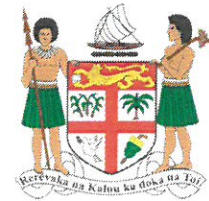


APPENDICES

Appendix One

**Written Response by the Ministry of Education,
Heritage and Arts**



Ministry of Education, Heritage and Arts

Annual Report 1 Jan- 30 June 2016

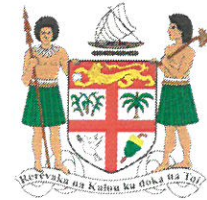
Briefing for Standing Committee on Social Affairs



Overview

- Ministry overview
- Selected section highlights

Overview



- TC Winston (Category 5) - 20 February 2016
- Damage Assessment:
 - 497 schools were severely affected (115 ECCE Centres, 314 Primary, and 68 Secondary)
 - 85,000 students affected with 2,073 students displaced and many required psycho-social support
 - Nearby schools spared were used as evacuation centres.

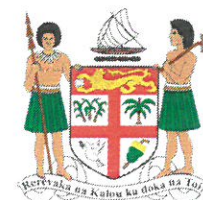
Overview



- Collaboration with donor partners to provide the necessary support
- Collaboration with NDMO
- Work to undertake damage assessments

Overview

- Donor Support

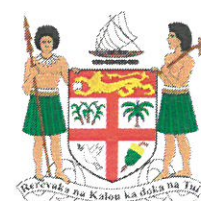


Donors	Items/Action	Schools	Districts
UNICEF	WASH Infrastructure Upgrading Assistance	31	Ra Ba/Tavua
AQEP /DFAT	Infrastructure Improvement	12	Ra Lautoka/ Nadi/Yasawa Cakaudrove
SCF	Water Tanks And Hygienic Kits	57	Ra Ba/Tavua Bua Cakaudrove Lomaiviti
AQEP/FTA	Better Hygiene And Sanitation Education.	48	Suva- 8 Lau- 9 Nadroga/Navosa- 7 Macuata/Bua -8 Cakaudrove- 16

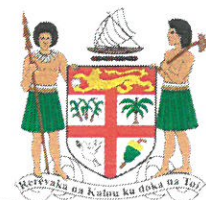
Overview

- Donor support

- Teaching & Learning Materials
- Teachers' Kits
- Child Friendly School Kits
- Recreational Kits
- Psychosocial
- Food Ration to Teachers
- School Feeding
- Generators
- Hygiene Promotion
- Water Supply
- Students Backpack
- ECCE Kits
- School in the Box
- Temporary Staff Quarters
- Temporary Learning Space
- School Chairs, Tables and desks



Ministry Overview



- Enrolments in primary decreased by 900 students
- Enrolments for secondary students decreased by 1,548 students
- An additional 3,342 Technical College of Fiji students enrolled in full time programmes compared to the previous year

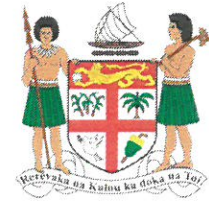
Ministry Overview (Initiatives)



Despite TC Winston, significant achievements were made during this period:

- 1,389,346 primary and 163,537 secondary text books delivered to schools in the 9 education districts
- Boats and outboard motors delivered to 17 schools
- 20,581 Year 1 students from 736 Schools continued to enjoy free milk
- 88,926 students (primary to Technical College) access transport assistance

Section Highlights – Primary, Secondary & Technical College



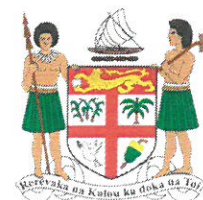
- Special and inclusive Education
 - Recruitment of 4 sign language interpreters and 10 additional teachers
- Primary and Secondary
 - Teachers and students affected by TC Winston placed in nearby schools

Section Highlights – Primary, Secondary & Technical College



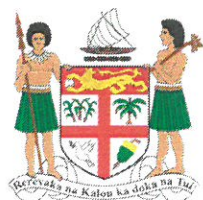
- Establishment of 8 new TCF Campuses
- Increased enrolment of TCF students (4,300 students compared to 958 students in 2015)

Section Highlights – Asset Management



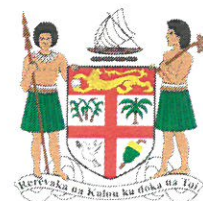
- Water tanks provided to 66 schools
- Construction of the New Bau Secondary School continues
- School lease payment for 18 schools
- Conducted damage assessment of schools by TC Winston

Section Highlights – Examinations and Curriculum



- Online examination registration on FEMIS introduced
- Introduction of LANA for Year 5 and 7
- Outcome based national standardized assessment prepared for Y5 and Y7 literacy and numeracy
- Supply of teaching resources on flash drives and CDs to supplement learning and teaching resources supplied to schools

Section Highlights – TEST



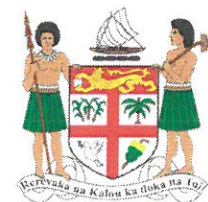
- TEST subject prescription and syllabi reviewed to align with the National Curriculum Framework, in accordance with 2030 Sustainable Development Goal 4: Quality Education

Section Highlights – Library Services



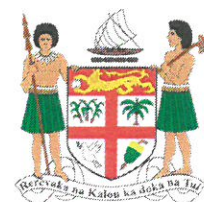
- Library automation using the newly acquired Intergraded Library Management System
- Set up 39 school libraries
- School library resources given to schools affected by TC Winston

Section Highlights – FTRA, SAAC



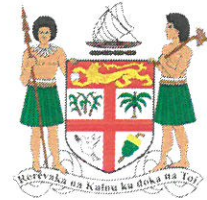
- FTRA
 - Induction for 48 USP students
 - Conducted professional development with teachers and students of Kadavu, Rotuma and Ovalau
- SAAC
 - TOT training conducted on issues relating to drugs and substance abuse, HIV and AIDS, violence against girls and women, child abuse and teenage pregnancy for 107 teachers and counsellors
 - Training on peer education for 105 peer educators from 26 Secondary Schools
 - Psychological First Aid and Trauma Counselling support and follow up to schools and community members affected by TC Winston

Section Highlights – Heritage and Arts

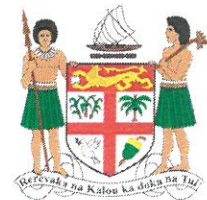


- Archaeological assessment mapping of sites of significance ongoing
- Final draft of the Fiji Culture and Education Strategy 2016-2020 completed

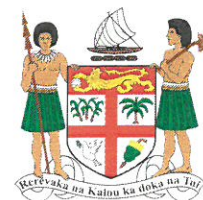
Section Highlights – Archives



- Increased and improved outreach programmes
- Over 200 hours of historical audio-visual footage successfully restored and installed in the Media Management System
- Production of the “Back in Time” programme on Fiji’s historical documentary series in collaboration with the Department of Information



Vinaka
Vakalevu

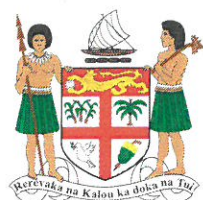


Ministry of Education, Heritage and Arts

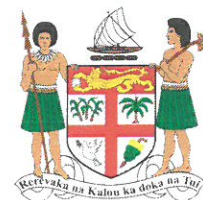
Briefing for Standing Committee on Social Affairs
Annual report 1 August 2016 – 31 July 2017

Overview

- Ministry overview
- Selected section highlights



Ministry Overview



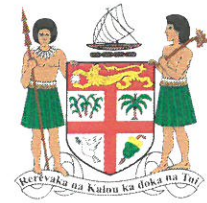
- Enrolments in primary increased by 3,153 Students
- Enrolments for secondary students increased by 1,929 Students
- An additional 398 students enrolled in full time programmes compared to the previous year
- ECCE student enrolment increased by 2,746 Students

Ministry Overview



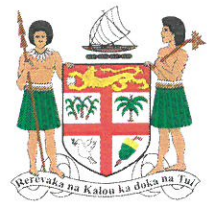
- 527,244 primary and 211,736 secondary text books delivered across 9 education districts
- Boats and Outboard Motors delivered to 17 Primary Schools
- 20,785 Year 1 Students from 736 Schools enjoyed free milk
- 90,801 Students (Primary to Technical College) access transport assistance

Ministry Overview



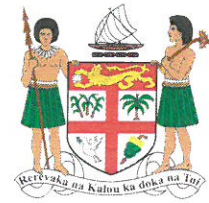
- 100 libraries established – 79 in primary schools, 18 in secondary schools, 3 in community information centres
- Enrolments for secondary students increased by 1,929 Students
- ECCE student enrolment increased by 2,746 Students

Section Highlights – Human Resources



- 100 new primary teachers, 250 new secondary school teachers
- New HR structure established- including HR officers in Divisions and Districts

Section Highlights – Primary, Secondary & Technical Colleges



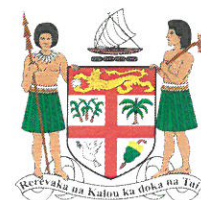
- ECCE teachers
 - paid directly by the Ministry
 - public service conditions
 - salaries aligned with job evaluation results- pay increased
- First ever ECCE conference held for ECCE teachers.

Section Highlights – Asset Management



- 2,974 students from 31 schools assisted with student back pack kits provided by UNICEF.
- 11,100 students benefited from the 186 Temporary Learning Spaces given to 87 cyclone-affected schools
- 36 primary boarding schools received infrastructure and development assistance
- 6 ECCE building grants given

Section Highlights – Examinations



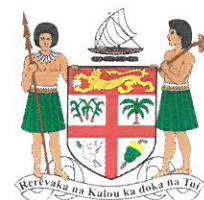
- Standard of Examination Papers and marking consistency improved
- Began using Fijian benchmark for LANA rather than an international standard
- Increased awareness of the difference between examinations and diagnostic tools such as LANA

Section Highlights – TEST



- Revised TEST subject syllabus and text books
- Piloted the Careers and Culture Resource text book *My Life at School*

Section Highlights – Library Services



- Introduction of eBooks
 - 118 non-fiction, 115 easy readers, 140 junior fiction, 77 adult fiction
- Addition of audiobooks
- Began working with ECCE schools to set up library corners
- 8 School/Teacher Librarian workshops held

Section Highlights – FTRA, SAAC & TSLB



- Completed inductions for 591 students across 5 tertiary institutions
- 221 counselling sessions conducted
- TSLB assisted 15830 students
- Rolled out online TSLB application system and new website

Section Highlights – Heritage and Arts

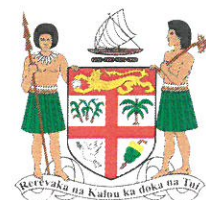


- Archaeological assessment mapping of sites of significance completed
- Work on establishing a 'virtual museum' started
- Digitisation of the museum audio, video, photograph and
- Documented heritage collection ongoing.

Section Highlights – Archives



- Leading the way in the Pacific on heritage preservation outreach
 - National Archives of Fiji Facebook Page had over 52,000 followers for the period (currently over 57,000).
- Educated staff of 132 offices on records management best practice



Vinaka Vakalevu

#	Questions	Response
1	<p>Brief the committee on the roles and responsibilities of the Ministry of Education, Heritage and Arts</p>	<p>Designing, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of educational legislation, policies and programmes in Fiji. MEHA provides the structures, human resources, budgets, and administrative and management support to ensure that the quality of service delivery is maintained at a high level.</p> <p>MEHA is specifically tasked to conduct and deliver education services to the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Early childhood care education (kindergarten age 0-4 with MWCPA) • Primary and Secondary • Specialised Schools for children with special needs and Vocational Schools • Students in the years of compulsory schooling (Year 1 – Year 13) and those participating in Form studies • Students in vocational education and training programmes • Teaching personnel • School management committees and controlling authorities <p>The Department of Heritage and Arts was established in 2000 with priorities of formulating cultural policies, promoting cultural education, raising awareness and mobilizing participation in traditional custom and multiculturalism including support for creativity. The heritage and arts sector has enormous potential for employment creation and income generation</p> <p>The Ministry also works with the following statutory authorities:</p> <p>Fiji Museum National Heritage Trust Fiji Arts Council Substance Abuse Advisory Council Fiji Teachers' Registration Authority Fiji Higher Education Commission Tertiary Scholarships and Loans Board</p>
2	<p>Inform the committee of the key challenges the Ministry faces whilst trying to achieve its strategic objectives and how it is planning to overcome these challenges.</p>	<p>Key Challenges for the Ministry</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Modernisation – restructure, distance learning, elearning • Volume – FEMIS • Infrastructure – buildings, IT – infrastructure audit • Policy framework – existing policies reviewed, new policies developed • Multiple stakeholders – developing fora for discussion

3	How does the Ministry ensure that both male and female employees are treated equally in recruitment, training, hiring and promotion?	<p>Both genders are considered equally in recruitment and selection as it is based on merit only.</p> <p>The Ministry specifically aligns its operations and strategic achievements to SDG 4 – “Ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all. But due to the complexity of the different sections and agencies attached, MEHA also contributes to the following SDGs:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • SDG1 – End Poverty in all its forms [through FEG implemented for easy access to schools, transportation assistance, Education for Sustainable Development initiatives, Financial Education, etc.] • SDG 2 – End hunger, achieve food security and improve nutrition and promote sustainable agriculture [through agriculture programs in schools, Canteen Policy, Free Milk Initiative] • SDG 3 – Ensure healthy lives and promote Wellbeing for all at all ages [Wellness Programs, Sports programs in schools, Physical Education classes] • SDG 5 – Achieve gender equality and empower all women and children [equal opportunities for all in accessing education and resources, MEHA being an equal opportunity employer through OMRS] • SDG6 – Water and Sanitation [through WASH initiatives in schools, provision of Water Tanks, Environment Programs in schools] • SDG 9 – Build resilient infrastructure [standards for building in schools] • SDG 13 – Combating Climate Change and its impact [through curriculum, through environment awareness and programs in schools] <p>Draft strategic Plan 2019-2023 is developed and under review prior to finalization. This caters for the Sector’s input so the Plan will have points on what the Ministry can do, what it can initiate and facilitate and what it can let other stakeholders take responsibility for.</p> <p>The Plan will look into the modernization of education system in the near future.</p>
4	Does the Ministry align itself to any of the Sustainable Development Goals? If so, can you further enlighten the Committee on this?	
5	Update the committee on the Ministry’s future plans and initiatives.	<p>A total of 495 schools were damaged by TC Winston. Over 60 schools that sustained minimal damage utilized their Free Education Grant to do own repairs. Also around 60 schools were either fully adopted or partially adopted by donor governments and other agencies. A total of 356 schools have undergone rehabilitation of which the progress report is below: 150 by AMU and 206 by CIU</p> <p>Progress: CIU – 157/206 (49 left - work in progress to be complete by December 2019)</p>
6	Inform the committee on the progress of the rehabilitation of schools damaged by Tropical Cyclone Winston and provide a breakdown of the amount expended towards this.	

	<p>AMU – 149/150 (1 school left – work in progress to be complete by December 2019)</p> <p>Total rehab cost : \$246M (CIU - \$238,548,950.93 AMU - \$7,446,446.11)</p>
<p>7</p> <p>Provide a listed update on the Adopt-A-School programme under the TC Winston rehabilitation program.</p>	<p>Below is the list of donors for the Adopt A School project:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • DFAT – AQEP (Koro (6) & Ra (12) schools) • MFAT (Vanuabalavu schools) • Government of Japan – (10 schools) • Government of India (20 schools - partial funding) • Government of Indonesia (QVS) • Belgium Government (Vuda Primary) • Red Cross Society (Vunikavikaloa Primary - Ra) • Save The Children (5 ECE - Ra) • UNICEF (WASH facilities) • SPC – (WASH facilities – 20 schools) • Rotary Taveuni (Taveuni schools) • Rustic Pathways • Pacific Destination • Fiji Muslim League • Catholic Education (Naitavuni Catholic) • Samaritan First (2 ECE) • Friends of Fiji – China (Yasawa Secondary) • US Marine • NZ Army • Australian Army • Sea Mercy • Wakaya Island Resort • Naitaba Resort
<p>8</p> <p>How has the Ministry expanded the Digital Literacy Program to secondary school students and strengthened community library services through digitisation of library systems?</p>	<p>Digital Literacy Program to Secondary School Students</p> <p>MEHA through the collaboration of various departments (TEST, CAS, LDU, IT) has been intensively involved in plans and developments towards Technology Enabled Learning and Digital literacy projects. A major focus is on Computer Education to be deployed in all secondary schools.</p> <p>The subject advisers have developed the syllabi and textbooks for computer education and have been monitoring and evaluating its impact through learning outcomes. Computer Education has equipped students with basic computing skills, research work, content evaluation and online safety.</p>

	<p>The initiative to introduce Microsoft Office 365 in Education was deployed in 2 schools and are actively using the program. Microsoft Office 365 for Education is a collection of services that allows Teachers and Students to collaborate and share the schoolwork. It is a Microsoft product built specifically for education and it is available for free to teachers who are currently working at an Academic Institution and to Students who are currently attending an academic institution. The service includes Office Online (Word, PowerPoint, Excel, and OneNote), 1TB of OneDrive storage, Yammer, email account and the creation of the School's intranet portal.</p> <p>The team at TEST is working on strengthening its collaboration with other stakeholders (ITC) to introduce the program to many more secondary schools.</p> <p>Other initiatives that the MEHA is focusing on are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Development of eBooks – all secondary schools to have textbooks converted to e-books ➤ Online Learning (Moodle) – the uploading of all the resources for Year 11, 12 and 13 in Moodle for easy student access ➤ Smart Classrooms – use of smart projectors to enhance learning in classrooms ➤ Internet Connectivity – prioritizing the need to have all schools connected to internet ➤ Distance Learning – live broadcast from a studio here at the Ministry to students of identified schools. The platform will enhance students' preparation as more remedial activities will be provided prior to external examination <p><u>Strengthening Community Library Services through Digitisation of Library Systems</u></p> <p>Library Services has automated its public library services to strengthen its services to the community it serves. All our branch libraries across Fiji have now being automated with the Liberty Library System and this can be accessed through https://www.libraryservices.gov.fj. However, the system has not been pushed out live yet due to the number of resources that we are cataloguing into the system.</p> <p><u>Digitization of Fiji Museum Collections</u></p> <p>In the period specified the Fiji Museum had not embarked on a major digitization initiative as there was no dedicated funding given by Government specifically for this purpose.</p> <p>The digitization work carried out by staff was ad-hoc and focused only on our photographic collection. Late 2017, the Fiji Museum applied for international funding from Korea to pilot its digitization project and this was successful resulting in digitization of 500 hrs of audio, video and reel to reel recordings. Government later took the initiative to provide specific funding for digitization in the Fiji Museum 2018/2019 budget.</p>
9	<p>What is the progress of the digitalisation of Museum Collections?</p>

10	Provide a list of all heritage sites and their conditions and future plan.	<p>Please see question 50.</p> <p><u>Fiji Museum Upgrade:</u> Government allocated \$232,988 for Fiji Museum ongoing upgrade capital works. In the 2016/17 financial year, funds allocated were used to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> (a) Complete new front entrance to the Fiji Museum; (b) Begin work on new gift shop; (c) Repairs to Museum roofing. <p>Monitoring was undertaken by the Ministry of Economy and Department of Heritage and Arts. These capital works have now been completed awaiting other minor works that are currently ongoing.</p> <p><u>Momi Historic Park</u> The site is located approximately 25 minutes' drive from Nadi town overlooking the Momi Bay. The gun site consists of seven concrete structures; a command post, a fire control room, two communications and store rooms, two gun emplacements and a small rest room.</p> <p>Outside the 13 hectares are signal tower on the hill behind the battery, a radar tower on another hill and sites along the shore. There are 2 future plans:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Expanding the "Heritage in Young Hands Program" to Momi to involve the two 2. Primary Schools in the area. Momi is one of the 2 new sites where this program will be implemented in the new financial year. 3. Implement "Youth Initiatives in Heritage" to involve youths in the Momi region. Momi will be one of the 5 sites where this program will be implemented. <p><u>Levuka World Heritage Structures</u> Funding was provided by the Government for the following works:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 2016-2017 for the architectural & structural evaluation of 67 historical buildings • 2017-2018 for the preparation of these 67 building reports <p>2018-2019 for the Upgrading of Levuka Community Center and St Johns Cawaci (tender process underway).</p> <p><u>Thurston Gardens</u> A total of \$150,000 was allocated for this work. The Working Group was not able to access the funds as key documentary evidence to submit to Ministry of Economy was delayed by SCC and others. The first phase of works</p>
11	Provide a status update on the upgrade of the Fiji Museum, Momi Historic Park, Levuka World Heritage structures and Thurston Garden. Provide a breakdown of the funds utilised in the upgrade works carried out.	

	<p>which includes grounds drainage cost around \$500,000. We had successfully called for tenders and a contractor earmarked. However the slow release of funds by the Ministry of Economy including other requirements resulted in the project not eventuating. So we had to hold the works. Later the Ministry of Economy (CIU) took up the initiative i.e. the Thurston Gardens project which is now managed by Ministry of Economy.</p> <p><u>Free Tuition for Children in the Final Year of Kindergarten at Accredited Pre-Schools</u></p> <p>The disbursement of the FEG to the ECCE is facing some issues since ECCE operators are not complying with the guidelines set out. This was observed during monitoring and the defaulters have been recommended for audit queries by our Finance Section.</p> <p><u>Free Milk Program for Year 1 Students</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Geographical locations of schools impacting delivery time especially for remote, very remote and island schools • Longer duration of storage especially for far away locations also impacted expiry dates of the products <p>This was addressed by the delivery of milk for a term happens in Week 10 of the preceding term.</p> <p><u>Free Tuition for TVET Students</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Students enroll but do not complete their studies due to various reasons, such as pursuing other education opportunities or joining the workforce <p><u>“Topper’s Scheme” Scholarships and the Tertiary Education Loans Scheme</u></p> <p>The schemes were not introduced in 2016 but in 2014 following the 2014 budget announcement and enactment of the Tertiary Scholarship and Loans Act and the same coming in force on 18 December 2013.</p> <p>The major challenges faced were as follows:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lack of or insufficient information about the schemes <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ The schemes were new and it took some time for Fijians to understand the eligibility criteria and the terms and conditions of the schemes. ○ This resulted in the high number of student and parent complaints to higher authorities and creating negativity about the new schemes. ○ Lack of clarity in the administrative policies, non-existence of clear Standard Operating Procedures and related policies compounded the problem. <p>Over the years TSLB has ensured that Fijians are more aware and informed on the schemes and the policies. The following measures are in place to overcome this challenge:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – New TSLB website with regular updates. The website is user friendly and easy to navigate. – A very informative and up to date TSLB Facebook account.
12	<p>What are the challenges faced in the implementation of the following initiatives introduced in 2016:</p> <p>Free tuition for TVET students</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Free tuition for children in the final year of kindergarten at accredited pre-schools; ○ Free Milk program for Year 1 students; ○ Free tuition for TVET students; and ○ “Topper’s scheme” scholarships and the Tertiary Education Loans Scheme.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Designing, printing and distribution of detailed brochures on the various schemes, application processes etc. - Conducting school empowerment drive. Every year TSLB staff visit all high schools and make a 2 hour face to face presentation to Year 12 and 13 students on the schemes, application process, opening and closing dates, required documents etc. - Taking part in Government road shows, careers expositions organised by Ministry of Education, Heritage and Arts, other sessions organised by Government, communities etc. - Radio and TV talkback shows. - Release media statements when deemed necessary. - Detailed advertisements on the Fijian Government schemes in the print media. The advertisements are done for around 6 months before applications are closed. - Networking with the Higher Education Institutions and the Student Association bodies.
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lack of Human Resources <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ When the schemes were introduced in 2014 and TSLB established in late December 2013, the operations of TSLB were managed by the three major universities (FNU, USP and UOF), even to the extent that the Vice Chancellors of these universities were also the Directors of TSLB ○ University staff members were on temporary secondment to TSLB prior to streamlining the process and procedures which resulted in inconsistencies and complaints. ○ Since 2016, TSLB Board has established a stable and well functioning secretariat as required under the Act and staff with appropriate skills, qualifications has been recruited. ○ Currently TSLB has three well managed and efficient offices located in Suva, Labasa and Lautoka and has 30 well trained and qualified staff serving Fijians. • No budgetary allocation for Operational Expenses <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Since the inception of TSLB in 2014 and till the financial year 2016-2017 there was no separate budget allocation to meet TSLB operational expenses for administering the various schemes. ○ TSLB operational costs were met by the Universities and this was mostly related to staff wages and salaries. ○ As a result, insufficient funding was available to TSLB to carry out the empowerment programs, pay staff well and retain them, attract qualified and experienced staff etc. ○ However, since the financial year 2016-2019, the Government has allocated an operating grant to TSLB and this has helped in building capacity and acquiring the required resources to deliver excellent customer services. ○ For the financial year 2019-2019 \$1,645,887 has been allocated for TSLB's operational and capital expenditure.

Government Budget to Faith Based Higher Education Institutions

All higher education institutions grants are allocated based on funding model that allocated grants based on number of EFTS. It comprises two components of funding: enrolments funding and leverage funding (based on measures of quality, access for disadvantaged students and uniqueness of an institution)

- Enrolments Funding – the total cost of running a programme for all enrolled students and the tuition revenue earned.
- Leverage Funding - the second component of funding in the transitional model was the Leverage Funding, awarded to all institutions and on the following basis:
 - The uniqueness or special character of the institution’s programmes;
 - The institution’s internal quality assurance systems; staff and facilities – including the level of qualifications of the teaching staff, and the quality of facilities, for instance, library and internet access and speed
 - How the institution supports disadvantaged students and students from remote areas;

Provide the criteria used to allocate Government Budget to faith based higher education institutions.

	Column Headings	Method of Calculation of data in this column
1	Total Cost of Running all programmes – Total Expected Fees	Total cost of running programmes for all Fijian EFTS less total expected fees.
2	Adjusted for Level Playing Field	0.4 - international benchmark for funding; 0.4 - VTC, CCTC, SIT, & FC; 0.6 - UoF & USP as universities; 0.7 - Montfort to cater for low socio-economic groups; 0.8 - FNU as a national university; and 0.8 - CATD as a government owned institute and catering for disadvantaged rural learners.
3	Regional loading	Contribution to regional economies, directly and through meeting regional skills needs. Provision of research, specialized skills and facilities that are unlikely to be available without the institution. Percentage of regional students multiplied by excess cost.

ENROLMENTS FUNDING

	the recommendations put forward by the Audit Team and how were they implemented?	No audit report for Transport received so far from the IAGG Unit Ministry of Economy. A draft report for March 2018 to March 2019 is being finalized for management comments.
15	Page 20 of Annual Report (Policy Unit) – Provide an update on the implementation of the twelve policies. What were the major challenges faced in the implementation of these policies and how have they been addressed?	<p>Q15: Update on the Implementation of the Twelve Policies, Challenges Faced and Addressed</p> <p>Policies listed have been implemented in the Ministry. Schools make their own Policies and Guidelines, aligned to the mentioned Policies. Decision making in the Ministry is also based on Policies.</p> <p><u>Challenges</u></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> Policy on Research – The main challenge is ensuring that international researchers meet the criteria stipulated. There is also a problem when many demand to have their application expedited. Policy on National School Library - Limitation of resources was an issue when trying to implement the policy by ensuring that schools have a standard library. Presently, the Library Services continue to provide library books and resources to needy schools. Policy on Mobile Phones in Schools – While schools have their own policies on this, there continue to be issues with students who do not conform to the guidelines in the policy. Policy on FEMIS – Compliance with policy including updating of information regularly. Schools with limited internet connectivity face problems in meeting deadlines as per policy. We have addressed this in that Monitoring Team looks into FEMIS compliance when visiting schools. FEMIS Update has also been included in the new Heads of School Job Description. For connectivity, MEHA is working towards improving services with installations of modems. Policy on Free Milk – Timely delivery to remote island schools, storage of milk while waiting to be distributed, and expiry dates of milk. Currently the delivery of milk for a term happens in last week of the preceding term. Policy on School Zoning – While schools have their school-based Enrolment Policies which stipulate that they take in students from within their zones, there is always a problem of parents enrolling children into schools of their choice. Policy on Open Merit Recruitment and Selection – Implementation of the Policy did not take place till late 2017. There has been regular training provided and it is a requirement for panel members to have completed the OMRS training. There are controls in the system at every stage of recruitment, selection, approval of appointment, issuing of contracts/letters, and release of pay that ensures that appointments are made only through OMRS. There have been instances where schools have made appointments for Heads of Departments, Assistant Principals without following the OMRS and later send requests to HR claiming for allowances to be paid.

	<p>8. Policy on External Examination and Assessment – While the current policy is adequate, the Ministry is currently revising it to provide staff, students and parents with more detailed information on a number of matters:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Misconduct of staff involved in examination and assessments ○ Student misconduct while undertaking examinations and assessments ○ Assessment moderation ○ Grading and marking, and ○ Identifying students who require additional support.
	<p>9. Policy on School Boarding – Our current boarding policy makes it clear that enrolment should not exceed available space, however the reality has been that some parents place significant pressure on School Heads to accept their child at a school, even advocating for others in positions of power to try and force the child to be enrolled. Other challenges include managing access to students whose parents are separated and do not agree on access rights. While School Heads already manage these issues on a case by case basis, improving parental awareness of the requirements of our policies and their responsibilities once a child is enrolled will assist in managing these issues holistically and appropriately. We need to ensure that parents understand that the rules apply to everyone equally. Meeting the staffing needs boarding schools is an ongoing challenge, and one that will be addressed through an upcoming school staffing framework project.</p>
	<p>10. Policy on School Counseling Challenges</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Teachers lack basic counselling skills: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ SAAC conduct TOT to up skill teachers with basic counselling skills. ○ SAAC also conduct Professional Development for teachers on basic counselling skills ○ Teachers reminded of the importance of engaging other stakeholders such as Social Welfare, Police, Empower Pacific, Medical Services Pacific. ● Lack of professional counsellors <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ MEHA with DFAT work in collaboration in up skilling 34 school counsellors who are now in schools. The programme will be completed early next year. ○ TAFE and APTC now offer Diploma in Counselling which offer opportunities for teachers and other professionals who are passionate about counselling to enrolled and get the necessary qualification. ● Identifying at risk students in school <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Teachers were taught skills to identify students who are at risk by studying the signs. ○ These students were mentored in school by teachers and also by the SAAC mentors who are in 120 schools all over Fiji.

	<p>11. Policy on Food and School Canteen – The main challenge is the lack of monitoring and the compliance of canteen operators. A new policy needs to be addressed holding a unit/section responsible for the monitoring of food and school canteens.</p> <p>12. Policy on Location Allowance for Teachers – Challenges are operational as below:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Incomplete information provided by HOS for Teachers on maternity leave or when transferred ○ Communication to remote/very remote schools is difficult and assistance of district officers is sought. ○ Standalone ECCE centers do not have phone/email contacts. They need to provide contact details for ease of communication. ○ Marital status of teachers not clear – HOS are asked to provide copies of marriage certificates with their forms for payment.
<p>What were the outcomes of the following research conducted by the Research Unit in 2016-2017:</p> <p>a. Financial Impact of the Kaji Rugby Tournament on Participating Schools in Fiji;</p> <p>b. Effectiveness of Literacy and Numeracy Assessment for Teaching and Learning;</p> <p>c. Use of Digital Technologies in Fiji Secondary Schools; and</p> <p>d. Causes of Student Dropouts in Primary Schools in the Suva, Nausori and</p>	<p><u>Q16 Part A: Research on the Financial Impact of Kaji Rugby Tournament</u></p> <p>Research was conducted to find out the expenses that primary schools bear in order to participate in Kaji Rugby competitions as well as the level of reimbursements offered to each school. It was discovered that financial impacts of Kaji Rugby on schools vary. Urban schools were always at an advantage economically compared to rural/remote schools, hence were able to participate every year.</p> <p><u>Q16 Part B: Research on the Effectiveness of LANA</u></p> <p>The research was to gather information on the effectiveness of the LANA for teaching and learning and whether to continue the implementation or not. The outcome of the research was in favour of the continuing use of LANA. Trends could be analysed to identify areas of strengths and weaknesses that will need future professional learning and resourcing.</p> <p><u>Q16 Part C: Research on the Use of Digital Technologies in Fiji Secondary Schools</u></p> <p>This was the background research required for the foundation of implementing Digital Literacy in secondary schools. It was to ascertain the readiness of schools so that MEHA could distribute tablets to Year 12 and 13 students. While all ground work was completed, the project was shelved because it was not approved. Many issues needed to be cleared like upgrading technological facilities in schools, capacity building of teachers and managers and piloting of the program.</p> <p><u>Q16 Part D: Causes of student dropouts in primary schools in Suva, Nausori and Lautoka/Yasawa Education Districts</u></p> <p>The research explored the factors contributing to school dropouts. Meetings with parents were then organized in the respective Districts and stationery packs were distributed. Heads of nearby Schools were also encouraged to enroll those dropouts and provide necessary support. 50 drop outs were put back as part of this exercise.</p>

	Lautoka/Yasawa Education District.	
17	<p>The committee notes that the Ministry carried out consultations on unnecessary paperwork in schools in the 2016-2017 period. What was the outcome of the consultations and how has the Ministry been able to address this issue?</p> <p>Page 22 of Annual Report – The committee notes from the Annual Report that a total of 3,097 professional developments were received from schools from July 2016 – August 2017.</p>	<p>The consultation came up with some recommendations to decrease the amount of paper work and reporting done by teachers in schools. This was to ensure that teachers spend more time in their preparations for the teaching and learning process. The Ministry then gave directions to Heads of Schools to minimize the reports expected from teachers and to do away with some of the usual reports. FEMIS was also upgraded to include applications to have those embedded online.</p>
18	<p>Provide further information on the types of professional development activities conducted and whether they were undertaken by the Ministry officials or were school based PDs.</p>	<p>Continuing professional development is school based aligned to the MEHA's needs and support its strategic direction. The HoS identifies the skill gaps that exist within the staff and conducts the professional development or invites personnel who are expert in the relevant field. The teachers are required to have a minimum of 20 hours of professional development per year. The OHS and First Aid training was conducted for the HoS, teachers and government wage earners.</p>
19	<p>How has the prevention and control of Non-Communicable Diseases been mainstreamed into the school system?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Healthy Living and Physical Education are compulsory subjects in primary schools, which address NCDs • Family Life Education and Physical Education subjects address NCDs in secondary schools
20	<p>What measures are in place to assist slow learners to move from one grade to the</p>	<p>Primary responses The class teacher provides individual assistance through one to one teaching, giving more time for completion of activities. Most schools also have remedial teachers to further assist slow learners. Teachers and School also meet</p>

<p>next to help them cope in that higher grade?</p>	<p>parents of slow learners on a regular basis to provide feedback to the parents/guardians on the progress of the child and also to seek parental support towards education at home.</p> <p>Secondary responses</p> <p>School Visits to under-performing secondary schools to empower school heads and teachers through PD sessions on how to assist slow learners.</p> <p>In 2016, 55 out of 60 “under-performing” schools were visited. 5 were Eastern schools and were not visited due to travel logistics.</p> <p>In 2017, 18 were identified as under-performing secondary schools. A big drop from the 60 schools in 2016, indicating the effectiveness of the school visits.</p>
<p>What type of in-service training programmes do teachers mainly pursue and what criteria is in place to determine eligibility for study leave with or without pay?</p> <p>21</p>	<p>The type of in-service training is study leave with/without pay depending on the priority needs of the Ministry. To be eligible, applicants must meet the requirements detailed below which are stipulated in the Learning & Development Guideline (2018) and the MEHA In-Service Training Policy (2017). The applicant must:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Be able to complete the study programme and return to duty before reaching 55 years of age (retirement age); • Be a confirmed employee or have a current contract of employment; • Have no current bond obligations; • Be already enrolled in a study programme formally recognised by the Fiji Higher Education Commission and; • For those who have served in rural areas – have successfully completed at least 10 units or more of the programme; • For those who have NOT served in rural areas – have successfully completed at least 12 units or more of the programme; • For teaching staff, must have current registration with the Fiji Teachers Registration Authority (FTRA); • Have served at least 3 years or more in the service; • Meet the minimum entry requirements for the course the applicant is applying to undertake; • Provide certified copies of the academic transcript confirming units already completed; • Provide a certified copy of birth certificate; • Provide a TIN letter or a joint ID card number issued by FNP/FIRCA; • Provide an updated course programme which states the units completed, yet to be completed and those that will be pursued; • Evidence of registration for units per semester during the intended study leave period; and <p>Have no recent discipline matters or outstanding discipline matters.</p>
<p>What challenges are faced by the Ministry in recruiting and filling positions of responsibilities in schools</p> <p>22</p>	<p>The challenges are in the number of positions to be filled and the volume of applications that has to be processed for these positions.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Difficult to fill positions in remote/very remote schools due to unwillingness of qualified people to take up postings in these locations

<p>under the Open Merit Recruitment System and what measures are in place to address the issue?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • OMRS allows for an appointment for one month only without the OMRS. A normal recruitment takes 3-4 months to complete. As soon as a vacancy arises in a position of reasonability, we make an appointment, preferably from within the school, for a period of one month noting that recruitment takes longer. • We are working on recruitment cycles to ensure we have orders of merit in place before the beginning of the new school year to fill positions as and when they arise.
<p>What challenges are faced by the Ministry in filling vacant teacher positions in schools?</p> <p>23</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Shortage of qualified teachers in certain subject areas particularly, in Maths/Science, Industrial Arts, PEMAC, Primary Teaching, Special Education • New qualified teachers hesitate in accepting offer of appointment to schools in remote locations. • Condition of school quarters, unavailability of quarters in rural/remote/very remote locations, the need to share quarters by single teachers of the same gender.
<p>Elaborate on the process in place for the appointment of school heads and school principals.</p> <p>24</p>	<p>The appointment of head teachers and school principals (collectively school heads) has been conducted only in 2018 in 3 phases – large, small followed by medium - and was based on the OMRS guidelines.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Positions are advertised • Selection Panel is formed with the approval of the Permanent Secretary • HR collates the applications • Prepares the long-listing for the panel • Selection Panel determines the shortlisting criteria, job tests, interview questions • HR assists in conducting the job tests and organizes for interviews • Panel recommends the candidates based on the criteria and the benchmark set for all criteria • An Order of Merit is prepared • A Selection Report is prepared and signed off by the Panel • The report is forwarded for the approval of the Permanent Secretary and endorsement of the Minister • Appointments are made based on the Order of Merit and as per the preferences of the candidates. <p>Currently appointments are made on acting basis only until the next recruitment round for HOS is conducted. For Acting appointments:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Expressions of Interests are invited through advertisement. • HR collates the applications • Prepares the Long-listing for the panel • Selection Panel is formed with the approval of the Permanent Secretary • Selection Panel carries out shortlisting based on qualification and experience • Panel confirms the order of merit • A Selection Report is prepared and signed off by the Panel • The report is forwarded for the approval of the Permanent Secretary and endorsement of the Minister • Appointments are made based on the Order of Merit and considering operational exigencies and current locations of the candidates to minimize any disruption to teaching and learning.

<p>Students with Special Needs:</p> <p>a. What are some of the challenges faced in the effective implementation of inclusive education policy and support for students with special needs in both special and mainstream schools?</p> <p>b. How many schools have included special needs children into their system and whether appropriate infrastructure facilities are provided?</p> <p>c. Do the schools have specially trained teachers to look after the special needs children?</p> <p>d. How well equipped are the schools in having to attend to special needs children in cases of emergencies?</p>	<p>a. One desk officer at the SIE unit is a challenge in itself, with the many roles to be addressed as disability is a cross-cutting issue and needs to be addressed at Curriculum, Exams, ECCE, Primary, Secondary, etc. SIE within Primary affects its functioning. Insufficient numbers of teachers trained in SIE, insufficient other trained professionals in the field due to skills shortages. The roll of students with disabilities is increasing, with insufficient emphasis on detection, intervention and support from other Government line ministries.</p> <p>b. 43 schools (and counting) have students with special needs with funding through SEG deployed to assist the provision of infrastructure.</p> <p>c. No. Out of the 153 teachers teaching in the special schools, only 42 have some level of training in teaching special needs children (Certificate/Diploma & Degree). This is being discussed with the teacher training institutions.</p> <p>d. Not well equipped enough. Training on DRR for special needs children has been included in the DRR Handbook which needs to be reinforced by training</p>	<p>25</p>

What type of assistance was given toward infrastructural development in the following three new secondary schools which were established:

- Jeremiah Raibevu College
- Magodro Secondary School
- Moce Secondary School

Assistance was provided through grants from within the Ministry except for Moce Secondary School funded by the Moce community members.

- Jeremiah Raibevu College** : Two 1x4 classroom and 1 ablution block
- Magodro Secondary School**: One 1x5 classroom and 1 ablution block
- Moce Secondary School**: One 1x3 classroom, one 1x5 classroom and two 1x2 classroom.

26

- Jeremiah Raibevu College
- Magodro Secondary School
- Moce Secondary School

27

- How often do medical teams visit these schools?

Government and Private Boarding Schools:

a. What is the allocation arrangement for students' meals at Government and Private boarding schools?

b. How often do they inspect Government and Private school dormitories and other living facilities for maintenance works and compliance with OHS requirements?

c. How often do medical teams visit these schools?

	Primary response	Secondary response
a	<p>There are no government primary boarding schools in Fiji. However the two (2) government primary Schools namely Delainamasi Government School and Natabua Primary School are paid the normal Free Education Grant.</p> <p>Ninety Seven (97) Non-government boarding schools receive Per Capita Grant of \$150.00 annually (\$50.00 per term).</p>	<p>2016-2017</p> <p>(i) For Private boarding schools, the hostel fee is determined by the School Management. The meal allocation is then determined from this hostel fee.</p> <p>(ii) Government boarding school: the rate depends on the boarding roll e.g. if the boarding roll is small, the rate per meal is more.</p> <p>Levuka Public: \$2.49 / meal with a roll of 35 boarders.</p> <p>QVS: \$0.30/ meal with a roll of 780 boarders.</p> <p>All the 9 Government boarding schools had different meal rates in 2016 and 2017.</p> <p>2019</p> <p>Nasinu Sec/Natabua High/Labasa Coll/Levuka Public= \$2/meal (roll is less than 350)</p> <p>ACS/QVS/RKS/Bucalevu/Vunisea = \$1.40/meal</p>
b	Schools inspect on a daily/weekly basis while the Government inspects on an annual basis	<p>i) Private dormitories: this is at the discretion of the school head and management</p> <p>(ii) Government boarding: this is at the discretion of the school head and the district officers.</p> <p>AMU response</p>

			<p>Inspection for other schools is carried out through monitoring visits. District officers also assist when they do their school visits on a more regular basis. Schools that need to be upgraded will then submit an application form which is usually endorsed by the District and Divisional office.</p> <p>(i) when there is outbreak of a epidemic and the school is at risk</p> <p>(ii) to distribute nation-wide drugs e.g. Filarisis tablets/ Tooth brushing Day celebration</p> <p>(iii) School Matrons are stationed in most government schools</p> <p>(iv) Blood drive</p>
	c	These visits are organized by the Ministry of Health and Medical Services	
28	Pages 40-41 of Annual Report (Maintenance and upgrading of Government schools) - Brief the committee on whether the pending projects for the Government schools outlined in the table provided have been completed.	<p>ACS -1x2 timber c/room</p> <p>Vunisea Sec. - Library</p> <p>Sila Central -renovation</p> <p>QVS - Reimbursement</p> <p>Labasa College – hostel repair</p> <p>Suva Grammar – renovation</p> <p>Bucalevu Sec. – hostel repair</p> <p>Natabua Prim. C/room repair</p> <p>Nasinu Sec. – Hostel upgrade</p> <p>QVS – new septic & washroom (Indonesia project)</p> <p>Delainamasi Prim. – 1x2 classroom</p> <p>Levuka Public – Dorm construction</p> <p>Completed</p> <p>Completed</p> <p>Completed</p> <p>Completed</p> <p>Completed</p> <p>Completed</p> <p>Completed</p> <p>Completed</p> <p>Done through FEG</p> <p>Completed</p> <p>Not done (new dorm does not comply)</p> <p>Done through FEG</p> <p>Completed this year</p>	
29	How many schools are still using the Temporary Learning Spaces provided to them after TC Winston?	Church halls currently being used at Qamea schools. Other schools under construction are using available spaces within existing classrooms.	
30	How does the Ministry determine student's for alternative skill based pathways following Year 6 to Year 11 external	<p>The intent of the introduction at all levels was based on established rationales to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ensure standard coverage of syllabus within an academic year • ensure teachers and stakeholders get to know the correct academic status of students' stock of knowledge and performance through examinations • The choice for pathways rest entirely on the student. Essentially the parents are involved and teachers' advice is critical based on the academic trend/ performance 	

	examinations and what does this process entail?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • MEHA still insists on a more consultative approach to ensure that the student was duly advised before finalising the path to take • A review of the curriculum and re-strategising of assessments will identify competency-based pathways <p>The 2016 examination was adjusted based on the 2015 experience. Most levels were shifted back to allow more teaching hours and quality preparation time.</p> <p>EAU also considers other important developments:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> i. introduction and removal of subjects; ii. result release – demand from higher education and overseas institutions; iii. secondary enrolment; and iv. issues raised from the last year of implementation. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Literacy and numeracy guides for teachers were developed in 2016 • Training of Years 1-4 teachers on literacy and numeracy learning, teaching and assessment strategies were conducted from 2017-2018 <p>In addition, measures in place to improve entail:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. improvement of LANA reporting to focus on the student. The benchmark reporting enables a structured approach of identifying those in need of more attention for improvement; and 2. EAU is developing a report to thin out the areas of concern from the learning outcomes to assist teachers on more direct and targeted approach of improvement
31	The committee notes that the 2016 examinations date was adjusted to allow space for quality measures before result release. Provide further information on what quality measures were taken.	
32	Page 53 of Annual Report (Year 5 LANA) - How has the Ministry addressed the challenge of maintaining consistent performance and improvement for the 408 schools in 2017-2018?	<p>LANA is a diagnostic assessment to identify areas needing improvement. LANA analysis is dispatched to CAS and the Districts for follow ups and intervention measures. The analysis identifies schools with students identified for concerted improvement measures.</p> <p>On the other hand the more than average and high performing schools are also monitored to maintain a consistent approach.</p>
33	How has the Ministry evaluated its monitoring process for Years 5 and 7 LANA results? Once the results are available, what measures and monitoring mechanisms are put in place to ensure that improvement is made in areas of weakness?	
34	Page 54 of Annual Report (Year 7 LANA) – How does the Ministry plan to address the low numeracy results for Year 7 students in	<p>There are issues we cannot control such as the makeup of students in a particular cohort in a year, changes in teacher but effectively it requires more commitment in a holistic and sustainable manner. Employment of sound strategies and proper monitoring at the internal school level will greatly enhance and improve individual results.</p>

	schools based in the Macuata, Bua and Ra districts?	<p>A working group has been established to address literacy and numeracy in a coordinated way across the country. This will bring together NGOs involved in the area, develop a consistent approach to catch up strategies, working on data analysis with Heads of Schools who will increasingly be held accountable. Twinning schools will also be considered as well as peer mentoring. Parental involvement is key and they are advised of the process.</p> <p>The external support is critical to keep a close tap on the schools' improvement measures.</p> <p>From 2015 all Literacy and Numeracy intervention programs were conducted by CDU/CAS.</p> <p>LANA 2016 – 2018</p> <p>Year 5 has shown an improvement in <i>literacy</i> which has not followed through to Year 7.</p> <p>The situation in Year 5 <i>numeracy</i> has not improved; but in Year 7 it has improved over the past years.</p> <p>A working group has been established to address literacy and numeracy in a coordinated way across the country. This will bring together NGOs involved in the area, develop a consistent approach to catch up strategies, working on data analysis with Heads of Schools who will increasingly be held accountable. Twinning schools will also be considered as well as peer mentoring. Parental involvement is key and they are advised of the process. The teacher training institutions have been alerted and the Ministry will work with them on ensuring that trainee teachers are properly prepared in ECCE, primary and secondary to implement a consistent standard for literacy and numeracy.</p> <p>The Divisional Officers: [2016-2017 and 2019]</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. identify Teacher transfer needs and non -performing school heads (now with HR) 2. Relieving teachers for Maternity/ Study Leave/Overseas Leave/Medical/ 3. Monitoring of School Capital Projects of MEHA and from Donor Agencies 4. Disseminate information from PS of MEHA to district members and report back to PSEHA office 5. Address district school based issues like Teacher/Student indiscipline/Parental complaints and stakeholder complaints/investigations 6. Attend Tikina Council meetings and talanoa sessions with Landowners/ Government Delegation 7. Act as Protocol Officers for Government /Private Delegations in their assigned districts. 8. Addressing Management-School disputes 9. Monitoring of FEMIS update 10. Monitoring of FEG (Free education Grant) update <p>a. \$179,000 was allocated for the purchase of gardening tools for schools.</p>
35	With respect to Year 5 and Year 7 literacy and numeracy results, the committee notes that there is an increasing percentage of students in the critical level or below the minimal expected level. Has this situation improved and what strategies does the Ministry have in place to increase the level of literacy and numeracy understanding of Years 5 and 7 students?	
36	What is the role of Divisional Education Offices in all Districts?	
37	Page 60 of Annual Report (Tools and Equipment):	

- a. How much funding was allocated to the 79 Primary and 50 Secondary schools in terms of assisting them with tools and equipment to enable the effective teaching and learning of the practical component of Agricultural Science?
- b. What kind of Agriculture practical related programmes are undertaken by schools?
- c. Based on the declining number of students from Year 9 to Year 13, how sustainable is the Agricultural Science programme?
- d. Is backyard gardening still part of the school curriculum?

Level	Primary	Secondary
Schools assisted	79	50
Amount per school	\$ 1 000.00	\$ 2 000.00
Total	\$ 79 000.00	\$ 100 000.00
	\$179 000.00	

These tools are supplied for the learning and teaching of gardening skills however, they are also used by schools for the:

- production of food in boarding schools
- building and maintenance of school buildings
- landscaping and beautification of the school compound
- erecting and maintaining fences and drainage systems

- b. Teachers conduct practical agricultural activities depending on the location of the school, the resources available, the competence of the teacher and the enterprise which has a market/ outlet for the produce:

This includes:

Level	Strand	Themes	Practicals
Years 6, 7 & 8	Gardening	Vegetables. Root crops Ornamentals	Soil preparation Planting Crop care Harvesting
Year 9	Crops	Vegetables (direct seeding) Organic farming	Husbandry skills from site selection to post-harvest treatment
	Soils	Preparation and conservation	Tilling, ridging/ furrowing Mulching Experiments on soil components Drainage & irrigation
	Livestock	Fisheries (Schools with a pond)	Aquaculture : fish & prawns Aquarium (if no pond)
Year 10	Crops	Vegetables (transplanting) Organic farming	Husbandry skills from site selection to post-harvest treatment Interplanting/ cropping Compost making Soil conservation

	Soils	Preparation and conservation	Minimum Tillage, Soil & water conservation (Terracing, contouring, cover cropping etc.)
	Livestock	Poultry (Schools with a poultry shed)	Broiler production
Year 11	Crops	Field crops -Fruit crop (pineapple & watermelons) -Cereals (rice & maize) (Schools with land area)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Husbandry skills from site selection to post-harvest treatment Value adding Field trials Asexual plant propagation (Cuttings, layering, bulbs etc)
	Soils	Ornamentals	Landscaping
	Livestock	Physical properties Pigs, sheep & goats (Schools with sheds)	Soil experiments Husbandry practices Mainly on field trips like feeding, hoof trimming, castration
Year 12	Crops	Tree crops	Planting trees Crop care Harvesting etc.
	Soils	Ornamentals	Potted plants, hedges, lawns
	Livestock	Biology Cattle	Vermiculture Field trips Identification methods, dehorning/ disbudding castration
Form 7 prescription used in 2017	Crops	Apiculture Tree crops	Bee keeping for honey production Planting trees Crop care Harvesting
	Soils	Ornamentals Conservation of soil & water	Potted plants Terracing Mulching
	Livestock	Cattle	Field trip

		Dehorning/ disbudding castration
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- c. Agricultural Science is offered as an optional subject from Years 9 to 13. The majority of secondary schools (97%) offered Agricultural Science in 2017. The total number of students choosing to study Agricultural Science has remained between 21 000 to 22 000 in the last 5 years.
At Years 9 & 10 students may opt to study one of three subjects:

i) Agricultural Science	ii) Office Technology	iii) a vernacular language (Vosa Vakaviti, Hindi, Urdu, Rotuman Language or French)
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However, when students reach Years 11, 12 and 13, they have more optional subjects to choose from including:

i) Agricultural Science	ii) Office Technology	iii) a vernacular language (Vosa Vakaviti, Hindi, Urdu, Rotuman Language or French)
iv) Biology	v) Chemistry	vi) Physics
vii) History	viii) Economics	ix) Accounting
x) Home Economics	xi) Computer Studies	Etc.

After Year 10, some Agricultural Science students choose to join institutions which specialise in agricultural studies like Montfort Boys Town, Navuso Agricultural College and the Technical College.

This is why the numbers of students studying Agricultural Science decrease once students reach Years 11, 12 and 13. This problem is being addressed by

- amending the syllabi to include other related enterprises which have potential in Fiji e.g. aquaculture, forestry, ornamental horticulture etc.
- including Careers as a sub-strand of the syllabi from Years 9 to 13 so making students aware of the academic and employable skills related to this subject as well as the potential for further studies, employment and self-employment in related fields.

d. The husbandry and management skills embedded in the respective syllabi are used for both small scale (backyard) and large scale farming. Due to the size of the school gardens and the number of students taking the subject, these

		skills are practised in limited areas so backyard gardening is embedded in practicals at all levels of both Primary Gardening and Secondary Agricultural Science.
38	<p>How successful has the 'My Life at School' careers and cultural resource portfolio been in the 20 schools it was piloted in? Are there plans to introduce this in other schools?</p> <p>The following questions relate to the Technical College of Fiji:</p> <p>a. Provide details of the technical centres currently in operation and the number of students enrolled at each TCF Campus. What are the challenges in the establishment of these TCF campuses?</p>	<p>The book is now adopted not only as a guide for students educational journey and the skills identified which are intended to assist in their subject choices later at higher secondary schools and ultimately determine their career choices, it has created enjoyment for learning for all stakeholders given that it is holistic in context. Thus, from 2018, with the budget approval all schools in Fiji now have copies.</p> <p>a) Currently there are 15 TCF Campuses operational. Memoranda of Agreement (MoA) have been signed for 11 campuses between MEHA and the trustees of the property, 1 campus property belongs to MEHA, and 3 MOA are being vetted. The main challenges faced are the non-availability or provision of certain documents such as land lease, Deed of Trust, consent to sub-lease and surveyed plan of site in case of 2 entities operating on 1 lease. In addition to these, the approval for registration and conversion of staff from Vocational to Technical College has been a challenge. The trainers do not have a qualification in education or adult education; the courses are not accredited.</p> <p>b) Graduates from TCF get employment as trade assistant in their respective fields of study. As per the survey response from 654 students conducted before graduation, 41% got a full-time, permanent jobs within their career field after having Level 2 qualifications from TCF, 29% got part-time jobs, 18% got full-time jobs but not in their career field, 6% were self-employed and 5% were still looking for jobs.</p>
39	<p>b. What employment opportunities are available to students after graduation and are all students able to secure employment?</p> <p>c. Provide details on the number of students receiving scholarships from TSLB and the programmes these scholarships are</p>	<p>Currently, the TCF offers the following training:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Automotive electrical engineering • Automotive mechanical engineering • Body work and spray painting • Refrigeration, heat, ventilation and airconditioning • Welding and fabrication • Carpentry • Cabinet making and joinery • Plumbing and sheet metal works • Cookery • Baking and patisserie

	<p>awarded for. What type of assistance is provided to students under the scholarship scheme from TSLB?</p> <p>d. Provide details on the vocational centers still in operation and whether there are plans to convert them to technical centers.</p> <p>e. Inform us of the number of students enrolled in each vocational center and whether they also receive scholarship assistance from TSLB. What are the challenges in the operations of these vocational centers?</p> <p>f. Provide details on the venues where the Technical College of Fiji's Open Week is held and how many students and schools have attended? How effective is the Open Week in terms of promoting awareness on the programmes offered at each campus</p>	<p>c) The scholarship numbers for TCF are as follows for the following years:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 2015 – 1200 • 2016 – 2057 • 2017 – 2416 • 2018 – 1978 • 2019 – 1921 (Till Trimester 2) <p>TELS scholarships are available for all TCF programmes. All TCF enrolled students are eligible for scholarship assistance provided all necessary documentation and requirements are met thereafter subject to TSLB approval. Assistance provided under the TELS scheme for TCF are as follows:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Tuition assistance • Rental assistance • Food allowance assistance • Incidental & stationery assistance • Transport assistance (during attachment period) <p>d) Currently there are 35 vocational centers (Technical Centres) attached to secondary schools still in operation (57 have been closed since 2015). These 35 are mainly in remote centers. 2 remote campuses also have boarding facilities.</p> <p>e) Currently there are 35 vocational centers in operation with 1064 students. They all receive MEHA tuition grant @ \$610 per student and do not pay fees. They do not receive assistance from TSLB.</p> <p>Challenges:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Remote and maritime areas where the monitoring is an issue • Lack of Education officers to supervise/moderate in the specific subject programs e.g. none for Engineering and Construction programs • Lack of support from school administrators and school management towards this program • Untrained teachers with no industry experience and find difficulty in upgrading their qualification due to their locations • Grant-Financial reports are either not submitted at all or not submitted on time by the schools • Curriculum provided by MEHA which is not accredited therefore not recognized by other higher institutions • Poor facilities in the Vocational Centers in terms of tools and equipment and workshop • Low enrollment at the vocational centers each year
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<p>and increasing enrolment numbers?</p> <p>g. The committee notes that TCF was liaising with the school management of the following centres to establish into TCF Campuses in 2018:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Tailevu North College – Technical Centre ○ Nukuloa College, Ba – Technical Centre ○ St. Francis College – Ra 	<p>f) The Open Week was held at 13 TCF Campuses:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1 Nabua Sanatan Campus 2 Suva Hospitality & Textiles Training Campus 3 Anjuma Hidayat-ul-Islam Campus 4 TISI Sangam Sadhu Kuppaswamy Campus 5 Tagitagi Campus 6 Lautoka Sanatan Campus 7 Dr. Shaukat Ali Sahib Campus 8 Nadrog/Navosa Provincial Campus 9 C. P. Singh Campus 10 Ratu Epeli Ravoka Campus 11 Vanua Levu Arya Campus 12 Macuata-i-cake Campus 13 Ratu Sir Kamisese Mara Campus <p>More than 22 schools and approximately 1804 students attended the Open Week in 2018. For most campuses open week was a great way to inform and create awareness. A lot of students got enrolled after visiting TCF during open week. The main attractions were the practical demonstrations and competency based learning and assessment which captured the interest of students.</p> <p>g) Liaison with committees:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1 Tailevu North College Technical Centre – Draft MoA has been discussed with the committee. SG's office requires supporting documents such as lease, consent to sub-lease, deed of trust, registration of the body, financial report, site plan marked by registered surveyor if 2 entities are on the same lease. Tailevu North college committee has not been able to provide consent to sub-lease yet. Draft MoA will be submitted to SG's office when the consent to sub-lease is provided by the committee. 2 Nukuloa College Technical Center – The vocational centre and the secondary school both are on the same lease therefore a site plan has to be drawn by a registered surveyor showing the line of division. This document is yet to be provided by the committee. All other required documents have been submitted. Once the surveyor's plan is provided TCF will submit the draft MoA to SG's office for vetting. 3 St. Francis College – This was declined by the then Minister for Education, Hon. Dr. Reddy. <p>a. FTRA is a centralised office that relies on District MEHA Offices to reach out to all corners of Fiji. The District Education Offices receive the fees and the applications forms and send them to FTRA secretariat for processing and registration. The following are some challenges that FTRA secretariat faces:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Wrong forms are filled • Forms submitted by applicants are incomplete
<p>Fiji Teachers Registration Authority:</p> <p>40</p> <p>a. What are some of the challenges faced by the</p>	

<p>Fiji Teachers Registration Authority in the registration of qualified practicing teachers to teach in ECCE, Primary and Secondary schools in Fiji?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • All documents are not attached to the form • Right amount of fees is not paid <p>Steps taken</p> <p>All graduating teachers are advised on the right forms to fill during the Induction. Page by page the contents of the form are discussed and all necessary supporting documents to be attached are emphasized. The right amount of fees to be paid is also communicated to the graduating students.</p> <p>FTRA also has awareness sessions with all education offices that receive these forms so that they check the forms for errors or omissions before posting the forms to the secretariat for registration.</p> <p>Online registration is being worked on and this service should be available by beginning of 2020. It is year marked to be piloted with graduating FNU students this year.</p>
<p>b. Which other classification apart from qualified teachers need to be registered with FTRA?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Delays caused by forms reaching late to the secretariat - All education offices have been requested to CDP forms directly to FTRA secretariat rather than using normal post services.
<p>c. Page 70 of Annual Report – The committee notes that the FTRA was awaiting the final Amendment Act to be passed by Parliament together with its subsidiary regulations. Update us on whether the Amendment Act has been passed and what amendments have been made to the Act.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • All renewals are done in December - January before schools reopen. This places a lot of stress on the secretariat staff members - Online renewal currently being developed and should be available for 2020 and beyond renewals. • Issuing of ID cards to teachers is delayed as only one ID printer is available to print the cards - Secretariat has formed an internal task force to specifically work on ID Cards. Request has been made for funding of an additional card printer. • Time taken to validate students with overseas certificates • Non response of overseas tertiary institutions (universities/tertiary institutions) <p>FTRA works in collaboration with HEC verifies all overseas certificates received. Only those students whose qualifications have been verified are registered.</p> <p>b.</p> <p>FTRA also registers:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Volunteers • Teacher Aides • Sports coaches/ instructors • Librarians • Counsellors • Chaplains • Sign language instructors

	<p>c. The proposed Act is still with the SG's Office. It had been submitted in 2014 and some changes were done in 2015. Amendments were sought so that as per Parliament resolution in 2013, FTRA could be fully divested and become a fully-fledged Government Statutory Body with in-house disciplinary powers. The FTRB Promulgation was deemed inadequate to enable this, hence the amendments were proposed. Some major changes that were proposed were:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Board to appoint secretariat staff • In-house disciplinary fines without having to go through court prosecution • Reducing of fines for non-compliance
41	<p>Why is the National Substance Abuse Advisory Council not comprised of representatives from the Fiji Police Force, Ministry of Women, Children and Poverty Alleviation, and Ministry of Youth and Sports as it deals with issues arising out of drug and substance abuse?</p> <p>The SAAC Act 1998 only identifies the Ministry of Finance [Economy], Ministry of Health, Ministry of Regional Development, Ministry of Education, Fiji Council of Social Service, Fiji Council Churches as council members.</p> <p>We are planning to include the Fiji Police Force, Ministry of Women, Children and Poverty Alleviation and Ministry of Youth and Sports at least as observers in 2019.</p>
42	<p>Considering the continuous increase in drug and substance abuse amongst students, what has been the major challenge in the implementation of the relevant legislation and policies?</p> <p>The drug policy needs to be amended to capture the new types of drugs entering the country and used or abused by the students. Apart from this, the disciplinary procedures in place are not effective to change student attitudes. The Policy Unit will be reviewing the drug policy and include relevant sections that can address these gaps.</p> <p>The enforcement of policy at school level needs to be strengthened and SAAC whenever visiting schools, creates awareness on the drug policy for better understanding.</p> <p>There are many cases from schools on inhalant abuse. SAAC has developed the Volatile Substance Abuse Draft Law and is currently with Solicitor General for final vetting before taken to Cabinet and Parliament. This law will restrict the sale of Inhalants to students and penalize retailers who deliberately sell them to students.</p> <p>The MEHA collects data from schools through FEMIS. The SAAC has its own data base where we collect data on drug and substance use and abuse from schools. The data is used to identify schools with high cases of drugs. Training programmes are prepared where teachers and students attend the training and are empowered with knowledge and skills on how to address the substance abuse and other social issues in schools.</p>
43	<p>Is there a database on drug and substance abuse with the Ministry and how is the data used to address this problem?</p> <p>The data collected also helps in identifying cases from school that require intervention in terms of counselling support for both legal and illegal drugs</p>

<p>The committee notes that the NSAAC counselling team provides counselling support to students, teachers and community members and observes the various pressing issues in counselling as identified on page 75 of the Annual Report. How is the Ministry planning to address these issues particularly with the shortage of professional counsellors?</p>	<p>The SAAC counselling team always includes basic counseling skills training during the teacher Training of Trainers. With these skills, teachers who attend the training will be able to conduct student assessment after identifying the student who shows at risk behaviour. After assessing and finding out that the student needs further help from professional counsellors, they will refer the case to other professionals or SAAC counsellors for further assistance.</p> <p>Apart from this, SAAC also conducts professional development on Basic Counselling skills to school teachers who request. In this way the teachers are empowered to conduct assessment to student at risk and make necessary referral to professional. The SAAC counsellors conduct Drug counselling, Trauma counselling, Career counselling and General counselling.</p> <p>The Ministry with the assistance of the Australian government currently in the process of upgrading the qualification of 36 teachers into Diploma in Counselling from APTC. These teachers who are providing some counselling services in schools can assist in counselling of students after being properly qualified. Scholarships through TSLB are also available for people (not just teachers) to undertake counselling studies but the uptake has not been significant.</p> <p>Furthermore, the Australian government through DFAT funding is also piloting a programme to engage the services of NGOs which provide counselling to help students who need counselling services in selected schools in the central and the west.</p> <p>SAAC also has 32 mentors in selected schools throughout the divisions who conduct one on one mentoring services for students in schools identified by the teachers.</p> <p>The Police provide assistance through facilitation training session on these topics: Drugs and Substance Abuse, Sexual Offences, Cyber Crime, Human Trafficking. They conduct awareness for schools on dangers of illicit drugs.</p> <p>Ministry of Women, Children and Poverty Alleviation: facilitate session on Child Welfare Act, Forms of Child Abuse and Neglect, and the importance of reporting cases from school by teachers since teachers are also professionals.</p> <p>Ministry of Health & Medical Services: Facilitate session on NCDs, Wellness concept, and Health screening. St Giles Hospital always handles cases referred from schools involving mental illness relating to illicit drugs.</p> <p>Fiji Women Crisis Centre: facilitate on the elimination of all forms of gender based violence in schools.</p> <p>Pacific Centre for Peace Building: facilitating session on promoting peaceful reconciliation in conflict situations in school.</p>
<p>What kinds of programmes do the various NSAAC stakeholders have in place to assist it in carrying out its mandated roles and responsibilities?</p>	

	<p>Empower Pacific, Medical Service Pacific, Lifeline Fiji: They handle counselling referral for serious cases</p>																																		
46	<p>Are school libraries properly resourced to cater to the needs of students and what are the challenges faced in the setting up of libraries in schools and their administration? How is the Library Services Department planning to overcome these challenges?</p>	<p>Some school libraries are well resourced and well maintained since they have a school librarian. Some challenges faced once school libraries are set up are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Removal of resources from the rooms that were set up into a smaller room or shared room to create space for the number of students, this could arise when there is an increase in their intake. • Removal of resources from a dedicated library to classroom collection, due to lack of rooms (infrastructure). • Loss of resources due to the non- availability of full time school librarians who will be accountable for the resources in the school library. • Lack of ownership at school level, schools do not value or take responsibility to safeguard their school library resources, to carry out a stock take ensure that all their resources are available at the end of one academic term. • Frequent request for assistance in terms of setting up as they do not have school librarians. • Natural disaster that destroyed school libraries for example. • Lack of implementation of the National School Library Policy across schools. <p>The development of the National School Library Policy was to overcome those challenges. Some possible solutions could be:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Nationwide awareness and implementation of the National School Library Policy • Schools to be encouraged to utilize their school library FEG for the purpose of developing their School library. • The introduction of Book Box Loan Scheme to schools; schools to loan the resources on a monthly or termly basis, an agreement to be signed by the School Head, agreeing to accept the loan condition. School Heads will be held accountable for any loss of resources. <p>An agreement to be drawn up once the School library set up is completed and School Heads will need to sign agreeing to the condition stated on the agreement or Handing over statement.</p>																																	
47	<p>Provide details on the number of schools which have a fully-fledged library together with full time School Librarians.</p>	<table> <tr> <th>EDUCATION DISTRICT</th><th>WITH LIBRARY</th><th>WITHOUT LIBRARY</th></tr> <tr> <td>Suva</td><td>68</td><td>15</td></tr> <tr> <td>Ra</td><td>29</td><td>14</td></tr> <tr> <td>Nausori</td><td>93</td><td>16</td></tr> <tr> <td>Nadroga/Navosa</td><td>49</td><td>10</td></tr> <tr> <td>Macuata / Bua</td><td>77</td><td>11</td></tr> <tr> <td>Lautoka / Yasawa</td><td>73</td><td>8</td></tr> <tr> <td>Eastern</td><td>86</td><td>18</td></tr> <tr> <td>Cakaudrove</td><td>52</td><td>6</td></tr> <tr> <td>Ba/Tavua</td><td>51</td><td>7</td></tr> <tr> <td>TOTAL</td><td>578</td><td>105</td></tr> </table>	EDUCATION DISTRICT	WITH LIBRARY	WITHOUT LIBRARY	Suva	68	15	Ra	29	14	Nausori	93	16	Nadroga/Navosa	49	10	Macuata / Bua	77	11	Lautoka / Yasawa	73	8	Eastern	86	18	Cakaudrove	52	6	Ba/Tavua	51	7	TOTAL	578	105
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	<p>Not all the schools that have libraries have a dedicated rooms, about 35% will have shared room due to lack of building or space.</p> <p>Not all schools have full time librarian as there are no positions created in schools, thus those that have full time librarians are either paid by FEG, School committee or PTFA. Therefore approximately 20% of schools have full time librarians and sometimes in some secondary schools language teachers are responsible for the school library.</p> <p>In order for students' literacy to be improved, schools need to invest in upgrading their library and to create spaces for students to cater for different types of learners. We need to create that environment to allow students to explore and learn the world around them at their own pace, that way we will support a 21st century learner and enhance their learning skills as well and boost their love for reading and books.</p>
48	<p>Provide further information on the National School Library Policy and what standards the school libraries are required to have.</p> <p>The Standards that we want school libraries to follow is stipulated in the School Library Guideline put together by the International Federation of Library Association (IFLA) which is the international professional body of Librarians. The National School Library Policy had contextualized the International School Library Guidelines to our local context. In order to strengthen school library services, schools need to invest time in implementing the National School Library Policy and ensure a school committee is set up to assist in the development of school library rules and regulation to suit their students.</p>
49	<p>The Department addresses these through the following means;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • talks in villages • presentations at Provincial Council Meetings • workshops • displays during Government roadshows • distribution of resource materials (brochures, pamphlets) • festivals • newsletter • facebook page • website • Domo ni Vuli Programme • Careers Expo Programme • Radio Talkback show • Invitations from communities <p>How does the Department of Heritage and Arts carry out awareness on cultural sites to the general public?</p>

	<p><u>Laucala Ring Ditch Fortification</u></p> <p>The site is a twin ring ditch fortification situated in Laucala Beach Estate. One of the forts is clearly identifiable, with a well-defined ditch and four obvious causeways the second and adjoining forts is much less obvious at ground level. The site is a well preserved example of a type of pre-historic site, common in SE Viti Levu.</p> <p><u>Future Plans</u></p> <p>Currently being restored and developed for small scale ecotourism and historical excursion site for schools and the public. Plans include construction of Visitor Information Center</p>
<p>Inform us on what other properties in Fiji are under heritage and whether there are plans to include others as heritage sites/buildings.</p>	<p><u>Sigatoka Sand Dunes</u></p> <p>Located directly west of the mouth of the Sigatoka River the extensive sand dune area contains a rich combination of interesting land-form features, archeological history and remains and natural beach forest.</p> <p><u>Future Plans</u></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Implement "Youth Initiatives in Heritage" to involve youths from the neighbouring communities and settlements. 2. Upgrading of NTF Resource Libraries. 3. Upgrading of Track facilities. 4. Implement Technical and Advocacy Heritage Workshops. 5. Use of Drone as Monitoring and Surveillance Equipment Essential, given the acreage size of the Protected Area, for ecosystem management, document illegal activities, wildlife research, disaster response etc.
<p>50</p>	<p><u>Garrick Reserve</u></p> <p>The reserve is located in Navua and was given to the National Trust by the Garrick family in 1980. The reserve consists of old growth lowland forest.</p> <p><u>Future Plans</u></p> <p>To be developed for ecotourism with proper visitor facilities</p>
	<p><u>Waisali Rainforest Reserve</u></p> <p>Waisali forest is an area of unlogged tropical rainforest lying in the upper catchments of the Savuqoro River on the steep south-facing slopes of Vanua Levu's main chain of hills. The parts of the reserve contain native hardwoods such as Dakua and softwoods such as Yaka and Yasi. Rare specimens of wildlife including the Red Breasted Musk Parrot and the Orange Dove are also found here.</p> <p><u>Future Plans</u></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Establishment of the first Environment Education Centre for Vanua Levu focusing on the endangered species of the North i.e. the Fiji Ground Frog, Fijian Crested Iguana and the Fijian Free-tailed bat (refer to 2019-2020 budget submission). 2. Upgrading of Visitor Facilities at the site. 3. Implementation of "Heritage in Young Hands" Program.

	<p>4. Implementation of “Youths Initiative in Heritage” Program.</p> <p>5. Implement programs with themes on Climate Change and Disaster Risk using the site as a tool for Adaptation and Management.</p> <p>6. Implement Technical and Advocacy Heritage Workshops.</p> <p>7. Use of Drone as Monitoring and Surveillance Equipment. Essential for ecosystem management, document illegal activities, wildlife research, disaster response etc.</p> <p><u>Yaduataba Crested Iguana Sanctuary</u></p> <p>A tiny rather dry rain shadow island located approximately 21 km west of the Naicobocob Peninsula of western Vanua Levu, is a major refuge for the Crested Iguana and Fijian dry forest. The island is home to a population of about 6,000 Crested Iguanas and contains some of the best remaining examples of dry forest and littoral or beach forest in Fiji.</p> <p><u>Future Plans</u></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Establishing ecotourism development as a long term solution to its conservation and management. 2. Construction of Visitor Information Centre and establish new Resource Library. 3. Translocation of an identified number of Crested Iguanas to main Yadua Island at identified location adjacent to Yadua Tabu. 4. Implementation of “Youths Initiative in Heritage” Program with the Denimanu Community on Yadua Island. <p><u>Sovi Basin Protected Area</u></p> <p>Sovi Basin Protected Area (SBPA) is Fiji’s largest terrestrial protected area nestled between the Medrausucu, Korobasaga and Nakeva-Naitaradamu ranges, 35km from Suva. The SBPA covers an area of more than 16,000 hectares owned by 13 landowning units who reside in six separate villages within the provinces of Naitasiri and Namosi. The Sovi Basin Protected Area is co-managed by the National Trust and the villages of Delailasakau, Naseuvou, Nadakuni, Nukusere and Naivucini.</p> <p><u>Future Plans</u></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Implementation of “Heritage in Young Hands” Program involving Primary Schools in the Waidina District. 2. Continue with Community Conservation Agreements with the Sovi Landowning villages. 3. Use of Drone as Monitoring and Surveillance Equipment. Essential, given the acreage size of the Protected Area, for ecosystem management, document illegal activities, wildlife research. <p><u>Nakanacagi Bat Sanctuary</u></p> <p>The Nakanacagi Bat Sanctuary is located in the Dreketi District of the Macuata Province, Vanua Levu, Fiji. It is approximately three (3) kilometers south of Nakanacagi Village and 60 km southwest of Labasa. The cave is the only known maternity colony of the globally endangered Fijian free-tailed bat (<i>Chaerephon bregullae</i>) and is the only</p>
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	known roost in Fiji. Based on the best scientific data available, this single roost represents over 95% of the species global population. Future Plans 1. Expansion of "Heritage in Young Hands" Program to include Nakanacagi community and students from neighbouring communities and settlements.	
51	How does the Department of Heritage and Arts partner with the iTaukei Trust Fund Board in regard to the preservation and promotion of Intangible Cultural Heritage (ICH) in Fiji?	<p>The Department of Heritage and Arts through the completion of the 1st Phase of Rotuma Cultural Mapping has commenced dialogue with the iTaukei Trust Board. There is a need to establish stronger relation with the iTaukei Trust Board on the implementation on the 2003 ICH Convention.</p> <p>The first phase of the national consultation on the National Cultural Policy was carried out in the 3rd quarter of the 2018-2019 Financial Year. The Unit has scheduled for four phases to be conducted regarding the NCP. The second consultation will have to be carried out in the 1st quarter of 2019-2020 after all the amendments from the 1st consultation have been carried out. The Policy and Convention Unit has identified ten national priority areas which are stipulated in the document.</p> <p>The UNESCO Conventions – a national consultation on the Hague Convention and a Training of Trainers on the Hague Conventions has been completed. The Policy and Convention Unit is currently working towards consolidation of reports and a Cabinet paper submission for the ratification of the Hague Convention and its Protocols. The Policy and Convention Unit needs to carry out continuous dialogue with the Ministry of Defense regarding the ratification of this important convention as it centres on the protection of heritage sites in times of armed conflict.</p> <p>The 2005 Cultural Diversity Convention is another UNESCO Convention that the Unit is working towards ratification. Currently there is a need for a refresher information session for line ministries and stakeholders on the Cultural Diversity Convention.</p> <p>The first phase of Rotuma CMP has been completed in which two districts have been covered. The ICH Unit is currently working on the compilation of the report. The actually documentation of the various ICH domains will be done in the Rotuman language as this is in line to the ICH Convention and the protection of language.</p> <p>Three phases have been scheduled for Rotuma CMP but from work that has been carried out in the 1st phase it indicates that more time needs to be allocated to carrying out such sensitive work. The work of the 2003 ICH Convention is delicate as well and this means that the delegation carrying out the CMP will need to be aware of cultural sensitivities and adhere to conducting traditional ceremonies.</p>
52	What challenges is the Policy, Conventions and Projects Unit faced with in the implementation of policies, guidelines and strategies that are developed for the culture sector?	
53	Provide an update on the progress of cultural mapping or inventorying of Rotuman ICH and whether there are any heritage sites in Rotuma.	

54	Is the Mini ICH Show an yearly event and are there plans to extend the Show to other Divisions?	<p>The Mini ICH Show was in partnership with the Ministry of iTaukei Affairs. The Mini ICH Show provides a platform at the national level for practitioners to showcase their traditional heritage under the five broad domains of the 2003 Intangible Cultural Heritage Convention.</p>
55	<p>Page 94 of Annual Report - How has the Department of National Heritage and Arts monitored the implementation of the various community and national cultural projects supported in 2016-2017 to ascertain their effectiveness? Does the Department carry out awareness on the availability of cultural grants in order to attract more recipients?</p>	<p>The Department has a monitoring mechanism in place whereby projects are monitored before and after in order for the grant to be released.</p> <p>Yes, the Department undertakes awareness on the Cultural Grants programs for general awareness and undertakes a rigorous programme of selection of grant recipients.</p>
56	<p>Page 95 of Annual Report (Archaeological assessment and Mapping of Traditional Heritage Sites) – Detail how the \$50,000 grant allocated to Fiji Museum for an Archaeological Impact Assessment in 2016-2017 was utilised.</p>	<p>One of the mandated legal functions of the Fiji Museum is to conduct Archaeological Impact Assessments to safeguard and preserve the sites of cultural significance which links communities to their ancestors and their identity. The \$50,000 allocated to the Fiji Museum is used for these activities and has helped the Museum to a large extent to assist communities. The success in works has also firmed up on a relationship established between the TLTB and Museum regarding sharing of data so that any development will not have any impact or implications of site demarcated and assessed by the Fiji Museum.</p>

Village Requests – Archaeological Impact Assessment

Villages	Province	Quarter	Year
Sovusovu	Ra	1	2016
Korovatu Hisotrical Site	Ba	1	2016
Nadarivatu Landonwer's Consultation	Ba	1	2016
Makogai Salvaging Exercise	Lomaiviti	1	2016
Koronivonu, Vusasivo	Cakaudrove	2	2016
Moturiki	Lomaiviti	2	2016
Nadarivatu Community Consultation-Hydro Project	Ba	2	2016
Bua Archaeological Excavation	Bua	2	2017
Delaiviwa	Tailevu	3	2017
Community Consultation at Uluibau, Moturiki	Lomaiviti	3	2017
Moturiki Eco-Tourism Consultation	Lomaiviti	4	2017
Nabukelevu	Serua	4	2017
Nalawa	Ra	4	2017
Saru	Ba	4	2017

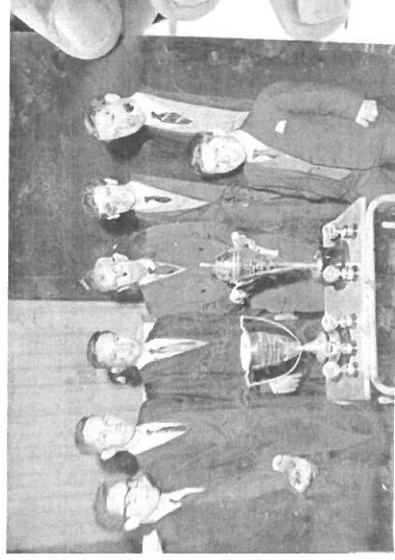
Procurement and Others

Volunteer Payment as of Quarter 1, 2016	Mr. Nikolau Tokainavatu
File server for the storage of data from the AIAs	
Refurbishment of the Archaeology Storeroom for the proper storage of equipment and collections from the villages and archaeological research materials	Paints, paint brushes and rollers, nails, double sided tapes, lino carpets, storage boxes, marker pens, zip locks etc.
Equipment and materials needed for conducting AIAs and the preparation and compilation of survey reports	Report covers, spiral combs, field gear (boots, waterproof bags), cameras, torches, GPS, waterproof and underwater cameras etc.

57	<p>Page 96 of Annual Report (Cultural Industries) - What has been the outcome of the 3 years EU-ACP funded project on "enhancing the Pacific Cultural Industries: Fiji, Samoa and Solomon Islands" which concluded in July 2016?</p>	<p>This is an on-going exercise as the Department continues to work on leveraging Cultural Industries for the wider culture sector in all different forms of arts. For this, the Department continues to collaborate with its implementing agencies and other key cultural institutions including Non-Governmental Organisations in particular the Pacific Community.</p>
58	<p>How are Cultural Statistics collected by the Department such as, those from the MSG Fiji Alternative indicators of Well-Being Pilot Project 2016, utilised by the Department and other relevant organisations and institutions?</p>	<p>The Data collected by the Department on the AIWB Project has been analyzed and sent to the MSG AIWB Project Coordinator for further analysis and comparison purposes against the same survey conducted by the MSG member countries. This is to enable the deriving of a common indicator for development amongst MSG countries.</p> <p>The survey was completed in 2017 with the dataset verified, analyzed and summarized. The findings have been presented to the relevant stakeholders and agencies with strong recommendations by the MSG Project Coordinator and the handing over of the data to the relevant government agency.</p>
59	<p>What measures has the National Archives taken to protect and preserve its records and what mechanisms are in place to restore these records in the event of a disaster?</p>	<p>The National Archives of Fiji (NAF) has undertaken a number of measures to protect and preserve Fiji's documentary heritage.</p> <p>Firstly, we have the only document conservation laboratory in the entire English speaking South Pacific. The NAF Conservation Section actively treats and restores damaged documentary heritage using scientific methods. This section also monitors all repository areas to ensure that the proper environmental conditions are present, to ensure the longevity of Fiji's recorded history. Secondly, all deposits are processed in accordance with international archival standards to ensure their good condition, accessibility, and long life span. This work is carried out by the Archives Administration Unit. Thirdly, the Digital Continuity Unit is the section of NAF responsible for dealing with records in special formats, i.e. photographs and footage. These are sorted, stored digitised and catalogued.</p> <p>In addition to this, NAF recently carried out a Disaster Preparedness and Response Training facilitated by Mr Brandon Oswald, the Executive Director of Island Culture Archival Support, utilizing guidelines issued by the Pacific Regional Branch of the International Council on Archives (PARBICA). NAF is currently refining a draft Disaster Preparedness and Response Policy, to be complete by end of June 2019.</p> <p>On top of this, NAF has been able to take a consistent approach to building capacity in working with documentary heritage. Over the years a number of workshops and meetings have been arranged, leveraging subject matter</p>

expertise from abroad in order to demonstrably and steadily improve how we care for and make accessible our heritage documents.

- An Australian Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade (DFAT) funded Twinning programme was executed in 2016. This enabled NAF to benchmark our digitization standards against the National Archives of Australia, learn from their institutional governance structures and also allowed for the then Acting Director of Conservation Cheryl Jackson to visit Fiji and carry out hands on training on photograph restoration and preservation. Overall this has distinctly improved the quality and consistency of our digitization programme, and enabled us to restore photographs which we previously would have discarded because we were not able to physically restore them. This means that we are able to save more at risk photographic heritage than before.



Before photo restoration treatment.



After treatment methods taught by Cheryl Jackson.

Mr Steve Clark of the National Film and Sound Archive of Australia (NFSA) visited NAF on behalf of the South East Asia Pacific Audio Visual Archives Association (SEAPAVAA) as part of a scoping study for UNESCO, to identify where audio visual collections are situated in the south Pacific. During his time with us, he was also able to do training on film handling, and disaster mitigation. This has given our team more confidence in dealing with AV footage, and take precautionary measures to ensure their preservation.

- 2016 UNESCO Memory of the World Training Workshop for the Asia-Pacific Region
The regional training workshop was jointly organized by the Korean National Commission for UNESCO, Cultural Heritage Administration of Korea, and the National Archives of Fiji, in cooperation with UNESCO Apia Office and the Fiji National Commission for UNESCO. The workshop brought together representatives from 10 countries in Asia-

	<p>Pacific Region, and 4 world leading experts on documentary heritage to discuss how to identify documents of national, regional, and international significance, and to be able to advocate for their preservation and access.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • International Network of Emerging Library Innovators (iNELI) 2016-2017 <p>Fiji participated in a Library leadership development programme for Pacific Librarians at both the Steering Committee, and the Executive Committee level. iNELI-Oceania was based on the highly successful International Network of Library Innovators (iNELI), a project of the Global Libraries initiative of the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation, which since 2011 has provided emerging library leaders with opportunities to connect with each other - to explore new ideas, to experiment with new services and to learn from one another. The program was supported by a number of peak library organisations in Australia and New Zealand and is guided by a Steering Committee representing local program partners and funders: ALIA (Australian Library and Information Association); LIANZA (Library and Information Association of New Zealand Aotearoa) and NSLA (National and State Libraries of Australasia). Other key supporters include the State Library of Queensland; the State Library of Victoria; PLVN (Public Libraries Victoria Network); Yarra Plenty Regional Library and Auckland Libraries. ALIA provides administrative support for the Program Manager. The primary objectives of the program were to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identify, nurture, and develop innovative emerging leaders in Australia, New Zealand, and the South Pacific through an online learning program and network opportunities • Foster partnerships and collaboration of stakeholders in the region <p>The programme has graduated over 50 individuals, and created a network of librarians with important tools to lead efforts to support the information and documentary heritage needs of their populations.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Pacific Regional Branch of the International Council on Archives 17th Biennial Conference <p>In September 2017 the Pacific Regional Branch of the International Council on Archives (PARBICA) held its seventeenth (17th) biennial conference in Fiji. The conference provided a unique opportunity to make or renew professional contacts with Pacific archivists and records managers who usually work in isolation. Delegates discussed common problems and explored possible solutions in small groups and plenary sessions. This was supported with skills based workshops on digitization led by the National Library of New Zealand, records management facilitated by the National Archives of Samoa and Fiji, and a Memory of the World heritage assessments and documentation capacity building by the Memory of the World Committee for Asia Pacific (MOWCAP). All told, there were over a hundred participants from over 20 Pacific nations and territories. Feedback from the conference was very positive.</p>
60	<p>Are there plans to set up Archives in other Divisions?</p> <p>There are no plans to set up divisional archives at this juncture. For the most part, doing so would diminish the ability of NAF to maintain consistent controls on archival preservation and environmental standards. The whole idea</p>

Total No: Currently Active			25,471
Total No: Graduated So Far			9283
Total No: of Students Assisted from 2014 to 2018 YTD			35229

The budget allocation for the new schemes since 2014 is summarised in Table 2 below.

Table 2: Fijian Government Budget Allocations for Tertiary Education 2014-2018/2019 Budget Allocation by Scheme and Year

Schemes	2014	2015	2016/2017	2017/2018	2018/2019
National Toppers Scheme (NTS) - Local	10,000,000	10,000,000	21,186,575	32,252,447	40,768,447
Tertiary Education Loan Scheme (TELS)	42,500,000	42,500,000	84,905,055	96,361,437	120,417,437
Accommodation Support Scheme (ASS)	-	-	-	62,777,093	85,176,254
Existing Scholarships	26,000,000	15,703,205	8,655,031	3,751,880	1,594,740
Overseas Scholarship Support Scheme	220,000	220,000	438,480	608,600	676,222
Scholarship for Students with Special Needs	200,000	200,000	200,000	200,000	266,000
National Toppers Scheme (NTS) - Overseas (New)					3,000,000
Civil Service Scholarship Scheme (New)					2,272,000
Post-Graduate Scholarship – Local Awards Scheme (New)					876,400
TOTAL BUDGET	78,920,000	68,623,205	115,385,141	195,951,457	255,047,500

63	Explain the process through which grants are released to schools.	<p>The Grants are release to schools based on the following process:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Grants are computed based on previous term's roll. 2. Per child grant is determined on the student roll in each school which ranges from \$175 to \$250 per child n primary and \$375 to \$860 in secondary 3. Once the Grant is computed the funds are released to schools subject to compliance such as submission of AGM and AFS, compliance to FEMIS Policy
64	Are counselling services available through Divisional District Offices and are there plans to have qualified counsellors?	<p>In 2016 and 2017, there were few qualified counsellors in schools. [3 in district offices- Lautoka, Nausori/Suva and 6 in schools]. Please see answer to question 44.</p>
65	How does the Ministry deal with bullying cases?	<p>Cases are addressed at the school and district level, however, if issues are brought to the attention of the MEHA, then the MEHA coordinates with the District Officers or goes directly to the school. SAAC provides counseling to those students involved.</p> <p>A School Canteen Policy is a governing and guiding document compiled by the MEHA to guide the school management, school heads (Principals & Head Teachers) and school canteen operators on operating/ running a school canteen.</p> <p>Some of the following issues were noted from school canteens, which resulted in the compilation of a School Canteen Policy: -</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. School canteen operators were running/operating school canteens without proper of valid license from the MHMS and local city authorities. This is in violation of the Food Safety Act 2003, Part 3 on "Licensing of Food Establishments"; 2. Monthly rental of the school canteen levied on canteen operators was very high; 3. School canteen operators are still selling junk food and fizzy drinks to students in schools, despite numerous reminders from the MEHA not to. A School Canteen Guideline was compiled in collaboration with the MHMS and sent to schools, but canteen operators ignore the guideline. Selling junk food and fizzy drinks to students is an easy way to make money; 4. Some canteen structures in schools were not to the designed/fit to be a canteen; 5. School Managers and school heads were not aware of what is sold in the school canteen, thus, there was no monitoring from the latter on what is sold in the canteen.
66	What is the School Canteen Policy?	<p>The School Canteen Policy is one way of informing the school management, school heads and school canteen operators that the MEHA is serious about and advocating the sale of healthy snacks and drinks. Healthy snacks and</p>

		drinks in the school canteen will contribute to a healthy school lifestyle and environment, thus contributing to the successful academic performance of the children.			
67	How is the Ministry of Education working with the Ministry of Infrastructure and Transport to ensure that gravelled roads in front of schools are sealed and also road humps and school signs provided for the safety of students?	The management of the school with the support of the Divisions/Education Districts liaises with the Ministry of Transport to seal the road in front of their school. This is linked to available budget and the FRA's implementation plan.			
68	Is there a policy to transfer husband and wife team to the same school or in the same district?	The policy is silent. However, we have recognised this and put processes in place to identify if the spouse has requested for a transfer and transfers are executed together.			
69	How is the Ministry dealing with issues of corporal punishment?	<p>There has been a Zero tolerance Policy on Corporal Punishment in schools since 2002 but it has not always been implemented consistently. The Ministry also has a Behaviour Management Policy that guides teachers/schools on how to deal with behavioural problems in schools.</p> <p>All Corporal Punishment complaints are attended to with utmost priority and a panel is formed to carry out the investigations. Based on the investigation report, if there is a case to answer the employee is given an opportunity to respond to the allegations presented and a decision is made accordingly.</p> <p>The Ministry has included discussions on positive behavior management in the programme for student free days, issued circulars to school heads to eliminate corporal punishment.</p> <p>Teachers have taken advantage of the open-door communication channels offered by political leadership rather than going through the preferred line of communication from the teacher to school head to district officer to Director Secondary/Primary to PS.</p>			
70	What is the channel of communication for teachers to air their grievances with higher authorities?				
71	Are there plans to include basic sign language classes in schools?	At the moment, there are not enough interpreters for regular school activities and so there are no specialist/trained teachers in that area. The plan is to outsource the training of personnel in this area.			
72	<u>Head 21: Statement of Receipts and Expenditure</u>	<table border="1"> <tr> <td>Breakdown:</td> <td>ACS</td> <td>\$69,624.35</td> </tr> </table>	Breakdown:	ACS	\$69,624.35
Breakdown:	ACS	\$69,624.35			

<p>a. Provide a breakdown of the fees derived from Government Boarding Schools.</p> <p>b. What is the ratio of the revenue collected under "Technical College Recovery" to the overall TELS Budget allocated?</p>	BSS	\$38,004.00
	Labasa College	\$69,062.60
	LPS	\$2,605.00
	NHS	\$28,156.00
	NSS	\$75,715.00
	QVS	\$126,359.00
	RKS	\$81,655.00
<p>This includes Boarding Fees, Tuition Fees for foreign students, Exam Fees, Miscellaneous Fees, Sale of Produce and FTRA Fees</p> <p>For 2016/2017 Financial Year: \$4,947,011/\$84,905,055 = 5%</p>		

Appendix Two

Supplementary Responses

Response by the Construction and Implementation Unit (CIU) of the Ministry of Economy

Clarification on Sukanaivalu VC Memorial School (Yacata)

The Tender for Sukanaivalu VC Memorial School was called in November, 2016 and no bid was received. Therefore, it was retendered in January 2017 whereby only one bid was received. The bid was evaluated and recommended to be awarded to the bidder. The contract was awarded to Gyan Deo Raju Construction Limited in April, 2017.

Ministry of Economy has signed the AS4000 -1997, Australian Standard Contract with the Contractor effective from 11 December 2017 and ended on 15 June 2018.

The mobilization was delayed due to accessibility to site in terms of engaging the appropriate barge, which has the capacity to carry maximum load given the size of the project. In addition to this, the shortage of building materials and adverse weather condition were major factors in delaying the project.

The scope of works for the school included the following:-

- Construction of 5 new buildings
 - Building 1: 1x4 Classroom Block
 - Building 2 : 1x4 Classroom with joining ablution
 - Building 3: ECE Building
 - Building 4 & 5: Duplex Staff Quarters
 - Building 6: Ablution Block
- Structural upgrading and maintenance to 1 buildings
 - Building 7: Staff Quarters
- Minor maintenance works to 3 building
 - Building 8: 1x2 School Block
 - Building 9: Staff Quarters
 - Building 10: Generator Shed

In addition to this, given the magnitude of the project and the geographical location of the School, other major contributing factor included the shortage of skilled trades' people and labourers.

During the early works it was noted that the site condition was very challenging whereby no proper access road from the shore to the site was available to suit transfer of building materials from the barge to the construction site. The distance covered more than 760m on which the contractor constructed a temporary access road to assist with the access of machineries to deliver building materials to site. The works involves compacting of sand to form the required access road surface. This temporary access road took more than a month and a half to complete and now the villagers have the luxury of using this temporary road for access.

Apart from the above and having mentioned the issues, Government did not back down from its deliverable to provide safe and durable teaching and learning environment and continued to put pressure on the contractor and consultant for project to be completed according to the approved timeline.

Government has seen the delays and carried out all the necessary contractual obligations in trying to assist the contractor with the issues encountered at this site.

All payments made are based on the Progressive Payment Certificate for works completed on site only, which is verified and certified by the Lead Consultant, Chand Engineering Consultants Limited.

Government has imposed penalty of \$500.00 per working day effective from 16 June 2018 till termination of contractor on 16 June 2019 and any other associated costs incurred due to retender of the project.

After exploring all options available and with the slow progress of works on site, it was becoming uneconomical for Government to continue the engagement of awarded contractor therefore decided terminate to avoid any further loss of time and money. The contract was terminated in June 2019 and the revised balance of works has been tendered and closed on 16 October with the pre-bid meeting held on 25 September at the school.

Bids will be evaluated and a new contractor to be engaged to complete works after the Government Tender Board approval.

Atelaite Catimaibulu

From: Alison Burchell
Sent: Tuesday, August 20, 2019 6:08 PM
To: Tevita W. Tuivanuavou
Cc: Timoci B. Bure; Sukhendra D. Lal; Makereta Konrote; Shah I. Mohammed
Subject: Question on TC Winston rehabilitation

Good evening

As promised to the Standing Committee on Friday past, please find below the relevant information requested on the progress on the remaining specified schools affected by TC Winston:

1. Kade Village School (Koro Island)

The school is under TCW rehab and is administered under the Construction Implementation Unit (CIU). The work is near completion.

2. Sukanaivalu VC Memorial School (Yacata)

The school is under TCW rehab and is administered under the CIU. The work has stopped due to the expiry of the contract period. However, it has been re-tendered with tender process ongoing.

3. Laucala District (Qamea Island)

The school is under TD04F rehab and the project is administered by MEHA

(a) Tender was initially awarded to Powerlite by the technical committee from the allocated resilience funds. The funds were shared between Yadua Island school in Bua (completed) and Gau Secondary while the remaining was not sufficient to accommodate the estimated \$1.8 million for Laucala District.
(b) FPO advised us to re-tender for Laucala District rehab in 2018-2019 financial year and Powerlite again was recommended with a bid of \$2.2 million (lowest bid) while the allocated funding for that budget is \$1.5 million.

(c) MEHA requested a virement to cover for the balance from the Ministry of Economy but this did not get through the system in time before the end of the financial year so we are reviewing our budget with the Ministry of Economy to address the shortfall.

I have copied the PS Economy and the Head CIU in case you need further clarification.

Best wishes

Alison

Alison Burchell
Permanent Secretary
Ministry of Education, Heritage and Arts

Senikau House
1 Gordon Street
Suva
Fiji

Phone: 00 679 331 4477

Appendix Three

Verbatim Report

STANDING COMMITTEE ON
SOCIAL AFFAIRS

Submittee: Ministry of Education, Heritage and Arts (MEHA)

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[Verbatim Report of Meeting]

HELD IN THE
COMMITTEE ROOM (WEST WING)
ON
FRIDAY, 16TH AUGUST, 2019

VERBATIM NOTES OF THE MEETING OF THE STANDING COMMITTEE ON SOCIAL AFFAIRS HELD IN THE COMMITTEE ROOM (WEST WING), PARLIAMENT PRECINCTS, GOVERNMENT BUILDINGS, ON FRIDAY, 16TH, AUGUST, 2019 AT 9.10 A.M.

Interviewee/Submittee: Ministry of Education, Heritage and Arts (MEHA)

In Attendance:

1. Ms. Allison Burchell : Permanent Secretary
 2. Mr. Timoci Bure : Deputy Secretary
 3. Ms. Kirti Sharma : Head of Human Resources
-

MR. CHAIRMAN.- Thank you, Honourable Members. Good morning and welcome back.

(Mr. Chairman introduced Committee Members)

On behalf of the Standing Committee on Social Affairs, we would like to welcome you, Madam, the Permanent Secretary for Education, Heritage and Arts, Madam Allison; Mr. Bure, the Deputy Secretary; and Ms. Kirti Sharma, Head of the Human Resources Division within the Ministry. Welcome, Madams and Sir.

Honourable Members, the Team is here to present to the Committee in regards to the January to July 2016 Report and then 2016 to 2017 Annual Report. They have already given us two presentations and also they have responded to the questions which we have sent.

I will request them to go through their presentations and also briefly go through the questions and answers which we have sent and this will be followed by supplementary questions by Honourable Members.

So, welcome, Madam, and I will give you the opportunity to present to the Committee now, thank you.

MS. A. BURCHELL.- Thank you, Mr. Chairperson. Good morning, Honourable Members. Thank you for the opportunity to present to you, and I think this is perhaps a little bit of a catch-up process as we have got two Annual Reports to present to you.

Obviously, I think the issue in relation to 2016 is always going to be *TC Winston* and I think that is probably something that each Ministry has referred to as well in terms of their presentations. So, the main things that we really want you to have a look at as per the request is the Ministry Overview and some of the Highlights from each of the Sections within the Ministry.

As I said, *TC Winston* happened and those were the figures in terms of the number of schools that were severely affected, 497. As a result of that, 85,000 students with just over 2,000 students being displaced.

As you know, there was quite a lot psycho-social support that was required. So, I was talking to a family and they said that after *TC Winston*, a couple of months later when they had moved to Suva, there was quite a lot of rain and wind and the young child picked up all of their stuff and went and hid in a corner. So, obviously the impact of *TC Winston* has been felt by many people for a long time and probably still will be for a long time.

One of the issues in terms of schools that they generally used as evacuation centres and I think going-forward, we will be having a discussion with the National Disaster Management Office (NDMO) about whether that is strictly necessary because one of the issues is to make sure the children have stability and having them back at school as soon as possible is the best way forward.

So, within that context, there was some very good collaboration with our donor partners, particularly United Nations International Children's Emergency Fund (UNICEF) and I think the Australians were particularly useful in that.

Obviously, within that context, NDMO was taking the lead on all activities and we started the process of doing the initial damage assessments as soon as possible after *TC Winston*.

So, donor support came in from UNICEF, from DFAT or at that point in time, it was the Australian Quality Education Project (AQEP), Save the Children Fund.

In terms of Water and Sanitation, we are working with AQEP and with the Fiji Teachers Association as well, and those figures you have in front of you as well.

So their main concerns were Infrastructure in trying to get schools back into a reasonable state before the students went back as well as sanitation in particular.

So this sets out the items of support that we received and so it goes from building temporary staff quarters to some recreational kits as well as trying to replace issues relating to hygiene.

Interesting things happened in terms of having a decrease in enrolments in Primary School during that period and our belief is that, that was as a result of *TC Winston*. There was quite a lot of movement of students as you know, for example, from Koro to Suva to ensure that the students were able to continue with their education.

The same thing in terms of Secondary School students, but conversely at 2016, it was the first real year of the Technical College of Fiji operating and so obviously there was a significant enrolment there which had a knock-on impact in terms of FNU's enrolment. I think you have spoken to FNU, and this is where that correlation starts as well.

We tried to make sure that we continued with operations as much as possible, so there are the numbers of text books that were delivered to schools in the nine education districts in that period.

We also had to distribute boats and outboard motors to 17 schools, but the approach of the Government in terms of providing free milk to Year 1 continued and that a large number of students were accessing the transport assistance which was brought into play in that year as well and so those numbers go through from Primary through to the Technical College Level.

In terms of Primary, Secondary and Technical College, there was recruitment to some sign language interpreters as well as ten additional teachers in the Special and Inclusive Education Sector (SIES).

Primary and Secondary Sector focused at that particular point in time in terms of the transfer of students and teachers to nearby schools to continue education as quickly and as easily as possible. As I said just now, eight new campuses for the Technical College were established and the enrolment increased as a result of that over time. That has probably stabilised in terms of what is happening now.

In terms of our Asset Monitoring Unit, the provision of water tanks continues even to this day, but in that particular point in time, 66 schools had the benefit of that. The new Ba Secondary School continues and the construction of it.

Lease payments which were done through the Ministry for 18 schools were sorted out and we continued with the damage assessment processes for *TC Winston*, both in terms of the initial one and then the final one.

In terms of examinations and curriculum, we have been trying to make sure that we modernise the Ministry over time so the online examination registration on the Fiji Education Management Information System was introduced.

We also had the introduction of the Literacy and Numeracy Assessment for Years 5 and Year 7. The Pacific Islands' Literacy and Numeracy are for Years 6 and 8, first done in 2012, and again it was done last year.

The move towards an Outcome-Based National Standardised Assessment was done to support the LANA process and we also support it through providing teaching resources to supplement the learning and teaching for schools.

For Test, we worked on the syllabi which was now more in line with the National Curriculum Framework and that obviously is linked to the 2030 Sustainable Goals and particularly SDG 4 which is very much-focused on education.

In terms of libraries, again automation is a theme that comes through there in trying to make sure that all of the assets within the library system are registered. Our libraries' colleagues set up 39 new school libraries and also supplemented the library resources for *TC Winston*-affected schools.

These are two of our statutory authorities so I think technically, they should be reporting on their own terms as statutory authorities, but these two, in particular, are being very closely aligned to the Ministry: The Fiji Teacher Registration Authority (FTRA), run an induction programme for the USP students and also did some professional development for teachers and students in Kadavu, Rotuma and Ovalau.

The Substance Abuse Advisory Council (SAAC) again is a statutory authority and they have been doing and still do quite a bit of work in terms of training of teachers in particular, but not exclusively so for drugs and substance abuse which is the specific mandate, but they have expanded towards HIV and AIDS, violence against girls and women and children, child abuse and in some instances, teenage pregnancies. You can see there that 117 teachers and counsellors were trained in that area.

Also looking at the issue of Peer Training, 105 peer educators from 26 secondary schools and then obviously linked to *TC Winston* psychological, first aid and trauma counselling were provided as required as well.

For the Department of Heritage and Arts, the ongoing process of mapping archaeological sites which I believe to be of significance, is ongoing, and they also worked on the final draft of the cultural and education strategy as well.

In terms of archives, they have worked continuously to increase the awareness of the archives and this is being done through the outreach programmes.

They also had some assistance in terms of translating some of the historical audio visual footage into something which can be kept and used. So, a lot of that was restored and input into their management system.

They also produced the '*Back in Time*' Programme which was done in collaboration with the Department of Information.

Thank you very much, Mr. Chairman. That was for the Report for the shortened Year of 2016.

MR. CHAIRMAN.- Thank you, Madam. Very quickly, I will just allow Honourable Members if they have any questions so far. Honourable Salote?

HON. S.V. RADRODRO.- Thank you, Mr. Chairman and the Permanent Secretary and the Team, for your presentation.

In regards to the primary schools that were affected during *TC Winston*, and specifically to the Yacata District School, Avea District School, I believe also Kocoma District School in Qamea and may be Nakodu in Koro.

For Avea and Yacata, I have been there recently and Yacata, for example, I had continuously raised this in the House, the material had been there from 2016 and up until now, the construction and repair work is still not moving. The latest information I got for Yacata is that the contractors have left the island.

MR. CHAIRMAN.- Thank you, Madam.

HON. S.V. RADRODRO.- If your Team could, please, brief us on why it is taking so long? For Yacata, I know the children are attending school in the community hall that was constructed by Kaibu Resort, but in Avea, if they are not in tents then they must be in private homes, that I had witnessed in an earlier trip - they were attending school in a private home.

For Koro, I am told that part of the students are still in tents. If not, then where are they attending schools, and likewise in Kocoma? Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

MR. CHAIRMAN.- Thank you, Honourable Member.

MS. A. BURCHELL.- Thank you, Mr. Chairman and the Honourable Member for the question. We would have to get back to you on that, so I would ask for a week to give some written response to that. Part of the issue is that, as a result of the *TC Winston* process, some schools were managed in terms of upgrading reconstruction by the Ministry and some of them were handed over to the Construction Implementation Unit.

Koro, for example, is a little bit more complicated because I think that there were about five schools that were being upgraded and rebuilt in some instances by the Australian Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade (DFAT). So in Koro, there have been some issues in relation to the contractor and I think that that may also be this issue and some of the other places that you have mentioned.

Our information from Qamea is that, they are using a church hall while the process is being finalised there. But, I do not want to give any wrong information to you, so I prefer if we could come back with some written information which we will send through to the Secretariat, if that is all right with you.

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

HON. S.V. RADRODRO.- Honourable Chair, Permanent Secretary and Members of the Team, just in regards to schools being used for evacuation centres: Can you brief us on what kind of consultation was done with the Ministry in regards to this issue because I note from the schools, for example, Daliconi District School in Vanuabalavu has been listed as an evacuation centre; also, Mualevu District School, and this covers the surrounding villages.

Madam Permanent Secretary, the schools are so far-removed from the villages. For example, if a cyclone happens in the night, the villagers will just not decide on moving to those schools because they are so far away. So I am just wondering as to what kind of consultation was done with the Ministry, for the Government to have that policy in place, to use schools as evacuation centres. It contradicts human rights of the people in regards to safety, life, food, shelter and water during a time of disaster.

MS. A. BURCHELL.- I am going to ask the Deputy Secretary to answer that because this predates both myself and the Head of Human Resources. Hopefully, the Deputy Secretary will be able to provide some information, otherwise we will revert on that as well.

MR. T. BURE.- Thank you, Chair, thank you, Honourable Member. I think the general understanding is that, prior to the actual arrival of a cyclone, there are usually warnings, et cetera. In that period of time, we expect people to start moving to evacuation centres before it actually hits the location. But, also with the understanding that most of our people take their time to move to an evacuation centre, some are very reluctant to move, leaving their properties, homes in isolation to live in an evacuation centre. So it is a matter of just following advice and then moving when it is time to move rather than moving when the hurricane is already hitting the location.

Thank you, Chair and Honourable Members. *Vinaka*.

MR. CHAIRMAN.- Thank you. Yes, Honourable Alipate Nagata.

HON. A.T. NAGATA.- Thank you, Honourable Chair and thank you, Madam. In regards to Special Inclusive Education, are there plans to have the basic sign language taught in schools?

MR. CHAIRMAN.- Thank you, Honourable Nagata. Yes, Madam.

MS. A. BURCHELL.- In an ideal world, Chair, yes. I think that the issue is that sign language is still a scarce skill in Fiji still. One of the things that we need to be doing a lot better is to ensure that we plan from A to Z and not from A to W because before we institute a new project or a new policy, we need to make sure that we understand what all of the implications are. So, for us to do that, we would need to understand how many people would need a sign language interpreter in the class; we would need to ensure that that sign language interpreter was a qualified teacher to be able to ensure that we maintain standards and consistency across the Ministry; and then we would need to do a recruitment before we actually implemented it, so that we did not do something, kind of a halfway house approach, so in an ideal world, yes, we should be doing that in schools.

MR. CHAIRMAN.- Honourable Dr. Ratu Atonio, anything so far?

HON. DR. RATU A.R. LALABALAVU.- Thank you, Honourable Chair. Thank you, Madam Permanent Secretary and your Team, just a question in relation to Mr. Bure with regards to still the same school - Dreketi Primary School in Qamea. I am sure they were affected a lot by the landslide caused by *TC Winston*. Currently, they are still schooling in churches as well as in makeshift classrooms. Can you just give us a bit of an update on when will they be relocated to their proper schools?

MR. CHAIRMAN.- Do you have any information on that?

MR. T. BURE.- Mr. Chair, I think we will request that we come back to the Honourable Member.

MR. CHAIRMAN.- You can also write back to us with all those information.

Permanent Secretary, just one clarification: you have said that just soon after the disaster, you also returned and schools started to run as soon as possible, students started to get their education as soon as possible,

looking at some of these schools which are built now, they are built to have evacuation centres for the people in their communities, like we have seen - new generators, water tanks, rooms are there and the schools are allocated in that area as evacuation centres. What are your plans to see that if there is a disaster, people are in there and how quickly you will be able to start classes and all that? Do you have any consultations with NDMO and other relevant stakeholders?

MS. A. BURCHELL.- Thank you, Mr. Chair, for that. We have not as yet had discussions on that specifically with the NDMO but it is certainly on my agenda, and has been for the past couple of weeks.

In my previous Ministry, we actually started discussing with NDMO and with MIT the possibility of doing some sports facilities which could then double-up as evacuation centres.

When I was at Queen Victoria School (QVS) on Friday, they are doing a double-storey building and the plan there is that, the ground floor can be used as an evacuation centre but it is a gym (gymnasium) in real life and so it will not hopefully affect any of the education activities, should unfortunately be a disaster again or a cyclone coming through. But the reality is that, schools provide fairly large indoor spaces and besides community halls and places of worship, those are the only ones that are available and the schools are effectively in most instances, part of the government system. So, it is easy, I think, for NDMO to declare a school as an evacuation centre then necessarily a place of worship or a village hall. But it is something that we will be discussing with the NDMO and now the Permanent Secretary has found his feet, so that we can try and move forward on that one and try and find some alternatives where relevant, taking into account the Honourable Member's point earlier on as well.

MR. CHAIRMAN.- Thank you, Madam. Honourable Salote.

HON. S.V. RADRODRO.- Thank you, Mr. Chair. Thank you, Madam Permanent Secretary and the Team. My next question is on the drug issues. You had briefly mentioned on that and may be the need for the Drug and Substance Abuse Unit to make that presentation but as the Permanent Secretary to the Ministry and particularly the increased emergence of hard drugs into Fiji, and particularly into schools, it is a great concern to us as a small nation. So what strategies or what approaches the Ministry is taking to be able to address this issue, particularly with our students - your strategies may be with other relevant stakeholders?

MR. CHAIRMAN.- Thank you, Honourable Member. Yes, Madam, Permanent Secretary.

MS. A. BURCHELL.- Thank you, Mr. Chair. I think that is the question for now and not for 2016. We actually convened a meeting on Monday evening under the auspices of the Ministry of Defence which brought in the Police, six different Ministries, namely the Ministry of Defence, Ministry of Education, Ministry of Health, Ministry of Local Government, Ministry of Women and Children, Poverty Alleviation and the Ministry of Youth and Sports, together obviously with the Police. There was also representation from the US Embassy and a concerned parent who was actually the one who initiated Marist Brothers becoming and declaring itself as a drug-free school.

It was a two and a half hour meeting that we had and as a result of that, we have agreed that there would be a coordinating Committee of Permanent Secretaries so some of our colleagues have volunteered, for example, Fisheries, Forests as well because of the network that they have.

The following are the three components of it:

- reducing demand - which is where this Ministry would get involved;
- reducing supply - which is obviously being led by the police; and

- reducing harm - which is predominantly likely to be led by the Ministry of Health, because of the possibility of reusing needles and those types of things and rehabilitation processes.

The particular concern at the moment obviously is *Meth* which is highly addictive, and when they showed us the list of substances that go into *Meth*, I cannot understand why any person would want to put them in themselves. You can go on to the dark web and get your shopping list of what substances you need to make *Meth*, and it is mostly purchased through a pharmacy which might be all right, but also from a hardware store.

It is like paint stripper and that type of stuff. I am not saying “paint stripper” per se, but that type of stuff and so what we have asked for is for an awareness brochure to be developed so that we can actually start distributing that to teachers. So we have a system where we can e-mail things out to as many teacher e-mails as we have on record and that we hope that there will be some items on this in relation to our Students Free Day Programmes, when the teachers go back to school two days before the students, to make sure that we try and make them aware of the signs that need to be recognised, so there can be a referral process.

The US Embassy has kindly agreed to bring in a number of awareness kits which can then be distributed to the schools which is a very simple way. It has been done in such a way that you cannot go wrong in terms of raising awareness about it, so we are hoping that that will be arriving soon and we can distribute a number of those to the schools.

The police have identified a number of schools. For the police I think the Red Zone is mainly in the Suva-Nausori corridor at the moment, but obviously we need to look country-wide as much as possible, and so we have invited them to go to the schools and I think we need to be sensitive to the issues of the police being perceived in a particular way, perhaps a former drug addict being perceived in a different way and that in some instances, it may be more effective to have a former drug addict going into the schools and saying, ‘It is not worth it’, and having a discussion about why it is not worth getting involved.

So we are very much looking at those types of activities and we hope that after exams, because we are concerned as well that after exams, there is a habit for teachers to do their preparations for the next year and children to stay at home, that we try and find interesting things to bring the students back into schools so that we can do awareness issues about suicide prevention, the abuse of drugs, alcohol as well as to play sports so that we can try and get some of the kids a little bit more active than perhaps they are at the current time. Also to do some things that are completely unusual in terms of the curriculum so that it becomes an interesting and engaging time for students to spend at school after the exam period, but it is something that we need to be a lot more conscious of.

What the US Embassy people were saying is that, in the US at the current time, the problem that they are having to deal with is actually more of the legal over-the-counter drugs and the addiction that goes with it.

So we are hoping that we can do a combined-approach of not just the illegal substances but the legal substances that sometimes get abused, so that we can make students aware of that and the impact it is going to have on their health. It is not just as you know on their health, but it is on the economy because often people will end up thieving in order to pay for drugs, and then it becomes an economic problem in terms of the family, as well as (kind of) dropping out of society as a whole. So it is a very serious issue that we are taking seriously in a far more coordinated way than has been done up until now.

MR. CHAIRMAN.- Thank you, Madam, for your response. I will request you to go through your next presentation.

MS. A. BURCHELL.- Thank you, Mr. Chairman. This is the longer 12-month period of operation for 2016 and 2017. So I think it took a little bit of adjustment for people because I think they were used to the calendar year rather than the current financial year.

Again, Overview, and some Highlights from each of the Sections is what we will go through. In general terms, we see that having had a decrease in the previous financial year, there was an increase in primary and secondary enrolments. Those are probably similar numbers to those that were the decrease in the previous financial year.

We also noted that there were 398 students enrolled in fulltime programmes, compared to the previous year. There was a significant enrolment in terms of the ECCE component, as that becomes a little bit more formalised in approach.

Those are the numbers in terms of the textbooks and as you can see, that it is actually quite a big operation to get to the point where we have those textbooks procured, printed and then delivered across the country in time for the start of school.

Similarly, to the previous financial year, another 17 boats and outboard motors were delivered; there were still students who were getting access to free milk, and there was a slight increase in the number of students who have access to transport assistance, as you can see there of just over 90,000.

In terms of libraries, there were 100 more libraries established and 79 of them were in primary schools, 18 secondary and three Community Information Centres. The Ministry is responsible for both, school libraries as well as some community libraries because I think the rest of them are under the Ministry of Local Government, for example, the Suva City Council Library.

Enrolments in secondary schools increased and also in ECCE.

In terms of human resources and in the Budget, we were very thankful for the provision of 100 new primary teachers and 250 secondary teachers. We also, at that point in time, established a new HR structure which included people operating on HR in the Divisions and Districts.

Primary, Secondary and Technical Colleges: For the first time, ECCE teachers were paid directly by the Ministry up until that point that we had been transferring grants to the Management Committees and they were paying the ECCE teachers. There were some complaints about that not being done regularly. So for the first time, they have been appointed on Public Service conditions and the salaries were aligned with the Job Evaluation results, which was done in the middle of 2017.

For the first time, there was an ECCE Conference held for ECCE teachers and that has continued over the past couple of years as well.

In terms of Asset Management in that period which is still post *TC Winston*, just under 3,000 students were assisted with backpacks from UNICEF and that 11,000 students were put into 186 temporarily learning spaces which were affected from the 87 cyclone-affected schools; 36 primary schools received assistance in terms of their infrastructure. In terms of ECCE, there were six ECCE Centres that were assisted as well.

In terms of Examinations, we continued to work on the improvement and consistency of examination papers so that we do not have one year when it is a particularly difficult exam and another year where it is a particularly easy exam, so there is a benchmarking process that is being used.

We have also been working on benchmarking in terms of Literacy and Numeracy Assessment (LANA) rather than necessarily using an international standard. It is important that we continue with the LANA process as an assessment tool and not a test. Trying to get that information out is important so that it becomes a diagnostic process to assist those students who need some additional help to improve their literacy and numeracy components.

In our Test Section, again, it is revising continuously to make sure it is aligned to the qualifications framework both, the syllabus, and once the syllabus is reviewed then it means that the textbooks also need to align to the syllabus.

We then piloted the Careers and Culture resource textbook, 'My Life at School', for the first time and subsequently to that, it has been rolled out across a number of schools.

For libraries, we are starting to look at the introduction of e-books, acknowledging that not everyone will have access to a smart phone or to a computer, so we are combining e-books and continuing with paper books. So in libraries, there have been introduction of a certain number of non-fiction, easy readers, junior fiction and adult fiction books, as well as doing some audio books. Audio books can be used by people who are visually-impaired, as well as people who would prefer to do that and may not have access to a computer, for example.

We are also working with ECCE schools increasingly to set up library corners in the schools, all trying to encourage our students to start reading at any early age.

There were a number of workshops held for people within the school system, many teachers who are acting as librarians as well. So, the issue on librarians is an issue that we need to look at increasingly, to make sure that we have the skilled people in schools to encourage and maintain the libraries.

Again, for our statutory authorities and these are just three of them, I think we have seven overall. The Fiji Teachers Registration Board (FTRA) completed inductions for 591 students in this time across the five teacher-training institutions that we have.

For Substance Abuse and Advisory Council (SAAC), there were 221 counselling sessions conducted.

The Tertiary Scholarship and Loans Board (TSLB) assisted 15,800 students and the online TSLB application process started in 2016/2017, combined with the new website which was aimed to provide more information to students so that they knew, not only how to apply for scholarships and loans, but for what they could apply in terms of particular subjects and courses.

Heritage and Arts: Again, we continue with the archaeological assessment mapping process and the Fiji Museum started some work on establishing a virtual museum and that will ultimately help people who are in far-flung places but do have access to internet, to be able to enjoy the museum to the same extent and not necessarily have to come in person. Obviously, it is more ideal in person because you get more of a feel for it but a virtual museum is one way to start moving forward and it is a way that many museums across the world are moving as well. Similarly, some digitisation of audio, video and photographic operations and continuing with the documenting of the heritage collection.

For archives, it seems as our National Archives are probably ahead of the game in terms of the Pacific Islands and they continue with their outreach programmes. They have established a National Archives *Facebook* page and they were very happy to have 52,000 followers and that has slowly increased to over 57,000 this year. They also managed to work with 132 different offices in terms of records management and quite a few of those offices would obviously be Government Ministries as well.

Thank you very much, Mr. Chairman, and I am open to questions.

MR. CHAIRMAN.- Thank you, Madam. Honourable Members, any questions? Then we will go to that response which they have provided. Yes, Honourable Salote.

HON. S.V. RADRODRO.- Thank you, Honourable Chairman.

Madam Permanent Secretary and the Team, just on the issue of counsellors in schools, bearing in mind the big social problems that we have in relation to drugs, teenage pregnancy, increasing crime rates amongst our students and the fact that I believe there is a great lack of professional counsellors in schools so how are these counsellors' role being addressed in schools? In the absence of professional counsellors, do teachers double up as counsellors or how does the Ministry address this issue?

MR. CHARMAN.- Thank you, Honourable Member.

MS. A. BURCHELL.- Honourable Chairman, thank you for that. Again, that is probably going to be a question for now rather than back then.

What we have been doing in recognition of this need is that, we have now put 36 teachers on to a training course with the Australia Pacific Training Coalition (APTC), as it is now called. That is where they do a number of courses, modules over two years. So they have just finished their first year of study on that basis and they will be continuing next year. We are hoping that with those 36 people trained, who happened to be teachers, that they will be able to provide better support to students through the school system.

Currently, we have two counsellors appointed; one in the Western Division and one in the Eastern Division. Obviously, the counsellors within SAAC support, particularly in the Central Division but not exclusively so. So when that unfortunate and very distressing accident happened last year with the students from Natabua, I think it was SAAC that went through to the School to try and do some formal counselling for them. So, the SAAC people are quite mobile from that perspective.

We are also working with DFAT to appoint and essentially Empower Pacific and Medical Services Pacific (MSP) to provide additional counselling support. That will tide us over, while we try and get more people interested in counselling. So, last year in terms of the scholarships that were made available, counselling was one of the scarce skills scholarships that was offered and, unfortunately, there was a very poor uptake. So we need to do more in terms of promoting counselling as a profession, and that we need to do more to get people into the system as counsellors.

It is interesting that last week, the Fiji Psychological Society was launched so that hopefully will help to create more awareness in terms of counselling, the need for counselling and that it is a very viable profession for people to get in and a rewarding profession for people to get involved in. So, that is also a good development from our perspective.

We are trying to do stop-gap measures in terms of training people and that we are working with DFAT to ensure that we have a system in place through the CSOs or NGOs providing the service, while we train people up and that we need to get more people into the system from that perspective. So, we have also been through a process of creating a job description from the Ministry's perspective so that we can move to employ people to be counsellors to give the necessary support.

We have also been in touch with the teacher training institutions and to make sure that in terms of the competency framework for a teacher, the teachers are trained to recognise signs and that they refer people as is

necessary. So, if a child comes to school and is showing some bruising and then to recognise that and refer it for counselling.

As you know in terms of the Child Welfare Act, it has been quite clear that the teachers are required to report any abuse or any signs of abuse that they see, so we are also working with the Ministry of Women, Children and Poverty Alleviation to create again another flyer that can be sent out to each teacher and alerting them to that responsibility, and also what to do when they do notice that type of an issue.

The other thing that we have been talking about and we need to follow up on a lot more stringently is working with our universities to ensure that they provide the support to train counsellors. So, USP through Pacific TAFE, I think, has a Diploma in Counselling but it is possible that the APTC courses are perhaps graded higher because they are on the Australian standards, so we need to have a look at that. I think that they have a basic Bachelors Course in Counselling as well.

Counselling is a very complex area, so you need to have experience in terms of trauma which is different from marriage counselling, counselling students and young people, versus counselling someone who is a victim of rape, et cetera. So it is a quite a wide space but it is increasingly an essential one.

We have had meetings also with the Ministry of Health and Medical Services and the Ministry of Women, Children and Poverty Alleviation, because all of us have an interest in counselling, and all of us at the current time are outsourcing counselling. The following are components of it:

- Predominantly Lifeline;
- Medical Service Pacific (MSP); and
- Empower Pacific.

So we are trying to make sure that from our perspective, if a student is referred for counselling that we know about is going directly to the Childline or Child Helpline which is under the Ministry of Women, Children and Poverty Alleviation, so we can make sure there is no duplication of support, No. 1, but making sure that there is support, so that the student does not fall between the cracks - between the Ministries as well. So it is a work in progress but we are trying to address it as fast and efficiently as we can.

MR. CHAIRMAN.- Thank you, Madam, for your response. In regards to the questions which were sent to you, Madam, if you can take us through that very briefly. If you see that you have already responded to some of the questions, you need not elaborate further on that. After that, then I will allow Honourable Members for their supplementary questions.

MS. A. BURCHELL.- Mr. Chairman, this is a very long list of questions and, again, I think that in terms of the answers, there is some kind of an approach in terms of answering the question as in 2016 and 2017, but also in some instances, we have provided an update where we are able to.

I think Question No. 1 is probably known by Honourable Members, and so I do not think that there is a need to go through that.

Some of the Key Challenges and, again, this is probably more now than it was then, and one is Modernisation, so that is looking at Distance Learning.

Although Distance Learning has been within the Ministry for a number of years, but we are looking at how can roll that out, so that we can try and balance the education provided in an urban area with that provided in a rural area.

We are also looking at e-learning. Again, that will be linked to IT infrastructure, so we need to tread carefully on that because it can be quite a huge investment but perhaps, a necessary investment.

Also within the Ministry, looking at a restructure, so we are looking to have a Learning and Teaching Department, a Quality Assurance and Implementation Department, a Corporate Services Department, Human Resource Department already exists, Finance will ultimately go under Corporate Services, but also looking at having the hubs, so we want to change the mentality behind the Divisions to becoming more of a support system. So we are looking at those becoming school support hubs.

I think in a teaching profession, over the years, it has become quite hierarchical and I think that there has been a perception that the Divisions and Districts tell the schools what to do whereas, in fact, we should be supporting the Heads of Schools and the teachers to do the job that they can do and should be doing.

The other thing is, we are dealing at the current time with about 14,000 employees, so volume in everything that we do is an issue.

I was speaking to the Fijian Elections Office (FEO) about a couple of weeks ago and the Supervisor of the Elections was quite astounded that we had 14,000 employees because he thought the FEO was the largest employer. So his comment was, "Well, we employ the same number of people but we only do it for a short period of time, whereas the Ministry is dealing with that on a regular basis." So volume is always an issue for us.

Infrastructure increasing is an issue, so we have had some complaints, some Heads of Schools alerting us to termites in the West, the Ba Special School, unfortunately, burned down a couple of weeks ago so we have to take some actions in relation to that. It seems as though some of the school managements could be doing more maintenance than they are currently doing because our preference, obviously, is for schools to be properly maintained and then it means that the life of the buildings continues a lot more.

I have also mentioned IT.

Policy Framework is critically important because if we are going to be able to hold people accountable within the system, there need to be policies against which they are measured. So I think that over the years, we have perhaps, become a little bit lax in terms of policies and procedures, so we are trying to address that.

When I was in the Ministry of Youths and Sports, I was used to say that everyone is an armchair coach and it seems so in the education sector, everyone has an opinion, appropriately, on education because most of those people are parents. So, the multiple stakeholders, whether they be faith-based organisations, communities, individuals, the teachers themselves, industry, the universities - it is a very complex set of stakeholders, each with occasionally competing demands of the Ministry.

I think the other component is, the Ministry and schools in particular, are seen as captive audiences so the people want to get active access as quickly as possible.

Question No. 3, obviously, we appoint people on the basis of merit and we do not look at gender, so from that perspective, everyone is treated equally.

We have set out in Question No. 4 how we contribute specifically to SDG 4, but SDG 4 has links into other SDGs as well, so we have set that out in the answer there.

Future Plans and Initiatives: We are very close to finalising our Strategic Plan which we hope will be available in the next month or two. It will have to go to Cabinet, the Minister is to sign off on it, and that will

give us a greater focus for the Ministry, but what we have also done essentially is something similar for the sector, because we have so many multiple stakeholders with an interest in education. One of the key things obviously is to use education to ensure that we address the scarce skills challenges within Fiji.

Rehabilitation: Noting, Mr. Chairman, the questions from earlier on, we will update that to make sure that we give you the full answers in terms of the schools that you have identified. But here it sets out that some of them were done by the Construction and Implementation Unit (CIU) and some of them by the Ministry. But it also says that overall, \$246 million has been expended to try and put the schools back together again after *TC Winston*.

Adopt A School Initiative, Mr. Chairman, I think that that is probably fairly self-explanatory.

Digital Literacy Programme: That is also self-set out and we are quite happy if there are follow up questions on that.

What we are also looking at is, what other countries are doing in terms of putting things on to what is known as *Moodle* and trying to encourage that as a way forward. We are looking at Smart Classrooms, so we are doing a pilot project on some Smart Classrooms this financial year.

The Fiji Muslim League has already implemented Smart Classrooms in its 20-plus schools, so we are looking at them to be, kind of, a role model in that process. Obviously, we are trying to strengthen the community libraries as well through digitisation.

Fiji Museum Collections: This has not been a major initiative due to funding, but hopefully that will change as the Museum is now starting to look at external funding as well.

Museum Upgrade: I am referring you to Question No. 50 where the same information is based. In terms of the upgrades, again, that I think is fairly self-explanatory in terms of the upgrading process.

On Question No. 12, the particular challenges in terms of the particular initiatives that have been identified, so we have set out our responses there and we are happy to do a follow-up on that as well. So that goes through in terms of TSLB, Human Resources, Operational Expenses, et cetera.

Question No. 13 sets out essentially the formula that is used for all higher education institutions. We do not set aside faith-based higher education institutions, they are all treated in the same way.

But in terms of the funding formula for higher education institutions, the Fiji Higher Education Commission (FHEC) is reviewing that, to try and make sure it is more fit for purpose in the Fijian context and trying to promote more research that is going to be applied in practical research as we move forward.

On Question No. 14, Transport Assistance Scheme, it sets out in terms of what, at that point in time, were the challenges. As you will know, there are ongoing challenges, particularly in relation to abuse. So, a colleague, I think, on Tuesday morning told me that he had been on the bus and he saw a parent getting onto the bus with a blue card and tapping twice to make sure that it went up to 68 cents, but it was a student card, not an adult card. That is still happening so we are looking at ways of making sure that that abuse does not continue.

On the Audit Report, I consulted the PS Economy yesterday and there is a draft report available for the period of March 2018-2019 which is going to be sent to us still, so that report has not been finalised.

Then we set out the policies and some of the challenges, but suffice to say that all of these are having to be updated and they need to be updated on a regular basis, as well as adding a whole lot more policies. So we have looked at the particular policies that the Committee identified.

Outcomes of Research: We have set that out as well and obviously, we can provide more information on that if Honourable Members would like.

Question No. 17, Unnecessary Paperwork: That I think is probably an ongoing challenge but I think on paperwork, we can use digital systems a lot more. But what seems to be hidden behind this is the question about the workload, so we need to have a look at that in an ongoing way.

Continuing Professional Development: At the current time is very much school-based. I am hoping that the Fiji Teachers Registration Authority (FTRA) will start looking at this in a far more systematic way, so that we have a very clear number of hours, number of credits, what type of courses are we going to be able to meet the need for the credits because at the moment, I think it is very much school-based and it is very much during school term, because the General Orders provide that the teachers should enjoy their school holidays. So most of the training has to be done through the school term which then has a knock-on impact on the students and that we end up having catch-up classes in that. So I am trying to minimise the amount of training that takes teachers out of school because that knock-on impact is not ideal. So I think, increasingly, we will be looking at online courses for teachers for continuing professional development.

Healthy living and physical education are compulsory but I think you know as well as we do that it does not always happen. I think part of that is because there are not necessarily facilities in schools that are conducive to physical education happening. Perhaps, secondly, that we need to be upgrading our teachers' skills in terms of physical education because it is very easy to move from physical education straight into sport and there are two substantially different issues in terms of the development of the body, muscles and hand-eye coordination in terms of physical education.

For those who learn at a slower pace than others, we have given some responses there from both - the secondary and primary perspectives. But interestingly, we also need to look at those students who are faster learners than others, so that the people who could be defined as "genius" we need to find ways to accommodate their particular needs as well. So this means that we go back to the teacher training institutions to make sure that the teachers they are producing are able to cope in a multiple variety of situations in terms of learning, including that we get interactive learning, that we ultimately maybe also looking at e-learning and those type of things. So, there is quite a lot of challenges in that area.

In-Service Training Programmes; this is mainly, at the current time, done through our Learning and Development Guideline and this sets out the criteria as requested on that.

Recruiting and Filling Positions; that sets out some of the challenges which include that some teachers were reluctant to take up positions in remote schools. We have had some discussions with the teacher unions about the possibility of new teachers who are coming out of the teacher training institutions being placed, as apparently used to be done in the first three years, you spend in a remote school.

The issue with that is that, we will need to have an experienced teacher to help mentor them because if it is going to be a very small school, then we have mostly new graduates there. We need to try and balance it with some old hands, who can make sure that they get the support that they need, so we have set out some of the issues there.

Filling Vacant Posts; one of the things that we are trying to do is a complete staff audit and there are issues that we have identified and we have identified and announced this to the teacher training institutions last year on particular areas of scarce skills.

This year that is being compounded, particularly in terms of Maths teachers, and to some extent, primary teachers who are being attracted to go and work in New Zealand, in particular, so I have had some discussions with colleagues in New Zealand about trying to stay away from taking up some of our teachers but freedom of association, freedom of movement and freedom to earn a living will probably trump that.

So, we are looking at, again, through the scholarships process and these have been identified as areas. We are trying to persuade the teacher training institutions not to take in so many students into the areas where we have got a surplus but we also need to make sure that we keep those taking on. But through the staff audit, we are trying to identify who has what skills, and that we make sure that there is a fair spread over the schools. We believe that there are some schools that will probably have too many teachers and some schools which have too few teachers, so we are trying to adjust that to make sure that we serve all schools as we should.

In terms of the appointments of Heads of Schools, we have set out the process that we followed there.

Students with special needs, we have set out the information there and happily, there is an increase in the number of schools that are taking in students with special needs. The impact on us is that, we need to make sure that they are properly trained and prepared to take in students with special needs.

Here, I need to say that we have some severe skills shortages, for example, in Fiji at the moment, there are not too many Occupational Therapists, Speech Therapists, Educational Psychologists, even Physiotherapists in some countries are part of the Special Education System. So, we are working to identify the support system that needs to go into the Special Schools, which will be slightly separate from the inclusive schools which are essentially mainstream schools which have taken in students with special needs. So, we are continuing to work on that.

Infrastructural Development in Question No. 26, is answered fairly clearly, I hope.

Government and Private Boarding Schools; here, we have set out the information but in summary, the private schools which set their own fees and run that in the normal way, whereas for Government schools, we have recognised that we need to do more in terms of the feeding system for the students.

Also, through the new initiative - the school farm project which was approved in the Budget, we are hoping that those schools that have land will actually augment their diet by growing produce and either selling it where there is excess but definitely putting it on the table to improve the food that is provided in Government schools.

In terms of Question No. 28, hopefully, we have given you the information that you need, if not, then please, come back to us.

On Question No. 29, as I said earlier, I think the Honourable Member was asking about that particular school but we will provide more information as requested.

On Question No. 30, we have answered that. We hope, in a way, in which we will provide the information that you need.

The 2016 Examinations: that is an ongoing process. At the current time, we have exams from Year 6 through to Year 13. The impact of that is that, the teachers have become very exam-focussed and the students, as

a result as well. So we need to try and change the focus to becoming more of an ongoing assessment of competence rather than necessarily relying on exams only as the assessment of competence.

We are also seeing that there are several requests for schools to offer additional classes because, again, it is exam-focused. So we are reviewing the exam process just to see what makes sense for the students, particularly.

Literacy and Numeracy; we have given some answers there in Question No. 32, Question No. 33 and Question No. 34. One of things with exams as well as with the LANA is that, students are not all the same. So in some years, you might have a particularly bright class and other years, not such a bright class. Some years, you might have more difficult exams or difficult questions and other years, you might have easier questions. In some instances, you may have a change of teacher, and all of these issues have an impact on the examination assessment process. It is not always easy to compare apples with apples because there may be a big apple and a small apple or may indeed be an orange.

In terms of literacy and numeracy in Question No. 35, here we have given an update and so we have established a working group to address literacy and numeracy, because it is something that is of concern. People have made comments to me that it is not at the level it should be, and we were just talking this morning with my colleagues about what is the difference between then and now? So what was the difference when they were at school or when we were at school and now? And it seems as though one of key issues is easy access to libraries and to reading.

The Pacific Islands Literacy and Numeracy Assessment (PILNA) which was announced a couple of weeks ago was saying in particular that there is a greater role for parents to play in the education of their children. And that can be reading to children at a young age, listening to them, reading back to them, giving them support and asking them what happened at school. It seems that across the Pacific, only 53 percent of parents are doing that. So parental involvement is key as we go forward, and there is a superficial correlation, but a correlation nevertheless between parental interest in a student's education and their performance.

So it is important, I think, for us all to encourage parents to become far more involved in the education process and we have had reports from Heads of Schools who are saying, "They actually go out to parents' homes, students' homes, to say; "Why aren't you coming to the parent-teacher meeting?" So we are taking as many measures as reasonable to try and get parents involved but it needs to start in here - your own commitment. So we are looking at all of those types of issues as we go forward.

But the working group really does need to be coordinated. What we have found as well is that, there is a number of NGOs who are offering their services in going into schools, but it is not coordinated with the Ministry, it is coordinated directly with the school. So we need to make sure that what is being done is consistent so that we do not have different messaging and learning strategies being implemented.

The role of the District and Divisional Education Offices is set out there and the issue of tools and equipment and focus on predominantly our test operations there are set out and, again, if there is any follow up, I am happy to answer it, either now or later through writing.

Question No. 38 - My Life, mentioned in the presentation that it is now being rolled out, so we are continuing with that.

Technical College of Fiji; Noting, Mr. Chairman, that it is in the process slowly of moving to FNU and so this will be an item for FNU to answer in the future, but we have answered the questions as best as we can on the issues raised by Honourable Committee Members.

Question No. 40: the Function of the FTRA used to be within the Ministry and I think that it still has an umbilical cord attached to the Ministry, instead of being of its own firm statutory authority which is independent of the Ministry. We have continued to give them support and it is a very linked operation in terms of registering teachers. As I had said earlier, hopefully, FTRA will be looking at continuing professional development for teachers as well.

We are trying to support them through our database so that soon-to-be teachers are registered through our database and that they have access to it, so that we reduce the duplication that we could be doing as well. But FTRA just does not limit itself to teachers but essentially any person who goes on to a school for a longer period than a short visit. So it can be a Peace Corps volunteer, as an example.

Question No. 41 gives an idea of the coordination that currently exists. You are asking about the membership and that is defined in the Act. The Act hopefully, when the new Board is appointed, that they will spend some time in trying to review the Act.

We have also recognised that the Police, the Ministry of Women, Children and Poverty Alleviation and the Ministry of Youth and Sports should be invited to SAAC meetings as part of the coordination process.

I think, the other thing, because SAAC is under the Ministry of Education, but its mandate is about drugs and alcohol across the nation with all age groups. So there is a bit of a disconnect on that.

Secondly, that SAAC has moved into the counselling area and I think again that that is because of its close relationship with the Ministry. If SAAC is going to continue to exist with its focus on alcohol and substance abuse, it may be more appropriate under the Ministry of Health and Medical Services. So these are the types of discussions that we will be having with SAAC as we move forward.

I think the Honourable Member asked about drugs and we are happy to give more of an answer, if necessary, on that. Yes, there is a database from SAAC's perspective, but obviously a lot of the information is held by the Police and we need to make sure that there is increased co-operation on that level and hopefully the PS coordinating group will be able to encourage that to happen as well.

The Counselling Team, as I said earlier on, hopefully most of that has been covered and the programmes that SAAC operates are set out there, as well as co-operation with other service providers.

On School Libraries, I have given a fairly full information on that in Questions No. 46, 47 and 48 in terms of the policy.

Moving to the Department of Heritage and Arts, it sets out what they do in terms of their operations in Question No. 50, which is linked to Question No. 10 earlier on. It sets out what is happening in terms of other heritage sites and plans for them going forward.

On Question No. 51, the co-operation with the iTaukei Trust Fund, there is some close co-operation with them and hopefully, we will be able to continue to build on that relationship. They also have come to visit us to discuss the promotion of language across the board, so that we can ensure that the teachers are upgraded and continue to be upskilled in offering those courses.

On Question No. 52, the Conventions that have been signed off by Fiji and that we try to implement, I think UNESCO is one of those UN agencies where there is a plethora of Conventions. So I think Parliament could be kept very busy just for the UNESCO issues, so we need to be a little circumspect in terms of recommending which Conventions to be approved and ratified.

The Rotuman ICH is set out in Questions No. 53 and 54, and we have also done that as well.

On Question No. 55, we have put in place a monitoring system for grants that are given out.

The Fiji Museum and what it does in terms of Archaeological Impact Assessments are set out.

The Answer to Question 57 is looking at the ongoing work subsequent to what the European Union-African, Caribbean Pacific (EU-ACP) has done.

Cultural statistics continuing with that project seems to be taking a very long time to complete it but hopefully, it will be completed quite soon and it is important that we bring in other stakeholders in terms of that as well. I am hoping that some time, we will be able to combine the Geographical Information System (GIS) mapping system that we are doing in the Department of Heritage and Arts with the *Vanua* GIS under the Ministry of Lands and Mineral Resources.

National Archives of Fiji (NAF) as I said earlier, seems to be one of the leading archives in the Pacific, and it has given quite an expansive answer to the questions that you have raised.

In terms of opening archives in other divisions, probably not, because there is kind of only one copy of it but also a lot of the archival material needs to be kept in certain temperature and in a dry environment and so on, so having that replicated in terms of construction might be an issue.

In terms of the Answer to 61, in terms of Plans for the Building; and then the Tertiary Scholarship and Loans Board (TSLB) information, I think it is probably fairly clear.

Then moving to 63, we have set out the information related to Grants for the Free Education. I think technically, it should be the tuition-free education grant because I think the free education grant gives an impression that it is actually for free and can be used for practically anything, so that sets out some answers and obviously back to counselling which hopefully we have covered.

Bullying is part of the Substance Abuse Advisory Council (SAAC) process but it is again something that we have asked teacher training institutions to include in the Competency Framework for teachers so they themselves do not bully students but also to ensure that we counteract the process that sometimes unfortunately occurs when one student bullies another student.

School Canteen Policy: I think one of the issues here for us is enforcement. Secondly, that some of the canteen operators are ignoring the policy because it is going to be cheaper and easier for them to supply so-called junk food and fizzy drinks to students, instead of fruits and potentially water.

The Answer to 67, the issue of road humps: I think this is something that has come up relatively recently after a student was unfortunately killed but the issue here is that, it is not under our jurisdiction and we have had some discussions with the Fiji Roads Authority (FRA) and the Land Transport Authority (LTA). It is under the jurisdiction of the FRA so they monitor traffic around schools. We have also had some discussions with the Fiji Bus Operators Association (FBOA) in terms of making sure that the bus drivers do not drive off while students are getting on to buses or getting off buses and that they drop off students in a safe space in terms of ensuring that they are properly safe.

Transferring of husband and wife teams: Yes, we are now sensitive to the issue in trying to address that in an ongoing way. Sometimes, the husband and wife will apply independently, and in some instances, they have different surnames so we do not necessarily make the connection. So, when it comes to our attention, we do

make every effort to transfer the husband and wife together. In some instances, it is not necessarily strategic to have them in the same school and so sometimes, we will look at placing them, if possible, in separate schools.

Corporal punishment: We have had zero-tolerance on corporal punishments since 2002 and that has been reinforced over the years in a number of speeches and policies that have been made across the board.

Behaviour management policy: The policy is great but the implementation of policies is a different matter and so we need to be looking at that. It is unfortunate that we are still having cases of corporal punishment and corporal punishment is effectively assault in terms of the Crimes Act. It is something that we have to take action on and we have also put the word out to teachers as well as to heads of schools to say, "Don't do it", so we are trying to get the message out but, unfortunately, it is still continuing.

So, we need to work as a society to try and change the approach that many have grown up with. I was whipped when I was a student and I turned out all right but for some students, it is quite a traumatic approach.

The sign language classes, I think the question was asked a little bit earlier so we need to plan for that to make sure that we are able to implement it.

Question No. 70, Communication Channels: I think that all Members of Parliament have opened up the channels of communication for your constituents. So, in many instances, teachers as constituents, will approach a Member of Parliament, the Attorney-General, the Prime Minister or the Minister as the case maybe or another Minister, and that is fine. I mean, that is the right of any individual to do that.

Our preference obviously because all of you have important things to do and I am not saying dealing with the teacher complaint is not important. But it would be nice if those things are referred to us in the first instance so that we can deal with them. If we cannot deal with them, then obviously, it will escalate. But I think the "genie is out of the bottle" and we are trying to put it back in again, and may not be possible.

Question 72, Receipts and Expenditure: We have put the information there.

So, Mr. Chair and Honourable Members, I am happy to answer follow-up questions. I am happy to give written answers as well as may be required, over to you, Mr. Chair, thank you very much.

MR. CHAIRMAN.- Thank you, Madam Permanent Secretary, for the information you have provided to the Committee. Honourable Members, we will now open the floor for questions. Honourable Alipate Nagata.

HON. A.T. NAGATA.- Thank you, Honourable Chair. Thank you, Madam Permanent Secretary, for the presentation. I do not seem to hear anything about the Duke of Edinburgh International Award. Just a question: is it compulsory for schools to have this program? Also, what is the role of the Ministry of Education in promoting this programme in schools?

MR. CHAIRMAN.- Thank you, Honourable Member.

MS. A. BURCHELL.- Thank you, Mr. Chair and Honourable Member. The Duke of Edinburgh International Award is actually a programme under the Ministry of Youth and Sports. I think in the old days when Youth and Sports was part of the Ministry of Education, it was all in one. But as a non-formal education program, it now falls under the Ministry of Youth and Sports. So, we provide a support system to that. So, there are several schools that are involved in the program. It is not compulsory but we encourage it.

In the last financial year, we were encouraged to work with the boy scouts and girl guides where they have activities on the guides and scouts. I am trying to encourage them to work with the Ministry of Youth and Sports in terms of that being a component of the bronze award, for example.

I have also encouraged scouts and the guides to become more aware of what happens in the Duke of Edinburgh International Award because it is a useful award. It is not just limited to what the guides and the scouts do.

There is a Board for the Duke of Edinburgh International Award and the Ministry is represented on that Board as well. So, we try to work closely together.

When I was at QVS last week with the Honourable Minister, I did ask the Head of School if they were still doing the Duke of Edinburgh International Award, and they said, "No". So, I asked, "Why?" They said, "Because there had not been a follow-up from the Ministry of Youth and Sports", so it is something where I think, we, as Permanent Secretaries need to work together a little bit more closely on.

MR. CHAIRMAN.- Thank you, Madam. Honourable Salote, if I remember rightly, we did a Bill on Heritage during our last term. Recently, I believe we received one letter but it is still with Honourable Speaker. We had some discussions on this the last time regarding the Bill which we were going through - the Heritage Bill which was not completed, I believe, and there was a request from the Ministry.

Madam, you are aware that our Committee was working on the Heritage Bill during our last term, and we did not complete that. Recently, there was a letter from, I believe, the Director of Heritage and Arts, writing to us to relook at that Bill, but that can only be done if that Bill is given to the Committee by the Honourable Speaker.

So just for your information, that should be written to the Honourable Speaker, for your information. We cannot ask Honourable Speaker to give us that Bill so that we can work on that unless and until he gives it in Parliament and refers that to our Committee. So maybe you can talk to the Director and write to the Honourable Speaker in that regard. Yes, Honourable Salote, any question?

HON. S.V. RADRODRO.- Thank you, Honourable Chairman, Madam Permanent Secretary and the Team, for your very comprehensive presentation.

Listening to the presentation, particularly in regards to the challenges, and having said that, we know that we have come through a long period of time where it had seen changes in legislation, policies, programmes and in school curriculums, I am just wondering as to what are your views in having to establish an Education Commission which would look at all these educational issues from a holistic perspective?

Personally, I always believe that education is not only about intelligence, it is also about character-building which maybe, we say, when we went to school, our old school also mould our character but now having seen what we are seeing nowadays, I am just wondering as to what are your views or the views of the Ministry in regards to the establishment of an Education Commission to have a holistic review of the legislation, policies, programmes and curriculums so that we are in tune with our development and in time towards building a better Fiji?

MR. CHAIRMAN.- Thank you, Honourable Member. Yes, Madam.

MS. A. BURCHELL.- Honourable Chairperson, if I recollect correctly, this was a motion in Parliament, relatively recently. I think my Honourable Minister spoke on the matter so I am hesitant to say anything different, so I would leave it at that.

I think, suffice to say that the Honourable Minister is very keen to involve stakeholders in the process, so that is why she has initiated discussions, for example, with the faith-based organisations, Unions and School Management Committees, so we are revising the School Management Handbook which is effectively the policy related to who does what in the school and who manages the money and the facilities, et cetera.

I am quite keen to have a fairly regular meeting with the Vice Chancellors of the Universities to ensure there is cooperation and reducing duplication because as a small country, we cannot afford that. But, also to ensure that the areas of need are addressed. So while there may not be a Commission per se, the Honourable Minister has already initiated several ways in which she is reaching out to stakeholders to make sure that we involve people in terms of that particular area of expertise.

So we also have regular meetings with the Teacher Training Institutions. We had a discussion yesterday about something akin to a teacher's code of conduct that they want to promote through their systems.

We had a discussion about values-based education, so we are addressing these types of things, but not necessarily as an Education Commission per se but trying to bring in a particular expertise in particular areas.

MR. CHAIRMAN.- Thank you, Madam. Honourable Dr. Ratu Antonio Lalabalavu.

HON. DR. RATU A.R. LALABALAVU.- Thank you Honourable Chairman. Thank you, Madam Permanent Secretary, for that very vibrant presentation. I will get to the question later, but I want to comment on your earlier slide with regards to the Human Resource issue that you are centralising it back to the district, is that correct or not?

MS. A. BURCHELL.- Mr. Chair, just to clarify that at that point in time, it was put to the Districts but now we have centralised it in HR, because what we found out was that, in fact our District Officers who are not necessarily skilled in HR issues are the ones doing HR issues. So now we have centralised it within HR in terms of their specific mandate.

MR. CHAIRMAN.- Yes, Honourable Member?

HON. DR. RATU A.R. LALABALAVU.- My question is on the shortage of teachers. You had it back then in 2016 and you still have it now. With regards to re-hiring of the retired teachers, is the Ministry looking into that? If so, who pays for their salaries when they contract or re-hire teachers?

MR. CHAIRMAN.- Thank you, Honourable Member. Yes, Madam.

MS. A. BURCHELL.- Thank you, for that. I think we need to be clear that it is shortages in some areas - in Industrial Arts, Maths and in some of the science subjects, whereas in other areas we have an oversupply. So we have an under-supply in terms of people skilled in Special Inclusive Education, for example.

What the Honourable Minister has done recently with support from the Honourable Attorney-General, in his capacity as the Honourable Minister of Civil Service, has allowed us to employ retired teachers in areas of our scarce skills for a period of time, which should be a limited period of time while we try and get through the system, younger replacements or teachers within the policy.

Earlier on this year, we actually advertised without the age limit and very few retired teachers actually applied. That was a little bit of a disappointment because I think a lot of people are saying that we should employ more retired teachers, but if they do not come forward to be appointed then it puts us in a difficult position.

Secondly, what the Honourable Minister has recently approved is that those people who should retire during the school year, can continue if they choose to retire at the end of the school academic year, which is effective just at the end of Term 3. That is also trying to ensure that there is a level stability in the school for the individual concerned as well as for the students. That is what we have been trying to do in terms of the retirement process to provide some stability. I am sorry, I miss the second part of your question.

HON. DR. RATU A.R. LALABALAVU.- In terms of who pays for their salary when you re-introduce the retired teachers back into the workforce?

MS. A. BURCHELL.- The Ministry pays.

HON. DR. RATU A.R. LALABALAVU.- Just a follow-up to that question: I will give you an example, this was brought to my attention by the parents at Holy Cross College. There was a shortage of two teachers in a subject for the whole year up until now, one has been transferred and one resigned. They have brought up the issue of re-hiring one of the retired teachers to the Ministry. According to the parents, they were being told that if they want to re-engage the retired teacher, they have to pay for that themselves. Now, they are paying for that teacher's salary, as we speak.

MR. CHAIRMAN.- Thank you, Honourable Member. May be, Honourable Member, you can give the details to Permanent Secretary and she can do a follow-up on that and maybe she can advise us on that.

Permanent Secretary, also for your information, you mentioned about the library services and some of these libraries are looked after by the Town Councils or the Ministry of Local Government. Is there any coordination between the Ministry of Education as far as all that is available in those libraries?

MS. A. BURCHELL.- Thank you, Mr. Chairman. At the current time, not, but I have mentioned to the Permanent Secretary of Ministry of Local Government that there is something we need to coordinate on, because in some instances, it may be appropriate for us to hand-over responsibility for some of the community libraries to the Ministry of Local Government but it will depend on who is responsible for that particular community, and I say "responsible", in terms of support services. So we will be having those discussions fairly soon hopefully, so that we can have some kind of a way forward before the next budget. For example, what we did do is, we used to receive, I think, it was about \$50,000 for the Levuka Town Council through our budget, and that is being transferred to the Ministry of Local Government to manage, and that is supposed to be used in terms of the Heritage Site there. We have started having those discussions on areas of overlap and, hopefully, we will address it before the next Budget.

MR. CHAIRMAN.- Thank you, Permanent Secretary. Honourable Members, any other questions? Yes, Honourable Nagata, yes, Doctor.

HON. DR. RATU A.R. LALABALAVU.- Thank you, Honourable Chair. You had mentioned earlier about the Distance Learning as one of your future plans. Is this for Tertiary Education only or all?

I also want to bring to your attention the matter regarding teachers. Some of them have come to me, I think they are doing some Distance and Flexible Learning but I think, the University of the South Pacific (USP) offers it, the Fiji National University (FNU) does not offer that, and I stand to be corrected on that.

MR. CHAIRMAN.- Yes, Madam.

MS. A. BURCHELL.- Yes, thank you, Chairperson and Honourable Member. It has come to our attention, I think, from the beginning of last year that we have been appointing teachers who do not have an education qualification. So they do not have a Diploma or a Bachelor's qualification, so we have been encouraging them to upgrade to have a Diploma or a Bachelor's qualification. So we negotiated with USP because they developed something, I think, for the Solomon Islands which was Online Learning but they then also insisted on some Face-To-Face Learning which is usually organised during the school holiday period and that takes about a year to do. That is why we have been giving teachers who do not have the required qualifications a year's contract, to encourage them to get that qualification as quickly as possible, and then we can change the salary band and the length of contract.

So we recognise that ideally it should be expanded so there was one teacher, for example, who asked for a transfer because they wanted to do their qualification upgrade at the University of Fiji but they only do Face-To-Face. I am fairly sure that we did do that transfer, so where we can, we do support teachers to do that because it is in our interest and more importantly, it is in the interest of the students to have qualified teachers in the process.

MR. CHAIRMAN.- Thank you, Madam. Yes, Honourable Nagata.

HON. A.T. NAGATA.- Thank you, Madam. In regards to discipline, apart from the counselling programme, are there awareness programmes or information booklets available to educate students on discipline?

MS. A. BURCHELL.- At the moment, we do not have that but if we get something to assist, for example, with drugs and awareness with drugs, we could probably roll out something in terms of discipline.

What we have done, I think, the Honourable Minister has now signed off on a policy in relation to a Student Code of Conduct where we have asked for students, I think, we may be doing it as a pilot where students are asked to sign a Code of Conduct and their parent or guardian, is asked to sign that Code of Conduct and it is trying to raise awareness about the expectations that we have, like attending school, coming on time, respect, doing your homework - things that in our generation were part of the course.

So we are trying to address discipline through that kind of a process. So, it is something that perhaps we need to look more closely at but I think we need to look at awareness in an active way rather than the passive way or whereas a flyer is probably more passive because you are relying on the student to read that. But if they are not interested, they are not going to read it. So trying to inculcate it through lessons, behaviour and guidance from the teachers or from the head of school as well as the parents. It is something that we would look at in terms of an active interaction to try and keep the students on the straight and narrow ...

MR. CHAIRMAN.- Thank you, Honourable Members. Madam, you would like to add something before we adjourn today?

MS. A. BURCHELL.- Mr. Chair and Honourable Members, I need to say "Thank you for your time, thank you for the 72 questions". I do not think I was quite expecting that many but as I said, if there is more information that we can provide to you then, please, let us know. It is important for us to have this dialogue in an ongoing way and we are here to assist you at all times. I think that the Ministry has been going through changes that have been more tumultuous than we would have liked, but hopefully things are settling down now and we are able to address the issues in a more considered way as we move forward, so that we make sure that we have that A to Z planning process in place.

We are very concerned as well that we treat our employees, our staff, our colleagues with the respect that they deserve. So, we acknowledge that there have been some things that we have not done well and that we will continue to try and improve as we move forward.

MR. CHAIRMAN.- Thank you, Madam, for your presentation and all the information that has been provided.

On behalf of our Honourable Members of the Standing Committee on Social Affairs, I thank you and the Team with you.

Also I request you to provide some of the information that has been requested. Also should we need any other information, we will write back to you for that.

For your information, we did go page-by-page on your Annual Report and that is why we formulated the questions. Looking at the Ministry and the Budget allocation and all that as required by Parliament, we are here to scrutinize and report back to Parliament in regards to the Report.

So, thank you very much for your time and I will request you before you leave, you can join us for tea then you can leave afterwards.

Thank you very much.

The Committee adjourned at 10.52 a.m.