



PARLIAMENT OF THE REPUBLIC OF FIJI

STANDING COMMITTEE ON SOCIAL AFFAIRS

REVIEW OF THE FIJI NATIONAL UNIVERSITY 2018 ANNUAL REPORT



Parliamentary Paper No. 137 of 2019

February 2020

Published and Printed by the Department of Legislature, Parliament House, SUVA

TABLE OF CONTENTS

COMMITTEE MEMBERSHIP.....	3
CHAIRPERSON'S FOREWORD.....	4
LIST OF ACRONYMS	5
RECOMMENDATION	6
INTRODUCTION	6
PRINCIPAL ACTIVITIES OF THE FIJI NATIONAL UNIVERSITY.....	6
ISSUES RAISED.....	7
Outstanding Grant Payments to the University.....	7
Recommendation.....	7
Sustainable Livelihood Project.....	7-8
Recommendations.....	8
Refurbishment of Student Hostels.....	8
Recommendation.....	8
GENDER ANALYSIS	9
CONCLUSION.....	10
COMMITTEE MEMBERS' SIGNATURE	11
APPENDICES	
Witnesses	12
Published Written Evidence	13

COMMITTEE MEMBERSHIP



Chairperson

Hon. Viam Pillay MP
Government Member



Deputy Chairperson

Hon. George Vegnathan MP
Government Member



Member

Hon. Alipate Nagata MP
Government Member



Member

Hon. Salote Radrodoro MP
Opposition Member



Member

Hon. Dr Ratu Atonio Lalabalavu MP
Opposition Member

CHAIRPERSON'S FOREWORD

I am pleased to present the report of the Standing Committee on Social Affairs on the annual review of the Fiji National University for the year ended 31 December 2018.

In accordance with its established Annual Report review process, the Committee examines Annual Reports of agencies, in order to investigate, inquire into, and make recommendations relating to the agencies' administration, legislative or proposed legislative programme, budget, functions, organisational structure and policy formulation. As part of this process, the Committee conducted public hearings to gather additional information.

The process has proven to be an effective means of gauging its progress and maintaining a high level of scrutiny of the agencies under review.

This review was made in accordance with Standing Order 109(2)(b) which mandates the committee to look into issues related to health, education, social services, labour, culture and media.

The review looked at nine key areas covering the period from 1st January to 31st December 2018, conducted into: The University's administration; structure; budgetary allocation; programmes and activities; policies; challenges; highlights; priorities for the coming years; and its implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals.

At this juncture, I also wish to thank the Vice-Chancellor of the Fiji National University, Professor Nigel Healey, and his staff for their assistance in this review process. I also extend my gratitude to my Committee colleagues namely: Hon. George Vegenathan (Deputy Chairperson), Hon. Alipate Nagata, Hon. Salote Radrodoro, and Hon. Dr. Ratu Atonio Lalabalavu for their contributions as well as to Hon. Simione Rasova and Hon. Jale Sigarara for availing themselves as alternate members for those Members who were unable to attend the committee meetings. Finally, I thank the Secretariat, Ms. Sheron Narayan, Mr. Tevita Tuivanuvou, and Ms. Atelaite Leba for the assistance provided during the committee's deliberations.

I, on behalf of the Standing Committee on Social Affairs, commend the *Fiji National University 2018 Annual Report* to Parliament and request all members of this August House to take note of the committee's Report.



Hon. Viam Pillay
Chairperson

LIST OF ACRONYMS

FCA	-	Fiji College of Agriculture
FNU	-	Fiji National University
FSM	-	Fiji School of Medicine
FSN	-	Fiji School of Nursing
SLP	-	Sustainable Livelihood Project
SDGSs	-	Sustainable Development Goals

RECOMMENDATION:

The Standing Committee on Social Affairs has conducted a review of the Annual Report of the Fiji National University for 2018 and recommends that Parliament take note of its report.

INTRODUCTION

The 2018 Annual Report of the Fiji National University (FNU) was tabled in Parliament during the September 2019 meeting and referred to the Standing Committee on Social Affairs for its scrutiny.

Standing Orders 109(2)(b) allows Standing Committee on Social Affairs to examine matters related to health, education, social services, labour, culture and media.

Furthermore, Standing Orders 110(1)(c) authorises the Standing Committee to *scrutinise the government departments with responsibility within the committee's subject area, including by investigating, inquiring into, and making recommendations relating to any aspect of such a department's administration, legislation or proposed legislative program, budget, rationalisation, restructuring, functioning, organisation, structure and policy formulation.*

PRINCIPAL ACTIVITIES OF THE FIJI NATIONAL UNIVERSITY

The principal activities of the University are the provision of post-secondary programmes of study in higher education, technical, vocational education and training that are responsive to the needs of industry, the market place and non-formal sector of employment to students from Fiji and other countries in the South Pacific region.

ISSUES RAISED

OUTSTANDING GRANT PAYMENTS TO THE UNIVERSITY

The committee notes that FNU is in discussion with the following Ministries regarding outstanding grant payments to the University that were initially pledged but not paid to the University during the 2010 financial year:

- Ministry of Health - \$563,602 (\$500,000 for FSM 4th quarter grant & \$63,602 short payment for FSN Grant)
- Ministry of Agriculture \$100,000 - short payment for FCA Grant

These were operating grants for FSM, FSN and FCA that should have been transferred to FNU post-merger. The committee was informed that these outstanding grants have not been paid.

RECOMMENDATION

1. That FNU continue discussions with the relevant Ministries to resolve the above issue.

SUSTAINABLE LIVELIHOOD PROJECT

The Sustainable Livelihood Project aims to empower people in rural communities and villages with skills and knowledge to become more productive and self-sufficient in their rural areas. Over 28,000 participants have been trained thus far under this scheme. The table below shows the number of districts (*Tikina*) visited and those yet to be covered under the Project.

Table 1: SLP Training Data by Province/ Districts					
No.	Province	Districts	Villages	Number of districts trained by SLP	Number of districts yet to be trained
1	Ba	21	107	10	11
2	Bua	9	50	4	5
3	Cakaudrove	16	132	8	8
4	Kadavu	9	75	5	4
5	Lau	13	72	2	11
6	Lomaiviti	12	74	8	4
7	Macuata	12	112	4	8
8	Nadroga Navosa	22	121	7	15
9	Naitasiri	16	91	6	10
10	Namosi	5	28	4	1
11	Ra	19	89	7	12
12	Rewa	9	52	7	2
13	Serua	4	24	4	0
14	Tailevu	22	146	10	12
15	Rotuma	7	19	2	5
TOTALS		196	1192	88	108

Impact assessment results of the SLP skill training has 16.6% of participants have secured paid employment while 6.3% have managed to utilise the training to get promoted at work.

RECOMMENDATIONS

1. That FNU continue to provide the SLP skill training so as to cover all the districts yet to be trained.
2. That FNU monitor and evaluate the effectiveness of the training.
3. That the sex disaggregated data of SLP participants be reflected in the Annual Report.

REFURBISHMENT OF STUDENT HOSTELS

The University has embarked on a programme to gradually upgrade and refurbish its student accommodation. Its Halls of Residence consists of just over 2,000 beds and some of its hostels are in a poor state of repair. FNU anticipates the completion of the renovation programme by the start of Semester 1, 2020.

RECOMMENDATION

1. That FNU continue to have an ongoing maintenance and repair programme to ensure that all student accommodation and other facilities are well maintained at all times.

GENDER ANALYSIS

Gender is a critical dimension to parliamentary scrutiny. Standing Order 110 (2) requires committees to consider gender equality and ensure that the impact on both men and women is explored in all matters.

In 2018, the University had a total of 167 managerial positions (academic and support), of which 55 (33%) were women. Furthermore, at Senior Management Group level (Deans and Directors), there were 16 senior managers of which 4 (25%) were women. Overall, the University employed 1,038 (47%) women in 2018 compared to 1,037 (39%) in 2014.

The committee notes that the University is moving towards gender balance in its workforce however, more work needs to be done to increase the number of senior female managers.

CONCLUSION

The Standing Committee on Social Affairs has fulfilled its mandate approved by Parliament which was to examine and review the Fiji National University's 2018 Annual Report.

As Fiji's national university, FNU's core objective has remained the education of Fijian students, and to prepare its graduates to meet the needs and expectations of employers. 2018 saw an increase in enrolment at all FNU campuses and courses, construction commencing on more new facilities, and a resurgence in repairs and maintenance on many of the University's older buildings. The University also continued to maintain its strong financial position in 2018 and recorded positive financial results, achieving an operating surplus of \$20.0m.

As part of the Annual Report scrutiny process, the committee also undertook a site visit to the FNU Nasinu campus in order to obtain a better understanding of its operations and to witness the progress of ongoing capital projects.

This report highlights some of the pertinent issues emanating from the University's operations in 2018 and sets out recommendations to address these issues. The review of the University's Annual Report was conducted in a very tactful and comprehensive manner. This has enabled the committee for Social Affairs to submit to Parliament a more reliable and a cohesive report.

COMMITTEE MEMBERS' SIGNATURE

We, the Members of the Standing Committee on Social Affairs, hereby agree with the contents of this report:



Hon. Viam Pillay
(Chairperson)



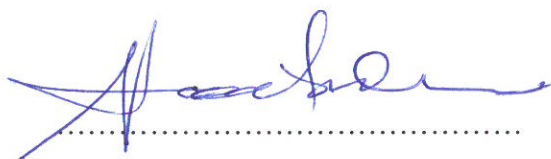
Hon. George Vegnathan
(Deputy Chairperson)



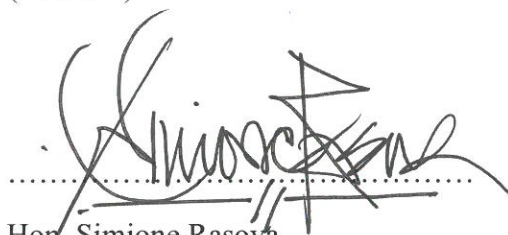
Hon. Alipate Nagata
(Member)



Hon. Salote Radrodro
(Member)



Hon. Dr. Ratu Atonio Lalabalavu
(Member)



Hon. Simione Rasova
(Reserve Member)

APPENDICES

Witnesses

The following witnesses gave evidence. Transcripts can be viewed on the Parliament website at the following link: <http://www.parliament.gov.fj/committees/standing-committee-on-social-affairs/>

Monday 20 January, 2020

Fiji National University

Professor Nigel Healey, Vice-Chancellor and **Reshmi Lal**, Senior Executive Officer-VC.

Published written evidence

Written evidence and supplementary information was received from the Fiji National University and can be viewed on the Parliament website at the following link:
<http://www.parliament.gov.fj/committees/standing-committee-on-social-affairs/>