.

## **General Code of Practice for Advertisements – Schedule 2 – Section 18 (2)**

#### **Sub-section 5 - Deception**

*Advertisements must not contain material likely to deceive or mislead people about any product or service, directly or by implication, by inclusion, omission, ambiguity, or false or misleading comparison.*

#### **Sub-section 18 (b) - Prohibited matter or messages**

*Advertisements must not be accepted or transmitted if their effect is likely to—  
(b) cause offence to adherents of any major religion*

The Authority received two complaints in breach of the general code of practice for advertisements. One complaint was concerning the breach of sub-section 5, alleging deception. A government statutory body notified the Authority about an advertisement published promising: "free gold on false teeth". This, according to the statutory body was misleading and deceptive.

A consumer body forwarded a complaint to the Authority in relation to the referencing of a Hindu God, *Yamaraja* depicted to be travelling to watch *Bollywood Dhamaka Show*. The religious connotation constituted a breach of sub-section 18 (b) of the general code of practice for advertisements.

## Section 17 of the Constitution of the Republic of Fiji

### **Freedom of speech, expression and publication**

17.—(1) Every person has the right to freedom of speech, expression, thought, opinion and publication, which includes—

- (a) freedom to seek, receive and impart information, knowledge and ideas;
- (b) freedom of the press, including print, electronic and other media;
- (c) freedom of imagination and creativity; and
- (d) academic freedom and freedom of scientific research.

(2) Freedom of speech, expression, thought, opinion and publication does not protect—

- (a) propaganda for war;
- (b) incitement to violence or insurrection against this Constitution; or
- (c) advocacy of hatred that—
  - (i) is based on any prohibited ground of discrimination listed or prescribed under section 26; and
  - (ii) constitutes incitement to cause harm.

The Authority received seven complaints about alleged breaches of section 17 of the Fijian Constitution pertaining to freedom of speech, expression and publication. In one of the cases, a law firm lodged a complaint against its client for allegedly colluding with a friend in posting information about the court proceedings on a social media platform. This according to the law firm could amount to contempt of court. In another case, a member of public lodged a complaint against a print media organisation for not publishing his letter in the editorial column; a complaint was lodged against a local media organisation for televising an international news channel carrying a story of the war in Syria, claiming the content fits the definition of war propaganda. In other matters, the Authority also expressed concern over media statements made by a traditional community leader (*chief*) regarding a particular community.

A print media organisation expressed concern with the Authority following the expulsion of reporters of a particular media organisation from the parliamentary press gallery. The news organisation alleged that this had affected the newspaper's reporting functions.

The Parliament Secretariat responded after the Authority enquired about the expulsion. The Parliament Secretariat clarified that:

- The news reporter was reminded not to take photographs in the public gallery as it was not permissible under the Fiji Parliament Media Guidelines.
- No journalist or any other journalist from any print media organization were denied access.

A member of the public lodged a complaint against an employee of a media organisation for using strong language on Facebook about the complainant's father who is the head of a *mataqali* clan.

### **Disclosure of editorial policy**

Following complaints by a regular commentator on politics and the state of the Fijian economy that a select newspaper had censored and did not publish many of his letters and opinion pieces and whether the Authority had compelled the print media into not publishing the complainant's opinion pieces, the Authority requested all media organisations to disclose their editorial policies in the interests of open and transparent discussions about why certain articles and opinion pieces are published to the exclusion of others. This was met with resistance by one mainstream media which claimed that it did not have an editorial policy. The same was conveyed to the complainant. The Authority notes that the complainant's opinion pieces were subsequently published by the print media.

### **Online Safety**

A member of public expressed concern against an online news agency over the use of distasteful language in a private message forwarded to him (complainant) by the website administrator following the complainant's feedback on the website.

### **Out of Jurisdiction**

A complaint was lodged by a member of the public regarding the quality of service provided by a television service provider. The complainant expressed disappointment for not getting value for his money.

# **Developing Media Standards**

Pursuant to sections 8 (a) (d) (e) and 9 (d) of the Act, the Authority is mandated to provide training and engage with media organisations and key stakeholders to encourage, promote and facilitate the development of media organisations and media services in Fiji and in ensuring that media services in Fiji are maintained at a high standard in relation to quality, balance, fair judgement and range of subject-matter of their content and ensuring that nothing is included in the content of any media service which is against public interest or order, or national interest, or which offends against good taste or decency and creates communal discord.

The Authority, in collaboration development partners such as the Pacific Media Assistance Scheme (PACMAS), the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR), and independent institutions such as the Judiciary, the Fijian Elections Office, the Human Rights and Anti-Discrimination Commission, and civil society organisations conducted workshops on a number of critical issues including awareness on the Fijian Constitution, the Media Industry Development Act 2010 and the media code of ethics and practice, press freedom, balancing freedom of expression with national security, reporting on the parliament, reporting on the national budget and reporting on sensitive issues such as domestic violence and vulnerable groups such as children and LGBTI community and hate speech.



Hon. Attorney- General, Mr. Aiyaz Sayed-Khaiyum was the chief guest at the *Reporting on Human Rights* training organised by the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR) in partnership with Media Industry Development Authority (Authority) and the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO)

## Journalists familiarize themselves with the Fijian Constitution



Madam Nazhat Shameem Khan conducts training on the Fijian Constitution

A three-day workshop was organised by the Authority in 2014 with the Fijian media in three locations; central, western and northern division to familiarize the editors and journalists on the Fijian Constitution and the role of the Authority under the Media Industry Development Authority Act of 2010.



Learning about the rights and freedoms enshrined in the Fijian Constitution

### Key issues discussed at the workshop were:

- Media freedom and limitations to freedom
- Contempt of Court, Defamation, Hate Speeches
- Protection of Sources
- International Law and the 2013 Constitution
- Media Industry Development Act and the Role of the Authority and Tribunal
- Bill of Rights
- Elections
- Parliament, the Executives, Accountability of Public Officers
- Independent Institutions
- Judiciary
- Immunity and transitional provision
- Electoral Regulations and the Constitution
- Political Parties (Registration, Conduct, Funding and Disclosures)

## Press Freedom Day



Panellists at the World Press Freedom Day celebrations held at the Fiji National University in 2016

Speaking at a panel discussion on the role of Education in Media to mark the World Press Freedom Day in 2016, the Chairperson of the Authority stated that press freedom must entail the rights and freedoms of ordinary citizens.

“While unequivocally recognising the freedom of the press, as pivotal in the materialisation of freedom of speech, expression, thought, opinion and publication, the Fijian Constitution includes justifiable limitations to protect the rights and freedoms of individuals.

The Media Industry Development Act and the Constitution guarantee freedom of the press. Consistent with the decisions of European Court of Human Rights and Article 10 of the freedom of expression provision in the European Convention of Human Rights, both the

Fijian Constitution as well as the Act protects the confidentiality of journalistic sources. The media is free to publish material including those that are critical of Government policies and this is evidenced in the opinion pieces and letters to the editors that are published in our dailies. Fiji has gone up in the world press freedom ranking based on the following criteria compiled by *Reporters Without Borders*: pluralism, media independence, environment and self-censorship legislative framework, transparency and infrastructure”.

## Reporting on children in conflict with the law



Authority Chairperson Ashwin Raj with Chief Justice, Justice Anthony Gates, UNDP Resident Representative, Ms. Osnat Lubrani, Solicitor-General, Mr. Sharvada Sharma and Regional Representative of Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights, Dr Chitralekha Massey at the reception for the Rights of the Child and the Criminal Justice System workshop.

A two-day workshop was held with representatives of the Fijian media in collaboration with the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR) and the Human Rights and Anti-Discrimination Commission in 2017 on reporting on children and the criminal justice system with a particular focus on children who are in conflict with the law either as victims or as perpetrators as well as examining models of child friendly courts. The participants were familiarised with the Fijian Constitution, international standards on children’s rights and mechanisms for responding to violence against children in Fiji. News reporters covering court stories were reminded of the Media Code of Ethics and Practice provision on reporting cases of sexual violence involving women and children in particular on disclosure of identity of the victims of sexual violence and their families, reporting on graphic details of the violence and exercising caution when reporting court trials involving children.



The Authority chairperson, Mr Ashwin Raj addresses the guests at the launch of the Rights of the Child and the Criminal Justice System

## Reporting on LGBTI issues

Media plays a critical role in advancing human rights of all people. A training on “*The Power of Messages: Reflecting LGBTI people in the media*” was conducted with the Fijian media representatives on reporting on issues pertaining to the human rights concerns of the LGBTI (lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and intersex) communities..

The aim of the workshops was to raise awareness on issues and educate the media on the different terminologies relating to sexual orientation, gender identity, expression and sex characteristic. The reporters were urged to report on LGBTI issues without sensationalising their lives and by using preferred terminology and pronouns.

The workshop was held in collaboration with the United Nations Human Rights Office (OHCHR), DIVA for Equality, Pacific Sexual Diversity Network (PSDN), Haus of Khameleon, Drodrolagi Movement, femLINK and Rainbow Pride Foundation (RPF) and was hosted by the EU Delegation for the Pacific in July 2015.

## Training on LGBTI rights

The Authority was part of a training in Bangkok convened by the United Nations Development Programme in collaboration with the Asia Pacific Forum for National Human Rights Institutions on LGBTI rights, health issues in relation to HIV in particular and on the Yogyakarta Principles. The workshop also focussed on identifying the need for capacity-building, training, regional exchanges of experiences and other support needed to promote LGBTI rights with development partners.

## **‘Do No Harm’ training for Journalists on reporting gender-based violence**

A media workshop, was held in partnership with the Pacific Media Assistance Scheme (PACMAS) for journalists on reporting gender-based violence related issues and the *dos and don'ts* of reporting on sensitive issues relating to domestic violence, particularly involving children.

## **Leadership Fiji**

Leadership Fiji has engaged the Authority over the years to address aspiring leaders including journalists on human rights and the role of the media. The authority has engaged in robust discussions on issues such as the right to free speech, press freedom, human dignity and principles of non-discrimination.

## **Budget and Financial Reporting**

A workshop was held for reporters to enhance their knowledge on business reporting and in particular on reporting on the national budget. The workshop was held in 2015 with the support of the Pacific Media Assistance Scheme (PACMAS). It was facilitated by ABC's



## **Fiji Parliamentary Reporters’ Handbook**

The Authority in collaboration with the Parliament of Fiji, UNDP, Pacific Media Assistance Scheme (PACMAS) facilitated a workshop for the Fijian media and members of Parliament on reporting on parliamentary proceedings and the development of a parliamentary reporting handbook.

## Media and Human Rights



The Hon. Attorney-General, Mr. Ayiaz Sayed-Khaiyum, Authority chairperson Ashwin Raj and Dr Chitralekha Massey, Regional representative of OHCHR with news reporters

The Office of High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR) in collaboration with Media Industry Development Authority and UNESCO, held a workshop with the mainstream media, Department of Information and outreach officers from civil society organisations representatives on *Reporting on Human Rights* in September 2017.

The workshop was aimed at deepening the participants' knowledge and understanding on human rights principles, international conventions, protection mechanisms, as well as standards on freedom of expression and information and to equip participants with relevant tools and skills to integrate human rights perspectives in media reporting or report on human rights issues.



Members of the media and civil society organisation receive their certificate of participation from Regional representative of OHCHR, Dr Chitralekha Massey and Chairperson of MIDA, Mr Ashwin Raj

## Raising Visibility

The Authority has engaged with mainstream media and the Fijian public over the period under review on issues such as freedom of speech, hate speech including racial and religious vilification, online safety, the role of the media in a democracy, fairness and ethical reporting and on media laws.



Live Radio talk-back show, Aaina host, Shammi Lochan Lal and the Authority Chairperson, Mr. Ashwin Raj during a show

A number of radio talk-back shows were held on issues of hate speech, bullying on the social media and freedom of speech to educate the public about the constitutional safeguards guaranteeing free speech and expression and the responsibilities that come with it. In-depth interviews were also conducted on the role of media during general-elections, importance of fair and balanced reporting ensuring voters had access to information on the electoral process and on the manifestos of the political parties.

### Summary of Media Coverage – 2010 to 2018

Date	News	Media Organisation
21/02/2013	Fiji: Media authority checks Fijilive ownership	Pacific Media Centre
07/10/2013	Election and role of media	Fiji TV
09/10/2013	New MIDA Chairman speaks	CFL
03/04/2014	MIDA asks Fiji TV to air an apology	CFL
03/04/2014	MIDA's chair finds Fiji TV guilty of 'hate speech' and blasts bloggers	Cafñ Pacific
24/06/2014	Samisoni Pareti confirmed as MIDA journalist	CFL

<b>11/09/2014</b>	Media Association and MIDA condemn threats	Fiji Sun
<b>29/10/2014</b>	MIDA wants a trained and strong media	Pacific Islands News Association Website
<b>24/11/2014</b>	Fiji media authority changes tune on 'racism' allegation	Pacific.Scoop
<b>02/01/2015</b>	Fiji Sun, MIDA respond to Opposition media breach claims	Mailife
<b>11/03/2015</b>	Fiji's MIDA retracts ruling against Sun newspaper	Radio NZ
<b>03/05/2015</b>	MIDA open to review of Media Decree	Pacific Islands News Association Website
<b>05/05/2015</b>	Fiji's MIDA: Any review would be inclusive	Radio NZ
<b>04/08/2015</b>	Analysis: Ignore Political rumours through social media, says MIDA chair Ashwin Raj	Fiji Sun
<b>25/07/2015</b>	Opinion: Skirt journalism claim reeks of hyperusculin	Fiji Sun
<b>05/08/2015</b>	Respect Privacy, says MIDA Head	Fiji Sun
<b>16/09/2015</b>	MIDA probes complaint against radio show	Fiji Sun
<b>12/01/2016</b>	Do not promote discord , says Raj	Fiji Sun
<b>05/05/2016</b>	Raj hits out at Kepa	The Fiji Times
<b>21/07/2016</b>	MIDA director calls on MPs to talk to all media organisations	The Fiji Times
<b>22/04/2016</b>	Free Media fosters vibrant democracy , says MIDA chair	Fiji Sun
<b>30/07/2016</b>	Politicians need to be fair on media, says MIDA chair	Fiji Sun
<b>22/10/2016</b>	Complaint lodged against FBC TV show	CFL
<b>24/10/2016</b>	Investigations still ongoing regarding complaint lodged against FBC TV show	CFL
<b>10/11/2016</b>	Complaints piling up at Fiji edia regulator	Fiji Sun
<b>22/11/2016</b>	NFP questions independence of MIDA chair	The Fiji Times
<b>17/11/2016</b>	Fiji media authority urged to reveal FBC TV findings	Radio NZ
<b>01/12/2016</b>	MIDA delivers Wasea Basha decision	FBC
<b>19/01/2017</b>	\$10K damages for Facebook comments	Fiji Sun
<b>12/04/2017</b>	Fiji's opposition NFP calls for dismissal of media authority chief	Asia Pacific Report
<b>04/08/2017</b>	Media Industry Development Authority hits out at Prasad	Fiji Sun
<b>14/12/2017</b>	Ashwin Raj embroiled in battle over hate speech in Fiji	Radio NZ
<b>09/02/2018</b>	MIDA, FMA slam attack on journalist	Fiji Sun

<b>20/02/2018</b>	Media should be fully empowered: Raj	FBC
<b>12/02/2018</b>	MIDA: Journalists must take responsibility	The Fiji Times
<b>04/05/2018</b>	No need for journalists to fear if basics covered: Delaibatiki	Fiji Sun
<b>05/05/2018</b>	It entails much more than freedom of journalists, editors, proprietors	Fiji Sun
<b>24/05/ 2018</b>	FMA calls on government to use MIDA	The Fiji Times
<b>06/07/2018</b>	Media Industry labels <i>The Fiji Times</i> video an 'Act of Savagery and a National disgrace'	Fiji Sun
<b>04/09/2018</b>	Fiji media laws aren't so draconian, says former MIDA chief	Asia Pacific Report
<b>20/09/2018</b>	Fiji Sun complying with MIDA decree, says lawyer	Fiji Sun
<b>25/09/2018</b>	MIDA Chairperson questions award citation	Fiji Sun
<b>01/10/2018</b>	Journalists must be accredited to cover the Election: MIDA	FBC
<b>19/10/2018</b>	SODELPA Labasa criticised for closing door on Fiji Sun	Fiji Sun
<b>23/10/2018</b>	MIDA commends political media coverage	FBC
<b>01/11/2018</b>	Raj warns those who are intending to post fake news	CFL
<b>08/11/2018</b>	MIDA chairperson briefs the media	Fiji Times Online
<b>09/11/2018</b>	Joint Press Conference MIDA Chairperson and Supervisor of Elections	Fijian Elections Office Facebook page
<b>09/11/2018</b>	General Election: Blackout On Social Media, Campaigning	Mailife
<b>10/11/2018</b>	4 venues in the Western Division remain to conduct pre-polling	CFL
<b>10/11/2018</b>	367 Journalists Accredited For General Election	Fiji Sun
<b>10/11/2018</b>	Stop posting fake news, Raj urges	The Fiji Times
<b>11/11/2018</b>	Raj warns those who are intending to post fake news	Fijivillage
<b>11/11/2018</b>	MIDA issues fake news warning	FBC
<b>12/11/2018</b>	Joint Press Conference – SOE and MIDA Chair, Ashwin Raj	Fijian Elections Office Facebook page
<b>12/11/2018</b>	Fiji blackout in force ahead of polls	Radio NZ
<b>12/11/2018</b>	FEO receives complaints during blackout period	FBC

<b>12/11/2018</b>	Beware of fake news In social media posts	Fiji Sun
<b>13/11/2018</b>	MIDA closely monitoring social media	FBC
<b>13/11/2018</b>	No Changes To Voter Booklet, Candidates List	Fiji Sun
<b>13/11/2018</b>	FEO receives complaints during blackout period	FBC
<b>13/11/2018</b>	MIDA closely monitoring social media	FBC
<b>13/11/2018</b>	MIDA chairperson Ashwin Raj explains the extended media blackout	Fiji Times Online
<b>13/11/2018</b>	Fiji warned about fake news	Radio NZ
<b>14/11/2018</b>	Media blackout to end at 6pm	The Fiji Times
<b>14/11/2018</b>	2018 General Elections: No media breach	The Fiji Times
<b>14/11/2018</b>	2018 General Elections: Raj content with polling at stations	The Fiji Times
<b>14/11/2018</b>	Investigations into blackout breach	Islands Business
<b>14/11/2-18</b>	Bainimarama, FijiFirst Party lead provisional poll count	Wansolwara
<b>15/11/2018</b>	Fiji PM Bainimarama's party leads provisional election count	Al Jazeera
<b>15/11/2018</b>	Fijians warned to be cautious of social media	FBC
<b>15/11/2018</b>	Fiji's poll: fake news and social media trolls	The Junction
<b>15/11/2018</b>	Be careful of fake news – MIDA	FBC
<b>15/11/2018</b>	Fiji prime minister leads provisional election count	Reuters
<b>15/11/2018</b>	Fiji authorities caught out by social media trolls, poll fake news	Asia Pacific Report
<b>16/11/2018</b>	Media focused on getting the right information out	FBC
<b>16/11/2018</b>	Fiji election blackout leads to fake news, press advocates say	Pacific Beat, ABC
<b>18/11/2018</b>	Raj: Fijians are to report any incidence of violence including racial and religious vilification	FBC
<b>19/11/2018</b>	2018 Fiji elections – the 'fake news' catchphrase of this poll but beware	Asia Pacific Report
<b>24/11/2018</b>	2018 Fiji elections – 'fake news' fills media vacuum	The Junction
<b>25/11/2018</b>	Close Up – Ashwin Raj	Fiji TV
<b>27/11/2018</b>	Aaina – Ashwin Raj	FBC

Fiji TV: Fiji Television Limited  
FBC: Fiji Broadcasting Corporation  
CFL: Communications Fiji Limited

# **The Authority and the Fijian General Elections**



Chairperson of the Authority at a press conference with the Supervisor of Elections



## The Electoral Act and the role of the Authority

The role of the Media Industry Development Authority as an enforcement agency is clearly stipulated under Part 4 “Electoral Campaign and Media” of the Electoral Act of 2014 and this pertains very specifically to media restrictions during campaigns.

Section 118 of the Electoral Act provides that:

118.—(1) During the 48 hour period prior to the polling day and on the polling day until the close of polling at all polling stations, it is prohibited for any media organisation to publish, print or broadcast any campaign advertisement, debate, opinion or interview on any election issue or on any political party or candidate.

(2) During the 48 hour period prior to polling day and on the polling day until the close of polling at all polling stations, any publication or broadcast by any media organisation relating to the election must obtain the prior approval of the Media Industry Development Authority to ensure compliance with subsection (1).

(3) The Media Industry Development Authority must ensure that all media organisations comply with the provisions of this section.

(4) If any media organisation contravenes this section, the editor, publisher or the owner of the media organisation (as the case may be) commits an offence and shall be liable upon conviction to a term of imprisonment not exceeding 5 years.

The Chairperson of the Authority held a number of joint-press conferences with the Supervisor of Elections during the pre-poll on the importance of observance of the blackout period and the rights and responsibilities of the media during the poll. The Chairperson also appeared on live radio and television shows on the Election Day and in the post-elections period to reflect on the election process, campaigns, the nature of and tenor of political debates and to raise public awareness about the proliferation of hate speech, particularly racial and religious vilification, on the social media.

### **Workshops on reporting the general elections in an accurate and impartial manner**



Mainstream media representatives received training on fair and balanced reporting during general elections

The media plays a critical role during elections. Fair and balanced coverage can foster transparency, provide opportunity for information and knowledge sharing, promote an inclusive electoral process, and serve as an effective forum for public debate, all of which strengthens democratic resilience. At the same time, biased media coverage can undermine integrity. In the lead up to the general elections in 2014 and 2018, strengthening accuracy of election reporting and promoting informed electoral analyses was a key priority. To that

end, the Authority facilitated workshops in 2014 and 2018 in collaboration with the Fijian Elections Office. The 2018 workshop was jointly facilitated by the Authority, the Fijian Elections Office and the International Foundation of Electoral System (IFES). The Authority also collaborated with the Fijian Elections Office in developing a media handbook on elections.



Reporters undergo training on covering general-election



Chairperson of the Authority with the Chairperson of the Electoral Commission

## **2014 General Elections**

### **Media Organisations Registered to Cover 2014 General Elections**

A total of 438 media personnel was registered to cover the 2014 General Election, representing 29 media organisations. Of this, 408 were from the local media while 30 media personnel represented foreign media. Below is a summary of the registered media outlets.

No.	Media Name	Local	International	Freelance	Total
1.	Australian Broadcasting Corporation		1		1
2.	Agence France-Presse		3		3
3.	Al Jazeera		2		2
4.	Business Melanesia	4			4
5.	Communication Fiji Ltd	47			47
6.	Fiji Broadcasting Corporation	97			97
7.	FemLINK PACIFIC	4			4
8.	Fiji Sun	40			40
9.	Fiji Times	80			80
10.	Fiji TV	30			30
11.	Fijilive	12			12
12.	Fiji Police Force Media	2			2
13.	Humm 106.2 FM – New Zealand		1		1
14.	Island Business International	5			5
15.	Mai Life Magazine	6			6
16.	Mai TV	4			4
17.	Ministry of Information	29			29
18.	Nikkei Inc.		2		2
19.	Nippon Hoso Kyokai		3		3
20.	Kyodo News		1		1
21.	Pacific Island News Association	2			2
22.	Radio New Zealand		2		2

23.	Radio Tarana – New Zealand		6		6
24.	Republika	8			8
25.	SBS World News Australia		2		2
26.	The Asahi Shimbun		2		2
27.	The Jet	3			3
28.	The Wall Street Journal Dow Jones		1		1
29.	Television New Zealand		3		3
30.	Wansolwara	40			40
31.	Mediaworks Ltd	2			2
32.	The New Zealand Herald		1		1
33.	The Weekend Australia Magazine		1		1
34.	Freelance-New Zealand			1	1
35.	Freelance with a cameraman-Australia			2	2
36.	Freelance-British			1	1
	<b>Total</b>	<b>18 media companies with 415 media personnel</b>	<b>18 media companies with 31 media personnel</b>	<b>4 media personnel</b>	<b>36 media companies with 450 media personnel</b>

## Engagement with media during the 2014 General Election

Date	Media engagement (pre-poll and post-poll)	Media outlet
06/04/2014	<p><b>MIDA Commends Media</b></p> <p>The Media Industry Development Authority commended the media for doing a splendid coverage of Fiji’s historical elections.</p> <p>MIDA Chairperson Ashwin Raj said he was ecstatic that the media came out in numbers.</p> <p>“One has to admire the tenacity of their spirit, and I am pleased that they came out in numbers and worked day in day out covering the elections,” he said.</p> <p>“It is a very strong testament to the fact that the political spaces have really opened up in Fiji that the media is free to cover.</p> <p>“I was also appreciative that the media for a large part observed requirements of blackout period.”</p> <p>However Mr Raj expressed concerns over the reporting of international media.</p>	Fiji Sun

	<p>“I had concerns of some of the international media and the lack of balance and accuracy in their report.”</p> <p>He said some had done a couple of reporting on the alleged fraudulent practices in the election without including views from the Electoral Commission.</p> <p>“But after my intervention they did retract and included the views of the Electoral Commission which was very important,” Mr Raj said.</p> <p>Mr Raj expressed disappointment about lack of historical knowledge by international media on the events in Fiji.</p> <p>This is after a report appeared on Al Jazeera reporting that this would be the first time Indo-Fijians would be voting. They also spoke about the 2000 coup in terms of one which was perpetrated by indigenous Fijians against a minority rich indo-Fijian community.</p> <p>“Now that’s a problem that not all Indo-Fijians are rich, so in that sense to what extent does it actually build the kind of racial stereotypes that have led to a lot of fragment in our society,” Mr Raj said.</p> <p>“So I have had concerns about parachute journalists coming in with no historical knowledge and critical acumen.”</p>	
<p><b>06/09/2014</b></p>	<p><b>MIDA condemns Labour claims</b></p> <p>The Media Industry Development Authority (MIDA) has condemned claims made by the Fiji Labour Party that they were trying to stop political leaders’ debate. MIDA Chairman Ashwin Raj challenged Labour leader Mahendra Chaudhry to back up his claims with evidence.</p> <p>In a press statement, Mr Mahendra Chaudhry said that FLP was reliably informed that media organisations interested in holding political leaders debate were being stopped by MIDA.</p> <p>“It is not the function of MIDA to conduct the coverage of election campaigns and hold public debates and discussions on electoral issues.” Mr Chaudhry said.</p> <p>“MIDA’s interference is simply a ploy to stop a national debate of political party leaders taking place because the leader of the FijiFirst Party is afraid to face other political leaders in a one-off debate.”</p> <p>However Mr Raj denied the claims and demanded evidence from the party.</p> <p>“The Media Industry Development Authority takes strong exception to the unsubstantiated claims made by</p>	<p>Fiji Sun</p>

	<p>the leader of the Fiji Labour Party that MIDA is trying to thwart any national debate amongst the multitude of political contenders," Mr Raj said.</p> <p>Yesterday, <i>Fiji Village</i> reported that leader of Fiji First, Voreqe Bainimarama has confirmed that he is ready to appear with the Social Democratic Liberal Party Leader Ro Temumu Kepa on its "<i>Straight Talk</i>" programme next Sunday, September 14.</p>	
11/09/2014	<p><b>Media Association and MIDA condemn threats</b></p> <p>The Fijian Media Association has strongly condemned the threats being made against Fiji Sun Journalist Jyoti Pratibha and Fiji Broadcasting Corporation's Vosita Kotoiwasawasa and is calling on all the leaders of all political parties to do the same.</p> <p>The Association has also urged political party leaders of all political and candidates to call on their supporters to show restraint and stop these threats immediately.</p> <p>.... Media Industry Development Authority Chairman Ashwin Raj has also urged all Fijians to refrain from using media including social media to incite violence. He said that death threats against journalists were alarming.</p>	Fiji Sun
13/09/2014	<p><b>The blackout before polling day</b></p> <p>...The blackout period does not apply to media coverage of the administrative aspects of the general election," says the FEO's media guidelines.</p> <p>However, during the blackout period, any publication or broadcast by any media organisation relating to the election needs the prior approval of the Media Industry Development Authority to ensure compliance with Section 118 of the Electoral Decree 2014.</p>	The Fiji Times
16/09/2014	<p><b>Raj lauds media</b></p> <p>The Chairman of the Media Industry Development Authority Ashwin Raj yesterday thanked all media organisations for abiding by Section 118 of the Electoral Decree which stipulates the 48-hour campaigning blackout.</p> <p>In a joint press conference with the Fijian Elections Office yesterday, Mr Raj said it was encouraging to see media outlets doing what was required of them.</p> <p>'I thank the media for exercising diligence in this regard and the instrumental role that the media will play in ensuring free, fair elections," he said.</p> <p>Mr Raj said 450 journalists, local and international, had registered with MIDA and had been accredited by the Fijian Elections Office to cover the election.</p> <p>He said out of 450 journalists, 413 were local journalists of which 37 were from international media.</p>	The Fiji Times

	<p>He said so far there have been no reported cases of “in fraction of Section 118 of the Electoral Decree, 2014”.</p> <p>Mr Raj also said it was encouraging to see that members of the public had been pro-active in reporting cases when witnessing a political banner or political party campaigning material still being displayed even after the 48 hour blackout period had started.</p> <p>The blackout period will continue today until the end of polling tomorrow at 6 pm.</p> <p>Any media organisation found to breach of Section 118 of the Electoral Decree the Editor, publisher or the owner of the media organisation commits an offence and is subjected to a term of imprisonment not exceeding five years.</p>	
<p><b>20/09/2014</b></p>	<p><b>MIDA wants balance</b></p> <p>Concerns were raised by Chairman of the media Industry Development Authority (MIDA) Ashwin Raj regarding the way in which the reporting of alleged discrepancies in Fiji’s election results have been carried out.</p> <p>Mr Raj said it was discouraging that stories which appeared in different media forums, especially pertaining to the election counting process, seemed unbalanced.</p> <p>“I’m particularly concerned that they have taken the statements of a few political parties and gone ahead with it without necessarily attaining the views of the Supervisor of Elections, the Electoral Commissions or the MOG,” he said.</p> <p>He said given the sensitivity of this year’s election, it was important that reports were balanced.</p> <p>“This is a particularly sensitive time for our history and our political history and you would have thought they would be a lot more sensitive to this.”</p> <p>Mr Raj also pleaded with members of the public not to believe everything they read and heard about on social networking sites.</p> <p>Mr Raj said the authority could not control the flow of comments on Facebook but advised people not to take their issues to the social media but to seek legal avenues to address their concerns.</p> <p>He also said he was considering revoking media accreditation for foreign media companies covering the election because of lack of adherence to good reporting ethics.</p>	<p>The Fiji Times</p>

## Submission to the Parliamentary Standing Committee on Justice, Law and Human Rights

### **Role of the Authority in the 2014 Fijian Elections**

The following submission pertains specifically to Section 4 (Media Environment) of the report of the Multinational Observer Group on the 2014 Fijian Elections. The Bill of Rights Chapter of the Fijian Constitution provides for not only the freedom of speech, expression and publication but the freedom of press as well.

While taking full cognizance of the right to freedom of expression as well as freedom of the press, Section 17(h) of the Bill of Rights expressly calls for regulation of the conduct of media. The Media Industry Development Authority ('Authority') derives its legitimacy from this specific provision in the Fijian Constitution. The role of the Media Industry Development Authority ('Authority') as an enforcement agency is clearly stipulated under Part 4 "Electoral Campaign and Media" of the Electoral Decree and this pertains very specifically to Media Restrictions During Campaigns.

Section 118 of the Electoral Decree provides that:

During the 48-hr period prior to polling day and the day of the polling until the close of polling at all polling stations, it is prohibited for any media organisation to publish, print or broadcast any campaign advertisement, debate, opinion or interview on any election issue or any political party candidate

During the 48-hour period prior to polling day and on the polling day until the close of polling at all polling stations, any publication or broadcast by any media organisation relating to the election must obtain the prior approval of the Media Industry Development Authority to ensure compliance with subsection (1).

The Media Industry Development Authority must ensure that all media organisations comply with the provisions of this section.

If any media organisation contravenes this section, the editor, publisher or the owner of the media organization (as the case may be) commits an offense and shall be liable upon conviction to a term of imprisonment not exceeding 5 years.

The Authority worked closely with the Fijian Elections Office in registering and accrediting all local and international media intending to cover the election. The Chair of the Authority, following meetings with the Multinational Observer Group extended the deadline by more than a week to accommodate ongoing requests by international media. A total of 450 local, international and freelance media personnel was registered to cover the Elections. No applications were rejected.

In relation to the specific comments and recommendations made by the Multinational Observer Group, it is imperative to note the following:

(1) Barring the limitations set out in the Electoral Decree to observe the blackout period (access to political actors for campaign purposes), no restrictions were imposed on the media in reporting the elections (particularly on matters of electoral fraud or any other malpractice). MOG's recommendation that media accreditation processes should be simplified and that all media outlets including international media should have sufficient advance notice of deadlines and timelines and that the Authority should issue clear, timely and practical reporting guidance lacks proper factual basis. A series of measures were taken to ensure that the media was fully prepared to report the elections which also entailed the following:

Notice for registration of both local and international media was well publicised with the provision of sufficient time to register. Registration was further extended by more than a week from the initial deadline of 29 August 2014.

A four-day workshop for the Fijian media was convened by the Authority and facilitated by an expert on media and elections included the formulation of a media's guide to elections as well as robust discussions on the role of the media under the Electoral Decree with both the Supervisor of Elections as well as the Solicitor General.

A very clear guideline on media reporting under Section 118 was issued.

Joint statements issued by FEO and the Authority including regular press conference with both local and international media in the lead up to the elections as well as the provision of an information kit to all media personnel engaged in reporting the elections all constitute concerted efforts made by the FEO and the Authority in educating the media on the Electoral Decree.

(2) Attributing "media's [limited] ability to rigorously examine the claims of candidates and parties" exclusively to "the restrictive and vague media framework, including potentially harsh penalties" is totalizing as it attributes the lack of media robustness to restrictive state laws without examining the following: the pervasiveness of racial vilification and racist hate speech given that Fiji is emerging out of the detritus of institutionalised racism and the role that media can and has played in conflagrating communalism particularly during political party campaigns, the political economy of the media industry in Fiji including the ideological proclivities of the various media, the power differentials within the industry as well as their training and development capacity. The lack of investigative journalism is serious indictment of this problem and factual inaccuracies (such as "Indians" will be voting for the first time in 2014) particularly by the international media affirms the important role that an independent regulatory body such as the Authority plays in times of elections.

(3) The report fails to acknowledge the fact that mainstream media endeavoured to capture a plurality of political perspectives in the lead up to elections which at times questioned the prevailing stereotypes about media bias (for example- *Fiji Sun* published the views of FLP, NFP, SODELPA). This was evidenced in the various talk back shows, televised debates, contribution to opinion columns from varied political actors including independent candidates and letters to the editor by the general public.

(4) Ironically, the Authority's call to establish an independent Media Monitoring Unit (consistent with developments in Europe amongst other jurisdictions) to address biases in media coverage of the elections was heavily criticized not only by the mainstream media but select political actors as yet another act of media censorship. The same political actors,

in light of the MOG report, are now decrying media bias during elections. The Authority has had to act within such complexities of constraints to ensure that the media was free to report the election.

(5) Given the heavy focus of the report on the state and its ideological apparatuses, the report makes no mention of the fact that quite contrary to the prevailing stereotypes about media freedom under repressive states, that in fact the journalists whose safety and security came under threat were those that were perceived to be pro-government.

(6) Multi Observer Group's call for public complaints on biased media coverage to be adjudicated by "an independent institution regulated by law" fails to recognise that that is precisely the function of the Authority. Furthermore, their recommendation that "should the Media Industry Development Authority continue its role in future elections, there is a need for an independent institution to adjudicate complaints about its actions, consistent with Fiji's legal and constitutional framework fails to appreciate the role of an independent Media Tribunal presided by a High Court Judge under the Media Industry Development Decree 2010.

## 2018 General Elections

### Media Organisations Registered to Cover 2018 General Elections

A total of 372 media personnel was registered to cover the 2018 General Election, representing 22 media organisations. Of this, 345 were from the local media while 27 media personnel represented foreign media. Below is a summary of the registered media outlets.

No.	Media Name	Local	International	Freelance	Total
1.	Australian Broadcasting Corporation – Australia		2	1	3
2.	Communication Fiji Ltd	21			21
3.	Coverstory/Mailife Magazine	7			7
4.	Department of Information	29			29
5.	Fiji Broadcasting Ltd	112			112
6.	Fiji Sun	25			25
7.	Fiji Times	65			65
8.	Fiji TV	46			46
9.	Fijilive	2			2
10.	Humm 106.2 FM – New Zealand		2		2
11.	Islands Business International	5			5
12.	Mai TV	16			16
13.	Pacific Island News Association	2			2
14.	Pacific Media Network – New Zealand		1		1
15.	Radio New Zealand Pacific		2	1	3
16.	Radio Tarana – New Zealand		11		11
17.	SBS World News – Australia		2		2

18.	Tagata Pasifika – New Zealand		2		2
19.	Television New Zealand		2		2
20.	Wansolwara – University of the South Pacific	14			14
21.	Wansolwara – University of the South Pacific International attaché		1		1
22.	Whale Oil Beef Hooked – New Zealand	1			1
	<b>Total</b>	<b>13 media companies with 345 media personnel</b>	<b>9 media companies with 25 media personnel</b>	<b>2 media personnel</b>	<b>22 media companies with 372 media personnel</b>

## Engagement with media during the 2018 General Elections

Date	Media engagement (pre-poll an post-poll)	Media Outlet
09/11/2018	<p><b>Joint Press Conference – MIDA chair and SOE</b></p> <p>I am very elated to convey to you that we have 367 media personnel who have registered and accredited to report on elections as you know this is a significant historical event for Fiji. We are absolutely delighted that local as well as International media are present to report on elections.</p> <p>We are going to be approaching the blackout period. There are certain rules in place pursuant to the electoral law that we want the media to take full cognizance of and in particular section 63 of the Electoral Act, section 110 and also section 118. The supervisor of Elections and I wish to inform you on the importance of taking full cognizance of these provisions under the Act. They establish the protocol around the blackout period.</p> <p>The intention of the blackout period is to provide you with the reprieve that voters need to be able to cast their vote without any due influence. The 48-hour period is very significant in that sense so that there is no pressure, no coercion, and no influence. People are able to freely cast their vote. This also bestows upon regulatory bodies like the Media Industry Development Authority enormous amount of responsibility in ensuring that there is full compliance with the 48-hour period.</p> <p>The 48-hour period blackout is not an exception to Fiji. There are other constitutional democracies where the 48-</p>	Fijian Elections Office Facebook page

hour rule is in play. In the last election, people were coming with conjectures why the blackout period. There is nothing sinister behind it. It is purely to give voters that reprieve because they have been inundated with campaign and propaganda material. You certainly want to give the eligible voter the reprieve to cast their votes freely and independent of any kind of coercion. I wish to draw our attention to section 63 of the Electoral Act.

Section 63.—(1) At least 1 hour before the commencement of polling on the polling day to the close of polling on the polling day at all polling stations, it shall be unlawful for any person at any place within the 300 metre radius from the boundary of the property where the polling venue is located (and as marked by the election official) or, at anyplace within the 300 metre radius of the polling venue where the boundary is not ascertainable, to—

(a) wear any emblem, clothing, badge, apparel or accessory of a political party or of a candidate in the election;

(b) display slogans, banners, posters, flags or colours of a political party or a candidate in the election;

(c) approach voters for the purposes of campaigning;

(d) distribute printed campaign material or communicate political messages, including calls to vote for or against a particular political party or candidate in the election; or

(e) use public address or sound systems that could be heard in the polling station or polling venue or its surroundings.

(2) In the 48-hour period prior to polling day and on the polling day until the close of polling at all polling stations, it is strictly prohibited for any person to—

(a) engage in any campaign, including any broadcast, advertisement or publication and distribution of any campaign material;

(b) display slogans, banners, posters, flags or colours of a political party or a candidate in the election;

(c) approach voters for the purposes of campaigning; or

(d) distribute in any manner (including through telephone, internet, email, social media or other electronic means) any campaign material or communicate political messages, including calls to vote for or against a particular political party or candidate in the election.

(3) In the 48 hour period prior to polling day and on the polling day until the close of polling at all polling stations, it shall be unlawful for any person, any political party or any candidate (or any person on behalf of the registered political party who is involved in the administration of the affairs of the registered political party including any office holder of the registered political party or any person on behalf of any candidate), at any place within the 300 metre radius from the boundary of the property where the polling venue is located (and as marked by the election official) or at any place within the 300 metre radius of the polling venue where the boundary is not ascertainable, to—

(a) construct or erect any structure;

(b) organise any meeting, gathering or assembly of persons;

(c) provide any enticement, incentive or inducement, including food and beverage to any person;

(d) engage in any campaign;

(e) distribute any material for the purposes of campaigning; or

(f) use public address or sound systems that could be heard in the polling station or polling venue or its surroundings.

(4) Prior to the opening of the polls and during polling, the presiding officer must ensure that there is no campaign material posted at any place within the 300 metre radius from the boundary of the property where the polling venue is located (and as marked by the election official) or at any place within the 300 metre radius of the polling venue where the boundary is not ascertainable.

(5) In ensuring there are no campaign materials as specified in subsection (4), a presiding officer may request

the assistance of a police officer and such police officer must comply with any request or directive of the presiding officer.

(6) Any person who contravenes this section commits an offence and shall be liable upon conviction to a fine not exceeding \$50,000 or to a term of imprisonment not exceeding 10 years, or to both.

For the media in particular, section 110 of the Electoral Act which is part 4 of the —Election Campaign and Media.

110.—(1) It shall be unlawful for any person to publish the results of any election-related opinion on the polls on any day during the 7 days prior to the polling day and on the polling day until the close of polling at all polling stations.

(2) Any person who contravenes this section commits an offence and shall be liable upon conviction to a fine not exceeding \$10,000 or to a term of imprisonment not exceeding 5 years, or to both.

Section 118 of the Electoral Act is on media restrictions during campaigns

118.—(1) During the 48 hour period prior to the polling day and on the polling day until the close of polling at all polling stations, it is prohibited for any media organisation to publish, print or broadcast any campaign advertisement, debate, opinion or interview on any election issue or on any political party or candidate.

(2) During the 48-hour period prior to polling day and on the polling day until the close of polling at all polling stations, any publication or broadcast by any media organisation relating to the election must obtain the prior approval of the Media Industry Development Authority to ensure compliance with subsection (1).

(3) The Media Industry Development Authority must ensure that all media organisations comply with the provisions of this section.

(4) If any media organisation contravenes this section, the editor, publisher or the owner of the media organisation

(as the case may be) commits an offence and shall be liable upon conviction to a term of imprisonment not exceeding 5 years.

Now, from my experience in 2014 General Election, it was a very smooth process, where media organisations felt that they were privy to particular news that might be deemed to an infraction on these provisions, what they did was called MIDA or the Fijian Elections Office. We will be working very closely together in ensuring where people feel apprehensive, or think it is ambiguous, we can certainly say that this particular news item pretty much amounts to campaign, is in fact an infraction of the 48 hour blackout period and therefore do not publish or this particular news item very specifically pertains to the technocracies around so please go ahead and publish.

For us, the 48-hour period is an extremely critical time. We want to ensure that the media is able to report as robustly as possible. This is not an attempt to censor the media. By all means, where there are issues that pertain to serious concerns around the technocracies of election and the ability to be able to cast your vote, you certainly have the right to publish that but you have to be able to delineate that from campaign. And any kind of report that give credence to political actors, political parties that would have the effect of encouraging or influencing voter – that’s a strict no.

So the rules are very clear. What the FEO and MIDA have collectively greed to make sure the Act is available to all of you so that you know what the laws are saying – not operating from a space of legal ambiguity. You also have the right to get legal opinion from your own lawyers.

<https://web.facebook.com/Fijianelectionsoffice/videos/1474630509306439/>

09/11/2018	<b>General Election: Blackout On Social Media, Campaigning</b>  Members of the public including political parties have been reminded to comply with the blackout period starting from midnight Sunday to Election Day.  Media Industry Development Authority (AUTHORITY) chairperson Ashwin Raj says the 48-hour media blackout	MaiLife
------------	---	---------

	<p>provision in the Electoral Act is necessary to protect voters from further campaigning.</p> <p>This means posting and sharing political party posts on social media and campaigning on social media during this period is prohibited.</p> <p>“The 48-hour blackout period is very significant so that eligible voters cast their votes without any interference on election day,” said Mr Raj.</p> <p>“This also allows political parties full compliance to the blackout period. There is nothing sinister.”</p> <p>Supervisor of Elections Mohammed Saneem said people need to be very careful during this period.</p> <p>Section 68 of the Electoral Act states that any person who contravenes this section commits an offence and will be liable upon conviction to a fine not exceeding \$50,000 or to a term of imprisonment not exceeding 10 years, or to both.</p> <p><a href="https://www.mailife.com.fj/general-election-blackout-on-social-media-campaigning/">https://www.mailife.com.fj/general-election-blackout-on-social-media-campaigning/</a></p>	
10/11/ 2018	<p><b>4 venues in the Western Division remain to conduct pre-polling</b></p> <p>.....Also present at the press conference was the Chairman of the Fiji’s Media Industry Development Authority, Ashwin Raj who has reiterated the need for media to follow the code of conduct and adhere to the rules relating to the 48 hour campaign blackout period. He says the rules are the same for all media that are covering the elections be it local or overseas media.</p> <p><a href="http://fijivillage.com/news/4-venues-in-the-Western-Division-remain-to-conduct-pre-polling-skr259/">http://fijivillage.com/news/4-venues-in-the-Western-Division-remain-to-conduct-pre-polling-skr259/</a></p>	Fijivillage
10 /11/ 2018	<p><b>367 Journalists Accredited For General Election</b></p> <p>More than 360 local and foreign journalists have been registered and accredited to report on this year’s General Election, says Media Industry Development Authority (AUTHORITY) chairperson Ashwin Raj yesterday.</p> <p>“As you all know this is a very significant historical event for Fiji. We are absolutely delighted to have the local and</p>	Fiji Sun

as well as the international media present to report and cover the election,” Mr Raj said.

In total registration and accreditation lists the total number of journalists at 367.

“One thing we would like to specifically address this afternoon is, of course, the fact that we are going to approach the blackout period.

“There are certain rules which are in place pursuant to the Election Law that we want the media to take full consideration of.”

Mr Raj said it was important that everyone followed the 48-hour blackout period.

“One thing we would like to specifically address this afternoon is of course fact that we are going to approach the blackout period and there are certain rules which are in place pursuant to the Election Law that we want the media to take full consideration of,” he said.

“It is under the Section 63 of the Electoral Act, section 110 and also particularly section 118.

“The Supervisor of Election and I wish to implore the importance of taking full consideration of these provisions under the Act.

“The intention of the blackout period is to provide you with the fact that the locals in the country need to cast their vote without any due influence.

“So, the 48-hour blackout period is very significant so that there is no pressure or influence so that people can freely cast their vote.

“I want to inform everybody that the 48-hour blackout is not an exception to Fiji because there are other constitutional democracies that have the 48-hour rule in place.”

<http://fijisun.com.fj/2018/11/10/367-journalists-accredited-for-general-election/>

10/11/ 2018

**Stop posting fake news, Raj urges**

The Fiji Times

	<p>The Media Industry Development Authority is urging the members of the public to refrain from posting fake news in relation to the elections on social media under the pretext of a legitimate media organisation.</p> <p>Authority chairman Ashwin Raj said serious penal liabilities would apply to those caught posting fake news during the 48-hour blackout period for the 2018 General Election with the intent to either campaign for or malign or impugn political parties and candidates.</p> <p>“The intention of the 48-hour black out period is to give voters reprieve so that they can cast their votes without undue pressure and influence,” Mr Raj said.</p> <p>“MIDA is calling on members of the public, mainstream media as well as political parties and candidates to exercise vigilance and report immediately to MIDA or FEO should they come across such fake posts.</p> <p><a href="https://www.fijitimes.com/stop-posting-fake-news-raj-urges/">https://www.fijitimes.com/stop-posting-fake-news-raj-urges/</a></p>	
<p><b>11/11/ 2018</b></p>	<p><b>Raj warns those who are intending to post fake news</b></p> <p>The Media Industry Development Authority is urging members of the public to refrain from posting fake news in relation to the elections on the social media under the pretext of a legitimate media organization during the 48-hour black out period.</p> <p>Chairperson Ashwin Raj says serious penal liabilities will apply to those that are caught posting fake news during this period with the intent to either campaign for or malign or impugn political parties and candidates during the blackout period.</p> <p>He says the intention of the 48-hour black out period is to give voters reprieve so that they can cast their votes without undue pressure and influence.</p> <p>MIDA is calling on members of the public, mainstream media as well as political parties and candidates to exercise vigilance and report immediately to MIDA or Fijian Elections Office should they come across such fake posts.</p> <p>The 48-hour campaign blackout will begin at midnight tonight.</p>	<p>Fijivillage</p>

	<p>This means that there is to be no more political campaigns, campaign advertisements, political rallies, banners, posters, billboards or media reports.</p> <p>The Fijian Elections Office says that information on the 48 hours campaign blackout period is clearly outlined in the Electoral Act.</p>	
<b>11/11/ 2018</b>	<p><b>MIDA issues fake news warning</b></p> <p>The Media Industry Development Authority is urging members of the public to refrain from posting fake news in relation to the elections on the social media under the pretext of a legitimate media organization during the 48-hour black out period.</p> <p>This comes as two prominent media houses have had fake pages set up under their names on social media, with fake news being reported on these sites.</p> <p>MIDA chair, Ashwin Raj says serious penal liabilities will apply to those that are caught posting fake news during this period.</p> <p>He says the intention of the 48-hour black out period is to give voters reprieve so that they can cast their votes without undue pressure and influence.</p> <p>MIDA is calling on members of the public, mainstream media as well as political parties and candidates to exercise vigilance and report immediately to AUTHORITY or FEO should they come across such fake posts.</p> <p><a href="http://www.fbc.com.fj/fiji/70731/mida-issues-fake-news-warning">http://www.fbc.com.fj/fiji/70731/mida-issues-fake-news-warning</a></p>	FBC
<b>12/11/ 2018</b>	<p><b>Joint Press Conference – SOE and MIDA Chair, Ashwin Raj</b></p> <p>...just wanted to implore on everyone that we are still in the blackout period so that we would like to ensure that we comply with the requirements set out n law under section 63, 110 and 118 so to the mainstream media, members of the political parties, individual candidates and members of the public - please ensure that you in full compliance with the requirements set out under the law for blackout period.</p>	Fijian Elections Office Facebook page

	<p>The intention of blackout period is to give people, voters in particular the much-needed reprieve so that they can cast their votes freely, without undue pressure.</p> <p>We also appeal to the public sense of reason particularly so as it affects the activities on social media to ensure that if there is any proliferation of fake news under the pretext of legitimate media – please report that immediately so we can take swift action on it.</p> <p>Also to individuals who are residing abroad and are recusant and continue to claim that they will post whatever they wish to post, to please exercise reason.</p> <p>If you want to see free, fair and credible elections, you need to ensure that our voters get that reprieve so that they are able to cast votes without pressure, without influence and that fact that there is so much fake news, people are beginning to find it really difficult to delineate between fact and fiction, I think all the more reason to have something like the blackout period. So please ensure there is full compliance with the requirements of the law.</p> <p><a href="https://web.facebook.com/Fijianelectionsoffice/videos/207118116870037">https://web.facebook.com/Fijianelectionsoffice/videos/207118116870037</a></p>	
<p><b>12/11/2018</b></p>	<p><b>Fiji blackout in force ahead of polls</b></p> <p>A blackout on all campaigning and mention of political parties in the media is in force in Fiji ahead of election day on Wednesday.</p> <p>The ban began at midnight last night and runs until polls close.</p> <p>Editors and publishers found breaking the ban face up to five years in jail.</p> <p>Ashwin Raj of Fiji's Media Industry Development Authority said journalists can run their stories past him to ensure compliance if they like.</p> <p>He said the blackout is to provide voters with a reprieve before they cast their vote.</p> <p>"The 48-hour rule is not an exception to Fiji. There are other constitutional democracies where the 48-hour rule is in play. I remember in the last election people were coming up with all sorts of conjectures on why the blackout period. There's nothing sinister behind that.</p>	<p>Radio NZ</p>

	<a href="https://www.radionz.co.nz/international/pacific-news/375720/fiji-blackout-in-force-ahead-of-polls">https://www.radionz.co.nz/international/pacific-news/375720/fiji-blackout-in-force-ahead-of-polls</a>	
12/11/2018	<p><b>FEO receives complaints during blackout period</b></p> <p>Numerous reports have been received by the Fijian Elections Office of people violating the 48-hour campaign blackout period that is currently in place.</p> <p>Supervisor of Elections Mohammed Saneem says the reports include vehicles being driven around with campaign materials like stickers and banners still on them.</p> <p>Other reports are of political banners hanging on walls and fences of some properties.</p> <p>The public were given until last night to remove all campaign materials that are still evident in their homes and vehicles or face the brunt of the law.</p> <p>" All banners and stickers or stickers taken out of cars in case your cars still have stickers of political candidates. We will be referring matters to FICAC if we come across any person that has not removed it by this afternoon. "</p> <p>The Supervisor of Elections stressed the two-day black-out is to enable voters to decide on their votes without undue pressure.</p> <p>" We will be referring this matter to FICAC. We just try to facilitate people from removing it and it's very important that people adhere to the blackout rules and they remove all stickers particularly from their cars."</p> <p>Media Industry Development Authority Chair, Ashwin Raj is also concerned with fake news being published on social media during the blackout period.</p> <p>" There's so much fake news and people are beginning to find it really difficult to tell the difference between fake and real news so all the more reason to have something like the blackout period so please ensure there's full compliance of the law."</p> <p>The public is advised to report about those violating the blackout period to the Elections Office so swift action can be taken.</p> <p><a href="http://www.fbc.com.fj/fiji/70793/feo-receives-complaints-during-blackout-period">http://www.fbc.com.fj/fiji/70793/feo-receives-complaints-during-blackout-period</a></p>	FBC

<p>12/11/ 2018</p>	<p><b>Beware Of Fake News In Social Media Posts</b></p> <p>In the past few days there has been a proliferation of fake news on social media.</p> <p>It has prompted Media Industry Development Authority chairperson Ashwin Raj to issue a statement.</p> <p>He is urging members of the public to refrain from posting fake news in relation to the elections on the social media under the pretext of a legitimate media organisation during the 48-hour blackout period.</p> <p>“Serious penal liabilities will apply to those who are caught posting fake news during this period with the intent to either campaign for or malign or impugn political parties and candidates during the blackout period,” Mr Raj said.</p> <p>“The intention of the 48-hour blackout period is to give voters reprieve so that they can cast their votes without undue pressure and influence,” Mr Raj said.</p> <p>“Authority is calling on members of the public, mainstream media as well as political parties and candidates to exercise vigilance and report immediately to MIDA or FEO should they come across such fake posts.”</p> <div style="background-color: #f8d7da; padding: 10px; border: 1px solid #f5c6cb;"> <p><b>EXAMPLES OF FAKE NEWS ON SOCIAL MEDIA:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ VOTESODELPA.BLOGSPOT.COM – SODELPA will remove Diwali as a public holiday</li> <li>■ NFPFIJI.BLOGSPOT.COM – NFP will legalise gay marriage</li> <li>■ FIJIONENEWS.BLOGSPOT.COM – FijiFirst to reduce kava price to \$50</li> </ul> </div> <p><a href="http://fijisun.com.fj/2018/11/12/beware-of-fake-news-in-social-media-posts/">http://fijisun.com.fj/2018/11/12/beware-of-fake-news-in-social-media-posts/</a></p>	<p>Fiji Sun</p>
<p>13/11/ 2018</p>	<p><b>MIDA closely monitoring social media</b></p> <p>Media Industry Development Authority Chair Ashwin Raj says the only worry so far during the current blackout</p>	<p>FBC</p>

	<p>period is comments made on social media relating to political matters.</p> <p>Raj says that since the blackout period started, the mainstream media and all political parties have adhered to the law.</p> <p>However, Raj says the social media is an area they are closely looking at.</p> <p>“The problematic terrain is the social media and I’ve seen a whole lot of comments on social media by people who have certain political bias or an agitator who are saying that nobody can stop us that we will continue to post whatever we want to post.”</p> <p>Raj is calling on social media users to refrain from making political comments as the blackout period will end soon</p> <p><a href="http://www.fbc.com.fj/fiji/70792/mida-closely-monitoring-social-media-">http://www.fbc.com.fj/fiji/70792/mida-closely-monitoring-social-media-</a></p>	
13/11/ 2018	<p><b>Saneem: No Changes To Voter Booklet, Candidates List</b></p> <p>.....The Media Industry Development Authority (MIDA) chairperson Ashwin Raj has made an appeal to the public that if they see any campaign materials on social media to report back to them immediately.</p> <p>“Also to individuals residing abroad who are posting campaign contents please exercise reason,” Mr Raj said.</p> <p>“If you want to see free and credible elections, you need to make sure all voters get that decree so that they are able to cast their vote without any pressure or influence.”</p> <p><a href="https://www.pressreader.com/fiji/fiji-sun/20181113/281500752278062">https://www.pressreader.com/fiji/fiji-sun/20181113/281500752278062</a></p>	Fiji Sun
13/11/ 2018	<p><b>FEO receives complaints during blackout period</b></p> <p>Media Industry Development Authority Chair, Ashwin Raj is also concerned with fake news being published on social media during the blackout period.</p> <p>" There’s so much fake news and people are beginning to find it really difficult to tell the difference between fake and real news so all the more reason to have something</p>	FBC

	<p>like the blackout period so please ensure there's full compliance of the law."</p> <p>The public is advised to report about those violating the blackout period to the Elections Office so swift action can be taken.</p> <p><a href="http://www.fbc.com.fj/fiji/70793/feo-receives-complaints-during-blackout-period">http://www.fbc.com.fj/fiji/70793/feo-receives-complaints-during-blackout-period</a></p>	
<b>13/11/2018</b>	<p><b>MIDA closely monitoring social media</b></p> <p>Media Industry Development Authority Chair Ashwin Raj says the only worry so far during the current blackout period is comments made on social media relating to political matters.</p> <p>Raj says that since the blackout period started, the mainstream media and all political parties have adhered to the law.</p> <p>However, Raj says the social media is an area they are closely looking at.</p> <p>"The problematic terrain is the social media and I've seen a whole lot of comments on social media by people who have certain political bias or an agitators who are saying that nobody can stop us that we will continue to post whatever we want to post."</p> <p>Raj is calling on social media users to refrain from making political comments as the blackout period will end soon  <a href="http://www.fbc.com.fj/fiji/70792/mida-closely-monitoring-social-media-">http://www.fbc.com.fj/fiji/70792/mida-closely-monitoring-social-media-</a></p>	FBC
<b>13/11/ 2018</b>	<p><b>Fiji warned about fake news</b></p> <p>Election authorities in Fiji are warning about false news stories in the run-up to tomorrow's election.</p> <p>They were telling people to report any so-called fake news.</p> <p>Social media users have found fake media sites with items about visa-free access to Australia and a ban on celebrating Diwali.</p>	Radio NZ

	<p>Ashwin Raj, of Fiji's media authority, said there was so much fake news that audiences found it hard to decide which was fact or fiction.</p> <p>Mr Raj said people should report fake news.</p> <p>A two-day campaign blackout started at midnight on Sunday, but the complaints to the elections office said some material remained on banners and car stickers.</p> <p>Offenders risk the chance of a hefty fine and up to 10 years in jail.</p> <p><a href="https://www.radionz.co.nz/international/pacific-news/375771/fiji-warned-about-fake-news">https://www.radionz.co.nz/international/pacific-news/375771/fiji-warned-about-fake-news</a></p>	
14/11/ 2018	<p><b>Media blackout to end at 6 pm</b></p> <p>The media blackout for the 2018 General Election will conclude at 6pm today.</p> <p>This was confirmed by the Supervisor of Elections Mohammed Saneem while speaking to the media yesterday.</p> <p>All media organisations have been advised to contact MIDA or FEO if they have any queries on the media blackout.</p> <p>Candidates were also advised to be cordial in their dealings with the FEO staff and to follow the procedures if they have issues.</p> <p>“Don’t create kind of scene in the polling place we want voters to be able to vote free of any such incidences,” Mr Saneem said.</p> <p>FEO hopes to deliver the 2018 general elections in a fair and credible manner.</p> <p><a href="https://www.fijitimes.com/media-blackout-to-end-at-6pm/">https://www.fijitimes.com/media-blackout-to-end-at-6pm/</a></p>	The Fiji Times
14/11/ 2018	<p><b>2018 General Elections: No media breach</b></p> <p>NO media organisation breached the 48-hour blackout period for the 2018 General Election that started on midnight, November 11.</p> <p>This was confirmed by Media Industry Development Authority chairman, Ashwin Raj.</p> <p>However, Mr Raj said his office had started investigations on some social media users who had allegedly breached the 48-hour blackout provision of the Electoral Act.</p> <p>In light with this, the MIDA chair said fake news spread through social media was of great concern in Fiji.</p>	The Fiji Times

	<p>Mr Raj said the members of the public should not pay attention to the fake news online that used logos of legit media organisations.</p> <p>He said his office was now weighing the provisions in the Online Safety Act to take actions on those spreading hatred, fear and disunity through fake news.</p> <p><a href="https://www.fijitimes.com/2018-general-elections-no-media-breach/">https://www.fijitimes.com/2018-general-elections-no-media-breach/</a></p>	
14/11/2018	<p><b>2018 General Elections: Raj content with polling at stations</b></p> <p>Media Industry Development Authority chairman and Fiji Human Rights and Anti-Discrimination director Ashwin Raj says it has been “smooth sailing” at polling stations.</p> <p>“ I have been to Arts Village in Pacific Harbour and now at Rampur School and will be heading towards Suva,” he said.</p> <p>“No major issues so far. It is good to see the officials helping out the elderly and those in need and also other voters helping each other.” he added</p> <p>Mr Raj added that they have teams in the West monitoring polling stations as well.</p> <p><a href="https://www.fijitimes.com/2018-general-elections-raj-content-with-polling-at-stations/">https://www.fijitimes.com/2018-general-elections-raj-content-with-polling-at-stations/</a></p>	The Fiji Times
14/11/2018	<p><b>Bainimarama, FijiFirst Party lead provisional poll count</b></p> <p>Speaking to local media tonight, Media Industry Development Authority chairman Ashwin Raj said the blackout period was still in effect as more than 7000 voters are yet to cast their votes after 23 polling venues were closed because of adverse weather.</p> <p>“The blackout period gives voters that moment to reprieve so they are able to cast their vote without pressure. Both mainstream, social media and the civic space have been saturated with campaigns so what we need is that space to make up your mind about who you want to vote for,” Mr Raj said.</p>	Wansolwara

	<p>“In essence, those 7852 (voters) have yet to cast their votes. We are still in the blackout period and what that essentially means is that we are going to be in the blackout period until the day of polling (for those voters from the 23 affected polling venues).</p> <p>“We will wait for the Electoral Commission to announce when the polling day is going to be (for those 7852 voters).”</p> <p><a href="http://www.wansolwaranews.com/2018/11/14/bainimarama-fijifirst-party-lead-provisional-poll-count/">http://www.wansolwaranews.com/2018/11/14/bainimarama-fijifirst-party-lead-provisional-poll-count/</a></p>	
15/11/ 2018	<p><b>Fiji PM Bainimarama's party leads provisional election count</b></p> <p>.....On Thursday, the Campaign Blackout period was extended because of the delayed voting, but the media were allowed to report the preliminary results, Media Industry Development Authority (MIDA) chairperson Ashwin Raj said on Wednesday.</p> <p>Polling has been rescheduled for November 17 at the booths where voting was delayed, the Supervisor of Elections, Mohammed Saneem, announced on Thursday.</p> <p><a href="https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2018/11/fiji-pm-bainimarama-party-leads-provisional-election-count-181115064928833.html">https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2018/11/fiji-pm-bainimarama-party-leads-provisional-election-count-181115064928833.html</a></p>	Aljazeera
15/11/ 2018	<p><b>Fijians warned to be cautious of social media</b></p> <p>Media Industry Development Authority Chair Ashwin Raj says that Fijians need to be cautious of what they post up on social media and also the type of pages they follow.</p> <p>Raj says social media has become an issue for alot of people in Fiji, as this is an area where people make accusations and even spread lies.</p> <p>He says social media is also tempting but people should be mindful of what they post up.</p> <p>“One thing that really gets them angry is anyone who can be intelligent or who can exercise reason. The moment you start having an intelligent and intellectual debate they will flare up.”</p>	FBC

in Fiji – and the authorities had not anticipated having to deal with the ferocity of it.

“It is a completely new terrain, last elections (2014) we weren’t talking about fake news; social media is now saturated with this stuff,” Raj told a media conference in Suva yesterday.

“This is now a completely new phenomenon. Obviously, we know who the culprits are, why they are doing it and what they are doing.”

The extension of the media blackout to allow for 23 venues and 7,852 voters to vote at a date yet to be announced meant people had to be vigilant not to be taken in by social media trolls or fake news.

“Wait for official authorised results that will come from the Fijian Elections Office (FEO), be very mindful that people will take to the social media and spread rumours about lawlessness and instil fear, so it very important that we go to the official sources,” said Raj.

“We’ve had members of various political parties who actually forwarded to us news items, which in their estimation constitutes fake news and has coloured a certain perception about the various political parties.

‘Everybody is concerned’

“We’ve also had concerns from the mainstream media that have been brought to our attention. One of the things that have come out of this is that everybody, despite their political differences, ideological disposition, political proclivities are actually concerned about the proliferation of fake news.

“What that has done in terms of the campaign, public knowledge and so on; if anything, this is why we must resort to the mainstream media as the veritable site of truth.

“This is why we need something like the 48-hour blackout period. This is why we need the mainstream media that is going to be the voice of reason, help the public delineate fact from fiction,” said the verbose Raj.

He said force of law would be brought to bear on those who indulged in the dark arts of social media.

“We are in the process of investigating, until we have concluded that process, I’m not going to make a series of statements in relation to that. We will be reporting it to the relevant agencies in due course,” he said.

“There is a whole bunch of stuff going on. There are elements in it that simply constitute criminal acts, when you threaten somebody with sexual assault because you disagree with their political views.

“When you threaten the life, safety and security of people that is simply a criminal act. Then there are other things that are basically fiction and the sort. That can be easily discredited if people produce facts.

Blackout period

“So, the transgressions vary.”

He reminded the people of the ongoing blackout period.

“We are still in the blackout period, the public needs to remember that 7,852 voters in 23 polling venues have yet to cast their votes it is imperative that people do not give any credence to fake news.

“This is where the role of media is very important is dispelling any fiction that might be out there, particular so when it comes to the results,” said Raj.

Nothing could have prepared them from the effects of a tyrant social media.

<https://asiapacificreport.nz/2018/11/15/fiji-media-authorities-caught-out-by-social-media-trolls-fake-news/>

16/11/ 2018

**Media focused on getting the right information out**

FBC

Getting the right and most clear information out to the public is the focus for mainstream media in this year’s general election.

Communications Fiji Limited News Director, Vijay Narayan says the focus is to give the right information to the public.

“The whole team got involved, we got about 150 plus employees, they did their bit to ensure that we have a successful coverage, to ensure that majority of the people

	<p>get to listen to what the election result is about and we continue to do that.”</p> <p>Fiji Broadcasting Corporation News Manager Indra Singh says while it has been a tough week for media organizations, it’s vital that journalists, cameraman and those involved in the election coverage enjoy their work.</p> <p>“It was one of the most enjoyable experience for the team. We had a great work ethic from everyone involved, the hard work put in by the journalists who followed ethics and rules to ensure the coverage that was given to Fijians was of absolute highest standard.”</p> <p>MIDA Chair Ashwin Raj says the mainstream media has done a very professional job.</p> <p>“The mainstream media has conducted themselves with utmost professionalism in covering the general election and they have done it in the most robust manner. They have ensured full compliance of section 118 of the electoral act as it pertains to the blackout period.”</p> <p>Meanwhile, a new government is to be announced in the next two days.</p> <p><a href="http://www.fbc.com.fj/fiji/70924/media-focused-on-getting-the-right-information-out">http://www.fbc.com.fj/fiji/70924/media-focused-on-getting-the-right-information-out</a></p>	
<p><b>16/11/ 2018</b></p>	<p><b>Fiji election blackout leads to fake news, press advocates say</b></p> <p>Fiji's election supervisor has defended a decision to release results from Wednesday's national election, even though some voting is still to be completed.</p> <p>Heavy rain forced the electoral authorities to suspend voting at more than 20 polling venues, many of which were inaccessible because of flooded roads.</p> <p>As voting was extended, so was the blackout on campaigning and reporting on the election which is enforced under the 2014 election act.</p> <p>"This is the 21st century and election blackouts should be removed, and freedom of freedom of speech, freedom of expression, is a basic human right," Pacific Freedom Forum (PFF) co-chair Bernadette Carreon said.</p>	<p>Pacific Beat ABC</p>

The law says it is prohibited for any media organisation to publish, print or broadcast any campaign advertisement, debate, opinion or interview on any election issue, or on any political party or candidate.

Another section of the act says it is illegal for candidates and private citizens to display campaign materials, but also to communicate any political messages, including by phone, private email, or social media.

Ms Carreon said the Pacific Freedom Forum is concerned the vacuum left by the blackout is leading to fake news and misinformation being shared.

"The media is not allowed to publish any information regarding the election and so there have been reports of some fake websites coming up during the blackout and we call it fake news because it could potentially influence the voting," she said.

"Media or the readers cannot fact check because the media is not allowed to air any news or information about the election process."

Pacific Beat requested comment from the chair of the Media Industry Development Authority (MIDA), Ashwin Raj, who did not respond.

But he has defended the laws to local media, saying rather than stifling freedom of speech, they give people time to decide who to vote for independently.

He said they were urging people to report fake news or breaches of the laws to MIDA or the Fiji Elections Office.

"With the blackout period, there were concerns raised with compromising freedom of expression and underlying rights to privacy," said Amnesty International researcher Roshika Deo.

"There were private citizens that also fall under this provision of the legislation and they cannot talk about any of the parties or any of the materials or information, even through private messages, so there was that aspect of concern that that media blackout extended to private citizens."

<https://www.abc.net.au/radio-australia/programs/pacificbeat/fiji-election-blackout-leads-to-fake-news,-press-advocates-say/10503350>

<p><b>18/11/ 2018</b></p>	<p><b>Report without fear any incidence of violence: Raj</b></p> <p>MEMBERS of the public are requested to take screen shots of posts on the social media which incite violence and encourage racial and religious hatred.</p> <p>The Human Rights and Anti- Discrimination Commission director, Ashwin Raj in a statement issued today urged all Fijians to report without fear any incidence of violence including racial and religious attacks either on the social media, in their communities or on the streets.</p> <p>“The Fijian Constitution guarantees everyone equal treatment and protection under the law including provisions to take action against those that incite violence on racial and religious grounds,” Mr Raj said.</p> <p>“The Commission is working very closely with the Fiji Police Force in ensuring that those that are encouraging hatred and violence based on race and religion either on the social media, on the streets or in the communities face the full brunt of the law,” he said.</p> <p>Members of the public are encouraged to report any matter highlighted above to the Commission on 9709894 or 9142539 or email <a href="mailto:info@fhradc.org.fj">info@fhradc.org.fj</a>.</p> <p><a href="https://www.fijitimes.com/report-without-fear-any-incidence-of-violence-raj/">https://www.fijitimes.com/report-without-fear-any-incidence-of-violence-raj/</a></p>	<p>The Fiji Times</p>
<p><b>18/11/ 2018</b></p>	<p><b>Report incidences and take screenshots of violence including racial and religious attack on social media – Raj</b></p> <p>The Human Rights and Anti- Discrimination Commission is urging all Fijians to report without fear incidences of violence including racial and religious attacks either on the social media, in their communities or on the streets.</p> <p>Director Ashwin Raj says members of the public are requested to take screen shots of posts on the social media which incite violence and encourage racial and religious hatred.</p> <p>Raj says the Fijian Constitution guarantees everyone equal treatment and protection under the law including provisions to take action against those that incite violence on racial and religious grounds.</p>	<p>Fijivillage</p>

He says the Commission is working very closely with the Fiji Police Force in ensuring that those that are encouraging hatred and violence based on race and religion either on the social media, on the streets or in the communities face the full brunt of the law.

Members of the public can call the Commission on 9709894 or 9142539 or email them on [info@fhradc.org.fj](mailto:info@fhradc.org.fj).

<http://fijivillage.com/news/Report-incidences-and-take-screenshots-of-violence-including-racial-and-religious-attack-on-social-media---Raj-k5rs29>

**18/11/2018 Raj: Fijians are to report any incidence of violence including racial and religious vilification FBC**

**Reports incidence of violence including racial and religious attacks either on the social media, in their communities or on the streets without any fear  
People should not be afraid  
Our constitution provides the strongest legal safeguard**

<https://web.facebook.com/fijibroadcastingcorporationtv/videos/2162459300660581/>

**18/11/2018 Fijians urged to report racial and religious attacked with fear FBC**

Fijians are being urged to report incidence of violence including racial and religious attacks either on the social media, in their communities or on the streets without any fear.

The Human Rights and Anti-Discrimination Commission chair, Ashwin Raj, is requesting the public to screen shot the posts on social media which can incite violence and encourage racial and religious hatred.

"This is a very sensitive and a critical time – so we want to report these things very quickly to the police and the police will take very prompt action on it because we don't want to delay things – particularly on the social media people are very quick to remove posts after they have done this because they know that people will be spreading this around anyway so they quickly exonerate themselves from all complicity."

Raj says the Fijian Constitution guarantees everyone's equal treatment and protection under the law including provisions to take action against those that incite violence on racial and religious grounds.

<http://www.fbc.com.fj/fiji/70962/fijians-urged-to-report-racial-and-religious-attacked-with-fear>

**19/11/2019 2018 Fiji elections – the 'fake news' catchphrase of this poll but beware Asia-Pacific Report**

..... The 48-hour media blackout period – extended until Saturday, November 17, to allow for 22 polling venues to

	<p>be opened for 7,458 people who were affected by floods – made it easy for social media trolls to make mischief.</p> <p>At a press conference during the election, Ashwin Raj, the CEO of the Media Industry Development Authority (MIDA), admitted to being caught out by the ferocity of fake news and the social media.</p> <p>In an interview with ABC’s Pacific Beat programme. Pacific Freedom Forum (PFF) co-chair Bernadette Carreon put her finger on the problem.</p> <p>She said the vacuum left by the media blackout had led to fake news and misinformation being shared.</p> <p>“The media is not allowed to publish any information regarding the election and so there have been reports of some fake websites coming up during the blackout and we call it fake news because it could potentially influence the voting,” she said.....</p> <p><a href="https://asiapacificreport.nz/2018/11/19/2018-fiji-elections-the-fake-news-catchphrase-of-this-poll-but-beware/">https://asiapacificreport.nz/2018/11/19/2018-fiji-elections-the-fake-news-catchphrase-of-this-poll-but-beware/</a></p>	
21/11/2018	<p><b>Speak Your Mind, Guest - HRADC Director, Ashwin Raj</b></p> <p>Report incidence of racial and religious attacks to the Human Rights and Anti-Discrimination Commission</p> <p>Use of social media to spread fake news, racial and religious vilification, insults to journalists during the poll</p> <p><a href="https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=QkbZVNIaZXI">https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=QkbZVNIaZXI</a></p>	FBC TV/Gold FM
24/11/2018	<p><b>2018 Fiji elections – ‘fake news’ fills media vacuum</b></p> <p>.....The 48-hour media blackout period – extended until Saturday, November 17, to allow for 22 polling venues to be opened for 7,458 people who were affected by floods – made it easy for social media trolls to make mischief.</p> <p>At a press conference during the election, Ashwin Raj, the CEO of the Media Industry Development Authority (MIDA), admitted to being caught out by the ferocity of fake news and the social media.</p> <p>In an interview with ABC’s Pacific Beat programme. Pacific Freedom Forum (PFF) co-chair Bernadette Carreon put her finger on the problem.</p>	The Junction

	<p>She said the vacuum left by the media blackout had led to fake news and misinformation being shared.</p> <p><a href="http://junctionjournalism.com/2018/11/24/2018-fiji-elections-the-fake-news-catchphrase-of-this-poll-but-beware/">http://junctionjournalism.com/2018/11/24/2018-fiji-elections-the-fake-news-catchphrase-of-this-poll-but-beware/</a></p>	
25/11/2018	<p><b>4 The Record – Ashwin Raj</b></p> <p>Use of social media, hate speech by some politician Discusses the role of the HRADC Redress provided by HRADC</p> <p><a href="https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=9rzkxXin5Uc&amp;t=216s">https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=9rzkxXin5Uc&amp;t=216s</a></p>	FBC TV
25/11/2018	<p><b>Close Up – Ashwin Raj</b></p> <p>Role of mainstream local media in covering the 2018 general elections against the fake news being posted on social media platforms</p> <p>Respect for human dignity in light of level of mud-slinging used on social media by certain politicians to campaign</p> <p>Respect for the blackout period and how it was covered by the Fijian media</p>	Fiji TV
27/11/2018	<p><b>Aaina – Ashwin Raj</b></p> <p>Critical analysis of the campaigns led by the political parties and candidates using social media to incite and statements bordering on racial and religious vilification</p> <p>Issue of division based on race and religion</p> <p>Hate speech used during political campaigns <a href="https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=LIXCIEmKU">https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=LIXCIEmKU</a></p>	FBC TV/ Radio Fiji Two

## Other election-related news coverage

20/12/2017	<p><b>Speak Your Mind - Hate speech on Social Media</b></p> <p>Sect 17 – justifiable limitation – right to be free from hates speech          Fiji’s history of institutionalised racism          International law in place on hate speech- global jurisprudence on freedom of expression          Democracy is built on reason          Cited examples of hate speech on social media  <a href="https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=aqui15-4SCO">https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=aqui15-4SCO</a></p>	FBC
20/02/2018	<p><b>Media should be fully empowered: Raj</b></p> <p>Raj says media has a fundamental role in ensuring that Fiji does enjoy a free, fair and credible election.</p> <p>“So it plays an important role in holding institutions to account in making sure that the public is dearly informed about their right to political choice, their right to political participation making sure that it’s not only the political elite but the people with no access to social mobility actually understand, that they have the right to political participation.”</p> <p><a href="http://www.fbc.com.fj/fiji/60102/media-should-be-fully-empowered-raj">http://www.fbc.com.fj/fiji/60102/media-should-be-fully-empowered-raj</a></p>	FBC
11/03/ 2018	<p><b>Close Up</b> Media and Elections</p>	Fiji TV

# **Press freedom and the right to political expression**

If indeed the press in Fiji continues to operate in an oppressive and censorious environment under the weight of draconian media laws, as has been claimed, we will not have seen the publication of dissenting voices openly critical of government and its policies as we so often see in the mainstream media.

A three month snapshot between August and November 2018 (a critical period when the country was heading to general election) of actual media content including opinion columns and letters to the Editor from the Fiji Times, Fiji sun, Communications Fiji Limited, Fiji Broadcasting Corporation, and Fiji Television Limited attests to the extent to which Fiji enjoys freedom of the press including the right to political expression without fear of reprisal, recrimination and self-censorship and the existence of a plurality of political perspectives on contentious issues.



People hold placards to relay their message during the march in Nadi. The National Federation Party says it will increase the minimum wage to \$5 an hour effective to government after the 2013 General Election.

## What is your party's view on workers' and union rights in Fiji and what policies would you have for them? Views by National Federation Party

**An assault on rights**

The workers are indeed not professional ethics, do not speak up. They are being treated as a means to an end, but not as individuals. The Government and the National Federation Party are both responsible for this assault on rights. The Government has failed to protect the workers' interests, and the National Federation Party has failed to represent them properly. The workers' rights have been severely affected, and the Government and the National Federation Party must take steps to rectify this situation.

**Assault on rights of workers and unions**

The assault on the rights of workers and unions is a serious issue that needs to be addressed. The Government and the National Federation Party have both failed to protect the workers' interests. The workers' rights have been severely affected, and the Government and the National Federation Party must take steps to rectify this situation. The workers' rights have been severely affected, and the Government and the National Federation Party must take steps to rectify this situation.

The FijiFirst party, Unity Fiji and Freedom Alliance Party were also given an opportunity to have an input on the issue of the rights of workers and unions. Requests for contributions sent to the parties on Wednesday via electronic mail (email) remained unanswered when this edition went to press yesterday.



## What is your party's view on workers and union rights in Fiji and what policies would you have for them? Views by SODELPA and HOPE Party

**'Rights decimated'**

The workers' rights have been severely affected, and the Government and the National Federation Party must take steps to rectify this situation. The workers' rights have been severely affected, and the Government and the National Federation Party must take steps to rectify this situation.

**Party HOPES for better Fiji**

The HOPE Party is committed to improving the lives of all Fijians. We will work to ensure that the workers' rights are protected and that the Government is held accountable. We will work to ensure that the workers' rights are protected and that the Government is held accountable.

The FijiFirst party, Unity Fiji and Freedom Alliance Party were also given an opportunity to have an input on the issue of the rights of workers and unions. Requests for contributions sent to the parties on Wednesday via electronic mail (email) remained unanswered when this edition went to press yesterday.

## What is your party's view on workers' and union rights in Fiji and what policies would you have for them? Views by Labour Party

### True test of democracy

The true test of democracy is not just the election of a government, but the way that government treats its citizens. The Labour Party is committed to protecting the rights of workers and unions, and to ensuring that the Government is held accountable. We will work to ensure that the workers' rights are protected and that the Government is held accountable.

**Private sector unions**

The Labour Party is committed to protecting the rights of workers in the private sector. We will work to ensure that the workers' rights are protected and that the Government is held accountable. We will work to ensure that the workers' rights are protected and that the Government is held accountable.

**What Labour will do**

The Labour Party will take the following steps to protect the rights of workers and unions: 1. We will work to ensure that the workers' rights are protected and that the Government is held accountable. 2. We will work to ensure that the workers' rights are protected and that the Government is held accountable.

**What Labour will do**

The Labour Party will take the following steps to protect the rights of workers and unions: 1. We will work to ensure that the workers' rights are protected and that the Government is held accountable. 2. We will work to ensure that the workers' rights are protected and that the Government is held accountable.

**What Labour will do**

The Labour Party will take the following steps to protect the rights of workers and unions: 1. We will work to ensure that the workers' rights are protected and that the Government is held accountable. 2. We will work to ensure that the workers' rights are protected and that the Government is held accountable.

The FijiFirst party, Unity Fiji and Freedom Alliance Party were also given an opportunity to have an input on the issue of the rights of workers and unions. Requests for contributions sent to the parties on Wednesday via electronic mail (email) remained unanswered when this edition went to press yesterday.

## How does your party view the State's free medicine scheme and in what way do you think it can be improved? Views by National Federation Party

**Free medicine overhaul**

The National Federation Party is committed to improving the free medicine scheme. We will work to ensure that the scheme is more efficient and that the medicines are of higher quality. We will work to ensure that the scheme is more efficient and that the medicines are of higher quality.

**Free medicine overhaul**

The National Federation Party is committed to improving the free medicine scheme. We will work to ensure that the scheme is more efficient and that the medicines are of higher quality. We will work to ensure that the scheme is more efficient and that the medicines are of higher quality.

**Free medicine overhaul**

The National Federation Party is committed to improving the free medicine scheme. We will work to ensure that the scheme is more efficient and that the medicines are of higher quality. We will work to ensure that the scheme is more efficient and that the medicines are of higher quality.

**Free medicine overhaul**

The National Federation Party is committed to improving the free medicine scheme. We will work to ensure that the scheme is more efficient and that the medicines are of higher quality. We will work to ensure that the scheme is more efficient and that the medicines are of higher quality.

**Free medicine overhaul**

The National Federation Party is committed to improving the free medicine scheme. We will work to ensure that the scheme is more efficient and that the medicines are of higher quality. We will work to ensure that the scheme is more efficient and that the medicines are of higher quality.

The FijiFirst party, Unity Fiji and Freedom Alliance Party were also given an opportunity to have an input on the issue of the State's free medicine scheme. Requests for contributions sent to the parties on Wednesday via electronic mail (email) remained unanswered when this edition went to press yesterday.

## NATIONAL OPINION

How does your party view the State's free medicine scheme and in what way do you think it can be improved?

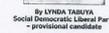
Views by Social Democratic Liberal Party



Nurses attend to patients at the Makoti Health Centre.

# Free medicine scheme - problem or solution

Free medicine is indeed a noble idea, but the botched implementation of it has become a headache that none of the substandard medicines it freely gives out can fix



By LYNITA MADATH, Social Democratic Liberal Party member

Free medicine is indeed a noble idea, but the botched implementation of it has become a headache that none of the substandard medicines it freely gives out can fix

Free medicine is indeed a noble idea, but the botched implementation of it has become a headache that none of the substandard medicines it freely gives out can fix

Free medicine is indeed a noble idea, but the botched implementation of it has become a headache that none of the substandard medicines it freely gives out can fix

## NATIONAL OPINION

How does your party view the State's free medicine scheme and in what way do you think it can be improved?

Views by FLP and HOPE party

# 'People paying more'



By LYNITA MADATH, Fijian Labour Party member

People are paying more for their medicine. The government is not doing enough to ensure that the free medicine scheme is a genuine benefit to the people.

People are paying more for their medicine. The government is not doing enough to ensure that the free medicine scheme is a genuine benefit to the people.

People are paying more for their medicine. The government is not doing enough to ensure that the free medicine scheme is a genuine benefit to the people.

People are paying more for their medicine. The government is not doing enough to ensure that the free medicine scheme is a genuine benefit to the people.

People are paying more for their medicine. The government is not doing enough to ensure that the free medicine scheme is a genuine benefit to the people.



Fijian Labour Party says there is widespread perception the free medicine scheme is a Fijian initiative. They say this is definitely incorrect.

Fijian Labour Party says there is widespread perception the free medicine scheme is a Fijian initiative. They say this is definitely incorrect.

Fijian Labour Party says there is widespread perception the free medicine scheme is a Fijian initiative. They say this is definitely incorrect.

Fijian Labour Party says there is widespread perception the free medicine scheme is a Fijian initiative. They say this is definitely incorrect.

Fijian Labour Party says there is widespread perception the free medicine scheme is a Fijian initiative. They say this is definitely incorrect.

Fijian Labour Party says there is widespread perception the free medicine scheme is a Fijian initiative. They say this is definitely incorrect.

## NATIONAL OPINION

What should be the government's priorities in foreign policy?

Views by Fijian Labour Party

# Focus on foreign policy



By MAHENDRA CHAUDHRY, Fijian Labour Party leader

The government should focus on foreign policy, particularly in the Pacific region, to ensure our interests are protected and our voice is heard.

The government should focus on foreign policy, particularly in the Pacific region, to ensure our interests are protected and our voice is heard.

The government should focus on foreign policy, particularly in the Pacific region, to ensure our interests are protected and our voice is heard.

## Foreign borrowings

The government should focus on foreign policy, particularly in the Pacific region, to ensure our interests are protected and our voice is heard.

The government should focus on foreign policy, particularly in the Pacific region, to ensure our interests are protected and our voice is heard.

The government should focus on foreign policy, particularly in the Pacific region, to ensure our interests are protected and our voice is heard.

## Border security

The government should focus on foreign policy, particularly in the Pacific region, to ensure our interests are protected and our voice is heard.

The government should focus on foreign policy, particularly in the Pacific region, to ensure our interests are protected and our voice is heard.

The government should focus on foreign policy, particularly in the Pacific region, to ensure our interests are protected and our voice is heard.

The Fijian First party, Fiji Fijian and Freedom Alliance Party were also given an opportunity to have an input on the issue of government's priorities in foreign policy. Requests for contributions sent to the parties on Wednesday via electronic mail (email) remained unanswered when this edition went to press yesterday.

## NATIONAL OPINION

What should be the government's priorities in foreign policy?

Views by SODEIPA

# Foreign policy to be based on party's vision



By SIOVEVA RATUVA, SODEIPA member

Foreign policy should be based on the party's vision and the interests of the people, rather than political expediency.



Australian Foreign Minister Julie Bishop with her New Zealand counterpart Murray McCully outside the Sovereign House in Suva during their earlier visit.

Australian Foreign Minister Julie Bishop with her New Zealand counterpart Murray McCully outside the Sovereign House in Suva during their earlier visit.

Australian Foreign Minister Julie Bishop with her New Zealand counterpart Murray McCully outside the Sovereign House in Suva during their earlier visit.

Australian Foreign Minister Julie Bishop with her New Zealand counterpart Murray McCully outside the Sovereign House in Suva during their earlier visit.

Australian Foreign Minister Julie Bishop with her New Zealand counterpart Murray McCully outside the Sovereign House in Suva during their earlier visit.

Australian Foreign Minister Julie Bishop with her New Zealand counterpart Murray McCully outside the Sovereign House in Suva during their earlier visit.

What should be the government's priorities in foreign policy? Views by HOPE party and NFP

For our best interest

We have to engage both our traditional partners ANZUS (Australia, New Zealand, and the United States) and the emerging powers of the region and the world... We need to start at home... We need to start at home... We need to start at home...

Not egos but needs

The whole point of diplomacy is to deal with people and not ideas... We need to start at home... We need to start at home... We need to start at home...

How do we regulate foreign investment in Fiji for the benefit of Fiji citizens? Views by Fiji Federation Party



Once Good Group president David Kin with staff members at his head office in Nausori. The NFP says it will review the Foreign Investment Act to make rules simple, straightforward and transparent.

Foreign investment vital

Foreign investment is vital to the economy... We need to start at home... We need to start at home... We need to start at home...

Table with 3 columns: Year, Ease of Doing Business, and Ease of Starting Business. Data for years 2007-2018.

How do we regulate foreign investment in Fiji for the benefit of Fiji citizens? Views by Unlly Fiji party and Fiji Labour Party

Stricter conditions vital

Stricter conditions are vital for foreign investment... We need to start at home... We need to start at home... We need to start at home...

How do we regulate foreign investment in Fiji for the benefit of Fiji citizens? Views by SODEPA and HOPE party

A balanced approach

A balanced approach is needed for foreign investment... We need to start at home... We need to start at home... We need to start at home...

New investments needed

New investments are needed for economic growth... We need to start at home... We need to start at home... We need to start at home...

Liberal democracy

Liberal democracy is essential for development... We need to start at home... We need to start at home... We need to start at home...

Why should voters vote for you or your candidates in this general election? Views by Unity Fiji party and HOPE party

A 'collective vision'

As the permanent secretary for finance, I have prepared five national budgets. When the leadership of Sir James Afi Koro as my Minister for Finance, we posted the only budget surplus in our modern history.

As the permanent secretary for finance, I have prepared five national budgets. When the leadership of Sir James Afi Koro as my Minister for Finance, we posted the only budget surplus in our modern history.

Younger and fresher

Improve their quality of life and a great deal of government will be done from the freedom of spending of those getting higher wages.

The Fiji First party and the Freedom Alliance party were also asked to express their views on why voters should vote for them in the 2018 General Election.

Why should voters vote for you or your candidates in this General Election? Views by SODELPA and Fiji Labour Party

SODELPA to bring changes

Act to remove and separate the extension of the 2017 term of office of the President from the 2017 term of office of the President.

SODELPA should vote for SODELPA in the 2018 General Election. It is the only party that has a clear vision for the future of Fiji.

Courageous leadership

Labour's key production was back to four million tonnes from a low of 2.1 million tonnes in 2017. This is a significant achievement for the country.

The Fiji First party and the Freedom Alliance party were also asked to express their views on why voters should vote for them in the 2018 General Election.

Why should voters vote for you or your candidates in this General Election? Views by National Federation Party

NFP's commitment

Shoppers in a supermarket. NFP's Brian Prasad says if they get the next government, they will make 15 basic food items VAT free.

NFP's commitment

At the same time wages and salaries of our working class have not been increasing as much as people would like to see.

Our policy is to have a strong and vibrant economy that provides employment for all.

What is your assessment on the economy and what would your party do to raise economic growth? Views by National Federation Party

Vision for the economy

Our economic growth has been slow and we need to do more to stimulate the economy.

Vision for the economy

Our economic growth has been slow and we need to do more to stimulate the economy.

The Fiji First party, Freedom Alliance party, HOPE party and the Social Democratic Labour Party were also asked to give their assessments on the economy.

NATIONAL OPINION

What is your assessment on the economy and what would your party do to raise economic growth?

Views by Fiji Labour Party



The Fiji Labour Party says that the economy must grow at an average rate of 6 per cent annually if we are to create jobs for the 17,000 youngsters who enter the employment market each year.

Strong economy key to national wellbeing



By AMAN RAVINDRA-SINGH Fiji Labour Party parliamentary leader

Labour believes that a strong and vibrant economy is the key to national wellbeing. It is the engine of jobs, education, income, and social services such as health, infrastructure, security and welfare.

Good governance The most fundamental prerequisite for the creation of a stable economy is good governance. It is the backbone of all economic activities.

Revitalising the investment environment Our business sector is choking under the weight of red tape and bureaucratic interference.

Solutions to raise economic growth We must have the right policies in place that are aimed at creating a business environment that is conducive to growth.

32 THE FIJI TIMES - SATURDAY, OCTOBER 13, 2018

NATIONAL OPINION

What is your assessment on the economy and what would your party do to raise economic growth?

Views by Unity Fiji



Unity Fiji says if they come into power, they will place jobs squarely at the top of their priority list.

Unity Fiji: Right political leadership important



By ANANDHA NAIR Unity Fiji leader

It is time to look at the people's needs and to create the atmosphere of trust and confidence. The leadership must be able to inspire and motivate the people.

Dignity of living to all families Unity Fiji will place jobs squarely at the top of its priority list. We will ensure that every citizen has the opportunity to improve their standard of living.

These jobs will be created by the private sector. We will encourage investment and ensure that the government's role is to support and facilitate.

The views expressed in this article are those of the Unity Fiji party and not of this newspaper.

32 THE FIJI TIMES - SATURDAY, OCTOBER 13, 2018

NATIONAL OPINION

Should politicians use race and religion in their election campaign?

Views by the Social Democratic Liberal Party



Social Democratic Liberal Party leader says the party is committed to the rule of law and justice, and will not turn a blind eye by assuming a false 'neutrality' or will blindness to the race and religion of its voters.

No man is an island



By SITIVENI RABUKA Social Democratic Liberal Party leader

In order to progress our nation, we must work together. No man is an island. We need to build a strong and united society.

Our party believes that a strong and vibrant economy is the key to national wellbeing. It is the engine of jobs, education, income, and social services.

Revitalising the investment environment Our business sector is choking under the weight of red tape and bureaucratic interference.

Solutions to raise economic growth We must have the right policies in place that are aimed at creating a business environment that is conducive to growth.

32 THE FIJI TIMES - SATURDAY, OCTOBER 13, 2018

NATIONAL OPINION

Should politicians use race and religion in their election campaign?

Views by Fiji Labour Party and Unity Fiji party

Serious race-based issues

Race will not be an issue if all communities are treated equally, have fair access to resources, social welfare programs, jobs and education.

Overcoming the Indigeneous We must ensure that all communities have equal access to resources and opportunities. We will not discriminate on the basis of race or religion.

Refusal to divide racial statistics We will not divide people along racial lines. We will focus on the needs of all citizens and work towards a more inclusive society.

Disproportionate representation We will ensure that all communities are represented in our government. We will work towards a more balanced and equitable system.

The views expressed in this article are those of the Fiji Labour Party and not of this newspaper.

32 THE FIJI TIMES - SATURDAY, OCTOBER 13, 2018

Party to build understanding



By ANANDHA NAIR Unity Fiji party leader

Our party believes that a strong and vibrant economy is the key to national wellbeing. It is the engine of jobs, education, income, and social services.

Revitalising the investment environment Our business sector is choking under the weight of red tape and bureaucratic interference.

Solutions to raise economic growth We must have the right policies in place that are aimed at creating a business environment that is conducive to growth.

The views expressed in this article are those of the Unity Fiji party and not of this newspaper.

32 THE FIJI TIMES - SATURDAY, OCTOBER 13, 2018

www.fjtimes.com.fj

Should politicians use race and religion in their election campaign?

Views by National Federation Party and Freedom Alliance party

'Power in our diversity'

There is power in our languages, cultures and religions. They are part of us. They are things to be celebrated, not denied



By PROFESSOR BIMAN PRASAD National Federation Party leader

As the Fiji Government... the number of people... the performance of the... about why they would not...

Unity in diversity... There are things to be celebrated... It is not wrong to be proud... The Fiji Government... the number of people... the performance of the... about why they would not...

Views expressed in this article are those of the National Federation Party and not of this newspaper.

'Need open discussions'



By ANAND KUMAR SINGH Fiji Labour Party leader

Election campaigns... The Fiji Government... the number of people... the performance of the... about why they would not...

Views expressed in this article are those of the Fiji Labour Party and not of this newspaper.

www.fjtimes.com.fj

What will be your party's policies on the salaries of the prime minister and cabinet ministers?



By PROFESSOR BIMAN PRASAD National Federation Party leader

Views expressed in this article are those of the National Federation Party and not of this newspaper.

Views expressed in this article are those of the National Federation Party and not of this newspaper.

Pay to be scrutinised



By PROFESSOR BIMAN PRASAD National Federation Party leader

Views expressed in this article are those of the National Federation Party and not of this newspaper.

Views expressed in this article are those of the National Federation Party and not of this newspaper.

www.fjtimes.com.fj

What will be your party's policies on the salaries of the prime minister and cabinet ministers?

Views by Fiji Labour Party



By ANAND KUMAR SINGH Fiji Labour Party leader

Views expressed in this article are those of the Fiji Labour Party and not of this newspaper.

Views expressed in this article are those of the Fiji Labour Party and not of this newspaper.

Views expressed in this article are those of the Fiji Labour Party and not of this newspaper.

Salary disparities



By ANAND KUMAR SINGH Fiji Labour Party leader

Views expressed in this article are those of the Fiji Labour Party and not of this newspaper.

Views expressed in this article are those of the Fiji Labour Party and not of this newspaper.

Views expressed in this article are those of the Fiji Labour Party and not of this newspaper.

www.fjtimes.com.fj

What will be your party's policies on the salaries of the Prime Minister and cabinet ministers?



By ANAND KUMAR SINGH Fiji Labour Party leader

Views expressed in this article are those of the Fiji Labour Party and not of this newspaper.

Views expressed in this article are those of the Fiji Labour Party and not of this newspaper.

Wage scales for parliamentarians



By ANAND KUMAR SINGH Fiji Labour Party leader

Views expressed in this article are those of the Fiji Labour Party and not of this newspaper.

Views expressed in this article are those of the Fiji Labour Party and not of this newspaper.



## 2018 GENERAL ELECTION... YOUR VOTE COUNTS

### Unity Fiji aims to serve people

By VILMAINA NAGLEVINI

The 2018 General Election is important to the Fiji people as they will get to choose to elect the new Prime Minister and the new Government. Unity Fiji is a political party that was formed to represent the people of Fiji. It was formed by the merger of the Fiji Labour Party and the Fiji People's Party. The party's aim is to serve the people of Fiji and to bring about a new era of development and progress for the country.

### 'About 30pc of population in poverty'

By VILMAINA NAGLEVINI

About 30 per cent of the population in Fiji is living in poverty, according to a report by the World Bank. The report states that the poverty rate in Fiji is one of the highest in the Pacific region. This is due to a number of factors, including a high unemployment rate and a lack of access to basic services. The report also notes that the poverty rate in Fiji has been increasing over the past few years.

### 'Horrible' road

By SAHVAL DEVI

Residents of Suva, Nausori and other parts of the country have expressed their frustration over the state of the roads. They describe the roads as "horrible" and "unsafe". The roads are in a state of disrepair, with many potholes and deep cracks. This makes it difficult for people to travel and increases the risk of accidents. The residents are calling for the government to take action to improve the roads.

### 'There's not going to be any coup'

By SAHVAL DEVI

There is no chance of a coup in Fiji, according to the Prime Minister. He stated that the government is committed to the rule of law and to the stability of the country. He also said that the military is loyal to the government and that there are no plans to overthrow the government. This statement was made in response to reports that there were plans for a coup.

### 'Road, drainage works plan'

By SAHVAL DEVI

The Fiji Government has announced a plan for road and drainage works. The plan includes the construction of new roads and the improvement of existing roads. It also includes the installation of drainage systems to prevent flooding. The government has allocated funds for these works and expects to complete them by the end of the year.

### 'Conditions concern'

By SAHVAL DEVI

There are concerns about the conditions in the country, particularly in the rural areas. The conditions are described as "poor" and "unsafe". There is a lack of access to basic services, including health care and education. The government is working to improve these conditions and is providing support to the rural communities.

### 'How will your party create job opportunities for Fijians?'

Views by National Federation Party

The National Federation Party (NFP) believes that the government should focus on creating job opportunities for Fijians. This can be achieved by investing in infrastructure and supporting the private sector. The NFP also believes that the government should provide training and education to the young people of Fiji to help them find employment.

### 'How will your party create job opportunities for Fijians?'

Views by Unity Fiji party

The Unity Fiji party believes that the government should focus on creating job opportunities for Fijians. This can be achieved by investing in infrastructure and supporting the private sector. The party also believes that the government should provide training and education to the young people of Fiji to help them find employment.

### 'Party to focus on abundant resources'

The Unity Fiji party has announced that it will focus on the country's abundant resources. The party believes that these resources can be used to create jobs and improve the economy. The party also believes that the government should invest in these resources to ensure that they are used in a sustainable way.

### 'Opportunities to grow'

The National Federation Party says it is important to give incentives to farmers, to encourage them to stay on the land and to keep farming. The party believes that farming is a key sector of the economy and that it can provide a source of income for many people. The party also believes that the government should provide support to farmers to help them improve their productivity.

## 2018 GENERAL ELECTION... YOUR VOTE COUNTS

### 'There's not going to be any coup'

By SAHVAL DEVI

There is no chance of a coup in Fiji, according to the Prime Minister. He stated that the government is committed to the rule of law and to the stability of the country. He also said that the military is loyal to the government and that there are no plans to overthrow the government. This statement was made in response to reports that there were plans for a coup.

### 'Road, drainage works plan'

By SAHVAL DEVI

The Fiji Government has announced a plan for road and drainage works. The plan includes the construction of new roads and the improvement of existing roads. It also includes the installation of drainage systems to prevent flooding. The government has allocated funds for these works and expects to complete them by the end of the year.

### 'Conditions concern'

By SAHVAL DEVI

There are concerns about the conditions in the country, particularly in the rural areas. The conditions are described as "poor" and "unsafe". There is a lack of access to basic services, including health care and education. The government is working to improve these conditions and is providing support to the rural communities.

### 'How will your party create job opportunities for Fijians?'

Views by National Federation Party

The National Federation Party (NFP) believes that the government should focus on creating job opportunities for Fijians. This can be achieved by investing in infrastructure and supporting the private sector. The NFP also believes that the government should provide training and education to the young people of Fiji to help them find employment.

### 'How will your party create job opportunities for Fijians?'

Views by Unity Fiji party

The Unity Fiji party believes that the government should focus on creating job opportunities for Fijians. This can be achieved by investing in infrastructure and supporting the private sector. The party also believes that the government should provide training and education to the young people of Fiji to help them find employment.

### 'Party to focus on abundant resources'

The Unity Fiji party has announced that it will focus on the country's abundant resources. The party believes that these resources can be used to create jobs and improve the economy. The party also believes that the government should invest in these resources to ensure that they are used in a sustainable way.

### 'Opportunities to grow'

The National Federation Party says it is important to give incentives to farmers, to encourage them to stay on the land and to keep farming. The party believes that farming is a key sector of the economy and that it can provide a source of income for many people. The party also believes that the government should provide support to farmers to help them improve their productivity.

### 'How will your party create job opportunities for Fijians?'

Views by National Federation Party

The National Federation Party (NFP) believes that the government should focus on creating job opportunities for Fijians. This can be achieved by investing in infrastructure and supporting the private sector. The NFP also believes that the government should provide training and education to the young people of Fiji to help them find employment.

### 'How will your party create job opportunities for Fijians?'

Views by Unity Fiji party

The Unity Fiji party believes that the government should focus on creating job opportunities for Fijians. This can be achieved by investing in infrastructure and supporting the private sector. The party also believes that the government should provide training and education to the young people of Fiji to help them find employment.

### 'Party to focus on abundant resources'

The Unity Fiji party has announced that it will focus on the country's abundant resources. The party believes that these resources can be used to create jobs and improve the economy. The party also believes that the government should invest in these resources to ensure that they are used in a sustainable way.

## 2018 GENERAL ELECTION... YOUR VOTE COUNTS

### 'There's not going to be any coup'

By SAHVAL DEVI

There is no chance of a coup in Fiji, according to the Prime Minister. He stated that the government is committed to the rule of law and to the stability of the country. He also said that the military is loyal to the government and that there are no plans to overthrow the government. This statement was made in response to reports that there were plans for a coup.

### 'Road, drainage works plan'

By SAHVAL DEVI

The Fiji Government has announced a plan for road and drainage works. The plan includes the construction of new roads and the improvement of existing roads. It also includes the installation of drainage systems to prevent flooding. The government has allocated funds for these works and expects to complete them by the end of the year.

### 'Conditions concern'

By SAHVAL DEVI

There are concerns about the conditions in the country, particularly in the rural areas. The conditions are described as "poor" and "unsafe". There is a lack of access to basic services, including health care and education. The government is working to improve these conditions and is providing support to the rural communities.

### 'How will your party create job opportunities for Fijians?'

Views by National Federation Party

The National Federation Party (NFP) believes that the government should focus on creating job opportunities for Fijians. This can be achieved by investing in infrastructure and supporting the private sector. The NFP also believes that the government should provide training and education to the young people of Fiji to help them find employment.

### 'How will your party create job opportunities for Fijians?'

Views by Unity Fiji party

The Unity Fiji party believes that the government should focus on creating job opportunities for Fijians. This can be achieved by investing in infrastructure and supporting the private sector. The party also believes that the government should provide training and education to the young people of Fiji to help them find employment.

### 'Party to focus on abundant resources'

The Unity Fiji party has announced that it will focus on the country's abundant resources. The party believes that these resources can be used to create jobs and improve the economy. The party also believes that the government should invest in these resources to ensure that they are used in a sustainable way.

### 'Opportunities to grow'

The National Federation Party says it is important to give incentives to farmers, to encourage them to stay on the land and to keep farming. The party believes that farming is a key sector of the economy and that it can provide a source of income for many people. The party also believes that the government should provide support to farmers to help them improve their productivity.

### 'How will your party create job opportunities for Fijians?'

Views by National Federation Party

The National Federation Party (NFP) believes that the government should focus on creating job opportunities for Fijians. This can be achieved by investing in infrastructure and supporting the private sector. The NFP also believes that the government should provide training and education to the young people of Fiji to help them find employment.

### 'How will your party create job opportunities for Fijians?'

Views by Unity Fiji party

The Unity Fiji party believes that the government should focus on creating job opportunities for Fijians. This can be achieved by investing in infrastructure and supporting the private sector. The party also believes that the government should provide training and education to the young people of Fiji to help them find employment.

### 'Party to focus on abundant resources'

The Unity Fiji party has announced that it will focus on the country's abundant resources. The party believes that these resources can be used to create jobs and improve the economy. The party also believes that the government should invest in these resources to ensure that they are used in a sustainable way.

## 2018 GENERAL ELECTION... YOUR VOTE COUNTS

### 'There's not going to be any coup'

By SAHVAL DEVI

There is no chance of a coup in Fiji, according to the Prime Minister. He stated that the government is committed to the rule of law and to the stability of the country. He also said that the military is loyal to the government and that there are no plans to overthrow the government. This statement was made in response to reports that there were plans for a coup.

### 'Road, drainage works plan'

By SAHVAL DEVI

The Fiji Government has announced a plan for road and drainage works. The plan includes the construction of new roads and the improvement of existing roads. It also includes the installation of drainage systems to prevent flooding. The government has allocated funds for these works and expects to complete them by the end of the year.

### 'Conditions concern'

By SAHVAL DEVI

There are concerns about the conditions in the country, particularly in the rural areas. The conditions are described as "poor" and "unsafe". There is a lack of access to basic services, including health care and education. The government is working to improve these conditions and is providing support to the rural communities.

### 'How will your party create job opportunities for Fijians?'

Views by National Federation Party

The National Federation Party (NFP) believes that the government should focus on creating job opportunities for Fijians. This can be achieved by investing in infrastructure and supporting the private sector. The NFP also believes that the government should provide training and education to the young people of Fiji to help them find employment.

### 'How will your party create job opportunities for Fijians?'

Views by Unity Fiji party

The Unity Fiji party believes that the government should focus on creating job opportunities for Fijians. This can be achieved by investing in infrastructure and supporting the private sector. The party also believes that the government should provide training and education to the young people of Fiji to help them find employment.

### 'Party to focus on abundant resources'

The Unity Fiji party has announced that it will focus on the country's abundant resources. The party believes that these resources can be used to create jobs and improve the economy. The party also believes that the government should invest in these resources to ensure that they are used in a sustainable way.

### 'Opportunities to grow'

The National Federation Party says it is important to give incentives to farmers, to encourage them to stay on the land and to keep farming. The party believes that farming is a key sector of the economy and that it can provide a source of income for many people. The party also believes that the government should provide support to farmers to help them improve their productivity.

### 'How will your party create job opportunities for Fijians?'

Views by National Federation Party

The National Federation Party (NFP) believes that the government should focus on creating job opportunities for Fijians. This can be achieved by investing in infrastructure and supporting the private sector. The NFP also believes that the government should provide training and education to the young people of Fiji to help them find employment.

### 'How will your party create job opportunities for Fijians?'

Views by Unity Fiji party

The Unity Fiji party believes that the government should focus on creating job opportunities for Fijians. This can be achieved by investing in infrastructure and supporting the private sector. The party also believes that the government should provide training and education to the young people of Fiji to help them find employment.

### 'Party to focus on abundant resources'

The Unity Fiji party has announced that it will focus on the country's abundant resources. The party believes that these resources can be used to create jobs and improve the economy. The party also believes that the government should invest in these resources to ensure that they are used in a sustainable way.

**Celebrate WITH THE TRUSTED BRAND**

Golden Malt beverages are available in various flavors including Golden Malt, Golden Malt with Lemon, Golden Malt with Orange, and Golden Malt with Lime. They are made with natural ingredients and are a healthy choice for any occasion.

**Touching your lives with Quality Products**

4 THE TIMES - SATURDAY NOVEMBER 3, 2018

**NEW! AIR SNEAKERS \$39.90**

Unisex Sneakers are available in various colors and styles. They are made with high-quality materials and are designed for comfort and durability. They are a great choice for anyone looking for a stylish and comfortable pair of shoes.

**Shop 3: 281 Marks Street, DeWu House, Ph: 3311330**

**Shop 4: 281 Marks Street, DeWu House, Ph: 3311330**

**Shop 5: 281 Marks Street, DeWu House, Ph: 3311330**

**Shop 6: 281 Marks Street, DeWu House, Ph: 3311330**

How will your party create job opportunities for Fijians? Views by Fiji Labour Party

Unemployment a concern for Labour



It is a concern about the high rate of unemployment in Fiji, more so than any other political party. It is a serious national problem which is a constant in the lives of Fijians... The Labour Party will address this issue as one of its key priorities...

Fiji Labour Party intends to set up a special fund to help graduates and diploma techs up self-employment.

YOUR COMPREHENSIVE GUIDE PARTIES' FINAL CRY TO VOTERS 2018 GENERAL ELECTION 4 DAYS TO GO



Ghai hits out at PM

PRIME Minister Voreqe Bainimarama has been hit by a scathing attack from opposition leader Frank Ghai... Ghai has accused the PM of being a 'dictator' and of 'stealing' the 2014 election...

2018 GENERAL ELECTION... YOUR VOTE COUNTS

Rabuka meets



By STEVE SAVANACCO... The Prime Minister was called by the Hon. Rabuka to discuss the 2018 general election... Rabuka has expressed his concerns about the current political situation...

74-year-old voter wants a good government to lead

By LITA CAVA... I WANT a good government to lead our country... I am 74 years old and I have seen many governments come and go... I want a government that will work for the people...

Soldiers unable to vote

By LITA CAVA... ABOUT 200 military officers were unable to vote in the 2018 general election... The Electoral Commission has stated that military personnel are not eligible to vote...

Voters urged to make wise decision

By FELIX CHALIDAYI... CHECKING the wrong party could cost you the money of the country... Voters are urged to make a wise decision based on their own interests and the needs of the nation...

2018 GENERAL ELECTION... YOUR VOTE COUNTS

Ba chiefs 'Nothing sinister about 48-hour blackout'



By ANITA MACKAY... The Ba chiefs have issued a statement regarding the 48-hour blackout... They stated that there is nothing sinister about the decision...

'Party will listen to all Fijians'

By SERAFINA SILAFOGA... The Fiji Labour Party will listen to all Fijians... We are committed to representing the interests of every citizen in our country...

Candidate claims Bainimarama is Fiji's messiah

By FELIX CHALIDAYI... The candidate claims that Bainimarama is Fiji's messiah... This is a controversial statement that has sparked debate among voters...

Advertisement for Oakley sunglasses, featuring the slogan 'ONE OBSESSION. PERFECTION' and images of various models like Siphon and RidgeLine.

Advertisement for Crest Chicken Kebabs, featuring the slogan 'It's Delicious! It's Crest' and images of the product packaging.



**NATIONAL OPINION**  
What is your party's view on the issue of same-sex marriage in Fiji?  
Views by National Federation Party



The National Federation Party says governments must let the people discuss, inform, and work out for themselves what their laws should be regarding important issues affecting people's personal, family and private lives.

## Let the people decide

**By PROF BIMAL PRASAD**  
National Federation Party leader

**S**AME-SEX marriage is a hot topic in the Fiji community. It is one on which we should keep an open mind. Members of the public are entitled and in Fiji we are used to disagree. They are our own flesh and blood.

Recent comments made that suggested that the LGBT people are no longer the same as they were in the past. There is an increasing acceptance that the LGBT community is a part of the Fiji community and we should be able to live together in peace and harmony. There is no need to be afraid of homosexuals. They are our own flesh and blood. They are our own people. They are our own people. They are our own people.

Other people, however, who are saying that there should be no discrimination, strongly oppose same-sex marriage. They are saying that it is wrong. They are saying that it is wrong. They are saying that it is wrong.

**So what should we do?**

The answer is in the name of the party. We are the National Federation Party. We are the party of the people. We are the party of the people. We are the party of the people.

The Fiji first party, HOPE Party and UNFJ Party were also given an opportunity to have an input on the issue of same sex marriage in Fiji. Requests for contributions sent to the parties on Wednesday via electronic mail (email) remained unanswered when this edition went to press yesterday.

**NATIONAL OPINION**  
What is your party's view on the issue of same-sex marriage in Fiji?  
Views by SODELPA



Rabuka says he believes that sex is given by God as an expression of love to be shared and enjoyed exclusively between a husband and wife.

## SODELPA stands by Marriage Act

**By SIVITENI RABUKA**  
SODELPA Democratic Liberal Party leader

**S**ODELPA is unequivocal in supporting the human rights of all people of Fiji, however, marriage as currently provided in the Marriage Act.

It is a privilege to be given by God as an expression of love to be shared and enjoyed exclusively between a husband and wife. This is the biblical definition of marriage. It is the sacred union of a man and a woman in the eyes of God. It is the sacred union of a man and a woman in the eyes of God. It is the sacred union of a man and a woman in the eyes of God.

The right of men and women to marry is a fundamental human right. It is a right that is enshrined in the Constitution of Fiji. It is a right that is enshrined in the Constitution of Fiji. It is a right that is enshrined in the Constitution of Fiji.

The views expressed in this article are those of the National Federation Party and not of this newspaper.

**NATIONAL OPINION**  
What is your party's view on the issue of same-sex marriage in Fiji?  
Views by Freedom Alliance Party



Some are marriage. Freedom Alliance Party says any social discussion must focus more on the emotional feelings between two people and less on the physical aspect of two people.

## FAP: We must focus on emotional aspects

**By MATHI KARANATHNE**  
Freedom Alliance Party leader

**I**f a couple discusses with a group of people, it is not about the physical aspect of two people. It is about the emotional aspects of two people. It is about the emotional aspects of two people. It is about the emotional aspects of two people.

Generally, the majority of the people who are opposing same-sex marriage are doing so based on the physical aspect of two people. They are saying that it is wrong. They are saying that it is wrong. They are saying that it is wrong.

**So what should we do?**

The answer is in the name of the party. We are the Freedom Alliance Party. We are the party of the people. We are the party of the people. We are the party of the people.

**NATIONAL OPINION**  
What is your party's view on the State's social welfare schemes and what changes (if any) would your party introduce to improve livelihoods?  
Views by National Federation Party



Retired pensioners during an AGM at Vatavuni in Suva. The National Federation Party says social welfare or pension payments are linked to wider issues that need to be resolved immediately.

## 'Pie in the sky theories'

**By PROF BIMAL PRASAD**  
National Federation Party leader

**O**n July 9, 2018, Prime Minister Frank Bainimarama announced that the government would be introducing a new social welfare scheme. This is a good step. It is a good step. It is a good step.

However, the government's policy of social welfare is based on 'pie in the sky theories'. It is based on 'pie in the sky theories'. It is based on 'pie in the sky theories'. It is based on 'pie in the sky theories'.

**So what should we do?**

The answer is in the name of the party. We are the National Federation Party. We are the party of the people. We are the party of the people. We are the party of the people.

The Fiji first party and HOPE Party were also given an opportunity to have an input on the issue of the State's social welfare schemes. Requests for contributions sent to the parties on Tuesday via electronic mail (email) remained unanswered when this edition went to press yesterday.

## NATIONAL OPINION

What's your view on the State's social welfare schemes and what changes (if any) would your party introduce to improve livelihoods? Views by Fiji Labour Party and Freedom Alliance Party

# FLP focuses on people



By MANINDRA CHANDRAY  
Fiji Labour Party leader

State and those policies that strike at the heart of people's livelihoods. We are not people - women and youth in particular - who are the focus of the government's social welfare schemes. We are people who are the focus of the government's social welfare schemes. We are people who are the focus of the government's social welfare schemes.

The government has introduced a number of social welfare schemes in the past few years. However, these schemes have not been able to reach the people who need them most. The government has introduced a number of social welfare schemes in the past few years. However, these schemes have not been able to reach the people who need them most.

# Religious organisations vital



By ANANTA KARUNARATNE  
Freedom Alliance Party leader

Religious organisations are vital in our society. They provide a sense of community and support for their members. They also play a role in social welfare and community development. Religious organisations are vital in our society. They provide a sense of community and support for their members.

The government should support religious organisations in their work. This support should be in the form of financial aid and other resources. Religious organisations are vital in our society. They provide a sense of community and support for their members.

What is your party's view on the State's social welfare schemes and what changes (if any) would your party introduce to improve livelihoods? Views by SOEFLPA and Unity Fiji

# Aid for those who need it

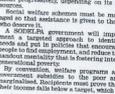


By STEVEN BARBRA  
SOEFLPA Party leader

The government has introduced a number of social welfare schemes in the past few years. However, these schemes have not been able to reach the people who need them most. The government has introduced a number of social welfare schemes in the past few years.

The government should support religious organisations in their work. This support should be in the form of financial aid and other resources. Religious organisations are vital in our society. They provide a sense of community and support for their members.

# Unity Fiji promises to do it better



By ANANTA KARUNARATNE  
Unity Fiji Party leader

Unity Fiji promises to do it better. We will improve the social welfare schemes and ensure that they reach the people who need them most. We will improve the social welfare schemes and ensure that they reach the people who need them most.

The government should support religious organisations in their work. This support should be in the form of financial aid and other resources. Religious organisations are vital in our society. They provide a sense of community and support for their members.

## NATIONAL OPINION

What is your party's view on ensuring an open, transparent and accountable government? Views by National Federation Party

# Untint the windows



By PIROO SIMAN PRASAD  
National Federation Party leader

The government has introduced a number of social welfare schemes in the past few years. However, these schemes have not been able to reach the people who need them most. The government has introduced a number of social welfare schemes in the past few years.

The government should support religious organisations in their work. This support should be in the form of financial aid and other resources. Religious organisations are vital in our society. They provide a sense of community and support for their members.

The government should support religious organisations in their work. This support should be in the form of financial aid and other resources. Religious organisations are vital in our society. They provide a sense of community and support for their members.

The government should support religious organisations in their work. This support should be in the form of financial aid and other resources. Religious organisations are vital in our society. They provide a sense of community and support for their members.

## NATIONAL OPINION

What is your party's view on ensuring an open, transparent and accountable government? Views by SOEFLPA and Freedom Alliance Party

# Total independence



By ANANTA KARUNARATNE  
SOEFLPA Party leader

Total independence is the key to our nation's future. We must ensure that we have full control over our own affairs. Total independence is the key to our nation's future. We must ensure that we have full control over our own affairs.

The government should support religious organisations in their work. This support should be in the form of financial aid and other resources. Religious organisations are vital in our society. They provide a sense of community and support for their members.

The government should support religious organisations in their work. This support should be in the form of financial aid and other resources. Religious organisations are vital in our society. They provide a sense of community and support for their members.

The government should support religious organisations in their work. This support should be in the form of financial aid and other resources. Religious organisations are vital in our society. They provide a sense of community and support for their members.

NATIONAL OPINION

What's your party's view on ensuring an open, transparent and accountable government? Views by Fiji Labour Party and UNLF Party

Lack of transparency



It is desirable for an open government to ensure that its decisions are made in a transparent manner... ANAN RAJIVINDRAN, Fiji Labour Party leader

It is desirable for an open government to ensure that its decisions are made in a transparent manner... UNLF Party leader

Governance concerns party



Good governance is the cornerstone of a stable and prosperous nation... SAVANNA NARISE, UNLF Party leader

Good governance is the cornerstone of a stable and prosperous nation... UNLF Party leader

What do you think of the State's civil service reforms and what policies do you have for the Fiji civil service? Views by UNLF Party and HOPE party

Conducive setting



Reforms whether in the form of a new structure or a new set of rules... SAVANNA NARISE, UNLF Party leader

Reforms whether in the form of a new structure or a new set of rules... UNLF Party leader

Reforms whether in the form of a new structure or a new set of rules... HOPE party

Efficient civil service reforms needed



The civil service is at the heart of the nation's governance... TUPOU DRUMALOLO, HOPE party leader

The civil service is at the heart of the nation's governance... HOPE party

The civil service is at the heart of the nation's governance... HOPE party

What do you think of the State's civil service reforms and what policies do you have for the Fiji civil service? Views by Fiji Labour Party and SOEFLA

Rights 'removed'



It is a sad state of affairs that the rights of public servants have been removed... MAUREN CHALDRY, Fiji Labour Party leader

It is a sad state of affairs that the rights of public servants have been removed... Fiji Labour Party

Rabuka: Poor civil service



A poor civil service is only a reflection of the poor political leadership in the land... STEVINA RABUKA, SOEFLA leader

A poor civil service is only a reflection of the poor political leadership in the land... SOEFLA

What do you think of the State's civil service reforms and what policies do you have for the Fiji civil service? Views by NFP and Freedom Alliance party

A holistic approach

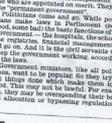


The Government's civil service reforms are a holistic approach... PROF IMAN PRASAD, National Federation Party leader

The Government's civil service reforms are a holistic approach... NFP

The Government's civil service reforms are a holistic approach... Freedom Alliance party

Localising ideas, policies



Localising ideas and policies is essential for the success of any reform... ANANDI RAJIVINDRAN, Freedom Alliance party leader

Localising ideas and policies is essential for the success of any reform... Freedom Alliance party

Localising ideas and policies is essential for the success of any reform... Freedom Alliance party

What does Fiji need to do to achieve national unity?

Views by National Federation Party



NFP leader Binam Prasad says for any government to achieve national unity, it must let the people lead the way.

Picture: FLE

Let people lead way

They are draconian and divisive laws... The Binam Prasad Government decided to change the... We must let the people lead the way... We must let the people lead the way... We must let the people lead the way...

The FijiFirst party and the Social Democratic Liberal Party were also asked to express their views on ways to achieve national unity. Requests for contributions sent to the parties on Wednesday via electronic mail (email) remained unanswered when this edition went to press yesterday.

What does Fiji need to do to achieve national unity?

Views by HOPE party and Fiji Labour Party



By TUPOI DRANIKOLAHO, Fiji Labour Party leader

Fiji united on many things

We are already united in so many things. We command the steps taken to give us a national name and one woman-one man - one vote with one national constituency... We must let the people lead the way... We must let the people lead the way...

Unity has to be nurtured

Labour said unity had to be carefully nurtured through policies that encouraged understanding and tolerance for each other's... We must let the people lead the way... We must let the people lead the way...

The FijiFirst party and the Social Democratic Liberal Party were also asked to express their views on ways to achieve national unity. Requests for contributions sent to the parties on Wednesday via electronic mail (email) remained unanswered when this edition went to press yesterday.

What does Fiji need to do to achieve national unity?

Views by Unity Fiji and Freedom Alliance party

Remove ethnic fears

To build a nation, we need to build trust... We must let the people lead the way... We must let the people lead the way... We must let the people lead the way...

Fiji needs genuine leaders

Leadership is about vision and... We must let the people lead the way... We must let the people lead the way... We must let the people lead the way...

'A ROADMAP TO PEACE AND HAPPINESS'

Unity Fiji believes that to empower the entire nation to move forward towards peace and happiness, we must heed the words of our past... We must let the people lead the way... We must let the people lead the way...

Advertisement for the Fiji Institute of Accountants (FIA) featuring a seminar on 'The Revised and Updated Conceptual Framework' and a list of members.



## Political Comments On Bus Fare Distract From Real Issues: Association

The Fiji Bus Operators Association (FBOA) has issued a statement regarding the government's proposed increase in bus fares. The association's president, Mr. Suresh Kumar, expressed his disappointment and concern over the move, stating that it would disproportionately affect the lower-income population.

"The FBOA has been in discussions with the government regarding the proposed fare increase, but we have not reached any agreement," Kumar said. "The government's decision to increase fares is a step in the wrong direction, especially given the current economic challenges facing the country."

The association also highlighted the need for the government to address other critical issues, such as the cost of living and the availability of public services, rather than focusing solely on bus fares.



Bus driver Suresh Kumar is seen at the controls of a bus in Suva, Fiji.

The FBOA also expressed its concern over the government's proposed increase in bus fares, stating that it would disproportionately affect the lower-income population. The association's president, Mr. Suresh Kumar, expressed his disappointment and concern over the move, stating that it would disproportionately affect the lower-income population.

"The FBOA has been in discussions with the government regarding the proposed fare increase, but we have not reached any agreement," Kumar said. "The government's decision to increase fares is a step in the wrong direction, especially given the current economic challenges facing the country."

The association also highlighted the need for the government to address other critical issues, such as the cost of living and the availability of public services, rather than focusing solely on bus fares.

## 34 political column 'Token Initiatives In The 2018-2019 Budget Are Not Sustainable In The Long Run'

**Opinion**  
Sitiwini Rabuka

Ministry	2018-2019 Budget	2017-2018 Budget	% Change
1. Ministry of Agriculture	\$ 5,817,000.00	\$ 5,143,000.00	13%
2. Ministry of Fisheries	\$ 10,119,000.00	\$ 9,474,000.00	7%
3. Ministry of Forestry	\$ 2,206,000.00	\$ 2,497,000.00	-12%
4. Ministry of Health	\$ 17,482,000.00	\$ 16,441,000.00	6%
5. Ministry of Lands and Mineral Resources	\$ 4,493,000.00	\$ 2,120,000.00	111%
6. Ministry of Labour	\$ 1,442,000.00	\$ 1,442,000.00	0%
7. Ministry of Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry	\$ 9,226,000.00	\$ 6,029,000.00	53%
8. Ministry of Health	\$ 17,482,000.00	\$ 16,441,000.00	6%
9. Ministry of Public Enterprise	\$ 6,231,000.00	\$ 6,113,400.00	2%
10. Ministry of Transport	\$ 2,844,000.00	\$ 2,844,000.00	0%
11. Ministry of Education	\$ 20,112,000.00	\$ 19,702,000.00	2%
12. Ministry of Information	\$ 3,210,000.00	\$ 3,210,000.00	0%
13. Ministry of Home Affairs	\$ 1,442,000.00	\$ 1,442,000.00	0%
14. Ministry of Environment	\$ 1,442,000.00	\$ 1,442,000.00	0%
15. Ministry of Disaster Preparedness	\$ 1,442,000.00	\$ 1,442,000.00	0%
16. Ministry of Culture	\$ 1,442,000.00	\$ 1,442,000.00	0%
17. Ministry of Sports	\$ 1,442,000.00	\$ 1,442,000.00	0%
18. Ministry of Gender Equality	\$ 1,442,000.00	\$ 1,442,000.00	0%
19. Ministry of Human Resources	\$ 1,442,000.00	\$ 1,442,000.00	0%
20. Ministry of Social Services	\$ 1,442,000.00	\$ 1,442,000.00	0%
21. Ministry of Community Development	\$ 1,442,000.00	\$ 1,442,000.00	0%
22. Ministry of Youth	\$ 1,442,000.00	\$ 1,442,000.00	0%
23. Ministry of Women's Affairs	\$ 1,442,000.00	\$ 1,442,000.00	0%
24. Ministry of Children	\$ 1,442,000.00	\$ 1,442,000.00	0%
25. Ministry of Disability	\$ 1,442,000.00	\$ 1,442,000.00	0%
26. Ministry of Senior Citizens	\$ 1,442,000.00	\$ 1,442,000.00	0%
27. Ministry of Elderly	\$ 1,442,000.00	\$ 1,442,000.00	0%
28. Ministry of Family	\$ 1,442,000.00	\$ 1,442,000.00	0%
29. Ministry of Housing	\$ 1,442,000.00	\$ 1,442,000.00	0%
30. Ministry of Urban Development	\$ 1,442,000.00	\$ 1,442,000.00	0%
31. Ministry of Infrastructure	\$ 1,442,000.00	\$ 1,442,000.00	0%
32. Ministry of Transport	\$ 1,442,000.00	\$ 1,442,000.00	0%
33. Ministry of Energy	\$ 1,442,000.00	\$ 1,442,000.00	0%
34. Ministry of Water	\$ 1,442,000.00	\$ 1,442,000.00	0%

The 2018-2019 budget is a significant milestone for the government, as it marks the first time that the budget has been presented in a format that is accessible to the public. However, the budget is criticized for being too focused on short-term gains, with many of the initiatives being described as "token" and not sustainable in the long run.

The budget also highlights the need for the government to address the growing debt burden, which has reached a record high of over 100% of GDP. This has led to a loss of confidence among investors and a sharp decline in the value of the Fijian dollar.

The budget also highlights the need for the government to address the growing debt burden, which has reached a record high of over 100% of GDP. This has led to a loss of confidence among investors and a sharp decline in the value of the Fijian dollar.

There are better ways to help our home owners rather than giving handouts to a selected few. The better and transparent way to help our homeowners is for the government to work with developers (and the private sector) through subsidizing the cost of developing infrastructure and utilities to reduce the cost of housing loans.

The budget also highlights the need for the government to address the growing debt burden, which has reached a record high of over 100% of GDP. This has led to a loss of confidence among investors and a sharp decline in the value of the Fijian dollar.

**QUELEYA POINT APARTMENTS**

LUXURY WATERFRONT LIVING WEST OF SUVA CITY

NOW SELLING FROM \$599,000.00

INCREDIBLE VIEWS OF SUVA HARBOUR

WE CARE FOR THE ENVIRONMENT

R.C. SANKHARIA & CO. LTD.

**Big Bait TENT SALE**

As much as 70% off

LAST DAY TODAY AUGUST 11th

DON'T MISS OUT!

WE CARE FOR THE ENVIRONMENT

R.C. SANKHARIA & CO. LTD.

## 36 political column 'The Right to Vote Is A Sacred Thing'

**Opinion**  
Tupou Draunidalo

The right to vote is a sacred thing, and it is the responsibility of the government to ensure that every citizen has the opportunity to exercise this right. The government should take steps to ensure that the electoral process is fair, transparent, and accessible to all.

The government should also take steps to ensure that the electoral process is fair, transparent, and accessible to all. This includes ensuring that the electoral process is free from corruption and that the results are accurately counted and reported.

The government should also take steps to ensure that the electoral process is fair, transparent, and accessible to all. This includes ensuring that the electoral process is free from corruption and that the results are accurately counted and reported.

## 30 political column 'Humanity Opportunity Prosperity Equality'

**Opinion**  
Tupou Draunidalo

The world is a place of opportunity, and it is the responsibility of the government to ensure that every citizen has the opportunity to prosper and live in equality. The government should take steps to create a more equitable society, where everyone has the chance to succeed.

The government should also take steps to ensure that the electoral process is fair, transparent, and accessible to all. This includes ensuring that the electoral process is free from corruption and that the results are accurately counted and reported.

The government should also take steps to ensure that the electoral process is fair, transparent, and accessible to all. This includes ensuring that the electoral process is free from corruption and that the results are accurately counted and reported.

**RG Direct**

RG DIRECT FACTORY OUTLET

Hibiscus Special SALE

Address: Pacific Road, Suva

**The University of Fiji**

For Quality, Affordable Education, It Must Be Chosen

WORKSHOP

Tapping Into Funds

A Winning Proposal Writing Workshop

Address: Pacific Road, Suva

**REQUEST FOR TENDER**

STUDENT MEDICAL SERVICES AT LAUCALA CAMPUS

REQUEST FOR TENDER

SUPPLY, INSTALLATION AND COMMISSIONING OF IBM STORWIZE V7000 SAN

Address: Pacific Road, Suva

UNITY FIJI

'Embracing Our Ethnic Fears'

Opinion



Savenaca Narube

religion intolerance. There is a sense that we are not embracing our ethnic fears...

I believe that Government's efforts to blame opposition parties about inflicting racism is a misnomer...

Government continues to have an open opposition party...

any resistance to their performance. Unity Fiji will encourage...

Unity Fiji will encourage all ethnic groups to embrace their fears...

Unity Fiji will try to build a strong group. We believe that this understanding will give us...

Unity Fiji will try to build a strong group. We believe that this understanding will give us...

Unity Fiji will try to build a strong group. We believe that this understanding will give us...

SOEFLA

'2018-19 Budget Irresponsible, Lacks Vision'

Opinion



Sitiveni Rabuka

It is a 'fairy tale' budget and irresponsible. The 2018-19 Budget is an irresponsible...

The 2018-19 Budget is an irresponsible budget. It is a 'fairy tale' budget...

The 2018-19 Budget is an irresponsible budget. It is a 'fairy tale' budget...

to be the following observation. The Budgetary Government has...

The Budgetary Government has not been able to deliver on its promises...

The Budgetary Government has not been able to deliver on its promises...

The Budgetary Government has not been able to deliver on its promises...

The Budgetary Government has not been able to deliver on its promises...

Carptrac CAT advertisement for fuel economy. Includes text: 'Achieve maximum power, optimum fuel economy, 3 prevent fuel wastage, conservation vehicle.' Also features 'SRI SATHYA SAI SANJEEVANI MEDICAL CENTRE' and 'FUEL UP & WIN' promotion.

RCdirect NO DIRECT FACTORY OUTLET advertisement. Features 'SALE' and 'HOT PRICE' text, along with images of clothing items.

Large advertisement for 'FIJI up' featuring a coach and athletes. Text includes: 'Shape up to keep home semis: Coach', 'FIJI NATIONAL FNUNIKUA Inside', 'Opposition called: New Poll', and 'Parties still struggling to keep up with Prime Minister Bainimarama's FijiFirst Party'.

Advertisement for QLEYA POINT APARTMENTS. Text includes: 'Upgrade to TAE40116', 'LUXURY WATERFRONT LIVING WEST OF SUVA CITY', and 'UNDISCOVERED WATERFRONT SUVA HARBOR AND BAY OF ISLANDS'.





'Voters Are Bosses of Parliament'

With fresh elections around the corner, HOPE just wants to remind you, the voter bosses, that you are free to choose all over again who you want working for you in Parliament - Tupou Draunidalo

Land Transport Authority Employment Opportunity. The Land Transport Authority (LTA) is currently guided by the Land Transport Act 1998 and transport system which is safe, reliable and efficient.

'Concerns About Supervisor of Elections Bias And Mistakes in 2018 Voter Rolls'

SOEPLA Opinion. Siitiveni Rabuka. The Supervisor of Elections (SOE) has been accused of bias and mistakes in the 2018 voter rolls. The SOE has been accused of bias and mistakes in the 2018 voter rolls.

25th National Convention on Quality. Theme: 'Sustainable Productivity'. The National Convention on Quality will feature the Quality Circle competition, presentation from international and local speakers and an exhibition of Quality related services.

COURTS PHILIPS. 1. September Letter of the Week Winner: GOS & PHILIPS STEAM IRON. 2. September Letter of the Month Winner: GOS & PHILIPS SLICE SANDWICH MAKER.

your views 'A good newspaper is a nation talking to itself'. LETTERS. Road lanes. The increase of new vehicles on our roads is a positive thing. However, it is also a concern as it leads to traffic congestion.

National Bedding. LIVE COIRTS MEGA SAMABULA TODAY. COURTS MEGA. The National Bedding store is offering a special promotion on coir mattresses.

Calling For Volunteers To Be Polling Station Agents

SOEPLA OPINION. Siitiveni Rabuka. We are calling for volunteers to be polling station agents for the 2023 general election. The SOEPLA party is seeking volunteers to assist in the polling process.

SRI SATHYA SAI SANJEEVANI MEDICAL CENTRE. PROVIDING HEALTHY HEATHCARE FOR THE UNDERPRIVILEGED AND NEEDY PEOPLE OF FIJI. OFFERING GENERAL MEDICAL CONSULTATIONS & MEDICATIONS TOTALLY FREE OF COST.

## 'Reduce Risk, Avoid Dishonest Election'

**Unity Fiji Opinion**  
Savenaca Narube

To reduce the risks of a dishonest election, a law and fair election to the voters of the country is the only way to ensure that the government is accountable to the people.

As everyone can see, the suggested changes and can be easily made without costs. No one is harmed by these changes. This is a win-win situation.

**Savenaca Narube**  
Unity Fiji Party

The proposed changes to the Electoral Code of Conduct (ECC) by the Fiji Government are a step in the right direction. However, the proposed changes are not sufficient to ensure a fair and honest election.

**FOR RENT**  
LOWERS LANE APARTMENTS  
LAPERSVILLE CROSSING LANE TOWN CENTRE

**THE VIEW**  
LIFESTYLE

**FEATURES**

- Leisure facilities
- Swimming pool & BBQ area with lounge furniture
- Outdoor covered entertainment (lounge area)
- Security watching provided full time

**STARTING POINT TECHNOLOGY PTE LTD**  
Specializing in IT Solutions for SMEs

## 'Slashing PM, Ministers Pay Our Core Value'

**HOPE Opinion**  
Funou Draunidalo

The salaries of Permanent Secretaries need not be so far higher than the rest of the civil service generally or indeed the elected Members of Parliament.

Government Ministers in Fiji are paid a salary that is significantly higher than that of the Permanent Secretaries. This is a clear indication of the government's intention to pay its ministers more than its top civil servants.

The salaries of Permanent Secretaries need not be so far higher than the rest of the civil service generally or indeed the elected Members of Parliament.

**SUBARU**  
Confidence in Motion

**2018 SUBARU FORESTER**

EXPLORE YOUR WORLD WITH FORESTER

**SHREEDHAR MOTORS**  
"where excellence is appreciated"

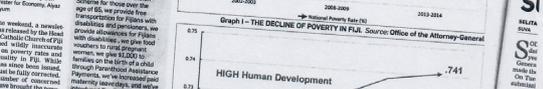
Head Office: Karanji Street, Vunavuno  
Lakunika Tel: (07) 3333422 Fax: (07) 3333292  
Lakunika Tel: (07) 3333192  
Lakunika Tel: (07) 3331222  
Lakunika Tel: (07) 3331222  
Visit our website: www.shreedhargroup.com.fj

## Poverty in Fiji is at a Historic Low

**Statement**  
Aigae Sayed-Khiyumi

The truth is, we have targeted poverty reduction through the provision of social services to the most vulnerable in our society.

Our society is becoming more developed. The poverty rate has fallen to a historic low of 35%.



**Mix-up worries party members**

The mix-up of party members has caused concern among party members. The party leadership has failed to provide clear guidance on the matter.

**Income inequality has decreased from 40.4 to 38.4**

The income inequality index has decreased from 40.4 in 2003 to 38.4 in 2014, indicating a more equitable distribution of income.

**Fiji's Human Development Index**

Fiji's Human Development Index (HDI) has risen to 0.741, placing the country in the upper middle income category.

**Income inequality has decreased from 40.4 to 38.4**

The income inequality index has decreased from 40.4 in 2003 to 38.4 in 2014, indicating a more equitable distribution of income.

## SODELPA, NFP Submit Candidates' Nominations

**SELA BOLANIVANAVA**

SODELPA and NFP have submitted their candidates' nominations for the 2018 general election.

The Fiji Election Office will receive the nominations for the 2018 general election. The candidates will be listed on the ballot paper.

The candidates for SODELPA and NFP have been announced. The candidates will be competing in various constituencies.

The candidates for SODELPA and NFP have been announced. The candidates will be competing in various constituencies.

The candidates for SODELPA and NFP have been announced. The candidates will be competing in various constituencies.

The candidates for SODELPA and NFP have been announced. The candidates will be competing in various constituencies.

The candidates for SODELPA and NFP have been announced. The candidates will be competing in various constituencies.

The candidates for SODELPA and NFP have been announced. The candidates will be competing in various constituencies.

**Reebok Jet 100 Series**  
Treadmill + Bluetooth

**KEY FEATURES**

- 110kg maximum user weight
- 1-12 speed range
- 12 levels of electronic incline
- 24 motivational programs plus body analysis
- Cushioning - Air Motion Technology
- 5-Display functions: digital heart rate, pulse, distance, speed, distance and program selected
- MP3 compatible with integrated speaker module with USB port
- Soft-drop hydraulic folding mechanism
- Direct speed and incline buttons

Exclusively available at:

- Toppoco City: 111 4421 | Toppoco City: 444 6010
- Toppoco City: 444 6010 | Toppoco City: 444 6010
- Toppoco City: 444 6010 | Toppoco City: 444 6010

Tell the whole truth, don't be economical with facts



National Federated Party leader... The party will not be... National Federated Party leader... The party will not be...

Speaker Meets Sacred Heart Students, Nabukavasi Villagers



Speaker of Parliament Dr. Jio... The Speaker met with... Speaker of Parliament Dr. Jio... The Speaker met with...

SODELPA continues dialogue... The Commission has... SODELPA continues dialogue... The Commission has...

Advertisement for Sri Sathya Sai Sanjeevani Medical Centre, offering free consultations and medications.

'The Three-legged Stool'

Unity Fiji Opinion... The three-legged stool... Unity Fiji Opinion... The three-legged stool...

Advertisement for Mahesh Syndicate, featuring fireworks and a Bachelor of Arts program.

Parties Marshall Polling Agents For Election Day

Parties appoint polling agents... The parties have... Parties appoint polling agents... The parties have...

Advertisement for FEO (Fiji Electoral Office) hosting parties for logistics workshop.

Advertisement for 'Between the Lines' magazine, featuring various articles and photos.

Advertisement for 'History Chappies' magazine, featuring historical content and photos.





The tables highlight media reports in relation to 2018 General Election (pre-electoral and post-electoral). It carries news, commentaries by political parties on their policies and public opinion expressed in the letter to the editor columns of the two national newspapers, *The Fiji Times* and *Fiji Sun*. It also includes coverage by radio and television stations.

## The Fiji Times

Date	News / National Opinion
<p><b>4 Aug 2018</b></p>	<p><b>Workers and union rights issue</b></p> <p><i>The Fiji Times</i> asked all registered political parties contesting the 2018 General Election: What is your party’s view on workers ‘and union rights in Fiji and what policies would you have for them?<sup>1</sup></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• National Federation Party leader, Prof Biman Prasad - An assault on rights</li> <li>• SODELPA leader, Sitiveni Rabuka – Rights discriminated</li> <li>• Hope party leader, Tupou Draunidalo – Party Hopes for better Fiji</li> <li>• Labour Party leader, Mahendra Chaudhry – True test of democracy</li> </ul>
<p><b>11 Aug 2018</b></p>	<p><b>Foreign Policy</b></p> <p><i>The Fiji Times</i> asked all registered political parties contesting the 2018 General Election: What should be the Government’s priorities in foreign policy?<sup>2</sup></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Labour Party leader, Mahendra Chaudhry – Focus on foreign policy</li> <li>• SODELPA leader, Sitiveni Rabuka – Foreign policy to be based on party’s vision</li> <li>• Hope party leader, Tupou Draunidalo – For our bet interest</li> <li>• National Federation Party leader, Prof Biman Prasad – Not egos but needs</li> </ul> <p>Related stories:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ties of concerns</li> </ul>
<p><b>18 Aug 2018</b></p>	<p><b>Free Medicine issue</b></p> <p><i>The Fiji Times</i> asked all registered political parties contesting the 2018 General Election: How does your party view the state’s free medicine scheme and in what way do you think it can be improved?<sup>3</sup></p>

<sup>1</sup> The Fiji Times, 4 Aug 2018, pages 31, 32 33

<sup>2</sup> The Fiji Times, 11 Aug 2018, pages 31, 32 33

<sup>3</sup> The Fiji Times 18 Aug 2018, pages 31, 32 33

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• National Federation Party leader, Prof Biman Prasad – Free Medicine overhaul</li> <li>• SODELPA candidate, Linda Tubuya – Free Medicine Scheme – Problem or Solution</li> <li>• Fiji Labour Party candidate, Lavinia Padarath – People Paying More</li> <li>• Hope party leader, Tupou Draunidalo – Hope to revamp system</li> </ul>
<p><b>24 Aug 2018</b></p>	<p><b>Media freedom concern</b></p> <p>A civil society organisation is concerned about media freedom in Fiji as the country prepares for the 2018 General Election.</p> <p>Dialogue Fiji feels the country’s media environment is far from the ideal standards that are needed for the media to operate freely in.</p> <p>Dialogue Fiji executive director Nilesh Lal said that time and again they had highlighted their concerns on how the media continued to exercise some forms of censorship when executing its role.</p> <p>“There is glaringly a lack of critical stories especially relating to the state of the Government and we feel that there is still not enough scrutiny on the State and its public offices.</p> <p>“So generally, the media environment is quite restrictive from things such as provisions of the Media Act and the Media Industry Development Authority (MIDA),” he claimed.</p> <p>“A lot of journalists have fear of personal repercussions if they report critically or even fear of persecution.</p> <p>“Not that, but most importantly some media agencies are seen as pro-government and others as anti-government while those that still report fairly are even still perceived as anti-government.”</p> <p>As an example of media freedom pertinent to the election, Mr. Lal said an international standard required State broadcaster to give equal coverage to each political party.</p> <p>“This of course means equal screening time for televisions, print spaces for newspapers, or tone of coverage and the placement of stories, headlines and captions.</p> <p>For any newspaper, this does not mean that two third of coverages go to a party and only one third to another because in a democracy the media plays a critical role in providing information for voters as a template to process political choice.</p> <p>“We are currently assessing the kind of media coverage that will happen prior to the election and will submit a report for public consumption,” he added.</p> <p><a href="https://www.fijitimes.com/media-freedom-concern/">https://www.fijitimes.com/media-freedom-concern/</a></p>
<p><b>25 Aug 2018</b></p>	<p><b>Foreign investment issue</b></p>

	<p><i>The Fiji Times</i> asked all registered political parties contesting the 2018 General Election: How do we regulate foreign investment in Fiji for the benefit of Fiji citizens?<sup>4</sup></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• National Federation Party leader, Prof Biman Prasad - Foreign investment vital</li> <li>• Fiji Labour Party candidate, Aman Ravindra Singh – Strict conditions vital</li> <li>• Unity Party leader, Savenaca Narube – new investment needed</li> <li>• SODELPA leader, Sitiveni Rabuka – A balanced approach</li> <li>• Hope party leader – Tupou Draunidalo – Liberal Democracy</li> </ul> <p><b>Relates stories</b></p> <p>Editorial comment – Foreign investment value (<a href="https://www.fijitimes.com/editorial-comment-foreign-investment-value/">https://www.fijitimes.com/editorial-comment-foreign-investment-value/</a>)</p>
<p><b>1 Sept 2018</b></p>	<p><b>Same-sex marriage issue</b></p> <p><i>The Fiji Times</i> asked all registered political parties contesting the 2018 General Election: What is your party’s view on same-sex marriage in Fiji?<sup>5</sup></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• National Federation Party leader, Prof Biman Prasad – Let the people decide</li> <li>• SODELPA leader, Sitiveni Rabuka – SODELPA stands by Marriage Act</li> <li>• Freedom Alliance Party leader, Jagath Karunaratne – We must focus on emotional aspects</li> </ul> <p><b>Related story</b></p> <p>Same-sex marriage is a challenging and delicate issue for Fiji, some political parties say.</p> <p>As we head towards the 2018 General Election, we asked the seven registered political parties on their views on the issue of same-sex marriage in Fiji. The National Federation Party (NFP), Social Democratic Liberal Party (SODELPA) and the Freedom Alliance party differ in their views on the issue. The FijiFirst party, Unity Fiji party, Fiji Labour Party and the HOPE party did not respond to the question when this edition went to press last night.</p> <p>While no response was received from the FijiFirst party, FLP said it forgot about the request from this newspaper for their contribution, while Unity Fiji and the HOPE party did not contribute because of time constraints.</p> <p>NFP leader Professor Biman Prasad said on the issue of same-sex marriage, the government should take the issue to the community, consult widely and listen to those views instead of monopolising the debate.</p>

<sup>4</sup> The Fiji Times 25 Aug 2018, pages 31, 32 33

<sup>5</sup> The Fiji Times , 1 Sept 2018, pages 31, 32 33

	<p>“And it is one on which we should all keep an open mind. Members of the lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender (LGBT) community in Fiji are our sons and daughters. “They are our own flesh and blood,” Prof Prasad said.</p> <p>“Recent changes mean that LGBT people are no longer discriminated against under the law. There is an increasing acceptance that this is right and fair. Discrimination of any kind is unfair and to be deplored. It breaks down, instead of building, our community,” he said.</p> <p>SODELPA leader Sitiveni Rabuka said the party was unequivocal in supporting the human rights of all the people of Fiji, however, it had no plans to change the definition of marriage as currently provided in the Marriage Act.</p> <p>“The clarity of God’s truth on this matter remains unchanged in spite of hermeneutical methods designed to justify homosexual behaviour. The Bible prohibits all kinds of sexual promiscuity — heterosexual as well as homosexual,” Mr. Rabuka said.</p> <p>“There is no scriptural support for endorsing sexual immorality (i.e., sexual activity outside the bond of heterosexual marriage) for anyone, no matter what his or her personal sexual feelings may be,” he said.</p> <p>Freedom Alliance party’s Jagath Karunaratne said the majority of the people who are opposing same-sex marriage were doing so based on the sexual interaction, claiming that it was wrong as per religious principles and based on accepted moral conduct.</p> <p>“The question must then be raised whether any emotional feelings and a relationship based on emotions between two people is also wrong. Our social discussion must focus more on this aspect and less on physical sexual conduct of two people,” he said.</p>
<p><b>8 Sept 2018</b></p>	<p><b>Social Welfare Scheme issue</b></p> <p><i>The Fiji Times</i> asked all registered political parties contesting the 2018 General Election: What is your party’s view on the state’s social welfare scheme (if any), would your party introduce to improve livelihood?<sup>6</sup></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• National Federation Party leader, Prof Biman Prasad – Pie in the sky theories</li> <li>• Fiji Labour Party leader, Mahendra Chaudhry – FLP focuses on people</li> <li>• Freedom Alliance Party leader, Jagath Karunaratne – Religious organisations vital</li> <li>• SODELPA leader, Sitiveni Rabuka – Aid for those who need it</li> <li>• Unity Fiji Party lender, Savenaca Narube - Unity Fiji promises to do it better</li> </ul>

<sup>6</sup> The Fiji Times , 8 Sept 2018, pages 31, 32 33

<p><b>15 Sept 2018</b></p>	<p><b>Governance issue</b></p> <p><i>The Fiji Times</i> asked all registered political parties contesting the 2018 General Election: What is your party's view on ensuring an open, transparent and accountable government?<sup>7</sup></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• National Federation Party leader, Prof Biman Prasad – Untint the windows</li> <li>• Freedom Alliance Party leader, Jagath Karunaratne – Total independence</li> <li>• SODELPA leader, Sitiveni Rabuka – Restoring transparency</li> <li>• Fiji Labour Party candidate, Aman Ravindra Singh – Lack of transparency</li> <li>• Unity Fiji Party lender, Savenaca Narube - Governance concerns party</li> </ul>
<p><b>22 Sept 2018</b></p>	<p><b>Civil Service Reform issue</b></p> <p><i>The Fiji Times</i> asked all registered political parties contesting the 2018 General Election: What do you think of the state's civil service reforms and what policies do you have for the Fijian civil service?<sup>8</sup></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Unity Party leader, Savenaca Narube – Conducive setting</li> <li>• Hope party leader, Tupou Draunidalo – Efficient civil service reform needed</li> <li>• Fiji Labour Party leader, Mahednra Chaudhry – Rights 'removed'</li> <li>• SODELPA leader, Sitiveni Rabuka – Poor civil service</li> <li>• National Federation Party leader, Prof Biman Prasad – A holistic approach</li> <li>• Freedom Alliance Party leader, Jagath Karunaratne – Localising ideas, policies</li> </ul>
<p><b>29 Sept 2018</b></p>	<p><b>National Unity issue</b></p> <p><i>The Fiji Times</i> asked all registered political parties contesting the 2018 General Election: What does Fiji need to do to achieve national unity?<sup>9</sup></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• National Federation Party leader, Prof Biman Prasad – Let people lead way</li> <li>• Hope party leader, Tupou Draunidalo – Fiji united on many thing</li> <li>• Fiji Labour Party candidate, Aman Ravindra Singh – Unity has to be nurtured</li> <li>• Unity Party leader, Savenaca Narube – Remove ethnic fears</li> </ul>

<sup>7</sup> The Fiji Times , 15 Sept 2018, pages 31, 32 33

<sup>8</sup> The Fiji Times , 22 Sept 2018, pages 31, 32 33

<sup>9</sup> The Fiji Times , 29 Sept 2018, pages 31, 32 33

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Freedom Alliance Party leader, Jagath Karunaratne – Fiji needs genuine leaders</li> </ul>
<p><b>4 Oct 2018</b></p>	<p><b>5 key issues</b></p> <p><i>The Fiji Times</i> asked all registered political parties contesting the 2018 General Election to list the top five issues they will base their election campaign on:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li> <p>FijiFirst leader Voreqe Bainimarama Just like in 2014, we will just campaign like the other political parties and how they are preparing for it, so we are looking forward to the elections.” The FijiFirst party leader hung up his phone when questioned on the five major issues his party would highlight as part of its campaign.”</p> </li> <li> <p>National Federation Party leader — Professor Biman Prasad High cost of living \$5 minimum wage rate VAT removal from 15 basic food items Implement a minimum guaranteed price of \$100 per tonne of cane for canegrowers Implement a new TELS policy by tertiary tuition free in the first year for degree students</p> </li> <li> <p>Freedom Alliance Party leader — Jagath Karunaratne Formation of a holding company – People’s Holdings Ltd (PHL) All investments under crown/native land to be structured under PHL All existing leases to be renegotiated on equitable participation Discourage leasing, encourage partnerships All administrative fees of TLTB to be subsidised for every LOU that forms a company and leases the land to their own company</p> </li> <li> <p>Unity Fiji leader — Savenaca Narube Build a nation not through fear but unity and promote ethnic tolerance Give people the freedom to speak without fear and not suppress them Bring every race together while embracing identities and culture If elected in Government, it will listen to the people and initiate a national program of building, understanding each other’s race in Fiji. Give people the freedom to talk about ethnic fears</p> </li> <li> <p>Fiji Labour Party parliamentary leader — Aman Ravindra-Singh Poor state of medical services and medical facilities in the count High food prices, high inflation rate and poverty Lack of decent and affordable housing and high numbers of squatters around Fiji High rate of unemployment, high levels of crime, low wages, better conditions and wages for workers an Labourers Respect for the rule of law, human rights and democracy and justice</p> </li> </ul> <p>*SODELPA and HOPE party did not respond to the question when this edition went to press</p>

	<a href="https://www.fijitimes.com/2018-election-2018-top-five-issues/">https://www.fijitimes.com/2018-election-2018-top-five-issues/</a>
<b>6 Oct 2018</b>	<p><b>Why vote for you?</b></p> <p><i>The Fiji Times</i> asked all registered political parties contesting the 2018 General Election: Why should voters vote for you or your candidate in this general election?<sup>10</sup></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Unity Party leader, Savenaca Narube – A collective vision’</li> <li>• Hope party leader, Tupou Draunidalo – Younger and fresher</li> <li>• SODELPA leader Sitiveni Rabuka – SODELPA to bring changes</li> <li>• Fiji Labour Party candidate, Aman Ravindra Singh – Courageous leadership</li> <li>• NFP leader Prof Biman Prasad – NFP’s commitment</li> </ul>
<b>13 Oct 2018</b>	<p><b>Economic Growth issue</b></p> <p><i>The Fiji Times</i> asked all registered political parties contesting the 2018 General Election: What is your assessment on the economy and what would your party do to raise economic growth?<sup>11</sup></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• NFP leader Prof Biman Prasad - Vision for the economy</li> <li>• Fiji Labour Party candidate, Aman Ravindra Singh – Strong economy key to national wellbeing</li> <li>• Unity Party leader, Savenaca Narube – Right political leadership important</li> </ul>
<b>20 Oct 2018</b>	<p><b>Race and Religion issue</b></p> <p><i>The Fiji Times</i> asked all registered political parties contesting the 2018 General Election: Should politicians use race and religion in their election campaign? <sup>12</sup></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• SODELPA leader Sitiveni Rabuka – No man is an island</li> <li>• Fiji Labour Party candidate, Aman Ravindra Singh – Serious race-based issues</li> <li>• Unity Party leader, Savenaca Narube – Party to build understanding</li> <li>• NFP leader Prof Biman Prasad - Power in our diversity</li> <li>• Freedom Alliance Party leader Jagath Karunaratne – Need open discussions</li> </ul>
<b>27 Oct 2018</b>	<p><b>Salaries of Prime Minister &amp; Cabinet Ministers</b></p> <p><i>The Fiji Times</i> asked all registered political parties contesting the 2018 General Election: What will be your party’s policies on the salaries of the Prime Minister and the Cabinet Ministers?<sup>13</sup></p>

<sup>10</sup> The Fiji Times, 6 Oct 2018, pages 31, 32 33

<sup>11</sup> The Fiji Times, 13 Oct 2018, pages 31, 32 33

<sup>12</sup> The Fiji Times, 20 Oct 2018, pages 31, 32 33

<sup>13</sup> The Fiji Times, 27 Oct 2018, pages 31, 32 33

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• NFP leader Prof Biman Prasad – Pay to be scrutinized</li> <li>• Fiji Labour Party candidate, Aman Ravindra Singh – Salary disparities</li> <li>• Freedom Alliance Party leader Jagath Karunaratne – Wage scales for parliamentarians</li> </ul>
<b>31 Oct 2018</b>	<p><b>Editorial Comment</b></p> <p><b>Those undecided voters</b></p> <p>However, you want to look at the first of the TebbuttTimes Poll results, one thing is certain, thoughts are flying, strategies are being discussed now and there is political manoeuvring taking place.</p> <p>It is pretty difficult to shrug aside the importance of the undecided voters, sitting at 22 per cent, in the greater scheme of things. Then there is the voter who has declined to answer sitting at 10 per cent. When combined, at 32 per cent, that is quite high for voters who have not stated where they are leaning.</p> <p>That is going to definitely attract attention. It's the base for all the political parties gearing up for the 2018 General Election. This is where attention will focus on strategies, and most importantly, the critical messages that must be effective over the next two weeks at least. The battle lines are drawn. A party is already suggesting this election will come down to becoming a "three-horse race".</p> <p>Another party is suggesting the signs were already out there, placing the undecided voter block on high plane. It insists though that the mood is way off that reserved for a national election.</p> <p>There will surely be many reasons for the huge undecided voter block. When we compare this with the lead-up to the 2014 election, undecided voters had dropped right down to 11 per cent. The challenge for the parties now is to understand the masses, get a feel of the pulse of the nation, and make the right calls. They will have to ask themselves what they can offer the undecided voter, and push this across clearly. It actually sets up a very interesting scenario.</p> <p>We should expect an intense campaign period leading up to the elections. There will naturally be differences in the way we do things, right up to the values we espouse. What will bring joy to one may not necessarily be so for another. What may be considered the right thing to do by one may not be so for some.</p> <p>But that is why the elections process is a special event. It allows you the voter to express yourself albeit in a process that is designed to ensure you alone know the number you selected on the ballot paper. We make no bones about our commitment to aiding in the process that will culminate in you the voter fulfilling your duty for the nation.</p>

	<p>Aside from other key factors, part of the challenge for the voter is to understand the messages coming out of the party camps, ask questions, consider manifestos and be comfortable with explanations. Fred Wesley</p>
<b>3 Nov 2018</b>	<p><b>Job creation issue</b></p> <p><i>The Fiji Times</i> asked all registered political parties contesting the 2018 General Election: How will your party create job opportunities for Fijians?<sup>14</sup></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• NFP leader Prof Biman Prasad – Opportunities to grow</li> <li>• Unity Party leader, Savenaca Narube – Party to focus on abundant resources</li> <li>• Fiji Labour Party candidate, Aman Ravindra Singh – Unemployment a concern for Labour</li> </ul> <p>Related stories</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• SODELPA prepares for worst-case scenario – Back-up plan</li> <li>• Make votes count, Ro Teimuu urges voter</li> <li>• Party tells supporters to talk to people</li> <li>• NFP boasts of family-friendly policies</li> <li>• FLP promises to hold municipal election</li> <li>• Unity Fiji aims to serve people</li> <li>• About 30 per cent population in poverty</li> <li>• Sugar issue raised during party rally</li> <li>• FLP focuses on real issues</li> </ul>
<b>10 Nov 2018</b>	<p><b>Why Vote for you and your party?</b></p> <p><i>The Fiji Times</i> asked all registered political parties contesting the 2018 General Election: Why should Fijians vote for you and your party?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• NFP leader Prof Biman Prasad – Fresh leadership</li> <li>• Fiji Labour Party candidate, Aman Ravindra Singh – Labour’s package</li> <li>• SODELPA leader Sitiveni Rabuka – Leadership that listens</li> <li>• Unity Party leader, Savenaca Narube – We will bring peace</li> </ul> <p>Related stories</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ghai hits out at PM</li> <li>• Rabuka meets Ba chief</li> <li>• Candidate claims Bainimarama is Fiji’s messiah</li> <li>• Nothing sinister about 48-hour blackout: Ashwin Raj</li> <li>• Pre-polling system easy, say villagers</li> </ul>

<sup>14</sup> The Fiji Times, 3 Nov 2018, pages 31, 32 33

# Opinion – Letters to the Editor

Date	Letters to the Editor	Comment
2 Aug 2018	<p><b>Speaker role</b> I wish either Lenora Qereqeretabua or Lynda Tabuya become our next parliament speaker. Sukha Singh, Labasa.</p>	Next Speaker of the House
4 Aug 2018	<p><b>Kidney dialysis</b> I would like to inform the A-G that no one wants the Government to provide the kidney dialysis for free, but everyone wants it to be affordable. If a labourer who earns \$2.70 an hour to a businessman earning millions is able to afford it, I would say kudos to the Government. If not, I would say, is the opposition ready? Dellas Singh Valebasoga, Labasa</p>	Critical of Government
	<p><b>Investigation</b> For starters how can Government allow investors into the country to set up shops without employing one local person? I believe the majority of the work being carried out by these Korean labourers can easily be done by locals. What are we trying to achieve here? Very deceiving indeed! Simon Hazelman Savusavu</p>	Use locals to do the job
7 Aug 2018	<p><b>Infrastructure developments</b></p> <p>MORE than 10 years now, I believe the Tailevu North area is still being neglected of infrastructure developments to increase economic activities.</p> <p>The Dawasamu road that runs along the coastline is still dusty and causes a lot of nuisance to villagers, schoolchildren and the few business enterprises that have taken aboard Government's initiative to boost employment in rural communities.</p> <p>The Gold Rock Quarry, Sunshine Villas, Natalaira Eco Resort, Dawasamu Shopping Centre, Dalomo Bay Resort, Takalana Bay Resort, Gold Rock Brick Factory are just some of the daily victims of dust nuisance and sufferers of water woes which the Water Authority and Fiji Roads Authority must prioritise and address immediately in their work program.</p> <p>Otherwise I believe it will be another lip service by the government of the day as promised by previous administrations. Is someone listening?</p> <p>ISIMELI CERELALA, Tailevu North</p>	Government promise
	<p><b>Minimum wage</b></p>	Critical of AG

	<p>Whenever Aiyaz Sayed-Khaiyum says that an issue is becoming “politicised”, I believe that means only that he is having trouble explaining his version of the facts.</p> <p>He seems to have trouble remembering that he too is a politician.</p> <p>Mr. Sayed-Khaiyum keeps telling us that the economy is doing well and unemployment is low. If that is true, by the ordinary laws of economics, wages should be going up.</p> <p>Because if what Mr. Sayed-Khaiyum says is true, there is a shortage of workers and employers need to pay good wages to attract them.</p> <p>Why, then, can he not increase the minimum wage to a decent level?</p> <p>Why, then, does he say that the minimum wage can only be grown in a manner “conducive to the economy”?</p> <p>What is the point of growing the economy if the poorest workers in the country cannot share in that growth?</p> <p>Something is not adding up.</p> <p>I wonder if it is Mr. Sayed-Khaiyum’s economic management.</p> <p>Maybe he needs to take off that blindfold!</p> <p>Pio Tikoduadua, NFP president</p>	
	<p><b>Twisted minds</b></p> <p>CAN authorities swiftly identify and apprehend those sick and twisted individuals who happily uploaded the gruesome Nabou tragedy episode on Facebook? Such shameful practices should never be condoned.</p> <p>It’s sickening to the core. Banning social media sites could be another possibility to dwell on.</p> <p>NISHANT SINGH, Lautoka.</p>	Ban social media
	<p><b>Doing the job</b></p> <p>I FIND it rather odd that when doing public duties only a few of the ministers get to do the job. Here I mean like being present at sporting occasions and presenting prizes.</p> <p>We have an assistant Minister for Sports; he is hardly ever seen doing this.</p> <p>ALLEN LOCKINGTON, Kava Place, Waiyavi</p>	Critical of Government Minister

<p><b>8 Aug 2018</b></p>	<p><b>Taxi permit lottery</b>  LTA board chairman Vijay Maharaj has been quoted (FT 07/08) as saying that “the taxi permit barrel draw was the most transparent process”. OK sure, but I believe people still managed to cheat the system and even the JPs and other people who have the authority who may have signed the declarations. I believe cheating happened with the HOMES and FARMS-CARE assistance and now the taxi lottery. Can someone stand up and take responsibility and say it was my fault? What other thing that the Government will soon be giving it that will be subject to thieving by the people? May I ask are these things being rushed and thus not theftproof? How much is wasted on investigations into the issues? ALLEN LOCKINGTON,  Kava Place, Waiyavi, Lautoka</p> <p><b>Minimum wage</b>  I agreed with Mr. Tikoduadua (FT 07/08) on the above, when he asked, “Why can he not increase the minimum wages to a decent level?” I believe if you walk down the street today, you’re likely to pass a half dozen construction sites advertising future luxury apartments, houses for rent starting at the low price of \$1000 per month. With the current minimum wages, who will afford such a thing? Expect an increase in squatters in Fiji. Panapasa Nayabakoro, Bryce St, Raiwaqa, Suva</p>	<p>Critical of Government assistance</p>
	<p><b>Politicising wage rates</b></p> <p>When the PM’s travel allowance was increased to \$3000 a day, no politics was involved. When workers’ cry for increase of the minimum wage, it immediately becomes political! DAN URAI, Lautoka.</p>	<p>PM’s allowance</p>
<p><b>9 Aug 2018</b></p>	<p><b>Politicians in the house</b></p> <p>Lately in the news media we hear, read and watch Prime Minister Voreqe Bainimarama open government projects in villages and communities and together with a popular statement like the one we read in the FT 08/08, “PM takes a swipe at the opposition”. In most places where he would be invited to be chief guest on special occasions, he would somehow find a way to attack the opposition by saying that they are politicising issues and it sounds as if the only politicians in the House of Representatives are the members of the Opposition.</p>	<p>PM’s comment on opposition politicians</p>

	<p>He further confirms that, “this is what makes people so frustrated and tired with politicians”. My simple question as a concerned citizen is: Aren’t the Prime Minister and other FijiFirst ministers politicians as well? If not, I believe they might be in the wrong house. Kositativo Tikomaibolatagane, Vuninokonoko Rd, Navua</p>	
	<p><b>Minimum wages</b></p> <p>The emotions expressed in this newspaper (FT 07/08) by Pio Tikoduadua, the president of NFP in regards to the above topic and similarly by NFP leader Professor Biman Prasad is sad and worrying. I believe it shows that the poor workers of this country are being paid low wage rates hardly commensurate with decent living and the inequalities are further exacerbated. What can we do when some people earn \$3000/day allowance while workers slog it out? Dan Urai’s letter on the same is relevant (FT08/08). Something is wrong! Amenatave Yaconisau, Palm Drive, Delainavesi</p>	<p>Who gets paid \$3,000 allowance per day compared to the minimum wage rate</p>
	<p><b>NFP candidates</b></p> <p>I thank Parmendra Sharma of Brisbane, Australia for his article in The Fiji Times (04/08) on the above title. I also travelled to Ba on Friday, July 27 for a family visit. While being that side for a few days I decided to attend the NFP rally at the A.D. Patel complex on Saturday, July 28.</p> <p>Here I would like to commend the Ba branch of NFP for their efforts to host an event of this magnitude. The way they organised breakfast, lunch and seating arrangements for such a large audience is commendable. The credit should go to Davendra Naidu and his team. The program was slightly delayed because of the late arrival of guests from far and wide. Parmendra Sharma correctly commented on the abilities of Lenora Qereqeretabua. As soon as she took the stage to welcome everyone in English and iTaukei languages, there was no end to loud cheers and clapping. I believe she is quite popular and her delivery was perfect. Besides the four heavyweights — leader Professor Biman Prasad, president Pio Tikoduadua, guest speakers Krishna Dutt and lawyer Richard Naidu — the other four candidates in Lenora Qereqeretabua, Riddhi Damodar, Seni Nabou and the young youth leader Apenisa were marvellous. Riddhi delivered in the Hindi language and she reminded me of the late Irene Jai Narayan when she entered politics in 1966.</p>	<p>NFP candidates praised</p>

	<p>Riddhi was very forceful and to the point. Seni Nabou's contribution was fantastic and she covered quite valuable points in her speech. A very fluent and eloquent speaker. Now when I compare these young speakers in the Ba rally with so many of our current sitting members in Parliament, I believe there is a big gap. I believe most of our sitting MPs read prepared speeches word by word and sound so boring. I always watch live sessions, therefore according to my taste, there is a vast difference. Further to my above views I strongly recommend that everyone should read page 11 of The Fiji Times (06/08). I read this in the plane while travelling from Nadi to Sydney. A beautiful piece by Seni Nabou on our environment. VIJAY MAHARAJ Sydney, Australia</p>	
<b>13 Aug 2018</b>	<p><b>One job</b></p> <p>I believe the A-G is not the right man to advise a students' association president to maintain only one job. Dan Urai, Lautoka.</p>	Critical of AG's advice
<b>15 Aug 2018</b>	<p><b>Calling ministers</b></p> <p>After reading honourable Semi T. Koroilavesau's letter in the FT 11/8 regarding calling his mobile phone to find out what happens to the confiscated fish, cannot go unchallenged. I believe when one calls government officials, 95 per cent of them hardly answer. Almost all don't even reply to emails. I believe the same can be said about most government bodies.</p> <p>Once a letter is written in The Fiji Times, most things get done and even the letter writer receives a phone call and 99 per cent of the time the problems are solved.</p> <p>It's about time government officials and ministers realise that we are not against them when we complain, but the people need things done and when nobody listens, the Letters to the Editor column does the work. Narayan Reddy, Lautoka.</p>	Government bodies don't answer phone calls
	<p><b>On merit</b></p> <p>THE more the A-G confirms that the Bainimarama Government appoints people on merit, the less I believe him, particularly when he says there is no shred of evidence to suggest otherwise. DAN URAI, Lautoka.</p>	Critical of AG , in terms of appointments
	<p><b>That perception</b></p>	Public perception about Muslims running the country

	I AGREE with Attorney-General Aiyaz Sayed-Khaiyum's statement that "Muslims don't run the country" (FT 14/8). I wonder why there is that lingering public perception in the post 2006 coup Fiji. RAJEND NAIDU, Sydney, Australia	
<b>16 Aug 2018</b>	<b>Attitude issue</b> I believe one reason voters change their mind about politicians is politicians' attitude. Dan Urai, Lautoka.	Politicians 'attitude
<b>17 Aug 2018</b>	<b>Taxi permits</b>  What happened to the screening process which is normally done before when issuing taxi permits and other business licences? I believe a barrel draw to determine those to be issued with taxi permits is the biggest joke ever. I believe transparency and accountability does not mean a barrel draw and cannot be determined only by the barrel. I believe it would have been better to call all those who qualified to be permit holders to come forward and have a game of 'sapui' (a hand game — rock, scissors, paper) and the winner be given the permit. Now I can see why it is often said when you try to please everybody you please nobody. Pita Soroaqali, Nadarivatu	Why have a barrel draw of taxi permits?
	<b>Wage battle</b>  I believe the Fijian economy has doubled in size in the past 10 years and economic forecast is to grow above 3 per cent as well. When will the wages grow for the workers who strive daily to bring about this change? How many more years of waiting is forecast for the workers of this country to rise above the minimum wage rate set at \$2.68 per hour? I believe not all workers are receiving \$2.68 per hour and there are many workers who are still paid \$2.68 or less per hour. I believe Fiji is now witnessing a declining trend in unemployment, opportunities are created for more jobs, compulsory savings membership is increasing but what is being done to increase the minimum wage rate? If the ruling government cannot increase the minimum wage to \$5 an hour as one of the political party has outlined to do so if they come into power, then at least the FijiFirst government should consider an increase from \$2.68 to \$3.50 or even \$3.75.	FijiFirst Government should raise \$0.82 in minimum wage rate

	<p>Minimum wage earners or those workers who are paid less than the minimum wage amount also deserve to enjoy, celebrate the success of the Fijian economic growth, after all workers are striving for the growth of this country.</p> <p>I believe the FijiFirst government can at least give a raise of \$0.82 in minimum wage rate, taking the minimum wage rate level to \$3.50 this year, gradually adding on as Fiji advances.</p> <p>Gulsher Ali, Lautok</p>	
	<p><b>Political support</b></p> <p>Is it a crime for someone to openly support a political party? Should it be done surreptitiously?</p> <p>Ravind Chandra Naidu Tuatua Branch Rd, Labasa</p>	Display of political support
18 Aug 2018	<p><b>Government help</b></p> <p>I would just like to ask all the parties contesting the elections against the FijiFirst party if they will continue with the Micro and Small Business Grant scheme, cane farm assistance and all the other initiatives provided by the FijiFirst Government?</p> <p>Sukha Singh, Labasa</p>	FijiFirst Government initiatives will other political parties
	<p><b>Access to justice</b></p> <p>In his article recently published in The Fiji Times, Richard Naidu emphasised the lack of accessibility to the people, including lawyers of the updated laws of Fiji because of the high price of purchasing a set, and the fact that it is not accessible online via a website. That Government and the Attorney-General in particular had not taken any steps to address the concerns and it has serious implications for Fijians. Mr. Naidu correctly said that it amounts to a denial of access to justice.</p> <p>I agree.</p> <p>In fact, the revision of the laws which are now published in the expensive red folders in loose leaf, has its origins in the Australia/Fiji Governments' Access To Justice Program which was initiated in 2004/2005 for a term of three years.</p> <p>The program had as components a Judicial Integrity and Independence Program, Legal Access Program and Legal Resources Program.</p> <p>They were abruptly stopped after the December 2006 political crisis.</p> <p>It is important that in a democracy, that the government equip the people with the ability to seek and obtain a remedy through formal and informal</p>	Critical of AG

	<p>institutions of justice, and in conformity with human rights standards.</p> <p>This means that the people are being treated fairly according to the law, and if not the case, they are able to get redress as appropriate.</p> <p>This does not mean just access to lawyers and courts, it also means access to Ombudsman, advice agencies and the police.</p> <p>Ooops!</p> <p>What has become of the Ombudsman’s Office?</p> <p>Access to justice is a basic principle of the rule of law. In its absence, people are not able to have their voices heard, exercise their rights, challenge discrimination or hold decision making accountable. For after all, what is the value or worth of the rights conferred under chapter 2 of the 2013 constitution if the people are not equipped to exercise them or seek redress when their rights are denied?</p> <p>Alipate Qetaki, Suva</p>	
<b>19 Aug 2018</b>	<p><b>Taxi permits</b></p> <p>I have received visitation from new taxi permit winners in Lautoka seeking advice on how to buy a car when struggling to feed themselves.</p> <p>Dan Urai, Lautoka</p>	Effect of barrel draw
	<p><b>Concrete evidence</b></p> <p>Political parties should stop the accusations against the Elections Commission immediately unless they come up with concrete evidence of their claims. Personally I have no doubt that the 2014 elections were free and fair.</p> <p>All I would ask the Electoral Commission to do is ensure that the international election observers are drawn from those countries that conduct credible elections themselves.</p> <p>This would rule out most other Pacific nations, together with most Asian and African nations. Observers should be drawn from Australia, NZ, EU countries, and other states that can conclusively prove their elections are above board.</p> <p>If the observers are drawn from dubious countries then our election’s credibility will be in doubt.</p> <p>Allan Loosley, Tavua</p>	Election credibility
<b>20 Aug 2018</b>	<p><b>Not an option</b></p> <p>I love the words spoken by SODELPA leader Sitiveni Rabuka, saying that “surrender is not an option” in working hard to make Fiji free. For Victorians who</p>	Forming a Coalition

	I believe Fiji is fast descending into “either you are with us or against us” paranoia. The propaganda minister of Nazi Germany Joseph Goebbels once aptly remarked “accuse the other party of that which you are guilty”. Aman Nath, Nadi	
<b>21 July 2018</b>	<p><b>Free and fair</b></p> <p>The Fiji Times (17/08) drew attention to political parties questioning the credibility of Electoral Commission (EC) and Fijian Election Office (FEO). Such questions will be somewhat expected as parties start warming up for the 2018 elections. But EC and FEO should ask themselves whether or not they have implemented the recommendations made by Multinational Observer Group (MOG) to improve this coming 2018 election. I believe one recommendation was that division of responsibilities between the EC and the FEO should be clarified. The concern was highlighted when the Fiji Court of Appeal in November 2016 declared the Supervisor of Elections failed to obey the mandatory direction of the EC under the Electoral Decree in 2014 in finalising the list of candidates for that election. We now know that the 2014 EC, which undertook its responsibilities with admirable competency and with limited resources, was not re-appointed. I believe the situation went from bad to worse when in February 2017, Parliament passed an amendment giving the Supervisor of Elections many of the policies and rule-making powers of the EC. I believe this change was passed by a FijiFirst majority in Parliament despite the MOG Report in 2014, which had critically pointed out this concern and the need for action. Under the Fiji Constitution 2013, “Every citizen has the right to free, fair and regular elections”. I believe this right can be fulfilled in the next election if MOG’s recommendations including the division of responsibilities between EC and FEO are clarified. Rev Akuila Yabaki, Suva</p>	Clarify the division of responsibilities between EC and FEO
<b>23 Aug 2018</b>	<p><b>Condition of roads</b></p> <p>I drove on these two roads, and ask the question, “what is the difference between Baka Drive and Nadomumai Rd?” Vinaka Fiji Roads Authority! SILIVARIO H. MALO, Caubati, Nasinu</p>	Road condition
	<p><b>Issue of roles</b></p> <p>It’s high time Mohammed Saneem acts like a civil servant and stops acting like a politician. Dan Urai, Lautoka</p>	SOE in question

<p><b>24 Aug 2018</b></p>	<p><b>Minimum wages</b>  There is a lot of talk regarding minimum wage for workers.  Not long ago when I was still employed, no one bothered to look at our grievances. When election time comes around, we hear all sorts of talk about raising the standard of living for the poor.  During the 1980s through to the 1990s and beyond, I believe many workers were exploited by employers. Throughout my working life with various companies, I have never earned more than \$60 a week. Even with this meagre income I was able to educate my children through to university.  It was a struggle. There was no assistance with school expenses, bus fares, etc. I and many others like me have exhausted all our FNPF etc., for our children's future.  With the current government's assistance and all sorts of opportunities available, people still complain.  I believe the minimum wage should be fixed so that it justifies the kind of work one does. Enforcing the law justly so that employers do pay up.  Ajay Singh, Natabua, Lautoka</p>	
<p><b>25 Aug 2018</b></p>	<p><b>Fishy question</b>  Now that the Minister for Fisheries is on record saying that the confiscated kawakawa and donu would be given to the old peoples' homes for their lunch and dinner, I believe the media, especially <i>The Fiji Times</i>, must be invited to cover the good gesture. After all, the fishy news is for public consumption!  Arun Prasad Dilkusha, Nausori</p>	<p>Minister for Fisheries should invite media in public interest</p>
<p><b>27 Aug 2018</b></p>	<p><b>Fijian divisions</b>  THE headline in the other paper of September 26, 2018 ("No more division here"), is as much a wish for the current government as it is for all Fijians. I believe the truth is, we are as further apart as we ever could be in all of Fiji's history. And to tarnish and disrespect the great Nelson Mandela's legacy is a new low for the current government. That they burned the constitution which included Mandela's ethics of tolerance, reconciliation and kindness by the constitution expert Yash Ghai is something we all remember. They have enforced upon the citizens of Fiji a constitution which to this day has special protective conditions for a section of Fijians. And yet we talk about equality! As we watch this spiel of 'no divisions in Fiji', being shared with an almost empty United Nations auditorium, it is not a surprise that</p>	<p>Yash Gahai's Constitution praised</p>

	<p>even the countries in the United Nations assembly think otherwise. All they can think of is when will we have a Fiji that is truthfully the way the world should be? Epeli Rabua Tamavua, Suva</p>	
	<p><b>Civil service reforms</b></p> <p>It's interesting to read the views of political party leaders regarding their thoughts and solutions on the States' civil service reforms (FT 22/09). As an ordinary citizen who regularly requires government services, I would also like to state my thoughts! Firstly, the fact remains that we have never ever had an efficient reliant civil service since we became an independent sovereign state in 1970. While some civil servants must be commended, the majority are ineffective and a downfall to the way in which government has been operating. Any government or ruling party is only as good as the quality of its civil servants! We can give all the excuses under the sun for our lacklustre service since 1970 but the problem is real and the solution is simple. Our level of quality is not only deficient but insufficient. We think we know everything but our actions show otherwise. Instead of being servants to the nation, I believe the majority of civil servants have taken the tendency of being served first before declaring their service. We simply don't cut into it! Current leadership is nothing more than positions and titles. We require good quality leadership throughout our civil service divisions and departments. We need people with unquestionable integrity, honesty and accountability, confidence, commitment with a passion to serve, and be good communicators who have the ability to make the right decisions. Academic qualifications does not necessarily qualify one as a good leader, and neither does practical experience. A good leader is one with good character who leads by example and whose leadership is defined by results and not attributes. There are people with such great characters among us and government simply needs to identify these individuals and urgently make the necessary changes. The current reformation of the civil service by the current administration is not only too casual but is hardly making a progressive difference. Get those who can do the job and kick out those who cannot! Simple! Simon Hazelman Rava Estate, Savusavu</p>	<p>Quality of the current public service and that the reforms are not making a progressive change in government service-delivery</p>
	<p><b>Mandela and Fiji</b></p>	<p>Fiji's political calamities should not be compared with South</p>

	<p>INTERESTING to read an article on The Fiji Times (26/09) by Aqela Susu titled ‘Inspiration to all’, where the Prime Minister Voreqe Bainimarama pays tribute to Mandela saying that the life of Mandela had been an inspiration to Fijians and everyone who wished to live in a world of peace, tolerance and understanding. While on one hand I agree with the PM on the above statement, however, on the other hand I am baffled with the comparison he made saying “Like South Africa, Fiji and the Fijian people suffered for decades under a political culture that fostered ethnic division, promoted hatred and fostered disunity between communities.” I have lived in Fiji long enough to boldly say that never have Fiji and the Fijians experienced what South Africa and its people encountered during the era of apartheid I know that Fiji has gone through some difficult past regarding its political culture, but nowhere closer to that of what South Africa and its people experienced, therefore, how then can he compare South Africa with Fiji in terms of our political situations in the past? I sincerely believe comparing Fiji with South Africa is uncalled for, however, that does not mean that we do not have anything to learn from the great man Mandela and the great sacrifice he made that brought an end to apartheid in South Africa.</p> <p>KOSITATINO TIKOMAIBOLATAGANE Vuninokonoko Rd, Navua</p>	<p>African struggles – reacting to PM’s comments</p>
<p><b>28 Aug 2018</b></p>	<p><b>Noise issue</b></p> <p>A lot of comments have been raised by the public who live in areas where public outreaches have been conducted, especially about the deafening noise levels and long hours of the programs.</p> <p>The latest from one P. Kailoa (FT 26/8), who also lives in my area in Samabula, said a mouthful of the increasing noise pollution associated with groups given permits to do public evangelism or outreach preaching programs.</p> <p>Don’t get me wrong, as a Christian I fully support all forms of reaching out to the masses in the Gospel Commission, but this should be conducted within the confines of the law of the land and appreciating the right to privacy of all Fijians.</p> <p>I must commend and praise the church group that conducted a three-day preaching outreach at Lakeba St on Wednesday to Friday last week.</p> <p>They started at about 6pm, their music and song was lively and the message uplifting Jesus Christ as our</p>	<p>Noise pollution with religious outreach programs</p>

	<p>only hope and solution to all the discouragement of life, touched the heart.</p> <p>I believe no one in Lakeba St, Samabula complained as it all ended by 8pm.</p> <p>Maybe all outreach groups should learn from this group and limit their program to just two hours max at night, in line with their approved permits.</p> <p>Savenaca Vakaliwaliwa, Suva</p>	
	<p><b>Fijian government</b></p> <p>It was so nice for the Minister for Women to say “the Fijian Government” on Fiji One TV. Whatever party wins the next election should always call it the Fijian Government.</p> <p>Sukha Singh, Labasa</p>	National Identity – Fijian
	<p><b>New immigrants</b></p> <p>It is rather rude and disrespectful how new immigrants who have settled here in Savusavu vent their frustrations on how locals live and conduct their lives.</p> <p>Amazing how these people can just come in, buy land, build their house, and think that everything around them needs to be the way they want.</p> <p>If you don’t like the way in which locals live their lives then you should leave and go find another place or country which conforms to your liking.</p> <p>Unbelievable!</p> <p>Simon Hazelman, Savusavu</p>	Writer is critical of immigrants settled in Savusavu
<b>29 Aug 2018</b>	<p><b>Writ of elections</b></p> <p>When will they announce the writ of elections? Why are they keeping everyone in suspense, and how will they receive the outcome of people’s choice?</p> <p>Dan Urai, Lautoka</p>	When is Fiji going to polls
<b>30 Aug 2018</b>	<p><b>Rising problems</b></p> <p>The Grace Road tale, the escalating meth plague, the prevailing drought, the mystery of the confiscated fish, the Vunato blaze, the election suspense, the incomplete Lautoka aquatic centre and now Parliament will convene on Friday to decide the fate of the current Head of State (FT Online 29/08). Fiji certainly has got her plate full. Nishant Singh, Lautoka</p>	National issues affecting Fiji
<b>31 Aug 2018</b>	<p><b>Presidential issue</b></p> <p>How can I put this very politely?</p> <p>How come the parliamentary sitting for the nomination for the president of Fiji was only</p>	Transparency in the appointment of the President

	<p>revealed to the opposition two days before the sitting?  Why was it done like this? Is the president's position a trivial matter that those who are supposed to contribute are given a short notice?  Why does it have to happen like this?  What happened to transparency and decency?  And we're all waiting for the date for the elections, will it be suddenly revealed to the populace one day before the elections?  Or may I say very politely is there fear somewhere?  Allen Lockington, Kava Place, Waiyavi, Lautoka</p> <p><b>Appointment of President</b></p> <p>PARLIAMENT will be sitting today to appoint our President. I have a feeling that Jioji Konrote will be chosen to serve as President for one more term. All the best to the Members of Parliament who will make the decision this morning! God bless my beloved Fiji!  RAJNESH ISHWAR LINGAM, Nadawa, Nasinu</p>	
	<p><b>Qualification need</b></p> <p>I refer to The Fiji Times report 'A-G: Very few civil servants with PhD qualifications' (FT 30/8).  From my own experience in the Fiji public service for more than two decades I believe having PhDs and MAs might be a necessary but not sufficient factor in determining effective and progressive national outcomes.  Many demonstrate an inability to think outside the conventional civil service box frame despite their higher qualifications.  Indeed this is not a problem specific to the Fiji civil service. (Ask some university academics how many useless PhD people they have in their midst!)  See Susan George books especially Faith and Credit: The World Bank's Secular Empire for an elaboration on how over qualified people parked in international financial and developmental institutions routinely failed to deliver appropriate policy outcomes.  Rajend Naidu, Sydney, Australia</p>	<p>PhDs and Mas not necessary when it comes to service delivery by public servants</p>
<p><b>1 Sept 2018</b></p>	<p><b>Plastic levy</b></p> <p>How about the plastic levy of 20 cents be dropped in a bin in every supermarket and shop and be diverted to the poor and needy families?</p>	<p>Government levy</p>

	<p>We may get some sort of blessings in that way rather than be a sinner in cursing and swearing at the ever increasing levy. Just a thought though!</p> <p>Pita Soroaqali Nadarivatu</p>	
	<p><b>Running engines while parked</b></p> <p>At about midday today (Tuesday 28.8) as I walked past the Nakasi Health Centre to the shop I noticed a white twin cab (I have the registration details) parked outside the health centre with the engine running.</p> <p>I had walked about 50 metres down the road and realised I should go and tell the driver to turn off the engine as I had come across this vehicle on numerous occasions doing the same.</p> <p>I returned and confronted the driver about why the engine was running while the vehicle was parked? His reply was “the engine is running because I turned the engine on”.</p> <p>I told him that he was wasting taxpayers’ money by keeping the engine running while the vehicle was parked and that he was contributing to the effects of climate change with the fumes being pumped out of the exhaust into the environment.</p> <p>His reply was “why do you care, you just mind your own business, I am waiting for an officer in the health centre”. I told him that I would write to the minister to report this and he just said, “you go ahead and report what you want to report”.</p> <p>He immediately turned the engine off and jumped out of the vehicle when he saw me walk to the front of the vehicle and pretended to take the picture of the number plate from my \$39 phone which had no camera.</p> <p>To Rosy Akbar, the Minister for Health if you ever get to read this letter, please inform your drivers to turn the engines off on their vehicles if it is parked. Your government vehicle drivers have a habit of keeping the engines running on their vehicles while parked outside the Nakasi Health Centre.</p> <p>Seru Rokosuka Nakasi Road</p>	Use of Government vehicle
2 Sept 2018	<p><b>Cutting back</b></p> <p>Don’t order us to cut down on our showers. Order people to not cut down trees.</p> <p>Baka, mangrove or any. COP23 and all ... ha!</p> <p>Manoj Lal Patel Drasa Avenue, Lautoka</p>	Critical of WAF
	<p><b>Parliament saga</b></p>	Parliament walkout

	<p>Personally, I'm not in favour of walkouts. One is representing, therefore, be present, voice concerns for the record, stand the ground, declare stand by abstaining the vote, never walk out. If a member, I voted for ever walked out, they will surely hear from me directly and/or lose my vote. Nigel Fiu Owls Perch, Lautoka</p>	<p>Voter expresses concern about SODELPA walkout</p>
<p><b>3 Sept 2018</b></p>	<p><b>Walkout mentality</b></p> <p>A person or group who begins to nurture a spirit or mentality of walking out when the going gets tough, will be called a loser or a bunch of losers by many of us! I believe the SODELPA MPs' walkout from the Parliament special sitting to appoint the President is a disgrace and disrespectful, especially when the Opposition NFP MPs did not walk out with them. The general election is expected to be announced soon, with the re-appointment of our President and I believe the SODELPA MPs should have stood their ground, present their case and show their supporters that despite being outnumbered, they will keep fighting to the end! With the Government majority in Parliament, we all know that everything discussed or voted in Parliament will go their way. We are told that the President is allowed by law to serve another three years and I believe all Fijians agree that his excellency has done an excellent job as reported in the dailies. From the SODELPA MPs' walkout, one can assume that they disagree with the Government, the NFP MPs and the majority of Fijians in the re-appointment of our President. SAVENACA VAKALIWALIWA, Suva.</p>	<p>Voter expresses concern about SODELPA walkout</p>
	<p><b>Waste of public funds</b></p> <p>THOUSANDS of litres of water are carted by trucks on a weekly basis to the residents of Koronubu and Namau in Ba at a huge cost. I believe it will be more cost effective if the reservoir and broken pipelines are repaired to restore the supply in these areas. It will save unnecessary wastage of public funds, which can be utilised for a more needy purpose or kept aside for a rainy day. Meanwhile, the reservoir is overflowing. What a waste of scarce resource. I urge the authorities concerned to please look into this. SELWA NANDAN, Lautoka.</p>	<p>Unnecessary wastage of public funds</p>
	<p><b>Baka trees</b></p> <p>Navua and Pacific Harbour are touted as two of the swankiest neighbourhoods to buy property. And now one of their famous landmarks being the matured baka trees are being cut down for farm development. Why cut trees and grow crops? Just trim them and our arborists should know how. We</p>	<p>Concerns expressed over the cutting of the baka tree</p>

	<p>need to develop a green program to make us a garden nation. Trees help fight climate change and provide oxygen and cools the air. They mop up carbon-dioxide and other greenhouse gases from the air which cools the earth. A mature canopy tree absorbs carbon and releases oxygen to sustain human beings! Let us not destroy nature as nature will one day destroy us. Param Singh, Navua.</p>	
4 Sept 2018	<p><b>Our President</b>  A LOT of attention, at least in some circles, has been drawn to Section 84 of the 2013 Constitution which deals with the appointment of our President. Subsections one through to five of that section (84) all deals with how he/she (President) is appointed. I believe there is nothing on how those who think there is something wrong with the appointment, can seek redress.  Your newspaper on Saturday September 1, in the spread on pages two and three, had Ro Teimumu Kepa saying the “illegality” of the appointment could have an (adverse) impact on our general election that should be held sometime this year.  If that is true, we should really sort this out before we carry out our most important civic duty, choosing our national political leaders for the next four years.  SAILOSI BATIRATU, Nadawa, Nasinu</p>	<p>Presidential appointment</p>
	<p><b>Election and promises</b>  In response to Akuila D Yabaki (FT 3/8), my point in mentioning Paul’s first and second missionary journeys was that he went back to the places he had already visited.  In Acts 15:36, Then after some days Paul said to Barnabas, “Let us now go back and visit our brethren in every city where we have preached the word of the Lord, and see how they are doing.”  The context of my letter was the upcoming 2018 General Election and I believe that great leaders and good governments take time to go out to the people, especially those in remote areas to listen to their plight and meet their needs.  How many political parties and MPs have visited the areas where they campaigned in 2014 more than once, during the past four years?  Voters know very well that some leaders only see them before the election and after they get elected, they forget about all their promises and the people who voted for them.  Our PM is getting thumbs up from Fijians in all the 14 provinces of Fiji because he and his team made promises, acted on its promises and before the</p>	<p>Voter asks this question:  How many political parties and MPs have visited the areas where they campaigned in 2014 more than once, during the past four years</p>

	<p>election, just like Paul, visit the people again “to see how they are doing”.</p> <p>I would not be surprised if a FijiFirst tsunami strikes again in 2018.</p> <p>Savenaca Vakaliwaliwa, Suva</p>	
	<p><b>Election time</b></p> <p>We know there is no more Parliament sitting, we know the current Parliament expires on or about October 6. What we don’t know is when will be the next election.</p> <p>I believe the reason is we still live with old rules out of the colonial days. I believe the British system of giving the Prime Minister the prerogative to set the date for an election is a back door to call for a snap election when things don’t go according to plan.</p> <p>However, why can’t we have a law which says elections are the next Sunday after Parliament’s four years are over?</p> <p>Hans B. Boernke, Savusavu</p>	<p>PM’s prerogative to decide on Election date</p>
	<p><b>Listening to the news</b></p> <p>I was listening to the news from one radio stations which reported what Alisi Rakukawaqa said in one of the forums at USP, that the abolition of the Fiji Council of Chiefs would enhance the women’s right and youth rights to be able to contest the President’s position to be the country’s Head of State and Commander in Chief.</p> <p>I believe if one wants to become a president of a nation, or become the prime minister or Cabinet minister he or she has to earn it through academic credibility where greater knowledge is required with work experiences which bring about wisdom especially in the line of work and leadership and not just using human rights, women’s rights, youth rights or any other rights as a reason of eligibility.</p> <p>Nowadays we hear some politicians saying that there should be more women and youth in Parliament basing their argument on gender equality and rights, however, I believe in order for one to be a parliamentarian, promoting rights and gender is insufficient for we need people who are well educated and have experience especially in the field of politics to be our voice in Parliament.</p> <p>Furthermore, no one or no law is stopping women and youth to be involved in the political sphere, nevertheless, but it will depend on the ordinary citizens who they want to choose or vote for during election.</p> <p>Isn’t that democracy?</p> <p>Kositatino Tikomaibolatagane, Vuninokonoko Rd, Navua</p>	<p>Women and youth parliamentarians</p>

	<p><b>Presidential issue</b> Do we even need a president? If I was in Opposition, this would be the question and the reason for my walkout. Dorine Narayan, Suva</p>	Do we need a President
	<p><b>Environment department</b> To me the environment department of Fiji is becoming a joke. People destroy mangroves, baka trees, pollute the sea with colours and raw sewage. I believe the department's response to complaints is too slow. The Navua baka tree saga was highlighted for almost two weeks before the environment department put a stop to the cutting of trees. Maybe our Attorney-General can bring order to this department just like he did with the Education Ministry. Narayan Reddy, Lautoka</p>	Critical of govt department
5 Sept 2018	<p><b>Alcohol production</b> THE banning of alcohol and other liquor production in Cakaudrove using customary laws (FT 03/09) poses the question of the application of Western laws to everyone. All come under the same law, don't we? AMENATAVE YACONISAU Palm Drive, Delainavesi</p>	Village by-laws vs Cmon law
	<p><b>Baka trees</b> TREES that have taken many, many years to grow and mature, man is destroying in one fell swoop! In this age of global warming surely we all know how important it is to keep and sustain our beautiful trees especially as they were landmarks. With all the land available surely man could have farmed in harmony with these beautiful trees rather than destroy them? What a sad example man is setting, how does this go towards helping Fiji shine. SANYA CATHERINE GAIN Lami</p>	Cutting of trees is a concern
	<p><b>Big issue</b> THE soot from the Fiji Sugar Corporation is becoming another big issue for the residents of Lautoka. Can the environment department please look into this? With plastic bag levy and environment levy charged on people, it is only fair for the environment department to get its acts together. JOHN BROWN Drasa Vitogo, Lautoka</p>	plastic bag levy
	<p><b>Response time</b> MR Narube has asked for an investigation into police response time after a house raid in Colo-i-Suva ( FT 04/09) just after they were praised in Savusavu. DAN URAI Lautoka</p>	Critical of police
6 Sept 2018	<p><b>Election dates</b> WE are in the month of September and yet the voters are unaware of the election dates for 2018.</p>	Why the suspense over the date the 208 election will be held

	<p>Why is this kept in as a suspense with already three-quarter of the year passed? I do not really know what holds for the country. It is nearly four years since the last election and we are yet embarking on the same old drama of keeping things as suspense. 'Till when? RAYNAV CHAND Nakasi</p>	
	<p><b>General election</b>  THE time for the general election is a constitutional provision under Section 58 and not to be decided by any Tom, Dick or Harry including the FEO. Let's follow the law. AMENATAVE YACONISAU Palm Drive, Delainavesi</p>	Election date
7 Sept 2018	<p><b>Times' response to attack</b></p> <p>I am not surprised to read the Attorney-General Aiyaz Sayed-Khaiyum issued a long statement castigating The Fiji Times for an error in reporting in Tuesday's edition and also devoted six paragraphs to personal attacks on the owners of the newspaper and trade unionists and others who took a different view to his idea of reforms (FT 5/9).</p> <p>Notwithstanding the error The Fiji Times will inevitably make from time to time (even the world's best newspapers do that from time to time) The Fiji Times remains the single most important link for Fijians living abroad with their home country.</p> <p>It's Fiji's number one newspaper for a good reason.</p> <p>Rajend Naidu Sydney, Australia</p>	Fiji Times praised
	<p><b>Admitting fault</b></p> <p>I read both daily papers every day.  What an amazing news you have!  The stories in the issue I picked up regarding Fiji's elections and backroom politics were fascinating, educational and disturbing at the same time.  I love the way you admit your fault when you are wrong.  I question myself, what happens to those who never admit fault, who never accept corrections?  (Proverbs 29:1) He, that being often reprovved hardeneth his neck shall suddenly be destroyed, and without remedy!  I was so impressed with your newspaper that I decided to write you this.  Your respect for all people makes your newspaper shine in my eyes, and is the reason that I would like to continue reading it.</p>	Fiji Times applauded

	Peni Mateiwai, Nabua, Suva	
	<p><b>Teachers and students</b></p> <p>THANKFUL they didn't introduce the new law during our school days where teachers were not allowed to throw their hands on students.</p> <p>Then it helped mould a lot of people to become what they became including Allen and Wise.</p> <p>Dan URai, Lautoka</p>	Corporal punishment
8 sept 2018	<p><b>Constitution Day</b></p> <p>It is heart-warming to read that northerners were celebrating the national Constitution Day for the first time this year at Subrail Park in Labasa.</p> <p>For decades, Fijians in the North have had to watch national celebrations held in Suva on television, listen over radio or read about it in the papers.</p> <p>The prime minister and his team were out there to celebrate our constitution and all of the rights and protections it affords us all.</p> <p>From the sea of blue and the Fiji flag, on first glance, one could easily assume that it was a FijiFirst party rally, but we all know that the election date has not been announced and no election campaign is being done.</p> <p>So Friday, September 7 is our national Constitution Day and some opposition forces who live under our Constitution, do not want to embrace it, saying it was forced upon them and that once they come into power, they will bring the old constitution back.</p> <p>The million dollar question is, "Which constitution is best for us Fijians as a whole, this current one or the old one? Which constitution safeguards the iTaukei land and natural resources better, this one or the old one? Which constitution reflects more the love of God in treating all Fijians the same, on a level playing field?</p> <p>Your answer to the above questions should help you to cast your one vote in the coming 2018 General Election!</p> <p>Savenaca Vakaliwaliwa, Suva</p>	Which constitution is best for us Fijians

	<p><b>Teacher issue</b></p> <p>Teachers' terms and conditions are covered under a collective agreement.</p> <p>I believe Mr. Sayed-Khaiyum should explain under what powers he changed teachers' terms and conditions from a collective one to individual contracts without consultation?</p> <p>Dan Urai, Lautoka</p>	<p>AG should explain the changes to the teachers 'contracts</p>
	<p><b>Waste of money</b></p> <p>As a developing country reliant on other wealthier nations, to survive, why can't Government cut down on things they can do without and still get the job done?</p> <p>There are old and new practices by our current government that is simply wasteful and it's time they reduce their cost of governance!</p> <p>One can draw up a huge list starting from personnel to the immoderate entourages that follow MPs around the country!</p> <p>It seems like MPs are being served as opposed to them serving the nation?</p> <p>MPs should never be in it to benefit themselves by raising their living standards, but instead they should be passionate about doing exactly that for the people of Fiji!</p> <p>One does not need to have to state outright the rightful way as those at the helm should be smart enough to know that!</p> <p>Walk our talk, not your own!</p> <p>Simon Hazelman, Savusavu</p>	<p>Govt should reduce their cost of governance</p>
	<p><b>At the helm</b></p> <p>IN our present government, some ministers and their assistants are not experts in their field of headship, hence they are surrounded by expertise within the government departments.</p> <p>Curious eyes on political parties campaigning for the yet to be announced date of national election, am I only seeing former civil servants, business people, lawyers standing for their parties.</p>	<p>Where is the expertise in the aspiring candidates</p>

	<p>How nice would it be to see political candidates from different backgrounds voted in by the people to head government departments should the shoe fit!</p> <p>Areki Dawai, Suva</p>	
	<p><b>Teachers' issue</b></p> <p>It is my humble plea to the Minister for Education to control or imply some stoppage on the poor teachers who are being demoted from their posts.</p> <p>As a student, I feel it is the worst time to make changes as we are in Term 3 and changes in our staff list surely does disturb us.</p> <p>Looking at our teachers, I really feel pity on them as many of them have been demoted and it is demoralising them, therefore, this affects them in giving the best in the classroom.</p> <p>Give the minister a pay rise, but put him as an assistant minister and tell him to enjoy the pay rise. He will then realise what he is doing to the poor teachers.</p> <p>Raynav Chand, Nakasi</p>	Teacher demotion
9 Sept 2018	<p><b>Political choices</b></p> <p>I believe people should make their decision based on which party will reduce the high cost of living.</p> <p>Dan Urai, Lautoka</p>	High cost of living
	<p><b>Trues up</b></p> <p>I agree a full 100 per cent with Simon Hazelman that "MPs should never be in it to benefit themselves" ( FT 8/9 ).</p> <p>I am sure Fiji is blessed with not having MPs who benefit themselves.</p> <p>In Australia, we have quite a few of that variety.</p> <p>Rajend Naidu, Sydney, Australia</p>	MPs who benefit themselves
10 Sept 2018	<p><b>Constitution Day</b></p> <p>FRIDAY, September 7 dawned and I was up and about like any other day.</p> <p>Then someone told me that it was a public holiday. I just raised my eyebrows and put aside the thought of going into town to do some window shopping and went about doing what I usually did. Oh yes, I have done lots of window shopping.</p> <p>Then I found out that it was Constitution Day, and I wondered if it was a celebration, a commemoration or just another day for those who work to stay home and have a long weekend and do what they usually do on long weekends.</p> <p>But my usual first each morning is to read the Fiji Times Online, I do it religiously.</p>	What is constitution day all about

	<p>Then I washed the clothes and did a bit of cleaning up around the house.</p> <p>On Facebook I wished all my friends a wonderful Constitution Day. I got some unusual remarks, which I cannot reprint.</p> <p>But Constitution Day has come and gone and so many people I met in Waiyavi don't know what it is about.</p> <p>One chap said, "Aaa, na cava ya?" (What's that?) Anyway having said that, I returned home and friends came and we sat and had a few basins of grog. By the way, I have lots of windows that I bought during my window shopping sprees.</p> <p>Allen Lockington Kava Place,</p>	
	<p><b>Teacher issues</b></p> <p>DANIEL Urai has a valid point.</p> <p>How come from collective agreement the minister has changed it to an individual contract.</p> <p>This should be contested in a court of law.</p> <p>I do not know why the unions have not taken this path earlier on. It is your responsibility to engage in legal experts and get out of this conundrum.</p> <p>Look at Australia and New Zealand unions and learn from them since the Fijian education department is implementing a lot of changes by looking at these countries.</p> <p>Dellas Singh Valebasoga, Labasa</p>	<p>Teacher's collective agreement changed to individual contracts</p>
	<p><b>COP 23 chair</b></p> <p>IT has been reported that the Prime Minister and chair of COP23 will be handing over the presidency at the end of the year. Have we learned anything? Have we achieved anything during our term as chair? These are rhetorical questions.</p> <p>Allen Lockington Kava Place, Waiyavi, Lautoka</p>	<p>What have we achieved from COP 23 - PM</p>
<p><b>11 Sept 2018</b></p>	<p><b>Poverty issue</b></p> <p>I CAN understand it that large parts of Bangladesh's huge almost 167 million population live in poverty. That must happen invariably.</p> <p>Why should that also be the case in Fiji? With a population of less than one million and its own vast natural resources and wealth and the additional foreign aid it gets why should anyone in Fiji be living in poverty? Of course that's not to say everyone should enjoy the lifestyle of the political class in Fiji but it's not unreasonable to say everyone should be</p>	<p>Poverty in Fiji</p>

	able to afford to live with human dignity, with a decent living wage and social protection, in Fiji.  RAJEND NAIDU Sydney, Australia	
<b>12 Sept 2018</b>	Election issues READING through your weekly feature of other political parties' views (other than FijiFirst) on the true state of the nation's economy, infrastructure, poverty, human rights, unemployment, education system, social welfare scheme, high cost of living to name a few, is really interesting and informative to the ordinary person. For the betterment of our ethnic Fijians, especially the rural readers, I suggest your editorial team translate those articles in vernacular and print in the Nai Lalakai and let them decide the party to vote for in the coming elections.	Request the newspaper to translate political parties 'view in Itaukei
<b>13 Sept 2018</b>	<b>Our police stations</b> THERE are several purposes for which people go to the police station. It may be to lodge a complaint, seek assistance and support, death notice, police clearance and many more. Does this mean all those visiting police stations are criminals? I believe they are made to look like such persons through the existence of such an environment at our police stations. I believe there is a need to change this criminal-like environment at our police stations. In fact the whole setup needs a change to encompass professionalism and confidentiality at our police stations. It does not require an Einstein to make such changes but any person with common sense can do it. I believe it is time now to get some civilians to organise our police stations with better administrative structures. Take note that it is not only the public but our hardworking police who need a professional workplace to work professionally. Getting computerised is another option that needs urgent attention. Over the years their vehicles have been modernised except their way of doing things. I salute our police officers for doing well under such circumstances. Of course there is room for much improved services with better attitude and organisational skills. DHIRENDRA PRASAD, Lautoka	Improve police stations
<b>14 Sept 2018</b>	That billboard THE question is which politician is dividing the people? DAN URAI Lautoka	Directed at FijiFirst Party
<b>15 Sept 2018</b>	Elections fight ELECTIONS should be fought and won based on principles, positions and ideologies. Not grandstanding and promise-making. WISE MUAVONO Balawa, Lautoka	Elections
<b>16 Sept 2018</b>	Billboard message	FijiFirst billboard

	<p>WHILE travelling from Nadi to Navua on Wednesday (12/09), I saw few billboards saying “Reject politicians who divide us”. This really confused me. I believe there are seven registered political parties in Fiji. All these parties have followers. During this election season all party leaders are trying to grab votes to win. My concern is all these leaders are dividing the people and if we reject all of them, then who will go to Parliament? VIJAY MAHARAJ Navua</p>	
18 Sept 2018	<p>Democracy Day AS we celebrated International Day of Democracy on September 15, I wonder if our country is really a democratic country. I personally believe that we in Fiji have limited rights in accordance with the 2013 Constitution. However, we as citizens have a right to voice our opinions and concerns in relation to the current situation. As election looms, I beseech us all to make wise choices and choose what is best for each of us. Bill Kunavatu, Lautoka</p>	Fiji has limited rights
	<p>Climate change  IS Fiji walking the talk in addressing carbon emissions as we approach COP24? I believe we continue manufacturing non-degradable plastic bags, vehicles continue to be offloaded, new factories continue to belch carbon into the atmosphere, mangroves continue to be cleared and there is an increase in burning of fossil fuels to produce electricity. Dan Urai, Lautoka</p>	Has lessons been learnt out of COP23
	<p><b>High prices</b>  LOOKS like most festivals that are going around Fiji, the price of things that are sold are very high and quality or quantity low compared with yesteryear. Barbecue chops are very thin but the price is high, snow cone price has gone up but the size of the cup has gone smaller, the price of stalls have gone up but the size has become smaller and I also found out that most ride prices have gone up but the time on the ride has been shortened.  Narayan Reddy, Lautoka</p>	Increasing prices
	<p>Albert Park closure  WHAT is the status of Albert Park? Why is it always closed for the public’s recreation?</p>	Why people have no access to Albert Park

	<p>This is a grave issue of public interest for two main reasons.</p> <p>First, the Government has invested millions of dollars in the park through taxpayers' funds and second, the affected number of public is clearly in thousands.</p> <p>Many will agree that because of its ideal location, a lot of people have been using Albert Park for their recreation.</p> <p>The public lockout certainly does not reflect well on the usually public-friendly FijiFirst Government.</p> <p>It is in public interest amid the terrible threats of NCDs, to keep Albert Park open for public recreation especially in the afternoons.</p> <p>Dorine Narayan, Suva</p>	
<p><b>19 Sept 2018</b></p>	<p>Indigenous rights</p> <p>CAN anyone from the opposition political parties explain to iTaukei people what they mean through their election campaigns that the protection of indigenous rights is of utmost importance to them. It seems it has been lost somewhere along the line. I am inclined to think that our superlative 2013 Constitution, through its preamble and Bill of Rights, is in good hands and guaranteed or have the opposition run out of ideas to obtain those votes in a transparent and honest manner. I believe some opposition candidates are only fooling themselves because iTaukei people no longer listen to their nonsense. TUKAI LAGONILAKEBA Namaka, Nadi</p>	
<p><b>20 Sept 2018</b></p>	<p><b>Water woes</b></p> <p>THE Fiji Times on Wednesday (19/09) thoroughly covered stories on water woes in the village of Galoa in Lekutu, Bua and the tales were indeed inciting. First and foremost, the villagers worked hard to raise \$28,000 as their contribution to Government in order for them to have access to drinking water — a project that was officially opened in 2013 which raised the hope of the people in Galoa that their water woes would now end since now they had pipes connecting them to mainland. According to their source, two months after the official opening of their water project, the pipe broke midway between the island and the mainland and since 2013, on top of their \$28,000 contribution, the villagers have spent more than \$5000 employing their own divers to continue fixing the underwater piping system. Secondly, the people of Galoa have raised their issue with PM Voreqe Bainimarama during his visit to the island in July after which the PM ordered officials to</p>	<p>Plea to PM</p>

	<p>resolve the problem immediately, however, three months have come and gone still nothing has been done about it. Now the prolonged dry spell is taking its toll on the villagers and it is indeed shocking to know that boarders of Galoa Island Primary School in Lekutu have resorted to bathing in seawater or in a slimey green pool to cope with the water scarcity on the island. I would like to again raise the plight of the people of Galoa Island in Bua with the PM and his Government to take into serious consideration the people’s concerns regarding the matter, for they have contributed so much for their water project only to be met with a delusion of an improper implementation that did not last long which dashes their hope that their water woes would end. KOSITATINO TIKOMAIBOLATAGANE Vuninokonoko Rd, Navua</p>	
	<p><b>Teachers’ job test</b></p> <p>TEACHERS did a job test for medium level school head positions during the school holidays. Different groups of candidates sat for the test on different days and the question paper was the same. Is the job test valid? What is the guarantee questions were not disclosed? Where couples were selected, they did the test on separate days, isn’t there opportunity for them to advise their respective spouses of the questions? Should the same paper be used on the assumption that questions will not be disclosed? There may be other criteria of interview but if a criteria is not valid, it simply is not valid. In such a case, aren’t some candidates benefiting while others are being victimised? A test is a test, whether done by teachers or students. The proper way is one paper at one time only and nothing else. However, if this system is right, then can we have students sit for the same external exam papers on separate days? No compassionate or aggregate pass required. Food for thought for the education system. It is my humble plea to the Minister for Education to better control the system. SANJANA MALA Nausori</p>	<p>Job tests for teachers</p>
	<p><b>Job recruitment</b></p> <p>A NEPHEW of mine was shortlisted for a vacancy with a government ministry. The shortlisting took over a month or so and then it took another month before he was called for an interview. He had prepared well and was very much looking forward for the opportunity . Seven other candidates were shortlisted and they all came prepared and were waiting for this big day. While they were waiting to be called in, an officer came out and told them that</p>	<p>Unprofessional of the HR team of that government ministry</p>

	<p>there had been a mistake and the position was wrongly advertised. All were sent home. The frustration and the disappointment of the applicants can never be expressed. This is very unprofessional of the HR team of that government ministry. It might have happened before and it has happened this time and I believe it's bound to happen in the future unless the ministry responsible put their acts together. TOMASI BOGINISO Nasinu</p>	
	<p><b>Political power</b>  PROFESSOR Cheryl Saunders of the University of Melbourne School of Law, in her guest lecture at USP in 2015, quoted a friend from Taiwan who said that a democratic transition cannot be said to be complete until political power had changed hands several times. With this in mind, we can recall that the present 2013 Fiji Constitution was fixed by military decree before the 2014 National Election and though now in place for merely five years, it has actually placed a government in power for as long as 12 years. This Constitution is now due for test and a change of political power by the choice of the people — without prejudice — will add considerable value to its effect whatever that may be. AKUILA YABAKI Suva</p>	Constitution
	<p><b>Way forward</b>  I ENJOYED reading Tui Rakuita's opinion (FT 19/09, p12). He has encapsulated our political landscape which is refreshing to read. My summary after reading the piece, the Government is in disarray, and the main opposition is muddled by actions of the past. Solution: I believe instead of choosing between a rock and a hard place, choose a fresh new party to take Fiji forward. SAILOSI NAEWE Naduru Rd, Nausori</p>	
21 Sept 2018	<p><b>Poll candidates</b>  MONKEY do what monkey see. It will be interesting to read about the assets and liabilities of politicians contesting the election or will it be privileged information? DAN URAI Lautoka</p>	Privileged information about politicians
24 Sept 2018	<p><b>Poll line-up</b>  NO party has any pharmacist or engineer or surveyor in their line-up. I believe Fiji universities are failing. Biggest budget slice goes to health, road and land. Yet no specialists in our next Parliament. JOE SMITH Pacific Harbour, Deuba</p> <p><b>Fiji's future</b>  WITH free education and when children cannot be given corporal punishment, our Government said</p>	Critical of election candidates

	the seat but representing for a reason. Gulsher Ali Lautoka	
26 Sept 2018	<p><b>Voting time</b></p> <p>I HAVE been voting ever since I reached that age where I could vote and I have never missed any. This year 2018, there is so much hullabaloo that I am of the opinion that it's the worst time leading to the date. With social media it's even worse. Now people can have a fake Facebook page and rant from there hiding behind their keyboard. In the past with no internet, people had opinions but were restricted to just their grog gang, tea club, men's club and the like, and the rest of the world went peacefully by with their own activities. When voting day came we went to the polling station and voted, we didn't hear any or too much propaganda. Voting for me was peaceful. Today it's different. I have never seen so much odium shown by supporters of the various parties. Odium may be too strong a word but I'll use it. As we journey into the future I hope things will be better, quieter and more peaceful. And I salute every citizen of Fiji and say cheers to a happy future. ALLEN LOCKINGTON Kava Place, Waiyavi, Lautoka</p>	Concern over the level of hatred displayed during election campaign
	<p><b>The disadvantaged</b></p> <p>I THINK it is the responsibility of the Social Welfare to take the homeless off the streets and provide them with decent shelter and food. I don't think these poor souls deserve to starve and die on streets because of their haplessness, they have been abandoned by their families and caretakers. Right now a number of people are seen sleeping in Nadi Town which gives one the impression that they have no other choice. It also suggests that the authorities that are charged with the responsibility of taking care of these destitute individuals have no time for them. It is rather sad that the Human Rights and Anti-Discrimination Commission is also not helping them. I tell you many of these deserted people urgently need food and shelter and need a shower and changing their clothes too. It is a bad scene which requires your urgent attention, please. Before negativity gains more attention, let's feed and shelter these innocent human beings properly. SURESH CHAND Nadi</p>	Govt's role in looking after the homeless Social security policy in question
	<p><b>Street people</b></p> <p>THE government continues to give money and grants almost every day but one can still see a lot of people who still sleep on the streets and parks around Lautoka. I am told that the operations loloma gang</p>	Plight of homeless people

	<p>will be going around trying to help the poor and homeless but I can see very little done in Lautoka. While unions and some political parties are fighting for workers' rights, it seems to me that nobody is actually doing anything regarding the homeless issue. Most of the so-called street people need your help please! NARAYAN REDDY, Lautoka</p>	
	<p><b>For the record</b></p> <p>LAST Sunday's episode (of FBC TV interview program "4 the Record" featuring National Federation Party leader Dr Biman Prasad) is a record. I believe it should be used in: ? journalism schools on how not to do live interviews and how not to behave as TV hosts; ? communication classes on why one should listen to answers to one's questions; ? etiquette schools on how not to be impolite and downright rude to one's guests ? diplomacy classes on how to answer rude journalists; ? time management classes on how not to interrupt an answer to one's questions because one is running out of time; ? co-host classes on how one should refrain from stopping a co-host when his questions are being well answered; ? drama classes on how a guest can pretend so well not to be offended by young, pretentious, incoherent and offensive TV hosts; and, ? Fijian culture classes on how not to behave as Fijian hosts towards interviewees. By the way, well done Professor Prasad. May I suggest just one thing? The next time such TV hosts interrupt you, why don't you calmly say: "You can always interview yourself or your co-host!" KINIVILIAME KETECA Nausori</p>	Critical of media
	<p><b>Poll hopefuls</b></p> <p>Can the aspiring 2018 General Election hopefuls kindly furnish their academic credentials and achievements to the public? This I believe would enable the voters to mull over and tick wisely. Or are they too "pressed for time" to fulfil this request? Seji, don't laugh! Nishant Singh Lautoka</p>	2018 election candidates asked to provide their academic credentials
	<p><b>Many issues</b></p> <p>There are many issues we can discuss, dissect and solve through our contributions to this esteemed forum. I would give my two cents worth but, 'I'm pressed for time'. Samuela Savu Farm Rd, Nakasi</p>	Critical of media (FBC)
27 Sept 2018	<p><b>Fijian divisions</b></p> <p>THE headline in the other paper of September 26, 2018 ("No more division here"), is as much a wish for the current government as it is for all Fijians. I believe the truth is, we are as further apart as we ever could be in all of Fiji's history. And to tarnish and disrespect the great Nelson Mandela's legacy is a</p>	Fiji is divided

	<p>new low for the current government. That they burned the constitution which included Mandela's ethics of tolerance, reconciliation and kindness by the constitution expert Yash Ghai is something we all remember. They have enforced upon the citizens of Fiji a constitution which to this day has special protective conditions for a section of Fijians. And yet we talk about equality! As we watch this spiel of 'no divisions in Fiji', being shared with an almost empty United Nations auditorium, it is not a surprise that even the countries in the United Nations assembly think otherwise. All they can think of is when will we have a Fiji that is truthfully the way the world should be? Epeli Rabua Tamavua, Suva</p>	
	<p><b>About the press</b>  Here's my advice to all politicians: Don't worry about how you're doing with the press. Only worry about doing your job. If you're doing a good job, bad press won't hurt you. If you're doing a bad job, good press won't save you. Apenisa Yabakitini Vatuniveivuke Lautoka</p>	<p>Critical of politicians</p>
	<p><b>Civil service reforms</b>  It's interesting to read the views of political party leaders regarding their thoughts and solutions on the States' civil service reforms (FT 22/09). As an ordinary citizen who regularly requires government services, I would also like to state my thoughts! Firstly, the fact remains that we have never ever had an efficient reliant civil service since we became an independent sovereign state in 1970. While some civil servants must be commended, the majority are ineffective and a downfall to the way in which government has been operating. Any government or ruling party is only as good as the quality of its civil servants! We can give all the excuses under the sun for our lacklustre service since 1970 but the problem is real and the solution is simple. Our level of quality is not only deficient but insufficient. We think we know everything but our actions show otherwise. Instead of being servants to the nation, I believe the majority of civil servants have taken the tendency of being served first before declaring their service. We simply don't cut into it! Current leadership is nothing more than positions and titles. We require good quality leadership throughout our civil service divisions and departments. We need people with unquestionable integrity, honesty and accountability, confidence, commitment with a passion to serve, and be good communicators who have the ability to make the right decisions. Academic qualifications does not necessarily qualify</p>	<p>Critical of civil service reforms</p>

	<p>one as a good leader, and neither does practical experience. A good leader is one with good character who leads by example and whose leadership is defined by results and not attributes. There are people with such great characters among us and government simply needs to identify these individuals and urgently make the necessary changes. The current reformation of the civil service by the current administration is not only too casual but is hardly making a progressive difference. Get those who can do the job and kick out those who cannot! Simple! Simon Hazelman Rava Estate, Savusavu</p>	
<p><b>28 Sept 2018</b></p>	<p><b>Lemon tree lesson – Letter of the week ending 3/9-9/9</b></p> <p>FIJI is a nation of unique potentials partly because of our multi-ethnic, multi-cultural and multi-religious make-up. But this uniqueness sits on a fragile borderline of good and evil. On one hand it can be tapped and properly utilised to bring out the best in us if we attempt to pursue achievements in various endeavours of our common interest. It can also be manipulated to magnify our differences making everything we see perceived on a “them against us” basis. A few years ago, I asked a Gujarat friend of mine who runs a successful business in both Nausori and Suva if he can explain to me in a very simple way why Gujarat people are better in running business compared with us iTaukei in his opinion. I asked him to put his answer in very simple terms so that if I take it to the villages, they will understand. No technical explanation and he can take his time before he gives his answer. About half an hour later and after a few glasses of beer, he told me this. “When we Gujarat plant a lemon tree, we manure it, water it and nurture it as it grows. When the tree starts bearing small fruits, we never touch it. The fruits get bigger then start to ripen. Still we never touch them. Then the fruits fall on the ground and rot, still we do not touch them. “When dozens of seedlings start to sprout from those rotten fruits, we then transplant them to different parts of our yard. Again we manure, water and nurture these seedlings to grow. Then the dozens of trees start bearing small fruits and still we do not touch them. When the fruits from this second generation of trees start to ripen, we then harvest half of it and let the other half follow the same process. “But for most iTaukei, when the fruits of the first tree are still green, you harvest all of them.” Could this be a reason why many iTaukei</p>	<p>Difference between a Gujrati doing business and an Itaukei</p>

	<p>businesses collapse, giving birth to the slogan, “Bisinisi ni iTaukei, duri ga me davo”? (iTaukei businesses were meant to stand and fall). I want to share this because I believe it may help some of us iTaukei in making right decisions in management whether it is at family level, private business, village development committee, school committee and etc. Sometimes when we run a community project, we quickly want to harvest the benefits before the project has sustained itself in the first place. Sometimes the project may still be in its teething period and we arrogantly assume that it is thriving so well. Sometimes, the lack of transparency opens the opportunity for abuse because some may see it as an insult to ask questions that needs to be asked just because they may breach traditional or cultural protocols. Our multi-cultural and multi-ethnic make-up can be a huge blessing propelling us to unity, development and prosperity if we use it correctly and learn vital lessons that needs to be learnt. But it can also become a curse if we choose to just focus on everything negative we can find in it. Today our nation sits on this vital crossroad between cultural and governance reform against those who insist that we should go back and live in the old ways despite the fact that our whole world is moving forward. The decisions we make today will reflect on our future generations tomorrow.</p>	
	<p><b>Another option</b> On the ballot papers for this year’s general election, we should have the option of choosing “None of the above”. Which will mean that none of the candidates is suitable enough to get your vote. Would be funny if it did. Wise Muavono Balawa, Lautoka</p>	Ballot paper must have another option – none of the above
29 Sept 2018	<p><b>Playing politics</b></p> <p>FROM the many letters I read in The Fiji Times on the FBC 4 the Record interview with NFP leader Professor Biman Prasad, it is apparent that clear-thinking Fijians are not fooled when the media makes out to be independent, impartial and fair when it’s not.</p> <p>I saw the interview myself while on holiday in Fiji and I concur with the criticism of your letter writers.</p> <p>I also saw on television what Nemani Delaibatiki had to say and wondered whether that was the commentary of a veteran journalist or a partisan political commentator?</p>	Bias media

	<p>Again I am sure thinking Fijians can figure that out.</p> <p>Rajend Naidu, Sydney</p>	
	<p><b>Government grants</b></p> <p>MORE than 7300 people in the North received assistance of \$1000 as part of government’s micro and small enterprise scheme this week.</p> <p>While the 2018 Fijian election is sometime soon and the Trade Minister says the grants given are not a “handout or freebie” but a “leg-up” for all Fijians, and this program will continue on a yearly basis.</p> <p>OK.</p> <p>Would be good for the Trade Ministry to reveal how many micro and small enterprises exists in the country?</p> <p>I believe it’s all public funds that’s being given to people so the Trade Minister would welcome the opportunity to be transparent and accountable — values the government promotes.</p> <p>Meanwhile, the minister also told the recipients that “your Government is realising your dreams, ambitions and fulfilment of becoming an entrepreneur”.</p> <p>I’ve been waiting for my dream to realise since May after submitting my registration with MIDA to operate as a freelance journalist for an overseas media. I’m still waiting. I’m at a point now where I’ve started to think that my Fijian dream doesn’t count because there’s no return on investment for the Government.</p> <p>Kelvin Anthony, Namadi Heights, Suva</p>	<p>Government handouts</p> <p>Application with MIDA</p>
	<p><b>Pressed for time</b></p> <p>I WAS extremely perplexed to witness the two anchors of the “4 The Record” TV program continuously barging in to muffle the voice of Professor Biman Prasad.</p> <p>However, Prof Prasad was unperturbed and remained cool, calm and collected.</p> <p>A sure sign of maturity.</p> <p>Arun Prasad, Dilkusha, Nausori</p>	NFP leader praised
30 Sept 2018	<p><b>United front</b></p> <p>NFP leader Biman Prasad has clearly mentioned that any other political party member who wants to contest the election as a united front with NFP has to resign from their current party and become a</p>	Contesting election on a united font banner

	<p>member of NFP and then go through the selection process to become a NFP candidate.</p> <p>I believe that once a party member resigns from their own party to join NFP clearly means that the member will leave, quit, and walk out, step down and to give oneself over without resistance from their own party in order to join NFP.</p> <p>Question is how one contests the election as a united front if the member does not remain a member of their own party.</p> <p>Gulsher Ali, Lautoka</p>	
	<p><b>Biggest problem</b></p> <p>FOR as long as I can remember the biggest problem with unity hasn't been the people – it's always been politicians, from years ago, until now — who've continued to divide people along ethnic and religious lines including using sensitive issues such as land ownership to ramp up people's emotions.</p> <p>The problem is, most of these politicians don't have the intestinal fortitude to own up to their divisive driven speeches and policies.</p> <p>Growing up, we all got along well together until elections came around — and then the proverbial "poo" hit the fan thanks to politicians who manipulated the masses with their cleverly designed "hate" speeches from "spin doctors" who knew how to capture votes with their strategic marketing.</p> <p>Will it ever change?</p> <p>Maybe, but the same brand of gutter level politics is still skulking in the shadows, ever so subtly planting their unscrupulous seeds in the various on-line media platforms.</p> <p>Colin Deoki, Australia</p>	<p>Politicians criticized for dividing Fiji along ethnic lines</p>
1 Oct 2018	<p><b>Walking the walk</b></p> <p>I fail to comprehend how it's possible for politicians or political candidates not to divide opinion. That's their job, although they can do it in a way that encourages discussion, and whether common ground does exist. Unless they identify how their opinions and platforms differ from that of other candidates, how on Earth are voters to know who to vote for? The issue we truly do need to elicit from our candidates is not what they are promising — appealing as those promises may be — but how they intend to achieve those promises. Anyone can make promises, but without substantial and credible strategies, it's simply talking the talk. I want to see the steps for walking the walk. Vivien Counsell Mitchell Serua</p>	
	<b>Water disruptions</b>	Water cuts

	<p>For the benefit of all the citizens and businesses, hotels, resorts etc, of greater Nadi and parts of Lautoka, will the Water Authority of Fiji kindly state how many more 72-96-hour water disruptions we will be subjected to before all major forced outages become a thing of the past. It is so very annoying and grossly inconvenient especially to the poorer sections of the rural community. Ronnie Chang Nadi</p>	
	<p><b>Caretaker governance</b>  We are now in the interim period between a dissolved Parliament and a newly-elected one. I believe an elected government only exists when its parent body — Parliament — exists. However, to avoid the disruption of government services in the absence of an elected government during this interim period, a “caretaker” government is appointed to administer normal government operations. I believe the caretaker convention dictates that such governments do not however, initiate any totally new policy or initiatives that may unduly compromise and burden the incoming government. Since our Constitution stipulates that the PM and his Cabinet ministers assume the “caretaker” government role by remaining in their posts until a new PM is appointed, I believe there is no specific provisions or guidelines in place to provide formal “caretaker” guidance. Especially, when the normal oversight body — Parliament — is absent. I agree with the view that we should by now at least establish formal “caretaker” guidelines for this constitutional provision, as a check and balance measure in parliament’s absence. EDWARD BLAKELOCK, Pacific Harbour, Deuba</p>	<p>No new policies as caretaker Government</p>
	<p><b>Police presence</b>  We hear every day of robberies taking place at the Suva Bus Stand. Jewellery snatching, purse snatching, computer snatching, bag snatching etc, happening every day but none of the culprits are caught. I wonder why the police presence here is not increasing. It is my humble request to the Police Commissioner to increase the number of police personnel here. Believe me, people are suffering. I believe action is needed now. Para Naidu Lautoka</p>	<p>Increase police presence</p>
<p>2 Oct 2018</p>	<p><b>Media playing politics</b>  FROM the many letters I read in The Fiji Times on the FBC 4 the Record interview with NFP leader Professor Biman Prasad, I believe that clear-thinking Fijians are not fooled when the media makes out to be independent, impartial and fair when it’s not. I saw the interview myself while on holiday in Fiji and I concur with the criticism of your letter writers. I</p>	<p>Critical of FBC</p>

	<p>also saw on television what Nemani Delaibatiki had to say and wondered whether that was the commentary of a veteran journalist or a partisan political commentator? Again I am sure thinking Fijians can figure that out.</p> <p>RAJEND NAIDU Sydney</p>	
	<p><b>Candidates</b></p> <p>I believe by now all candidates should know how their party is managed and controlled, campaign accordingly and hope for the best. Dan Urai Lautoka</p>	Election candidates
3 Oct 2018	<p><b>MIDA letter</b></p> <p>It took a good spirited letter in The Fiji Times last Saturday but it's finally done. MIDA has confirmed my registration to operate as a freelance/stringer for a New Zealand-based media. It tells us that when you express your opinion in The Fiji Times someone is taking notice. Took almost six-months for MIDA but vinaka! At least they're better than the health, trade, economy ministries, or Fiji police, and even Fiji football, who never respond to any concerns raised by writers here. If you've got an issue you need addressed, I encourage you to keep expressing your opinion about it in this newspaper. You may be pleasantly surprised. Kelvin Anthony Namadi Heights, Suva</p>	MIDA
	<p><b>Registered to vote</b></p> <p>I read (FT 02/10) that many people have just registered to vote. I wonder if they waited for the announcement of the election date? But I am glad that they have taken the time to do so. Now one interesting news is children as young as six can register at the Fiji National Provident Fund. Isn't that marvellous? What a way to save money! What else is there, (something within the reach of the wage earner) that we didn't know about? A party says change is coming — is it a change in government or will they change how things are happening? Can they change people's attitude towards the environment — burning, throwing rubbish anywhere, jaywalking, speeding, education and junk food? Will life get better than what it is, please tell us how you will do this. Mere Lagilagi Lovu</p>	Change is coming – what does this mean?
	<p><b>People power</b></p> <p>Dan Urai believes confidence is slowly eroding as the clock starts ticking and reality creeps in! (FT 02/10). I presume he is talking about all political parties except FijiFirst? If he thinks otherwise than I have news for him. Reality is that FijiFirst will comfortably win this 2018 General Election by a good margin! That's how confident the people are. The erosion began in 2006 and will continue for decades to</p>	Fiji First will win

	come. People power all right! Simon Hazelman Savusavu	
<b>4 Oct 2018</b>	<p><b>Election observers</b></p> <p>Election observers are here to observe a fair elections. My question is who will be observing the observers? May I recommend the first battalion from Kava parliament to be given this task. The master sniper Allen can snipe from the moon with pinpoint accuracy with his invisible gun. Let's all get together and vote for Allen to be the observer of election observers MOSES MANI Auckland, NZ</p>	Election observer group
	<p><b>Bad politics</b></p> <p>I read with interest the Prime Minister's comments in The Fiji Times (03/10) where he said that every Fijian should "reject politics of division and lies". He further suggested that this type of politics had been seen many times in our history and we cannot tolerate that old, hateful style of politics no more. When it comes to elections, politics are almost the same globally where politicians will campaign to win people's vote by promoting their manifestos and promising changes to be better alternatives. I do not believe that any politician or manifesto would have the intention to divide the people they want to lead, however, the only time in our history when that happened was when certain individuals or groups of people took over by force a legitimate government chosen by the people and that happened two times in 1987, one in 2000 and one in 2006. Now since the Writ for Election is out, I believe individual parties should focus more on their campaigns and set strategies of how best they can convince people for their votes instead of saying degrading comments about others for that is already the beginning of bad politics. KOSITATINO TIKOMAIBOLATAGANE Vuninokonoko Rd, Navua</p>	Election campaign
<b>5 Oct 2018</b>	<p><b>For the people</b></p> <p>Thank you madam Speaker, now I know that Parliament belongs to the people. Set saraga! But I think we own it only for one day — when we vote, after that the chosen ones' own it. We hardly see you guys again. Soon we will see you guys and on the 14th we will own it again, after that we won't see you because your official vehicles have very heavy tinted windows when you zoom past us, the owners. Sorry I couldn't help myself. Allen Lockington Kava Place, Waiyavi, Lautoka</p>	Politicians don't meet the voters
	<b>Issue of decorum</b>	Conduct of political actors

	<p>I totally agree with PM Voreqe Bainimarama (FT 03/10) requesting the leaders of political parties “to ensure their candidates, officials, and supporters conducted themselves with the same dignity and decorum online as Fijians expected them to in person”. I believe all the leaders should have demanded the same from their parliamentarians when they were in Parliament. Arun Prasad Dilkusha, Nausori</p>	
	<p><b>Social media site</b></p> <p>It seems canvassing for votes has ramped up a notch and is hotting up because yesterday I received an interesting note from a social media site where a certain party looks like they’re soliciting votes from a predominant ethnic community and making no bones about why they should vote for this party. However, if this is a hoax then the social media site needs to remove the offending and mischief-making reference. If it’s for real then I would assume that this form of solicitation is borderline bias and extremely inflammatory. COLIN DEOKI, Australia</p>	<p>Soliciting for votes from one ethnic community</p>
	<p><b>General election</b></p> <p>Ok so the fever of the general election has caught on like a wildfire and the other day on one of the radio stations they had a program during lunch and listeners were asked to give their opinions on post-election issues. Now a lot of callers were calling up saying if a new government is formed, the ministers and parliamentarians must take a pay cut and to improve the standard of living. There were also those that were for the current government and gave some examples of the good they did but not a lot of facts. I mean if they say our lives are much better now compared with 12 years ago, then I challenge them to tell me how come a shop at Raiwaqa is like a prison, where the shopkeeper is inside some sort of cage, and the slot where you are supposed to interact — whereby you put your money in exchange for goods — is caged and closed. The shopkeeper slides over a piece of cardboard to put my money, and the same cardboard was used to pass back my change. Luckily I had just purchased a recharge card, imagine if it was something bigger. My point is the shop is located about 500 yards from the nearest police station and this is in the middle of the day, and if a person cannot feel safe within their own premises, then there is something terribly wrong. I previously wrote in this forum about the men and women in blue showing more presence in</p>	<p>Listen to the public Are we really safe in this country</p>

	<p>my neighbourhood by making regular foot patrols, but alas I went past the community post the other day and it was closed during the day — must have been their day off or something. So in a nutshell, if the people are afraid to live in their own homes and must cage themselves in, then we might as well build prisons because people are already locking themselves in. I believe some of the causes of crime are politics, racism, TV violence, regionalism, family problems, drugs and other social and mental disorders to but name a few. Please candidates, take heed of these programs and letters, the people are speaking their mind, take the time to listen and let's move Fiji forward. Lawrence Wara Suva</p>	
	<p><b>Billboard decorations</b></p> <p>There is nothing sensational about vandalism and with the ever increasing rape and violence cases each day in Fiji, we should be headlining these cases daily in our print media. The rape and violence cases actually portray the “thuggery, lawlessness and lack of (personal) decorum” by the perpetrators on a daily basis. With the strategically placed mud patterns on the billboard, it has actually given a balanced muted ambience to a very colourful picture which is painful to the eyes upon encountering it for the first time and I would recommend shades to all Fijian citizens. The blame game begins with the usual suspects being the NFP and SODELPA political party members. However, this could equally have been the work of the actual party members of the subject who are hoping for sympathy votes. For all the sensationalism given in the article in one of the dailies, it was nothing but a decorated billboard! EPELI RABUA Tamavua, Suva</p>	Billboard vandalism
	<p><b>Free and fair</b></p> <p>Yes we have had free and fair elections. But the elections before 2014 had more free stuff like free grog, free tea and bread and the main thing was free transport to the polling stations. Sukha Singh Labasa</p>	Free goodies I the past election
	<p><b>PM's speech</b></p> <p>Few months back our beloved PM told religious leaders not to mix religion with politics. Rightfully religious place is a place to worship only, very well said Mr. PM. By the way I liked your political speech at the temple. Really shut all the haters. Woohoo my man! Moses Mani Auckland, New Zealand</p>	PM applauded
	<p><b>Owners and all</b></p> <p>Thank you madam Speaker for the kind words that we the people own Parliament. I felt proud knowing that I am also an owner. But madam please tell us</p>	Who owns Parliament

	<p>how do we own it? Are you referring to the building? Mere Lagilagi Lovu, Lautoka</p>	
	<p><b>Poll promises</b> Some election promises we will be hearing. National peace will be declared, all roads and streetlights will be fixed (not tiled), no more water disruptions, price of basic food items reduced. Do you know the mistake a lot of career politicians make is forgetting they've been appointed and thinking they've been anointed. Wise Muavono Balawa, Lautoka</p>	<p>Promises made by candidates</p>
<p>6 Oct 2018</p>	<p><b>Campaign tactic</b> I would like to know why the FijiFirst poster has only one picture and that of PM Voreqe Bainimarama. In the last elections he had the largest number of votes. Could the other parties also try this tactic to win more votes for their parties? Sukha Singh Labasa</p>	<p>Fiji cist campaign</p>
	<p><b>Media role</b> 2018 General Election will see political parties contesting against each other. Six will try hard to oust the current and probably leading party, FijiFirst. Whatever happens during this time it will be quite interesting with the media playing a major role. But the most interesting thing will be to see what party actually goes out after losing the election. Flip the pages day in, day out and The Fiji Times will keep you posted. Ramesh Sharma Nasinu</p>	<p>Media's role in informing people about political race</p>
	<p><b>Different views</b> I am grateful to the two church leaders, the president of the Methodist Church in Fiji and Rotuma, the Rev Epineri Vakadewavosa and the Archbishop of the Catholic church Peter Loy Chong for their timely advice regarding the coming election which was reported on the front page of The Fiji Times on 05/10 title "Cautious vote". The two leaders both voiced the importance of people to exercise their political right and responsibility to vote wisely, by being cautious to cast their vote only after thoroughly examining and weighing the different platforms of political parties. The Archbishop further shared that as being the head the Roman Catholic church in Fiji, he does not have the mandate to tell Catholics who they should vote for, however, he has an important role to inform the church members about what the Catholic social teaching taught that the fundamental moral measure of any economy was how the poor and vulnerable are faring. In addition, he highlighted the "status quo" of our economic trend that showed an increase in poverty and the growing economic gaps between the rich and the poor to which he firmly stated that "...the economy existed for the person,</p>	<p>Methodist Church in Fiji and Rotuma, the Rev Epineri Vakadewavosa and the Archbishop of the Catholic church Peter Loy Chong views on elections</p>

	<p>not the person for the economy". I sincerely hope that other churches and religious leaders would also encourage their members to be more cautious in casting their votes so Fiji may have leaders who care about upholding human dignity rather than just boasting about a robust economy. KOSITATINO TIKOMAIBOLATAGANE Vuninokonoko Rd, Navua</p>	
	<p><b>Cautious vote</b>  The daily headlines showing the heads of the two major Christian church denominations cautioning their members to vote responsibly (FT 05/10), makes me laugh! How can these two Christian leaders be giving such instructions when there is so much disfunction and unchristian-like behaviour, values and morals happening within their organisations? I believe their words of caution bring to question their own spiritual states of mind? One wonders if they really understand the importance of their calling? It is important that they have a positive awareness of the will of God and that they avoid divisions and arguments. As Christian leaders, I believe their one and main responsibility is to provide spiritual leadership to members of their churches, to prepare sermons, preach and conduct worship services, and interpret biblical scripture in a very responsible manner to their congregation. Not only should these two leaders take care of the spiritual upbringing of their members but more importantly they ought to first practise what they preach instead of just logically analysing their reason for believing! The greatest proof for their members is how far in practice they will stake their life on their belief! They ought to remain consumed with worship, praise and blessing God than getting involved in politics! Clean up your house first before getting involved in others! SIMON HAZELMAN Rava Estate, Savusavu</p>	<p>spiritual leadership not politics</p>
<p>7 Oct 2018</p>	<p><b>Free bus service</b>  We must applaud the minister and Government for providing free bus service for pensioners by offering bus companies concessions including retention of VAT on fares. It should be noted that many of these elderly pensions have disabilities e.g. knee, hip and back injuries that make it difficult if not impossible to board buses as their steps are too high. So many will not be able take advantage of this benefit. The older pensioners get, their need for bus services increase! A few years ago, the issue of lowering the height of steps were raised with the bus industry. Where they give time to gradually effect the lowering of the step height? Bus operators delay in implementing this change will be to their advantage</p>	<p>Disability-friendly bus service</p>

	as they will not need to provide this service to fewer pensioners and disabled. Christopher Jackson Mar Nasoso, Nadi	
8 Oct 2018	<p><b>'Pio, the man'</b></p> <p>PEOPLE had questioned NFP for taking in Pio Tikoduadua into its fold. Well, the article "campaign on facts not fear" on page 3 of The Fiji Times (FT 4/10) should put all queries to rest. Reading The Fiji Times on that day, two youngsters of Indian descent looked over my shoulder and asked "what are you reading?". I gave them the paper and they read the article. They looked at one another and then back at me. I was taken aback by the fear that I saw in their eyes. I asked "Are you OK?". They replied "How could he? After all that we have been through. He promised. We trusted him. Who is Pio Tikoduadua? We will check him out on Google or the NFP website". Their friends joined them and they were in a huddle talking. All I could hear was: "Pio, the man".</p> <p>KORINA WAIBUTA Knollys St, Suva</p>	Pio Tikoduadua as a candidate
	<p><b>Election day</b></p> <p>AS we approach election day it is expected that leaders of all faiths, community leaders including trade unionists will caution followers to vote responsibly. Simon Hazelman's comments against the leaders of the two major denomination, Catholics and Methodist (FT 06/10), is uncalled for. Did he disagree with Archbishop Chong's comment that the gap between the rich and poor including poverty has increased? I hope not because it unfortunately is the state of our country.</p>	Critical of comment made against the two church letters
	<p><b>Truth in election</b></p> <p>I agree with the editorial comment that this is that time "when registered parties will fire off salvos" ( FT 07/10 ) to gain the upper hand in the election. I wonder what part truth telling plays in the election campaign to ensure we have a well-informed public who can then make up their minds on who to vote for?</p> <p>RAJEND NAIDU Sydney, Australia</p>	Truthful campaigns
	<p><b>Billboard probe</b></p> <p>It's that serious huh. Police will now put resources to investigate the mud flung on the billboard in Vugalei. Someone took the mudslinging too far.</p> <p>MERE LAGILAGI Lovu, Lautoka</p>	Mudslinging
	<p><b>Grab all or share</b></p> <p>IF I were the President, no former PM/MPs would be allowed to fight this year's election. You guys have</p>	Former PM/MPs should contest the elections

	<p>had your share of the cake. Please pass it on to other kids (new generation). I have to be mindful too that I will be out in four years' time. Either I grab all or I share.</p> <p>A. SHARIFF SHAH</p>	
	<p><b>Visible politicians</b>  WHY are politicians really visible before elections and become invisible after elections? Are they using some sort of magic paint? I am sure my friend Allen Lockington and his Kava Place crew would like a few gallons.</p> <p>NEIL BILLINGS  California, USA</p>	Critical of politicians
	<p><b>Getting response</b>  SOMETIMES the best way to get any response to queries you were tired of sending to the ministries is to write to the letters to the editor column. You will get one of my five known replies: 1. An answer to your query that satisfies you with two thumbs up; 2. A retaliation that aggravates you and many other people; 3. Stone cold silence with daggers flying at you; 4. A phone call, "Hey if you have any issues with us just give us a call, don't write to the papers."; 5. A threat.</p> <p>I know, I have received all five over the 20-plus years of my writing to the papers.</p> <p>ALLEN LOCKINGTON</p>	Critical of Govt ministries
9 Oct 2018	<p><b>Campaign tactic</b>  My friend Sukha Singh wants to know why the FijiFirst poster has only one picture and that of PM Voreqe Bainimarama and in the last election he had the largest number of votes? (FT 06/10). He asks if the other parties also try this tactic to win more votes for their parties. The 2014 FijiFirst party general election campaign game plan was just that, to have all Fijians vote for the PM because he has a proven leadership track record. Even though each FijiFirst party candidate was given individual election pamphlets to distribute, we were told to get the voting public to vote for the Prime Minister. Our one vote system is very fair and it is more about voting for the political party than the individual candidates. So if 70 per cent of voters vote for our PM then he has pulled 70 per cent of the seats in Parliament. The total votes for the other FijiFirst candidates will be added up to calculate how many of the remaining 30 per cent of the seats in Parliament to be added to the seats already won by the PM. There is nothing stopping the other political parties in doing the same. One other thing, we FijiFirst party candidates were not allowed to do public interviews because we</p>	Put Fiji first

	<p>played as a team and that only the PM and A-G plus serving MPs were allowed to do debates and interviews. As an iTaukei, a Christian and a Fijian, I believe that despite all the negatives being compiled by the opposition forces to discredit the FijiFirst Government, it is best to allow them to continue moving Fiji forward as we soar to greater heights.</p> <p>Savenaca Vakaliwaliwa Suva</p>	
<b>13 Oct 2018</b>	<p><b>Role of the media</b></p> <p>As Fiji approaches the 2018 General Election on November 14, my humble plea to all media organisations is for a fair coverage to all political parties and candidates contesting this year’s election. Printing one-sided stories will not do any media organisation any good as voters prefer impartiality with political parties’ coverage and interpretation of their manifesto. After the “pressed for time” nationwide joke, I was impressed with the coverage on FBC on Sunday which featured the leader of SODELPA Sitiveni Rabuka. This time around the two journalists were quite professional in the way they interviewed the SODELPA party leader. I have time and again stressed the role our media plays in disseminating information to the public and the importance of following media ethics and principles. As a media organisation if we want respect from the public we need to ensure that we respect the views and opinions of all and this is why The Fiji Times continues to gain respect and admiration from the public.</p> <p>Rajnesh Ishwar Lingam Nadawa, Nasinu</p>	Media and National Poll
<b>15 Oct 2018</b>	<p><b>UNHRC seat</b></p> <p>SO, Fiji makes it into the UNHRC. Awesome! The powers that are, walk the talk. As Mother Teresa said, part of it at least; “Human rights are not a privilege conferred by government, they are every human being’s entitlement by virtue of his humanity.” Sa kila? MANOJ LAL PATEL Drasa Avenue, Lautoka</p>	Fiji’s election to UNHRC
<b>31 Oct 2018</b>	<p><b>Political platform</b></p> <p>WOW, the men were at it, now the women are at it. Minister for Health and Medical Services Rosy Akbar has condemned criticisms by National Federation Party candidate Sandhya Bajpai on the poor condition of Fiji’s health sector.</p> <p>Isa, politics certainly brings out the best in us! ALLEN LOCKINGTON Kava Place, Waiyavi, Lautoka</p>	NFP candidate criticized

	<p><b>Cost of living</b></p> <p>The political party that brings the cost of living in this country down will get my vote. I live with my nephew who is 22 years old, four granddaughters 18, 16, 11 and six years old. I have retired and looking after them. We used to receive \$300 plus a week for our shopping before, it was OK, now we receive \$250 per week because of the exchange rate. We struggle to spend this money every week trying to make ends meet. I feel for other families out there around the country trying to make a decent living for the little they get. Please those in powers have mercy on us, the people.</p> <p>NACA NABUKAVOU Nadi</p>	<p>Bring down the cost of living</p>
	<p><b>Who to vote</b></p> <p>IT'S not surprising that youths are undecided on whom to vote for. They look for role models of integrity, honesty, fairness, justice and goodness, and I believe are met with the contrary. I believe the winds of change are upon us, and the changing of guards is inevitable for the next lap of leadership. Fiji is grateful for the quantitative changes we have had for the past 12 years. Now the qualitative change for stable morality and genuine integrity is the greatest need youths need today, given the overwhelming challenges of information overload and false media influence. The anticipation for change in batons is causing hesitancy in choosing the right leaders to a brighter Fiji. Youths have learnt that deeds not words determine progress, and that copy and paste does not go a long way. After all, our Fiji tomorrow is determined by the right choices our youths will make today. FINAU NAIGULEVU TURAGA Nadi Airport</p>	<p>Change in leadership</p>
	<p><b>Our responsibility</b></p> <p>Fiji's election to the UN Human Rights Council recently speaks volumes about the level of confidence the international community has in us and our determination to not only grant equal rights and freedoms to every citizen. We seem to be concentrating a great deal of our time on "pushing for our rights and freedoms" and because of that, we seem to have forgotten our role to uphold those rights and freedoms with responsibility. A classic example I can think of is how we tend to abuse the</p>	<p>Freedom of expression</p>

	right of “freedom of expression”. ALIFERETI JOSEFA SAKIASI Nadi	
<b>3 Nov 2018</b>	<p><b>Election process</b></p> <p>With so many rules binding political parties and candidates during this campaigning period, I believe the national election seems to be not that free as it seems to be. I believe it’s rather more an election of legality and technicality rather than free and fair. What is supposed to be a case of national interest is not drawing an interest at all so far. I am not even looking forward to the national poll day but rather the holiday part of it. A dull national election buildup indeed.</p> <p>Pita Soroaqli Nadarivatu</p>	Free and fair election

## Fiji Sun

News/Opinion – 2018 General Election

Date	2018 Election News / National Opinion
<b>4 Aug 2018</b>	<p><b>Political Column</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Hope party leader, Tupou Draunidalo – Humanity Opportunity Prosperity Equality</li> <li>• Unity Fiji Party leader, Savenaca Narube - Embracing our ethnic fears</li> <li>• SODELPA leader, Sitiveni Rabuka- 2018-2019 budget irresponsible, lacks vision</li> </ul> <p><b>Analysis by Nemani Delaibatiki</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• DVD tries to reinvest Rabuka as alternative Prime Minister</li> </ul>
<b>11 Aug 2018</b>	<p><b>Political Column</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• SODELPA leader, Sitiveni Rabuka – Token initiatives in the 2018-2019 budget are not sustainable in the long run</li> <li>• Hope party leader, Tupou Draunidalo – the right to vote is a sacred thing</li> </ul> <p>Related stories</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Political comments on bus fare - Distract from real issues : Association</li> </ul>
<b>18 Aug 2018</b>	<b>Response to Unity Party leader, Savenaca Narube</b>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Ashwin Raj - Why We Must Speak Out Against Racism And Bigotry <a href="http://fijisun.com.fj/2018/08/18/why-we-must-speak-out-against-racism-and-bigotry/">http://fijisun.com.fj/2018/08/18/why-we-must-speak-out-against-racism-and-bigotry/</a></li> <li>Editorial : Why Opposition Poll Claims Should Not Be Taken Seriously <a href="http://fijisun.com.fj/2018/08/18/editorial-why-opposition-poll-claims-should-not-seriously/">http://fijisun.com.fj/2018/08/18/editorial-why-opposition-poll-claims-should-not-seriously/</a></li> </ul> <p><b>Political Column</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Unity Fiji Party leader, Savenaca Narube - Public financial management under threat</li> </ul>
<b>25 Aug 2018</b>	<p><b>Political Column</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Unity Fiji Party leader, Savenaca Narube- National unity must be through the people</li> <li>SODELPA leader, Sitiveni Rabuka – Why e’ re losing confidence in Supervisor of Elections, Electoral Commission</li> </ul> <p><b>Related stories</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Charged – Leader Biman Prasad stands by provisional candidate charged with racial or religious vilification</li> </ul>
<b>30 Aug 2018</b>	<p><b>Analysis by Nemani Delaibatiki</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>No restriction on campaign before writ of elections</li> </ul>
<b>1 Sept 2018</b>	<p><b>Political Column</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Unity Fiji Party leader, Savenaca Narube – Reduce risks , avoid dishonest elections</li> <li>Hope party leader, Tupou Draunidalo – Slashing Pm, Ministers ‘pay, our core value</li> </ul>
<b>8 Sept 2018</b>	<p><b>Political Column</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>SODELPA leader, Sitiveni Rabuka – Calling for volunteers to be polling station agents</li> </ul> <p><b>Analysis by Nemani Delaibatiki</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Tailevu shaping up as one of the fiercest battle grounds</li> </ul>

<p><b>15 Sept 2018</b></p>	<p><b>Political Column</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Hope party leader, Tupou Draunidalo – Voters are bosses of Parliament</li> <li>• SODELPA leader, Sitiveni Rabuka – Concerns about Supervisor of Elections bias and mistakes in 2018 voter rolls</li> </ul> <p><b>Analysis by Nemani Delaibatiki</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Naiqama leadership bid reopens old party wounds</li> </ul>
<p><b>22 Sept 2018</b></p>	<p><b>Political Column</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Hope party leader, Tupou Draunidalo – We’re working on our own pre-election</li> <li>• SODELPA leader, Sitiveni Rabuka – Voter roll anomalies do not raise confidence</li> <li>• Unity Fiji Party leader, Savenaca Narube – we will open a foreign missing in Israel</li> </ul> <p><b>Related stories</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• PM at 74 % SODELPA’s Rabuka still far behind <a href="http://fijisun.com.fj/2018/09/22/vote2018-pm-at-74-in-latest-fiji-sun-razor-opinion-poll/">http://fijisun.com.fj/2018/09/22/vote2018-pm-at-74-in-latest-fiji-sun-razor-opinion-poll/</a></li> </ul>
<p><b>29 Sept 2018</b></p>	<p><b>Political Column</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Hope party leader, Tupou Draunidalo – Where is the access to justice?</li> <li>• Unity Fiji Party leader, Savenaca Narube – your vote for Unity Fiji will not be lost</li> </ul> <p><b>Related stories</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Opposition failed: New Poll</li> <li>• 1987: six nights in May</li> </ul>
<p><b>4 Oct 2018</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Vandalism – uproar over attack on two Fijifirst billboards</li> <li>• FEO warns parties to ensure their actors do not cook up data</li> </ul>
<p><b>6 Oct 2018</b></p>	<p><b>Political Column</b></p>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Hope party leader, Tupou Draunidalo- Teach our young people Fiji’s political history</li> <li>• Unity Fiji Party leader, Savenaca Narube – Our election processes compromise democracy</li> </ul> <p>Related stories</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Rabuka rising, poll says <a href="http://fijisun.com.fj/2018/10/06/rabuka-rising-poll-says/">http://fijisun.com.fj/2018/10/06/rabuka-rising-poll-says/</a></li> </ul>
<b>12 Oct 2018</b>	<p><b>Statement</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• AG: Poverty in Fiji I at a historic low <a href="http://fijisun.com.fj/2018/10/12/poverty-in-fiji-is-at-a-historic-low/">http://fijisun.com.fj/2018/10/12/poverty-in-fiji-is-at-a-historic-low/</a></li> </ul> <p><b>Editorial:</b> Tell the whole truth, don’t be economical with facts</p>
<b>13 Oct 2018</b>	<p><b>Political Column</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• SODELPA leader, Sitiveni Rabuka – SODELPA continues dialogue with the Electoral Commission</li> <li>• Unity Fiji Party leader, Savenaca</li> <li>• Narube - The three-legged stool</li> </ul>
<b>20 Oct 2018</b>	<p><b>Political Column</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Unity Fiji Party leader, Savenaca Narube – Free education for all</li> <li>• Hope party leader, Tupou Draunidalo – Good governance brings certainty, safety, security</li> </ul> <p>Related stories</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• FICAC ready to take on poll breach complaints</li> </ul>
<b>27 Oct 2018</b>	<p><b>Political Column</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Unity Fiji Party leader, Savenaca Narube –</li> <li>• Hope party leader, Tupou Draunidalo –</li> </ul> <p><b>Analysis by Nemani Delaibatiki</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Rabuka moves to step his mark as undisputed leader</li> </ul>
<b>30 Oct 2018</b>	<p><b>Analysis by Nemani Delaibatiki</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• PM easily tops standings as political leaders re rated</li> </ul>
<b>3 Nov 2018</b>	<p><b>Political Column</b></p>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Unity Fiji Party leader, Savenaca Narube- A Road map to peace and happiness</li> </ul> <p>Related stories</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• FijiFirst leads in 2 polls</li> </ul>
--	---

## Opinion – Letters to the Editor

Date	Letters to the Editor	Comment
<b>18 Aug 2018</b>	<p><b>Birds of a feather</b></p> <p>Timoci Gaunavinaka, Nausori</p> <p>The allegations raised by Opposition political parties in regard to the election process is a desperate attempt to discredit the upcoming election and its eventual results.</p> <p>Various opinion polls survey done in the past 12 months suggest a landslide victory for the ruling FijiFirst Party. This is not an easy thing to swallow, especially after you have been so engrossed in manipulating facts and spreading lies about the Government.</p> <p>The opposition parties are already working on “Plan B” sensing the most likely result that a FijiFirst landslide victory is going to shatter their “Plan A” dreams to pieces.</p> <p>They today pretend to preach free and fair election as if they are experts on the topic and have perfect track records on the issue.</p> <p>They hide the truth from the people.</p> <p>The truth about how elections were done when they were in power and the reason the FijiFirst Government is now doing so much to prepare people for a genuinely free and fair election.</p>	Critical of the Opposition

The Fiji Sun dated Thursday, May 11, 2006, has a front page headline, "Poll officials reject 120 ballot boxes" refereeing to the incident that happened in Nadi where 120 ballot boxes from 24 polling stations were received without labels.

A day earlier, the Fiji Sun front page headline read "Ballot boxes breach baffles Karavaki".

This states that some ballot boxes were transported for many kilometres from one location to another without Police supervision, breaching the electoral law.

On another Fiji Sun news headline, "SDL backers chase NFP voters from grog party" an incident that happened at Waidalice District School.

In some polling stations, the polling started a day early, but only SDL knew about it and other parties were not informed.

Qarase was recorded saying that if an Indo-Fijian (referring to Chaudhry) was elected, the events of May, 2000 would be repeated.

It was this shameful election process that brought SDL (now SODELPA) to power.

I still have newspaper photos showing Mahen Chaudhary being held hostage in Parliament by George Speight before Bainimarama negotiated his release. Speight's elder brother later became a Minister in Qarase's SDL government. Mr. Chaudhry was first held hostage in Rabuka's 1987 coup along with Dr. Timoci Bavadra, the stepdad of Tupou Draunidalo. Tupou's biological dad was a senior military officer in Rabuka's 1987 coup and later became an Ambassador in the Qarase Government.

Today I find it amazing that all these people (Qarase, Mahen, Rabuka, and now Biman) who "once upon a time" had opposing political ideologies are now working together like a tight knit family with the single target to oust Bainimarama's FijiFirst.

	<p>They do not care about the needs and lives of the people that the Bainimarama Government has tremendously improved.</p> <p>They do not care about the huge improvement to our infrastructure and economy. They do not care about national stability Fiji First has brought.</p> <p>Today they have all showed us their true colours confirming the saying, “Birds of a feather flock together’.</p>	
<p><b>27 Aug 2018</b></p>	<p><b>Well said Naitasiri</b></p> <p>Tukai Lagonilakeba, Nadi</p> <p>These are the border villages in the interior where Navosa meets Naitasiri and are close to the Wainisavulevu Weir, Monasavu Damn and Nadrau Village.</p> <p>He had to cross rivers where there was no bridge, walking long distances through its many dangerous mountain ridges and terrain at Sauvakarua, Navosa.</p> <p>Riding on horseback where there was no road, our PM Voreqe Bainimarama toured the upper reaches of those far-thest and remotest villages, including Lutu Village, Naitasiri.</p> <p>This was in his desire is to see to that no Fijian was left behind through Govern-ment development, assistance and initia-tives. Thank you to the Taukei Nakorova-tu and the Vunivalu Waima Ratu Timoci Rokobukete your comments on in the Fiji Sun on Saturday, August 25.</p> <p>Well said indeed and I quote, “We must be realistic to see and acknowledge the development and assistance put in place by the government of the day, otherwise we could be hypocrites”.</p> <p>They also wished past leaders were like our PM, who takes the time to listen to people with their</p>	<p>PM applauded</p>

	<p>genuine concerns and directs Government officials to take action immediately.</p> <p>This is about the ordinary Fijian people who have been long neglected, forgotten and told lies to from past PM's and their governments.</p> <p>This is not about vote buying, this is about taking government services to those who matter the most and it is their constitutional right.</p> <p>We will all be hypocrites if we do not acknowledge these developments happening throughout the country.</p> <p>That's it directly from an iTaukei chief and a respected leader in the Vanua of Naitasiri.</p> <p>While his critics are asleep and spreading lies, our PM is out and about busy in remote areas, including our maritime islands.</p> <p>These villagers do not get involved in any politics, but they only want and desire Government services similar to what we in the urban centres take for granted</p>	
<b>3 Sept 2018</b>	<p><b>President</b></p> <p>Tukai Lagonilakeba, Nadi</p> <p>Can Ro Teimumu Kepa explain to the Fijian public who elected our 2014 Republic of Fiji President?</p> <p>She was among the handful of Opposition members who rejected the nomination of our current President, but the de-funct GCC did not have a part in it.</p>	Ro Teimuu asked to explain in relation to the President's election
<b>8 Sept 2018</b>	<p><b>Interfering by NFP</b></p> <p>Raj Deo, Lautoka</p> <p>Living in Lautoka, I had to put up with the fumes from the dump fire for a few days.</p>	Concern against NFP

	<p>What I could not put up with was the fact that the vice president for the National Federation Party chose to politicize the issue.</p> <p>Is the vice president for NFP our new garbage dump warden?</p> <p>The authorities came along and sorted out the issue in due course, which would have been done even without the Garbage Dump Warden's interference.</p>	
	<p><b>SODELPA Split</b></p> <p>Amenatave Yaconisau, Delainavesi</p> <p>I fully agree with your reporter Selita Bolanavanua who reported on the above (FS 1/9).</p> <p>Section 84 of the Constitution is about newly-appointed Presidents, not an ex-tension of appointment.</p> <p>The Great Council of Chiefs cannot come back as recommended by Aiyaz Sayed Khaiyum in his Masters' thesis "Cultural Autonomy" under the notion that a separate administration is bad for citizenship.</p> <p>After all lawmaking in Parliament is by the majority.</p>	GCC's role
<b>11 Sept 2018</b>	<p><b>Best write up</b></p> <p>Farmaan Ali, Nadi</p> <p>Early Monday morning and I read this article (Why Bringing Back the Great Council of Chiefs is a Lost Cause) by Nemani Delaibatiki. Makes my day.</p> <p>Please keep writing logical like this so that my iTaukei brothers and sisters do not get carried away by people like Niko.</p> <p>You are a legend.</p>	Reinstatement of GCC
<b>20 Sept 2018</b>	<p><b>Opposition parties</b></p> <p>Timoci Gaunavinaka, Nausori</p>	Issue of possible coalition

All opposition political parties know that winning the upcoming general election on their own is a farfetched conclusion.

They must form a united coalition to stand a chance of beating FijiFirst. But each of these political parties are built on political ideologies that are miles apart and some absolutely oppose each other to the core.

This means that their marriage under a coalition can only be superficial and nothing more. It will be like a couple going to their wedding where the only thing they both agree upon is to say no vows and make it up as they go along.

SODELPA wants to bring back Affirmative Action. This means that some iTaukei students with lower marks will get scholarships over students of other races with higher marks. I do not believe that National Federation, Fiji Labour Party, HOPE and Unity Fiji supporters will agree to that!

SODELPA wants to bring back the Great Council of Chiefs (GCC) and give them more power. This would mean allowing iTaukei traditional influences and allegiances to influence voters instead of fair and good governance. This absolutely contradicts what NFP and FLP preaches.

Sitiveni Rabuka, who is the leader of the most dominant opposition party, will be the likely Prime Minister if they win. This would practically mean that any vote for Biman Prasad, Mahendra Chaudhry or for Savenaca Narube is actually a vote for Mr. Rabuka. Are supporters of NFP, HOPE, Labour and Unity Fiji ok with that?

SODELPA, in its SDL days, were on the verge to install the "Qoliqoli Bill" transferring ownership of all waterways, coastal seas, rivers and their tributaries, dams like Monasavu and their catchment and etc. to Native Landowners from State. They will most likely do this if they come into power.

	<p>That will be like opening Pandora’s box with no limits to associated and relative iTaukei demands that may spring out of it.</p> <p>Many privileges will be unfairly given to iTaukei over other races under Affirmative Action to justify SODELPA’s ‘iTaukei victimisation’ claim under FijiFirst’s Governance. Are all parties ok with that?</p> <p>The same Mr. Rabuka, under whose governance our National Bank of Fiji went bankrupt, will now be in charge of all the money and the thriving economy, which the Bainimarama Government took years to build. Are NFP, Labour, UFP and HOPE supporters ok with that?</p> <p>Once in power, what is there to stop Mr. Rabuka from collapsing our economy once again and blaming it on the previous Bainimarama Government’s loans as a cover up?</p> <p>These are valid and vital questions that Mr. Prasad, Mr. Chaudhry, Tupou Draunidalo and Mr. Narube must answer to their supporters now and not deliberately “guise” and pretend that they are non-issues.</p> <p>What these politicians are not telling their supporters now is that their marriage after the election will compromise so much of their ‘ocean’ of differences making their various political party agendas and pre-election manifestos absolutely null and void.</p> <p>As a professor in social science, Mr. Prasad knows this too well. It is not rocket science. He can never reveal to his supporters before the election that he will combine with Mr. Rabuka after the election.</p> <p>He knows that to tell the truth will be a political suicide so he has taken the only option available to him to try and entice voters with an “imaginary” NFP single party victory that everyone knows will never happen.</p>	
	<p><b>Taveuni roads</b></p>	<p>Condition of roads</p>

	<p>A Shariff Shah, Savusavu</p> <p>To our very good Government, can we have the stretch of road between Wairiki and Soqulu in Taveuni tarsealed please? It has been long neglected.</p> <p>And while on this route, please maintain the roads from Wairiki right up to Salia-levu and Navakawau.</p>	
<b>22 Sept 2018</b>	<p><b>Hail Rosy Akbar</b></p> <p>Premila Singh,</p> <p>Suva</p> <p>As a grandmother of four young grand-daughters, I am thrilled to see Rosy Ak-bar in the strong FijiFirst line-up.</p> <p>She is a role model for all young girls, a woman who took over a Ministry rid-dled with issues and worked tirelessly to make a difference.</p> <p>God Bless you Madam Minister.</p>	Rosy Akbar applauded
	<p><b>Common ID</b></p> <p>Tukai Lagonilakeba,</p> <p>Nadi</p> <p>We are all Fijians. Former convicted 2000 coup supporter and SODELPA pro-visional candidate from Nadroga and Nadrau native, Simione Drola, believes in a common identity for all who call Fiji their home. Very encouraging in that he at least differs from those ultra National-ist party members.</p> <p>The Fiji Sun report September 18 (on page 2), about the former Coup convict is refreshing to know. But I personally feel he is in the wrong political party. The whole SODELPA leadership does not ac-cept our 2013 Constitution, including the use of Fijian as a common ID.</p>	SODELPA candidates

	<p>For that reason I am certain Mr. Drola will not make the final cut for the SODELPA 51 Candidates to contest our 2018 General Election, but despite that, I have the greatest respect for the bloke in bold-ly coming out in the open to defy the odds and express his positive opinion on equal citizenship.</p> <p>I am certain he will be castigated for his personal belief or conviction.</p> <p>You never know, he could be the agent of change in the SODELPA house, but I wish him well and good luck. Vinakwa Gali.</p>	
<p><b>23 Sept 2018</b></p>	<p><b>Spewing venom</b></p> <p>Dharmendra Kumar, Suva</p> <p>It's just horrific and outrageous to read Niko Nawaikula's post on Facebook. Ven-om being spewed and so much hate is just unbelievable.</p> <p>Having a Member of Parliament (MP) who continues to spew out hate on a regu-lar basis is just shocking.</p> <p>On the other hand, SODELPA leadership and NFP are quiet. Are they condoning this behaviour?</p> <p>We slaughter fellow Fijians in our words and attitude, we slaughter one another in the stereotype and mistrust that lingers in our head and the words of hate we spew from our lips.</p> <p>Real Christians don't hate, real Chris-tians overflow with God's love and with that they only have the capacity to love.</p> <p>If you find hatred in your heart it is an indication that it's time to keep quiet and pray, as every word you utter will be ac-countable to God.</p> <p>We as Christians must openly condemn this hatred which seeks to divide this na-tion.</p> <p>I fully agree with Jyoti Pratibha's anal-ysis "your vote will decide whether we prosper as a nation</p>	<p>Hate speech</p>

	or we are dragged back to where Fiji was 31 years ago”.	
<b>24 Sept 2018</b>	<p><b>Taveuni road</b></p> <p><b>Shariff Shah, Savusavu</b></p> <p>To our very good Government.....can we have this stretch of road in between Wairiki and Soqulu tarsealed please. Long neglected. And while on this route...please maintain the roads from Wairiki right up to Salialevu and Navakawau.</p>	Seeking govt assistance
	<p><b>Election line-up</b></p> <p>Joe Smith, Pacific Harbour</p> <p>No party has any pharmacist or engineer or surveyor in its line-up. Fiji universities are failing. Biggest Budget slice goes to health, road AND land. Yet no specialists in our next parliament.</p> <p><i>Editor’s note:</i></p> <p>FijiFirst sitting MP and provisional candidate Alvick Maharaj is a prominent pharmacist. The FijiFirst provisional line-up announced last week also includes 2 doctors, 10 teachers, 5 lawyers and 2 academics.</p>	Pharmacist in the election line-up
	<p><b>Marriage of convenience</b></p> <p>Dharmendra Kumar, Rewa Street</p> <p>The simple definition of a coalition government is a marriage of convenience between two or more political parties to form a governing body.</p> <p>It involves compromise of ideological positions and principle between multiple political parties in a desperate bid to form Government.</p> <p>The National Federation Party is still wary of SODELPA leader Sitiveni Rabuka. That’s why it</p>	Possible Rabuka-Biman –led coalition Govt

can't talk coalitions with SODELPA before the 2018 elections.

It's no secret that some politicians often lie, but consider this – they can do so simply by telling the truth.

Confused?

The NFP now has kept its option open after the elections.

So anything is possible. Biman Prasad is not willing to do a coalition before the election because Mr. Rabuka and SODELPA has a lot of political baggage.

If there are too many parties controlling the fate of the people, anarchy and disorder will eventually result because no single party is in power.

Multiple parties mean a multiple of opinions on every issue and lack of agreement on policies or their implementation.

Marriage of convenience don't have great success because they are filled with self- interest, absence of chemistry and, of course, real love.

Political promises are much like marriage vows, they are made at the beginning of the relationship between candidates and voter, but quickly forgotten.

The bottom line is voters must know of political marriage pre-election.

So, we can know where our votes will eventually go if a scenario of coalition does eventuate.

In my opinion a coalition government cannot provide the required stability for the development of the country hence voters must vote for a party that is capable to get the majority of votes and form the Government.

<p><b>25 Sept 2018</b></p>	<p><b>Rabuka's nemesis</b></p> <p>Tukai Lagonilakeba,</p> <p>Namaka, Nadi</p> <p>Sitiveni Rabuka's arch rivals or political opponents including the 630,000+ eligible Fijian voters will always remember Rambo from his past as the instigator and father of the coup culture in our country,</p> <p>It does not matter how many times he has apologised. It is human nature that Fijians will not forgive or forget his past and he will have to live with that, it is the reality on the ground now and into the future.</p> <p>I have already said it in the past that the former PM will be a liability in the political party he joins.</p> <p>And the HOPE party president Tupou Draunidalo has spelt it out pertinently in her outburst on the NFP and SODELPA working relationship that she did not want to become a part of it and resigned to form her own party.</p> <p>The fact remains that these many very negative testimonies are not doing the SODELPA and the NFP camps any good in terms of their voter confidence.</p>	<p>Rabuka, a liability?</p>
	<p><b>Rabuka / Coalition</b></p> <p>Amenatave Yaconisau,</p> <p>Delainavesi</p> <p>I refer to your article titled "Rabuka bad: Tupou" (Fiji Sun 24/9) wherein HOPE Party president attacked Sitiveni Rabuka of SODELPA.</p> <p>Political parties should promote stability and not personal revolutionary vendettas.</p>	<p>Rabuka bad: Tupou</p>
	<p><b>Political debates</b></p>	<p>Campaign promises</p>

	<p>Dharmendra Kumar, Rewa Street, Suva</p> <p>Candidate debates are not constitution-ally mandated, but it is considered to be an important element in choosing the right candidate.</p> <p>In the US, the presidential debates are held late in the election cycle. The debates are targeted mainly at undecided voters; those who tend not to be partial to any po-litical party.</p> <p>The advantage of a political debate is that it stimulates voter interest and also edu-cate voters quickly and completely.</p> <p>A good political debate will allow voters to assess potential leader’s intellect and also check their moral compass.</p> <p>A lot of campaign promises have been made and some are no doubt unrealistic.</p> <p>A political debate will help settle the matters on issues such as retirement age, scholarships, the disbanded Great Council of Chiefs and other important policies.</p> <p>If the debate does happen than we as the voters will have the opportunity to iden-tify false promises.</p> <p>When you put people on the spot on high stake situation, they may try to wriggle out or evade truth.</p> <p>My dream team for this particular politi-cal debate would be; Voreqe Bainimarama, Aiyaz Sayed-Khaiyum, Sitiveni Rabuka, Ro Teimumu Kepa, Biman Prasad and Savenaca Narube.</p> <p>A political debate is like a job interview and we as the voters look for certain traits as to who gets the job.</p>	
<b>26 Sept 2018</b>	<b>Party statistics</b>	<b>Contradictory policies</b>

	<p>Amenatave Yaconisau, Delainavesi</p> <p>A summary of Party sup-porters in the 2014 election is not forthcoming in terms of age, gender, occupation, trade union membership, religion among others so that parties know where to concentrate their resources.</p> <p>These are areas where parties can seek their fortunes. There will be many vote switching especially from preserved tra-ditions.</p> <p>Given NFP ruling out an alli-ance with SODELPA electoral possibilities will be very thin, especially contradictory poli-cies.</p>	
	<p><b>Politics and Lies</b></p> <p>Tomasi Lomaniviti, Suva</p> <p>I read with interest a media report in which SODELPA President of the Suva Branch and a candidate visited Nanuku settlement in Vatuwaqa.</p> <p>These politicians, Mr. Nata and Ms. Waqanika advised the people in Nanuku that it is the governments’ responsibility to provide developments in Fiji.</p> <p>Well, can they inform the people of what major develop-ments have been done by the SVT and SDL governments for almost 19 years effective from 1987 to 2006?</p> <p>They must wake up and stop spreading lies for their politi-cal gain.</p> <p>These are the same people from outer islands away from Viti Levu who continue to be-little our hero, Mr. Bainimara-ma who has achieved a lot for Fiji since 2007.</p> <p>Who is Watisoni Nata and did he ever exist all these years since 2007? It is evident that these iTaukei politicians who do not have any land in Viti Levu will continue to mislead the people to get</p>	<p>No lying</p>

	<p>their votes especially land issues which is a critical topic for every land-owner.</p> <p>The 1987 coup was initiated with the same lies on land issues by the same people who overtook the Bavadra govern-ment.</p> <p>Politicians must stop lying to the people to get their votes. The truth will always prevail.</p> <p>God Bless our beloved country and our Honorable PM for his vision for Fiji</p>	
<b>2 Oct 2018</b>	<p><b>Media fairness</b></p> <p>Amenatave Yaconisau, Delainavesi</p> <p>We assume media outlets are for the people and should not manipulate public opinion. Certainly, there is no Government interference in the media.</p> <p>But they are well advised to recognise their responsibilities and critically exam-ine opponents with fairness.</p> <p>No editorial preference!</p>	Pro-People – Media
	<p><b>FijiFirst the best</b></p> <p>Esther Croker, Kedrakulu, Sigatoka</p> <p>I would like to take this time and thank the FijiFirst Government for everything that it has done in improving the liveli-hoods of the ordinary Fijians.</p> <p>Over the years, we have witnessed chang-es that have taken place in infrastructure, the health sector, education department and the growth in the economy, to name a few.</p> <p>More children than ever before are able to go to school with the free tuition, free bus fare scheme and milk and Weet-Bix for the young ones in primary schools.</p>	
	<p><b>Shame on Rabuka</b></p> <p>Naca Nabutu, Caubati</p>	National Bank of Fiji

	<p>Sitiveni Rabuka fired a cheap shot at Voreqe Bainimarama in an exchange over the collapse of the National Bank of Fiji.</p> <p>During the exchange on FBC’s Radio Fiji One debate this week, Rabuka told Mr. Bainimarama that his late brother, Tim Bainimarama, was one of the debtors. The statement by implication suggested Mr. Tim Bainimarama was one of those responsible for the bank’s demise.</p> <p>It was a low blow and showed his real level. NBF did not collapse because the late Mr. Bainimarama took out a loan. There is no evidence to say that Mr. Tim Bainimarama did not pay back the loan. But the fact remains that NBF collapsed under the watch of Rabuka, a debt our children are still paying and our grandchildren will also pay. I am sure this can be checked with the Reserve Bank of Fiji which has a list of all the bad debtors of NBF. We can see through Rabuka’s cheap shot. It was cheap and he should be ashamed of himself.</p> <p>Blaming a man who is no longer in this world for the collapse of the National Bank is the sign of sheer desperation. This is how far Rabuka has stooped. It does not change the fact that it was during the watch of Rabuka as Prime Minister that our first and only National Bank collapsed and no amount of diversion changes that fact.</p> <p>Shame on him.</p>	
	<p><b>Imagine that</b></p> <p>Arvind Mani, Nadi</p> <p>What if all Opposition leaders were like Voreqe Bainimarama?</p> <p>Let’s take a momentary pause from the ongoing political campaigns, (which are getting uglier by the day, rife with empty promises and outrageous claims), but not necessarily from politics, to pay proper homage to the man who leads the country and the immense impact he has had on Fiji and beyond.</p>	<p>PM applauded</p>

Bainimarama has transformed our entire country and established a winning culture that set the foundation for the most successful era in the last decade. Through his exceptional leadership, Bainimarama set a new benchmark for excellence and continues to do so. As the tireless leader of COP23, relentlessly creating an awareness of the dangers of global warming, he has garnered the respect of leaders worldwide.

Bainimarama became the PM at a time when the country was in turmoil and few could have tackled that job with his finesse and tact. There was racial tension and no sense of security. Bainimarama has given the power back to the people, promoted secularism, and advocated that all citizens will be called Fijians. Quite a few who had fled the country because of political persecution have returned to the paradise and others are contemplating on coming back.

Even when FijiFirst was a military government, Bainimarama governed with class and honor. He is a caring, grounded, firm voice of reason in turbulent times. His moral compass points true north. He cares deeply for the disenfranchised and needy.

In other words, he is just like what we wish Opposition leaders would be.

Seriously, imagine (and you'll have to) how much different the country would be if a majority of our politicians were cut from Bainimarama's cloth.

As you know, parliamentarians aren't all choir boys and behave like errant miscreants but Bainimarama stayed true to himself and hasn't let the position corrupt him even though the social media and the pathetic conspiracy theorists have constantly, albeit unsuccessfully, tried to malign him. He has been tested by fire and has come out unscathed.

What if everyone in Fiji operated like that?

	<p>Bainimarama can rule with a quiet voice that commands the grudging respect of the Opposition parliamentarians and even the Great Council of Chiefs.</p> <p>It has worked because they recognized who Bainimarama is and what he stands for.</p> <p>It's a pipe dream, of course, to think that Bainimarama will be at the helm forever. But if he did, everyone can be sure he cannot be bought. He strips away ideology and finds a way to see that the most vulnerable citizens in the state has proper care. He has not been caught in any scandals and is strongly pro-education. He has not rested on his laurels but is continuously improving the infrastructure of the country. He has initiated great programmes that the Opposition leaders are trying to copy but make it seem like it is they who have done it. Imitation is, indeed, the sincerest form of flattery.</p> <p>Bainimarama is pro-human, and doesn't treat those whose politics might be different as trash to be trampled underfoot, though he can be brutally frank (no pun intended) when he sees politicians lying. And how can you tell politicians are lying? Their lips are moving. A cliché but a truism, nonetheless.</p> <p>Bainimarama continuously works to find common ground and is a dedicated and unquestionable leader for all Fijians.</p> <p>Imagine that. So why would you vote for anyone else?</p>	
	<p><b>Radio Interview</b></p> <p>Tukai Lagonilakeba, Nadi</p> <p>The Radio interview was fantastic with an opportunity for all to make clear our judgments whether our very popular Voreqe Bainimarama must remain our PM with his FijiFirst party government again, but the lack of maturity, stability with the ongoing crisis at the SODELPA house and its political Vanua based leadership is</p>	<p>Itaukei landowners have benefited</p>

not a choice for the many reasons known to all majority eligible Fijians voters.

Sitiveni Rabuka rejected the 1997 Constitution and does not have a provision for percentage fair share royalty payout to the resource owners including the 1970 post-independence Constitution.

Our 2013 Constitution allows, facilitates and respects indigenous iTaukei resource owners where they are now reaping the benefits including those that own Crown, iTaukei and Freehold Land from minerals mined below the surface of their properties.

It is historical for all Fijian resources owners at Nasomo settlement in Vatukoula after they received their royalties through this brave and visionary tested inclusive leadership which is in compliance with the Supreme Law of our sovereign state where we are truly sharing in the wealth of our country where no Fijian will be left behind irrespective and that is a promise to all Fijians irrespective from this FijiFirst government.

I am personally grateful and believe that there are three great favours the iTaukei landowners have benefited much from the leadership of Mr. Bainimarama as reported meticulously in the Fiji Sun front page Diwali day November 7 edition where 100 per cent of all VKB registered tokatoka and Mataqali landowner members are enjoying their Equal Lease monies distribution through TLTB indiscriminately, secondly the \$10 Million booster iTaukei Grant specifically allocated to inspire our landowners to achieve their Commercial aspirations in the development of their land and thirdly the royalty fair share provisions from mined minerals below their land apart from all the spoils which this government have implemented for all Fijians and not forgetting all those VKB registered iTaukei children born today including those who are under 18 years of age will have their shares kept in a trust with TLTB until they are officially qualified to be paid their share.

	<p>But can Fiji trust Rabuka and his SODELPA party to lead our country considering his past record and failed leadership?</p>	
	<p><b>My temple ban</b></p> <p>Sukha Singh, Labasa</p> <p>Could the people who selected CharanJeeth Singh as an NFP candidate ask him to lift the Temple ban he placed on myself from 31st January 2013 .</p> <p>Even the Fiji Human Rights Commission were unable to lift the ban sighting some constitutional restriction.</p> <p>As a former NFP election candidate, I think only the board can help me.</p> <p>Please note that the ban was placed on me without even calling me to a meeting.</p>	<p>NFP's Charanjeet Singh</p>
<p><b>4 Oct 2018</b></p>	<p><b>Free will voting</b></p> <p>Tukai Lagonilakeba, Nadi</p> <p>Mature, responsible and peaceful cam-paigning is expected from all our politi-cal parties so as not to create dissent and political instability among our eligible 630,000+ registered Fijian voters.</p> <p>They should not be coerced into voting against their own free will and totally un-disturbed.</p> <p>Surprisingly where are unionists Dan Urai and Felix Anthony hiding in all these as it would be the most opportune time for them to resign from both their very com-fortable highly paid union jobs to contest the election on a party of their choice. So they can holistically bolster their claims and work towards protecting their very few Union member workers "Fundamen-tal Basic Human Rights" they have always advocated and stood for.</p> <p>I hope they can man up to stand for elec-tion and increase their boisterous mini-mum wage rate claims of \$5-\$10 an hour with the NFP, FLP and</p>	<p>Let the voters decide</p>

	<p>SODELPA for un-established, inexperienced and unqualified first time Fijian labourers.</p> <p>I would also like to ask the Commissioner of Police Brigadier-General Sitiveni Qiliho to investigate SODELPA's Jale O Baba for irresponsibly and selectively exposing the right to privacy and confidentiality of personal information for those registered voters in his Facebook account and it is a very bad political ploy from a frustrated loser in the SODELPA camp.</p> <p>Again, this is a blatant disregard to our 2013 Fijian Constitution section 24(1) (a) in the guarantee of Fundamental Rights for every Fijian. It must be nipped in the bud straight away and discouraged immediately.</p> <p>To all eligible Fijian voters, please be-aware of false prophets,</p> <p>We must do all possible to eliminate and discourage these types of people from parliamentary representation with their political parties and I ask that we reject them outright with our votes through our 2018 National Election as they are a bad influence on the future of our young Fijian children and our country's new democracy.</p>	
<p><b>11 Oct 2018</b></p>	<p><b>Man of God</b></p> <p>Dharmendra Kumar, Suva</p> <p>Since pastors, preachers and church leaders are influential people they must ensure that before they speak from the pulpit they must speak only the truth and preferably only from the scriptures.</p> <p>The leader of the Catholic Church in Fiji Archbishop Peter Loy Chong has apologised for giving factually wrong and misleading figures to his flock.</p> <p>I am confused. What was his real motive? When things happen that you cannot understand.....understand, there is a reason for every occurrence. God knows the best.</p>	<p>Give the people the facts</p>

	<p>“For nothing is secret, that shall not be made manifest; neither anything hid, that shall not be known and come abroad.”</p>	
<p><b>12 Oct 2018</b></p>	<p><b>SODELPA encounter</b></p> <p>Rahul Chand, Suva</p> <p>I had an interesting debate with SODEL-PA MP Viliame (Bill) Gavoka on Facebook where he said SODELPA will abolish Ter-tiary Education Loan Scheme (TELS) and introduce scholarship.</p> <p>I questioned whether this scholarship would be for different races meaning some for iTaukei students and some for Indo-Fijians. What I suspected was correct.</p> <p>SODELPA will introduce race-based scholarship. Your merit will not matter but your race will. This is how they plan to take this nation backwards.</p> <p>I then asked him what about people like me who have both iTaukei and Indo-Fijian blood. His response was that it will be de-cided later.</p> <p>Here is a Party with a policy that they have not even thought about. Here is a Par-ty advocating dialogue but his own leader went and announced that their President was their Deputy Leader.</p> <p>I questioned whether their Party had been having dialogue amongst their own selves. He disappeared from that page and did not reply to my question.</p> <p>Be warned people, remember the days where your race and not your merit mat-tered. This is what SODELPA wants to bring in for us young Fijians.</p> <p>Leadership that listens? What a joke.</p>	<p>Race-based scholarship system</p>
	<p><b>Election promises</b></p> <p>Wise Muavono, Lautoka</p>	<p>Promises made by the politicians</p>

	<p>Some election promises we will hear are; national peace will be declared, all roads and streetlights will be fixed (not tiled), no more water disruptions, basic food items price reduced.</p> <p>Do you know the mistake career politicians make?</p> <p>It's forgetting they've been appointed and thinking they've been anointed.</p>	
<p><b>17 Oct 2018</b></p>	<p><b>Party of denial</b></p> <p>Dharmendra Kumar, Suva</p> <p>The leader of the National Federation Party (NFP) cannot stop denying despite concrete proof of the nonsense being spewed by candidates and former candidates.</p> <p>Apart from the Prime Minister, I am really worried about the caliber of leaders in the respective political parties.</p> <p>The politics of denial is profoundly disturbing and it's becoming a hallmark of the NFP.</p> <p>There are two kinds of denial. The kind that involves a conscious lie, as when a child denies he cheated in the exams or the husband denies he was busy at work. We expect this kind of denial.</p> <p>It is as old as the world.</p> <p>The other, modern kind of denial getting popularised is a symptom of angry and bitter politicians who like to condone garbage. Mr. Biman Prasad please stop denying what's so obvious.</p> <p>We want leaders who are trustworthy and those that have integrity. Sometimes denial is the worst kind of lie because it's the lie you are telling yourself.</p> <p>As the leader you are condoning poor behavior and it's not a good reflection on your leadership.</p>	<p>NFP's drama</p>

	Winning is always nice but don't lose your integrity in the process.	
<b>18 Oct 2018</b>	<p><b>Tupou confused about Land Bank</b></p> <p><b>Timoci Gaunavinaka, Nausori</b></p> <p>HOPE leader and president Tupou Draunidalo should do her research properly before answering questions on TV and mis-leading people.</p> <p>On the question about the Land Bank, she stated that all iTaukei who deposit their land with the land bank will have their land locked up for 99 years.</p> <p>But in fact the land bank can lease land for as short as three months, one year, five years, 15 years and so on. The maximum possible term is 99 years.</p> <p>The "Survivor" series that was shot in Fiji leased over 10 acres of land via the Land Bank for just three months and paid landowners over \$30,000. There are currently those who are leasing for 5 years, 15 years and so forth depending on what purpose the lease is for.</p> <p>The Land Bank is today assisting iTaukei land owners with limited land to buy back their land that have been converted to Freehold during the colonial era.</p> <p>Unlike TLTB, the Land Bank paid land-owners the current market value for their land which is much higher than the TLTB rates.</p> <p>To get a Lease Title from TLTB takes about 12 months. Investors with multi-million dollars to invest cannot wait that long. The clause in the Land Bank lease giving no option for landowners to take the investors to court is done to attract investors and safeguard their interest.</p> <p>There is more than a hundred cases in Police records over the years where NLTB / TLTB leases were illegally road-blocked by landowners because of various grievances. Many investors have lost millions of dollars in such processes.</p>	Land bank

	<p>That clause is therefore made to ensure that landowners seek all legal advice before committing to such agreements.</p> <p>The bulk of landowners who have their land leased under the Land Bank are enjoying the proceeds of their lease today. There are even candidates standing for the NFP and SODELPA in this year's General Election whose lands or those of their clients are deposited at the Land Bank.</p> <p>Ms. Draunidalo said that she will remove the Land Bank and all the good work they have done to our kawa iTaukei if she wins the election.</p> <p>What has she done for our kawa iTaukei compared to the Land Bank ?</p>	
	<p><b>Candidate vetting</b></p> <p><b>Dharmendra Kumar, Suva</b></p> <p>I'm shocked as to how the National Federation party vetted their candidates for the 2018 General Election.</p> <p>A few were disqualified because they had criminal convictions.</p> <p>Imagine if the Fijian Elections Office did not have stringent vetting policies in place.</p> <p>On the one hand NFP leader Biman Prasad has a dream to become the next Prime minister of Fiji and yet his vetting is not full-proof. Is this the type of leader Fiji wants?</p>	<p>NFP's vetting of its candidates not full-proof</p>
	<p><b>Election chances</b></p> <p>Sukha Singh, Labasa</p> <p>There are 230 contestants for 51 seats. Every contestant has a 4.5 per cent chance to win, but with one constituency and how well-known you are your chances can increase or decrease .</p> <p>Remember you can be in the same party but you all are contesting against each other. So far, no</p>	<p>Contesting an election can be challenging</p>

	<p>contestant has bothered to e- mail me for my vote.</p> <p>I was in the elections once and I can tell you that it is the hardest thing to go and ask for votes.</p>	
	<p><b>FLP's freedom of expression</b></p> <p>Rahul Chand, Suva</p> <p>Funny how Fiji Labour Party's Aman Ravindra-Singh professes freedom of ex-pression but blocked me from his Face-book account when I pointed out some bitter truth. Truth is always a bitter pill to swallow</p>	Freedom of expression
25 Oct 2018	<p><b>Straight Talk</b></p> <p>Simon Hazelman, Savusavu</p> <p>Watching and listening to FijiFirst gen-eral secretary Aiyaz Sayed-Khaiyum, in his "Straight Talk" interview with Vijay Narayan makes one see the difference in caliber of the man and it also dawned on me why some are so against him!</p> <p>Many are just not ready for such an advanced professional and are finding it hard to contemplate his intelligence.</p> <p>He is so ahead in his thinking of de-velopment and progress that I believe if he were to debate against all opposition political candidates at once, he would embarrass them all.</p> <p>And if they were smart enough and listened carefully, he would offer them valuable lessons!</p> <p>This formidable intellectual is the smartest politician/parliamentarian we've ever had so instead of wasting your time barking nonsense, first ask yourself if you could even achieve a tiny fraction of what he has!</p> <p>One has got to be brainless and stupid not to recognise how fortunate we are to have his service.</p>	AG applauded

	<p>He complements our strong-minded, no-nonsense, visionary Prime Minister to the T! A stand-out orator and a class act indeed! Literally, intelligent, straight talk by far!</p>	
<p><b>26 Oct 2018</b></p>	<p><b>Political views</b></p> <p><b>Rozina Ali, Suva</b></p> <p>I was reading the political views of few parties recently.</p> <p>I came across one party who says if they form a government, they will bring back the Great Council of Chiefs (GCC) and the old lease payment system.</p> <p>My question is if the system is working fine at the moment why do these political parties want to change it?</p> <p>I remember very clearly before the current government came into power, many leases were not renewed even though they paid the land rent.</p> <p>They were denied renewals. In some cases a few shareholders of the same land demanded more money.</p> <p>In some cases, farmers were not even allowed to take out their belongings when they vacated the land. Many people who live in settlements are the victims of these lease payment system.</p> <p>Some were told to go back to India, that Fiji is not their country.</p> <p>Me and my family are the perfect example of this. We were victims.</p> <p>Now the current government has ensured tenants are not treated unfairly.</p> <p>Many party members are screaming that they need to increase the sugarcane payments and encourage more farming.</p>	<p>What change is coming</p>

	<p>Where were those people when the farmers were removed from their farms and houses?</p> <p>Because they had lost their land, how can one party encourage farmers and promise to increase their cane payment to \$100 a tonne?</p> <p>Party members are saying poverty, unem-ployment and price of basic food items have increased and they going to reduce it. How?</p> <p>Some people were pushed into poverty and unemployment after they were evicted from the land. They used to plant vegetables, rice, and other crops and selling them.</p> <p>They were able to produce enough food to survive and make extra money but since they have been removed from their homes/farms they are looking for jobs outside.</p> <p>These people who only knew farming are looking for jobs thus increasing the number of people who want jobs.</p> <p>They are earning very little because they are doing whatever they can to put food on their tables.</p> <p>Nowadays, even a Master's degree graduate needs to have experience to get a job.</p> <p>Who do these parties think will give jobs to these farmers?</p> <p>Lease issues with the mataqali and the GCC brought about these problems.</p> <p>Was this issue investigated thoroughly?</p> <p>Why do some politicians want to take us back to a dark past when people suffered in pain. They did not suffer what people went through.</p>	
<p><b>31 Oct 2018</b></p>	<p><b>Shammi Lochan leads</b></p> <p><b>Chandra Shivnil, Suva</b></p>	<p>Role of media</p>

As the country approaches November 14 all political parties have boosted their campaign to a greater extent.

This simultaneously has increased the work of journalists and various media personnel because they have the job of disseminating the information to the general public.

All the journalists and media person-nel have the paramount responsibility to see that the voices of the people are heard and their questions to the candi-dates of the upcoming general election and future parliamentarians are an-swered properly.

They have the responsibility to ensure that people do not become the victims of the lies and are not trapped in a di-lemma about certain policies of various political parties.

As such, exemplary efforts and enthu-siasm of making peoples' voices heard and their questions answered appropri-ately by political party representatives was shown by the host of Fiji Broadcast-ing Corporation's Aaina host Shammi Lochan.

She is counted among the successful women of our country, having more than 25 years of experience in the media industry.

Recently her radio talkback show gained huge popularity among the peo-ple as representatives of prominent po-litical parties were being interviewed.

She really shows extraordinary effort by ensuring that these representatives answer clearly and directly to various matters of concern, which really helps people in clearing their doubts.

However, people have been seen writ-ing negative comments on various plat-forms such as social media about this compassionate and very hardworking lady, which is very irresponsible and im-mature.

	<p>People need to understand that if we do not want the dark history to repeat itself then we all should support interviewers and journalists like madam Shammi.</p> <p>I salute to this courageous lady.</p> <p>People of a democratic country surely need a strong media during elections.</p>	
	<p><b>Standing as political leaders</b> Amenatave Yaconisau, Delainavesi, Lami</p> <p>The ‘Public Opinion Poll’ on the political leaders standing (Fiji Sun 30/10) is very deceptive and maybe error ridden too.</p> <p>This is a persecution of own country-men where other leaders are made inferior on the basis of performance.</p>	Public opinion poll
10 Nov 2018	<p><b>Watch before voting</b></p> <p><b>Savenaca Vakaliwaliwa, Suva</b></p> <p>To all voters who are still undecided and to all who are against the current FijiFirst Government; have a watch and listen to the whole truth and nothing but the truth, no nonsense but factual and enlightening interview with the FijiFirst General Secretary Aiyaz Sayed-Khaiyum on the “4 The Record-Episode 209” conducted on 21/10/2018.</p> <p>For one and half hours, hold your political bias and your one vote preference and listen to what the current Government has done for all Fijians and what it has planned for you in the next five to twenty years.</p> <p>As you watch and listen to this 4 The Record interview, I pray that God will inspire you with a spirit of discernment and use your one vote for a leader and a political party that has the blessings of heaven to prosper all Fijians and move the nation forward.</p> <p>All the lies are answered in this one interview and if you believe in God and prayer, then decide and</p>	Voters devised to choose facts

	<p>cast your one vote after watching and listening to this interview.</p> <p>God bless Fiji.</p>	
	<p><b>NFP hallucinations</b></p> <p>Dharmendra Kumar, Suva</p> <p>When we aim for the average, we prepare ourselves to get average results, and nothing more.</p> <p>We start becoming comfortable with average relationships, average lifestyles and average habits to sustain that lifestyle.</p> <p>At work too, we begin to hire average employees, become average managers of average talents, all too happy with average pay cheques.</p> <p>In contrast, the FijiFirst government has set the bar so high in modern Fiji that the opposition political parties are trying their best to reach it and it seems impossible, hence they are coming up with unreasonable policies in their manifestos which I call “fantasies”.</p> <p>The only way for them to reach that bar or the high standard is to come up with their bag full of fat lies with the intention of deceiving people.</p> <p>It’s rather fortunate that we have intelligent voters who will not be fooled.</p> <p>I am beginning to wonder if Biman Prasad and the National Federation Party are hallucinating. Insanity is kind of believing your hallucinations are real.</p> <p>It’s like Mr. Biman saying I live in a world of fantasy, so keep your reality away from me. I see what I want, I want what I see and it’s all okay by me.</p> <p>Is this not the peak of political hallucinations?</p>	<p>Don’t listen to lies</p>

Voters respectfully decline the invitation to join your hallucinations Biman Prasad.
Too many people seek change, but unfortunately they don't open their eyes and see that change is already here.
It's time to wake up and see the changes everywhere.

## Television/Radio Interviews/Live Debates

### Straight Talk

Date	Radio Interview/Debate	TV/Radio Show – Media Outlet
2 Oct 2018	Guest – Supervisor of Elections, Mohammed Saneem	CFL (Viti FM)
3 Oct 2018	Guest – Supervisor of Elections, Mohammed Saneem	CFL (Viti FM)
16 Oct 2018	Guest – Fiji Labour Party candidate, Aman Ravindra Singh	CFL (Viti FM)
18 Oct 2018	Guest – SODELPA leader, Sitiveni Rabuka	CFL (Viti FM)
22 Oct 2018	Guest – National Federation Party leader, Prof Biman Prasad	CFL (Viti FM)
23 Oct 2018	Guest – FijiFirst Party general-secretary, Aiyaz Sayed-Khaiyum	CFL (Viti FM)
25 Oct 2018	Guests - FijiFirst Party general-secretary, Aiyaz Sayed-Khaiyum and National Federation Party leader, Prof Biman Prasad	CFL (Viti FM)
30 Oct 2018	Guest- Unity Fiji Party leader – Sitiveni Rabuka	CFL (Viti FM)
31 Oct 2018	Guests—FijiFirst Party candidate, Premila Kumar, NFP candidate, Seni Nabou and SODELPA candidate, Lynda Tubuya	CFL (Viti FM)
1 Nov 2018	Guest – Supervisor of Elections, Mohammed Saneem	CFL (Viti FM)
8 Nov 2018	Guests – FijiFirst party candidate, Jone Usumate and NFP candidate, Attar Singh	CFL (Viti FM)
11 Nov 2018	Guests – FijiFirst leader Frank Bainimarama and SODELPA leader Sitiveni Rabuka	CFL (Viti FM)
11 Nov 2018	Guests – FijiFirst leader Frank Bainimarama and SODELPA leader Sitiveni Rabuka in Itaukei language on Viti FM	CFL (Viti FM)

\*All the interviews can be accessed on the link:

[https://web.facebook.com/pg/fijivillage/videos/?ref=page\\_internal](https://web.facebook.com/pg/fijivillage/videos/?ref=page_internal)

Date	TV Interview/Debate	TV Show – Media Outlet
21 Oct 2018	Tali Magimagi <b>Guest – SODELPA leader Sitiveni Rabuka</b>	MaiTV
22 Oct 2018	Simpsons@8 <b>Guest – National Federation Party leader, Prof Biman Prasad</b>	Mai TV
28 Oct 2018	Simpsons@8 <b>Guest – FijiFirst Party general-secretary, Aiyaz Sayed-Khaiyu</b>	Mai TV
4 Nov 2018	Simpsons@8 <b>Guest – SODELPA leader Sitiveni Rabuka</b>	Mai TV
4 Nov 2018	Tali Magimagi <b>Guest – HOPE party leader, Tupou Draunidalo</b>	Mai TV
9 Nov 2018	Tali Magimagi <b>Guest – National Federation Party candidate, Pio Tikoduadua</b>	Mai TV
10 Nov 2018	Simpsons@8 <b>Guest – Unity Fiji Party leader – Savenaca Narube</b>	Mai TV
18 Nov 2018	Simpsons@8 <b>Guest – Former Supervisor of Elections and Suva lawyer, John Apted</b>	Mai TV

\*All interviews can be accessed on the link:  
[https://web.facebook.com/pg/maitvfiji/videos/?ref=page\\_internal](https://web.facebook.com/pg/maitvfiji/videos/?ref=page_internal)

## 4 The Record

Date	TV Interview/Debate	TV/Radio Show – Media Outlet
16 Sept 2018	<p><b>Guest – Supervisor of Elections, Mohammed Saneem</b></p> <p><a href="https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=4pYzIFM2KAc">https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=4pYzIFM2KAc</a></p>	FBC TV
23 Sept 2018	<p><b>Guest - National Federation Party Leader, Biman Prasad</b></p> <p><a href="https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Btjglo88NfU">https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Btjglo88NfU</a></p>	FBC TV
7 Oct 2018	<p><b>Guest - Sitiveni Rabuka</b></p> <p><a href="https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=BQaLNDGHzhY&amp;t=2247s">https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=BQaLNDGHzhY&amp;t=2247s</a></p>	FBC TV
14 Oct 2018	<p><b>Guest - Fiji Alliance Party leader Jagath Karunaratne and FijiFirst candidate, Naziah Ali</b></p> <p><a href="https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=WJfMFC08tyk&amp;t=1747s">https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=WJfMFC08tyk&amp;t=1747s</a></p>	FBC TV
21 Oct 2018	<p><b>Guest – FijiFirst Secretary General, Aiyaz Saayed-Khaiyum</b></p> <p><a href="https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=UMvuutYRe0A&amp;t=500s">https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=UMvuutYRe0A&amp;t=500s</a></p>	FBC TV
28 Oct 2018	<p>Live debate</p> <p><b>Guest – Hope Party Leder, Tupou Draunidalo</b></p> <p><a href="https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=qb6UuhHSljU">https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=qb6UuhHSljU</a></p>	FBC TV
4 Nov 2018	<p>Live debate</p>	FBC TV

	<p>Guest – FijiFirst Party general-secretary, Aiyaz Saayed-Khaiyum and National Federation Party candidate, Kamal Iyer</p> <p><a href="https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ERjLXsS6aIE&amp;t=2511s">https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ERjLXsS6aIE&amp;t=2511s</a></p>	
<p>11 Nov 2018</p>	<p><b>Political Forum - LIVE - with FijiFirst General Secretary Aiyaz Saayed-Khaiyum, National Federation Party President, Pio Tikoduadua and SODELPA candidate Ro Filipe Tuisawau</b></p> <p><a href="https://web.facebook.com/fijibroadcastingcorporationtv/videos/715498522161371/">https://web.facebook.com/fijibroadcastingcorporationtv/videos/715498522161371/</a></p> <p><a href="http://www.fbc.com.fj/fiji/69834/sunday%E2%80%99s-%E2%80%984-the-record%E2%80%99-to-be-political-forum-until-election">http://www.fbc.com.fj/fiji/69834/sunday%E2%80%99s-%E2%80%984-the-record%E2%80%99-to-be-political-forum-until-election</a></p>	FBC TV
<p>25 Nov 2018</p>	<p><b>Guest-HRADC Director and MIDA chair, Ashwin Raj</b></p> <p><a href="https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=9rzkxXin5Uc&amp;t=216s">https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=9rzkxXin5Uc&amp;t=216s</a></p>	FBC TV

## Aaina Show

Date	TV Interview/Debate	TV/Radio Show – Media Outlet
<p>27 Sept 2018</p>	<p><b>Women in Parliament</b></p> <p>Guest – President of Fiji Chamber of Commerce, Dr Nur Bano an FWRM executive director, Ms.Nalini Singh</p> <p><a href="https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=tk3KdMXdUsE">https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=tk3KdMXdUsE</a></p>	FBC TV/Radio Fiji Two
<p>23 Oct 2018</p>	<p><b>Guest - National Federation Party Leader, Biman Prasad</b></p> <p><a href="https://web.facebook.com/aainashowfiji/videos/331628787386800/">https://web.facebook.com/aainashowfiji/videos/331628787386800/</a></p>	FBC TV/Radio Fiji Two
<p>16 Oct 2018</p>	<p><b>Guest – Fiji Labour Party candidate, Aman Ravindra Singh</b></p> <p><a href="https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=x5S865pEWXo&amp;t=96s">https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=x5S865pEWXo&amp;t=96s</a></p>	FBC TV/Radio Fiji Two

31 Oct 2018	<b>Guest- FijiFirst Party General Secretary, Aiyaz Sayed-Khaiyum</b> <a href="https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=NFJFyfA1mKk">https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=NFJFyfA1mKk</a>	FBC TV/Radio Fiji Two
11 Nov 2018	<b>Guest – FijiFirst general-secretary,.Aiyaz Saiyed-Khaiyum and National Federation Party candidate, Kamal Iyer</b> <a href="https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=BsFkMO5Z96A&amp;t=352s">https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=BsFkMO5Z96A&amp;t=352s</a>	FBC TV/Radio Fiji Two
21 Nov 2018	<b>Guest – Attorney-General, Aiyaz Sayed-Khaiyum</b> <a href="https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=7WhM7953ZWo">https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=7WhM7953ZWo</a>	FBC TV/Radio Fiji Two
27 Nov 2018	<b>Guest – HRADC Director, Ashwin Raj</b> <a href="https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=LIXCIEmKU">https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=LIXCIEmKU</a>	FBC TV/Radio Fiji Two

## Speak Your Mind

Date	TV Interview/Debate	TV/Radio Show – Media Outlet
19 Dec 2017	<b>Hate speech on Social Media</b>  <b>Guest – HRADC Director, Ashwin Raj</b>  <a href="https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=aqui15-4SCO">https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=aqui15-4SCO</a>	FBC TV/Gold FM
20 March 2018	<b>Guest – Supervisor of Elections on 2018 Elections Awareness</b> <a href="https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=WcgsDxuK8ZE">https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=WcgsDxuK8ZE</a>	FBC TV/Gold FM
27 March 2018	<b>Racism! It Stops with You</b>  <b>Guest – HRADC Director, Ashwin Raj</b> <b>CCF executive director, Bulutani Mataitawakilai</b> <b>Law student – Ziyaad</b> <a href="https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=1ZH1l4YoCwc&amp;t=648s">https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=1ZH1l4YoCwc&amp;t=648s</a>	FBC TV/Gold FM
17 July 2018	<b>Build-up to 2018 General Elections</b>  <b>Guest – Prime Minister, Frank Bainimarama</b>  <a href="https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=r4k_SeEjt6M&amp;t=309s">https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=r4k_SeEjt6M&amp;t=309s</a>	FBC TV/Gold FM

<b>8 Nov 2018</b>	<b>Guest – Prime Minister, Frank Bainimarama and SODELPA leader, Mr Sitiveni Rabuka</b>  <a href="https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-Pa-fZ2z_YM&amp;t=408">https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-Pa-fZ2z_YM&amp;t=408</a>	FBC TV/Radio Fiji One
<b>26 Nov 2018</b>	<b>Guest – Prime Minister, Frank Bainimarama</b>  <a href="https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=HR0V1fu8EEA&amp;t=340s">https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=HR0V1fu8EEA&amp;t=340s</a>	FBC TV/Radio Fiji One

## FBC TV's 2018 General Elections Coverage (Facebook) Links

- 4The Record Show - LIVE (11/10/18)- hosts Ziyad and Geraldine speak with FijiFirst General Secretary Aiyaz Sayed-Khaiyum, National Federation Party President, Pio Tikoduadua and SODELPA candidate Ro Filipe Tuisawau  
<https://www.facebook.com/fijibroadcastingcorporationtv/videos/715498522161371/>
- FBC News 14/10/18 6am update - 2018 General Election  
<https://www.facebook.com/fijibroadcastingcorporationtv/videos/206900783538638/>
- FBC News 14/10/18 7am update - Fiji 2018 General Election  
<https://www.facebook.com/fijibroadcastingcorporationtv/videos/1420701241396800/>
- FBC News 14/10/18 10am update on the 2018 General Election  
<https://www.facebook.com/fijibroadcastingcorporationtv/videos/315499592512864/>
- FBC News 14/10/18 12pm Bulletin - 2018 General Elections  
<https://www.facebook.com/fijibroadcastingcorporationtv/videos/262071371159177/>
- FBC News 14/10/18 2pm Bulletin - 2018 General Elections  
<https://www.facebook.com/fijibroadcastingcorporationtv/videos/2086111144784033/>
- 2018 Fijian General Election Update- 14/10/18  
<https://www.facebook.com/fijibroadcastingcorporationtv/videos/2208535292514612/>
- 2018 Fijian General Elections Update- 14/10/18  
<https://www.facebook.com/fijibroadcastingcorporationtv/videos/2096948227284210/>
- 12am FBC News 2018 Fijian General Elections Update – 15/10/18  
<https://www.facebook.com/fijibroadcastingcorporationtv/videos/599343647166651/>
- 2018 Fijian General Elections Update 2 – 15/10/18  
<https://www.facebook.com/fijibroadcastingcorporationtv/videos/348940615911839/>
- Go behind the scenes with our FBC News and TV teams from the 2018 Fijian General Elections! – 15/10/18  
<https://www.facebook.com/fijibroadcastingcorporation.news/videos/571979756572956/>
- 2018 Fijian General Elections Update- 17/10/18

<https://www.facebook.com/fijibroadcastingcorporationtv/videos/2324878864407629/>

- FBC 7pm News – 17/10/18  
<https://www.facebook.com/fijibroadcastingcorporationtv/videos/353246041743166/>
- 2018 Fijian General Elections Final Results & Updates – 18/10/18  
<https://www.facebook.com/fijibroadcastingcorporationtv/videos/2209826262360865/>
- 2018 Fijian General Elections Final Results & Updates 2- 18/10/18  
<https://www.facebook.com/fijibroadcastingcorporationtv/videos/263941897656720/>
- The Return of Elections Writ 2018- 18/10/18  
<https://www.facebook.com/fijibroadcastingcorporationtv/videos/358598441554425/>
- FBC 7pm News – 18/10/18  
<https://www.facebook.com/fijibroadcastingcorporationtv/videos/2162459300660581/>

## Close - Up/Out of the Box

Date	TV Interview/Debate	TV/Radio Show – Media Outlet
7 Nov 2018	<p><b>Guest – HRADC Director/MIDA chair, Ashwin Raj</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Role of Media during general election</li> </ul>	<b>Fiji TV</b>
25 Nov 2018	<p><b>Guest – HRADC Director/MIDA Chair, Ashwin Raj</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Role of mainstream local media in covering the 2018 general elections against the fake news being posted on social media platforms</li> <li>• Respect for human dignity in light of level of mud-slinging used on social media by certain politicians to campaign</li> <li>• Respect for blackout period and how it was covered by the Fijian media</li> </ul>	<b>Fiji TV</b>

# Financials

The Media Industry Development Authority ('**MIDA**') is established under section 3 of the Media Industry Development Act 2010. As an authority that is responsible for the registration, regulation and development of media services in Fiji, MIDA is fully committed to the principles of good governance and accountability.

Although established in 2010, MIDA started receiving its annual operational grant in 2013. The Office of the Auditor-General during its routine audits, has been auditing the MIDA accounts under the Seg 6 of the Operating Grants and Transfers of the Office of the Attorney-General. It is noted that the audits carried out by the Office of the Auditor-General have not established any qualifications since 2013. MIDA has a clean financial record in relation to the management of its annual grants.

MIDA has, since 2013, repatriated un-utilised funds to the Ministry of Economy as stipulated in the appropriated financial statement.

**MEDIA INDUSTRY DEVELOPMENT AUTHORITY OF FIJI**  
**CONSOLIDATED STATEMENT OF RECEIPTS AND EXPENDITURE AS AT 31 DECEMBER 2013 – 31 JULY 2018**

Notes 1	AUG 2017 – JULY 2018 (\$)	AUG 2016 – JULY 2017 (\$)	JAN 2016 – JULY 2016 (\$)	2015 (\$)	2014 (\$)	2013 (\$)
<b>RECEIPTS</b>						
State Revenue						
Operating Revenue	-	-	-	-	-	-
Total State Revenue	-	-	-	-	-	-
Agency Revenue						
Miscellaneous Revenue	-	-	-	-	-	-
Total Agency Revenue	-	-	-	-	-	-
<b>TOTAL REVENUE</b>						
<b>EXPENDITURE</b>						
Operating Expenditure						
Established Staff	a	-	-	-	36,022.60	3,581.08
Government Wage Earners	b	16,147.95	12,413.87	8,214.13	19,673.31	2,895.95
Travel & Communication	c	3,059.89	1,215.54	1,715.64	30,529.88	43,303.70
Maintenance & Operations	d	5,175.03	6,389.62	5,869.68	14,269.23	26,241.53
Purchase of Goods & Services	e	61,991.32	11,808.37	2,563.25	4,207.71	20,444.65
Total Operating Expenditure		86,374.19	32,084.06	18,362.70	68,549.03	128,908.43
Value Added Tax						
<b>TOTAL EXPENDITURE</b>		<b>86,374.19</b>	<b>32,084.06</b>	<b>18,362.70</b>	<b>128,908.43</b>	<b>201,017.43</b>

# MEDIA INDUSTRY DEVELOPMENT AUTHORITY OF FIJI

## CONSOLIDATED STATEMENT OF RECEIPTS AND EXPENDITURE AS AT

31 DECEMBER 2013 – 31 JULY 2018

### Notes 1: SIGNIFICANT VARIATIONS

- (a) An increase in expenditure in 2014 was due to the appointment of a Director in late 2013. The Director later resigned in 2014. The position of the Director has been left vacant since because the Chairperson is undertaking the responsibilities of the Director on pro-bono basis to date.
- (b) A driver was appointed following the resignation of the Director in 2014. The driver assisted the Chairperson with logistical support in 2014 as the Chairperson stepped in to undertake the administration/operations of the Authority leading to 2014 General Election. The subsequent increase in expenditure in 2015 was a result of the driver tendering his resignation. The driver's final wages included the regulated benefits such as the annual leave entitlements.
- (c) Increase is attributed to travel and communication related expenses carried out during the period 2013 and 2014 in the context of the appointment of a Director and the 2014 General Elections. After the Director's resignation, the Vodafone (voice over air) and Wi-Fi service/privilege (internet) was stopped. The Chairperson has utilized his personal funds for communication. Vodafone (for the driver), and Website are currently in operation. In 2015, the Chairperson travelled to Bali, on invitation, to attend a workshop. This included return air tickets, travel insurance and visa application fee.
- (d) In 2013, the Authority was situated in Domain which incurred monthly rental expenditure. In 2014, the Authority was relocated to level 3, Suvavou House. There was a significant decrease in expenditure in 2014 as a result of the relocation. Office establishment and acquisitions were carried out later for the procurement of office equipment, vehicles and other stationeries. A decrease is due to resources being maintained in good working condition.
- (e) An increase in expenditure was expected in 2014 as a result of the Authority conducting workshops leading to the 2014 General Elections. The Authority also conducted a similar workshop for the media leading up to the 2018 General Elections.



# MIDA

MEDIA INDUSTRY DEVELOPMENT AUTHORITY OF FIJI

CONSOLIDATED  
**ANNUAL  
REPORT** 2010 - 2018