



STANDING COMMITTEE ON NATURAL RESOURCES

REVIEW OF THE CONSOLIDATED ANNUAL REPORTS FOR MINISTRY OF LANDS AND MINERAL RESOURCES AUGUST 2016 – JULY 2017 AND AUGUST 2017 – JULY 2018



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CHAIRPERSON'S FOREWORD



I am pleased to present to you the review report on the Ministry of Lands and Mineral Resources, 2016 – 2017 and 2017 – 2018 annual reports. The Ministry is responsible for the effective and efficient administration, development and management of all State Land initiatives including the facilitation of the country's mineral sector and ground water resources.

The Ministry of Lands administers approximately a total of 18,000 State Land leases covering about 4% of the total land mass in Fiji.

The Ministry headquarters is located at the iTaukei Trust Fund Building Complex, Nasova in Suva. Its three (3) Divisional Offices are each located at the Fiji Public Service Credit Union building, Gladstone Road in Suva, Lands Department Building on Tavewa Avenue, Lautoka and Macuata House on Siberia Road, Labasa. The Ministry under the review period had its activities and programs directly linked and aligned to the People's Charter for Change, Peace and Progress.

To note, for the years 2016 – 2017, the Ministry recorded a few sound achievements for the Ministry of Lands and Mineral Resources through the two (2) Departments on a range of activities. One of the major achievement was the alignment to the 2013 Republic of Fiji Constitution for conducting substantial consultation and progress to the determination of "Fair Share of Mineral Royalty" to the landowners and of which certain percentage of royalty has been paid out to the rightful landowners.

Additionally, some other Ministry achievements for the same period under review were;

- Facilitated around 78 special prospecting licenses for mineral exploration;
- Drilled a total of 31 boreholes of which 20 were successful with 11 boreholes being reticulated;
- The relocation assessment of about 28 villages who were greatly affected by TC Winston and was prioritized by the National Disaster and Management Office.

Upon the deliberations, the Committee noted that the Ministry had two major departments: - the Department of Lands and Survey and Department of Mineral Resources who independently carry out their own responsibilities for the diverse communities they serve. The Committee members during the period of review, noted the challenges faced by the Ministry of Lands and Mineral Resources. One of the challenges faced was the resignation of fully trained and experienced staff in the Ministry during the year of operation.

Nonetheless, the Committee commended the effort put forth by the Ministry of Lands and Mineral Resources to combat the challenges and impediments faced by the Ministry during the period under review.

At this juncture, I wish to thank both the former Permanent Secretary, Mr. Malakai Finau and the current Dr. Raijieli Taga and staff for their assistance in this review process.

I also extend my gratitude to my Committee colleagues namely: Hon. Jale Sigarara (Deputy Chairperson), Hon. Alexander O'Connor, Hon. Mitieli Bulanauca, Hon. Jese Saukuru and former Committee Member, Hon. Peceli Vosanibola.







I, on behalf of the Standing Committee on Natural Resources, commend the Consolidated Annual Reports for the Ministry of Lands and Mineral Resources 2016 – 2017 & 2017 – 2018 to Parliament.



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Hon. Sanjay Kirpal
Chairperson

COMMITTEE MEMBERSHIP

The substantive members of the Standing Committee on Natural Resources are as follows:

Committee Member	
	Hon. Sanjay Kirpal Chairperson, Government Member
	Hon. Jale Sigarara Deputy Chairperson, Government Member
	Hon. Alexander O'Connor Government Member
	Hon. Mitieli Bulanauca Opposition Member
	Hon. Jese Saukuru Opposition Member
	Hon. Peceli Vosanibola Alternate Opposition Member

LIST OF ACRONYMS

Abbreviation	Phrase
AAS	Atomic Absorption Spectrophometer
AN	Approval Notices
CHOVA	Commonwealth Heads of Valuation Agencies
CORS	Continuous Operating Reference Station
DS	Deputy Secretary
EIA	Environment Impact Assessment
FPSSD	Fiji Public Service Survey Draughting
GIS	Geographical Information System
GTB	Government Tender Board
JEE	Job Evaluation Exercise
MD	Microwave Digester
MLMR	Ministry of Lands & Mineral Resources
MOU	Memorandum of Understanding
MRD	Mineral Resources Department
NDP	National Development Plan
OMRS	Open Merit Recruitment Selection
PMF	Performance Management Framework
PS	Permanent Secretary
SDG	Sustainable Development Goal
SOP	Standard Operating Procedure
UAV	Unmanned Aerial Vehicle (Drone)
UCV	Unimproved Capital Value

RECOMMENDATION

The Standing Committee on Natural Resources has conducted the review of the Ministry of Lands & Mineral Resources (MLMR) Annual Reports for August 2016 – July 2017 & August 2017 – July 2018 and recommends that Parliament take note of its consolidated report.

1.0 INTRODUCTION

The Ministry of Lands and Mineral Resources Annual Reports for 2016 – 2017, 2017 – 2018 was tabled in Parliament during the 31st August, 2020 sitting and referred to the Standing Committee on Natural Resources for scrutiny.

The Committee proceeded with its mandatory function legislated under Standing Order 109(2) (c) which allows the Standing Committee on Natural Resources to examine matters related to forestry, agriculture, mining, environment, fisheries, water and marine services.

Standing Orders 110(1)(c) further authorizes the Standing Committee to *scrutinize 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, rationalization, restructuring, functioning, organization, structure and policy formulation.*

A Standing Committee must report to Parliament any other matter referred to or initiated by the Committee, as soon as it has completed its considerations and deliberations as stipulated under SO 121 (1) (b).

1.1 PROCEDURE AND PROGRAM

The Committee proceeded with its scrutiny and formulated questions which were sent to MLMR to respond to. The questions were basically on the challenges faced by the Ministry during the period under review, achievements, operational review, legislations in place, progress on the Ministry's initiatives. The Ministry's responses were received by the members and was incorporated into the Committees report for final presentation to parliament.

2.0 ABOUT THE MINISTRY OF LANDS & MINERAL RESOURCES

2.1 Upon the deliberations, the committee took note of the Ministry of Lands and Mineral Resources responsibility which was to provide effective administration and management of all state lands that initiate socio-economic development across the country and reflects the needs of the diverse communities it serves. The Ministry has two major departments:

2.1.1 Department of Lands and Survey; and

2.1.2 Department of Mineral Resources

2.2 Vision

The Committee also noted the Ministry's Vision which states, "*Vibrant, Equitable, Dynamic Management of Land & Minerals for a Sustainable Environment and Economic Future*".

2.2 Mission

The Committee also took note of the Ministry's Mission which was to implement the established platforms by:

- 2.2.1** Vigorously implementing government's reforms and policy initiatives on lands, minerals and groundwater resources;
- 2.2.2** Provide outstanding administrative and facilitate services to our customers;
- 2.2.3** Keeping abreast with technological changes and modern approaches to ensure timely and quality services;
- 2.2.4** Improving revenue collection to assist with government nation building efforts;
- 2.2.5** Embracing a corporate culture that is based on ethical and moral values;
- 2.2.6** Moulding team leaders and members to be agents of change;
- 2.2.7** Developing a sense of societal and environmental responsibility;
- 2.2.8** Recruiting, developing, motivating, rewarding and retaining capable personnel through good leadership and conducive working environment.

3.0 COMMITTEE FINDINGS

3.1 At its deliberation stage, the committee noted that the Ministry was in the process of reviewing its Business plan and work plans through consultation with the Senior Management. This was to assist the unit in facilitating the process for proposed developments approved by the Ministry and also in the monitoring of the impact of the development current economic climate brought by the pandemic and recent cyclones. For the environment division it included the following:

- 3.1.1** The processing of application for the proposed River Gravel and Sand extraction for road upgrades, construction purpose and other uses such as hard rock quarrying; and
- 3.1.2** Compliance to EIA monitoring and license in terms of operation for workforce retention and employment to these companies.

3.2 In terms of the challenges faced by all divisions for the period under review, the Committee noted the challenges faced by the Ministry. The lack of expertise in the technical areas of operation was one of the challenges faced. This was aligned to the government reform guidelines on Recruitment & Selection, Job Evaluation, Learning &

Development Guideline and Performance Management. Listed below were the retention activities that had been actively pursued:

- 3.2.1 Increasing salaries for scarce skilled position was part of the Job Evaluation Exercise (JEE);
 - 3.2.2 Training incentives through the Learning & Development Guideline;
 - 3.2.3 Contract employment through OMRS; and
 - 3.2.4 Performance pay under the PMF.
- 3.3 Generally, the Ministry scarce skill professions such as Surveyors, Valuers, Miners and Geologists were also scarce in the market and whilst government has actively pursued to reform initiatives to retain staff, the private and lucrative offers outside the Ministry were what lures experienced staff away. However, the Ministry continued to operate as others were able to fill in for staff who had pursued to greener pastures.
- 3.4 In addition to the above, it was also noted that the Mines Division had also faced the same. This was the increasing number of experience staff leaving and the reasons for their departure were:
- 3.4.1 The global demand for scarce skill sets possessed by qualified mining professionals;
 - 3.4.2 Lucrative offers for employment and also experience offered by the private sector mainly by mining or exploration companies which the Department could not match in terms of remuneration;
 - 3.4.3 Retirement and other personal reasons; and
 - 3.4.4 The OMRS system did not effectively take into account the experience that some officers had particularly in the field of mining and higher positions within the Mines Division. The OMRS system required higher qualifications which the officers did not possess but did possess the relevant experience. The experienced staff were not considered during the 1st stage of recruitment as most did not meet the maximum qualifications required for the positions and this had caused them to seek out better opportunities in the private sector.

3.5 It was worthy to note the achievements of the Ministry during the review period and the highlights which are narrated in table below:

No:	PERIOD	FEW ACHIEVEMENTS/HIGHLIGHTS
1	2016-2017	Department of Lands & Survey <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ The Survey Division deals with the Regulation and Checking of all land surveys attended by Registered Surveyors in accordance with the Surveyor Act Cap. 260 and Surveyors Regulation. The three

		<p>Divisional sectional offices which are located in Central Eastern, Western and Northern divisions were tasked to carry out subdivision and survey of; leased State Land, Native Lands leased to State (Native and Freehold), Informal Settlements, Approval Notices and Nukurua Mahogany Survey Lease.</p> <p>Geospatial Division – acquisition of Unmanned Aerial Vehicle-(Drones)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Land Use Master Plan – Launching of Vanua GIS ➤ Satellite Imagery Data sharing, 17th February 2017- MOU signed with TLTB. ➤ Fiji Public Service Survey Draughting (FPSSD) - 3 staff received completion certificate for participating.
2		<p>Valuation Division</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ CHOVA (1st time hosted by the Valuation Division of Fiji). ➤ Payment of Municipal Council Rate Arrears – Government paid a sum of \$1.5 m from its properties within the municipalities boundaries ➤ Capital Projects, Legalega Subdivision - amended scheme plan approved Project and the Yako Subdivision Government Tender Board approved <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 1) redesign of subdivision 2) EIA, 3) Re – Scheme of the subdivision <p>Environment Division</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Highlights: - Monitoring of the illegal river gravel extraction around the two main islands Viti Levu and Vanua Levu. ➤ Inspection on the Naibulu spillage in Dreketi in September, 2016 ➤ Formulation of the draft River Gravel Extraction Guideline and quarry approval process. ➤ On-going monitoring of rehabilitation during the year and for Nawailevu Bauxite Mine and Nasaucoko Manganese Mine. <p>Geoscience Support Services Division</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Mineral Resources Department – Capital Projects ➤ Geological Survey Division – Mineral Investigation Project - \$1,902,000 ➤ Geological Services Division: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Groundwater Assessment and Develop Small Islands - \$480,000 ➤ Groundwater Assessment and Develop Large Islands - \$750,000 <p>Policy, Planning (Land) & Quality Assurance Division</p> <p>Provides Executive Support to the Hon. Minister, PS & DS through:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Providing policy advice through research; ➤ Conducting Quality Assurance including Harmonization and State Land Rent Arrears Collection; ➤ Identification of un/under-utilized state land and making recommendations; ➤ Customer advocacy; and Media publication of Ministry's activities and programs <p>Highlights</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Project Saumia - Collected a total of \$13,570,432.52 (90.4%) State Land Rent and Arrears.

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Issued a total of 299 Arrears Notices within the Central Eastern Division. ➤ Project Harmonization - Harmonized a total of 1,611 State Land leases in areas around the Central Eastern Division (Muaniweni, Baulevu, Wainibuku and Nakasi), Ba, Tavua and Rakiraki. <p>Department of Mineral Resources Mines Division Tenement Unit is to provide efficient and timely mineral title approvals essential for the long term growth of the State's minerals sector. The Committee noted the increase of revenue from minerals under the review period.</p> <p>The Geological Services Division Resource Geology Unit Total exploration and Mining in 2016 Number of Exploration Tenements - 35</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Number of Mining Leases – 8 <p>Hydrogeology Section</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Groundwater Investigation and geophysics – 35 ➤ Preliminary /Reconnaissance Visit – 77 <p>Drilling Section</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ No. of boreholes drilled - 31 ➤ Abandon wells - 9 ➤ No. of boreholes reticulated – 11 <p>Lab Section</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ The section was also able to complete the disposal of all the old/expired and obsolete samples from the old storage area near the garage which was identified as high risk.
3	2017-2018	<p>Department of Lands & Survey The Land Use Division continues its land administration role of complimenting the operations of the iTaukei Land Trust Board to reform existing land administration processes of availing underutilized iTaukei and State lands for development purposes attaining optimal returns for both, Native Resource owners and the State.</p> <p>New Initiatives</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Commercial Grazing - There had been a secured interest for big scale commercial grazing at the Nadala highlands in Nadarivatu where 5,000 acres of designated land is now in process for leasing. <p>There is a total of 107 Designated Land parcels comprising an area of 10,003.0119 Ha. As of to-date, there are 50 current leases in Land Bank, with a generated income of FJD9, 104,624.68.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ An allocated budget of \$2.5 million dollars was assigned to the division for its 2 Capital Projects in Legalega and Yako in Nadi. They were residential subdivision developments piloted by Government under the Land bank Investment programme. Both Capital Projects were set to be completed by the end of 2018/2019, where landowners will receive 100% lease money from the 102 residential lots.

		<p>The Lands Administration Division - contributed towards the Regularization of Informal Settlements through the preparation of Approval Notices before issuance. A total of 79 ANs were issued benefitting a total of 79 families, namely in the Western & Northern part of Fiji.</p> <p>Valuation Division</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Acquisition of land requirement and payment of compensation totalling \$3.8m for the governments' Wairabetia Special Economic Zone project. ➤ Acquisition of 5 properties for the Waiqele Airport obstruction light project with a total compensation of \$40,000.00. ➤ Payment of town/city rate for all government properties totaling \$2m to all Municipal Councils.
		<p>Environment Division</p> <p>Achievements</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ On-going Formulation of River Gravel Management Guideline. This reference material on gravel and sand management is a first of its kind for the Ministry and can be used for education, regulation and environmental improvement- hence ensuring efficiency in the services provided by the Division, Department and Ministry as a whole. ➤ A new budget allocation of \$110,000 for environmental monitoring work in this financial year was earmarked to the Division which has allowed the engagement of six (6) Technical Officers as Projects officers to assist in monitoring of river gravel and sand extraction and other development administered by the ministry from the Central Eastern, Western and Northern. <p>Geoscience Support Services Division</p> <p>Achievements</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ A total of \$1.8m was collected in mining revenue where they were either held in the Government Consolidated Fund Account or in the Trust Fund by the Department. The beneficiaries of the Trust Accounts were the Mining Companies and land owners within the mining areas/prospects who are now entitled to receive 80% from the fair share of royalty payment. Other monies held in the trust are for private funded projects used for non-mining activities which the communities and general public also benefit from <p>Policy, Planning & Quality Assurance Division</p> <p>The Right of landowners to fair-share of mineral royalties was distinguished under the Fiji 2013 Constitution Section (30). As the first of its kind, the Fair Share of Mineral Royalties Bill was passed in Parliament on 16th May, 2018 and gazetted on 18th May. This allowed for an 80:20 fair share that is the respective landowners are entitled to 80% of royalty payments whereas the govt. retains 20% for administration costs. The beneficiaries to this will be the land owning units as well as owners of freehold land that extraction of minerals take place in.</p>
		<p>Department of Mineral Resources</p> <p>Geological Services Division</p> <p>Achievements</p>

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ STAR Conference - A presentation was done on Mineral Prospects during the STAR conference. This enhanced and equipped the audience on potential mining areas around Fiji. The Conference was attended by approximately 100 overseas and regional participants. ➤ The Division compiled 100% of data package of 2013 to 2016/17 prospects. The updated geological data assisted the landowners and the exploration companies interested in conducting further exploration work.
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4.0 COMMITTEE’S RECOMMENDATION

During the period of review, the Committee concurred and made the following recommendations as way forward for the Ministry of Lands and Mineral Resources.

1. RECOMMENDATION

The Committee recommends for the Ministry to review the State Lands Act of annual rent not exceeding 6% UCV (unimproved capital value) for fair market rental.

2. RECOMMENDATION

The Committee recommends for renewal of leases to be conducted in a proactive manner and to regularize any informal housing before renewing the head lease.

3. RECOMMENDATION

The Ministry must adhere to the Financial Management Act, Finance Instruction 2010 and Finance (Amendment) Instruction 2016 to enable the preparation of financial statements that are free from misstatement.

4. RECOMMENDATION

The Committee recommends stringent measures be undertaken by the Ministry to reduce rental arrears which stands at more than \$20 million.

5. RECOMMENDATION

The Committee recommends that the Ministry should regularize its established positions – Person to Post Positions.

To consider empowering employee through appropriate training and resources.

6. RECOMMENDATION

The Committee recommends that the Ministry adopts and implements the relevant SDG’s in all its spheres of work to ensure alignment. The Ministry to include and report on the specific SDG’s and its implementation in future annual reports.

7. RECOMMENDATION

The Committee highly proposes a 10 metre buffer zone parallel to the river banks and water ways, from planting and development. This will prevent soil erosion and silting of river and sea beds.

8. RECOMMENDATION

The Committee recommends that the Department of Lands and Survey to be conveniently housed in one location to enhance its service delivery i.e. one - stop – shop.

9. RECOMMENDATION

The illegal reclamation and burial of foreshore causing depletion of mangrove growth should be totally prohibited to protect the marine ecosystem.

10. RECOMMENDATION

The Committee recommends that the Surveyors Registration Board be more proactive towards encouraging more new registered surveyors.

5.0 SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOALS (SDGs)

5.1 GENDER EQUALITY ANALYSIS – SDG 5

The Committee noted that there was no information on Gender provided in the annual reports for the period under review.

6.0 CONCLUSION

The committee noted an increase of leases from 16,023 in 2010 to 18,352 in 2018 with an increase of annual rent from \$4.8 million to \$8.3 million in the same period.

Despite the challenges faced by the Ministry, the overall performance of the Ministry of Lands and Mineral Resources for the period under review was satisfactory.

7.0 COMMITTEE MEMBERS' SIGNATURE

We, the Members of the Standing Committee on Natural Resources, hereby agree with the contents of this report:

Committee Member	Signature
Hon. Sanjay Kirpal, Chairperson	
Hon. Jale Sigarara, Deputy Chairperson	
Hon. Alexander O'Connor (Member)	
Hon. Mitieli Bulanauca (Member)	
Hon. Jese Saukuru (Member)	
Hon. Peceli Vosanibola (Alternate Member)	

APPENDICES

Published written evidence

Written evidence and supplementary information was received from the Ministry of Lands and Mineral Resources and can be viewed on the Parliament website at the following link:

<http://www.parliament.gov.fj/committees/standing-committee-on-natural-resources/>