

APPENDICES

Appendix I
Written Response by the
National Fire Authority

29th March 2022

Hon. Viam Pillay
Chairperson
Standing Committee for Social Affairs
Parliament of the Republic of Fiji
PO Box 2352
Government Buildings
SUVA

Dear Sir

Clarification of Issues on the National Fire Authority Annual Report 2015

We are in receipt of your letter dated 22nd March 2022 in relation to questions pertaining to the National Fire Authority's 2015 Annual Report. We provide our response as follows:

A. General Questions

1. Is the Authority in a position to sustain its own operations without the assistance of Government grant?

The National Fire Service Act 1994 (the **Act**) provides for the revenue streams of the Authority. The revenue streams provided for in the Act include:

1. *Insurance Companies Contribution (s29) & supported by the Insurance Policy Levy Order 1995;*
2. *Levy on Water Meters (s30) & supported by the Levy on Water Meter Order 1995;*
3. *States Contribution (s31);*
4. *Payment of Expenses where property is uninsured (s32E); and*
5. *Fees under the Structural Fire Safety Department (National Fire Service (Fees and Charges) Regulations 2003.*

The revenue streams currently encompassed in the legislative framework of the Authority adequately provides for the financial sustainability of the Operations of the Authority. The Authority has been able to sustain its operations through its current revenue streams with assistance from government grants for the Emergency Ambulance Services.

NFA anticipates collecting \$20 million annually in revenue and also forecasts growth in revenue subject to confirmation of fire boundaries which is sufficient to maintain its operational sustainability.

In the long run for infrastructure development and asset replacement plan, the Authority would require Government funding for Capital Projects:

- Capital Construction – construction of new Fire Stations in accordance with Government's NDP.
- Capital Procurement – procurement of fire trucks, ambulances, and firefighting equipment.

Unexpected circumstances such as the COVID pandemic and its rippling impacts on the revenue streams of the Authority reinforces the need for Government to continue its support through the assistive grants for the Authority's capital projects, emergency ambulance services, at the Authority's request. An annual Capital grant of \$2.5M - \$3M would enable the Authority to achieve its capital investment program as stated above.

2. Is there any arrangement made between NFA and EFL to discuss ways to mitigate issues on fire resulting in electrical defaults (eg electrical appliances, power points etc.)?

On the recommendation of the Honorable Minister for Local Government and the NFA Board, NFA organized a multi-agency taskforce committee to review sub-standard electrical appliances in early 2020. The committee consisted of representatives from the Consumer Council, Ministry of Industry, Trade and Tourism, the Department of Energy, Energy Fiji Ltd, Solicitor General's Office, Commerce Consumer Council and Suva Retailers Association. The committee elected the CEO for Consumer Council as the Chairperson for the Committee and NFA held the Secretariat. After several meetings, the taskforce committee drafted a Ministerial Issues Paper highlighting the issues with the importation of electrical appliances into the country. Recommendations were also made for consideration on the implementation of standards on the importation of electrical items in Fiji.

The Ministry of Commerce, Trade, Tourism and Transport (MCTTT) also, recently, facilitated the 1st virtual Electrical Appliance Sub-Committee (EASC) meeting held on 17th March 2022. Key subject discussions were around:

1. Standard development process and roles and responsibilities of the sub-committee.
2. Presentation on Household and Similar Electrical Appliance Standards IEC 60355-1;
3. Appointment of the Convener of the Sub-Committee; and
4. Declaration of interests by the TC members for transparency purposes.

Ms. Baleca of EFL is now the current convener. Committee members received a list of appliances that can be monitored in Fiji and also given a window until the next meeting to add on to the list if needed.

The date for the 2nd Virtual Meeting will be confirmed by the MCTTT, where lists of appliances will be further deliberated and a possible agreement shall be in place between NFA and EFL on appliances.

3. Elaborate on alternate arrangements made with WAF as part of contingency plan due to frequent intermittent water shortage in ensuring sufficient supply of water in the case of fire outbreak.

Meetings with the Chief Operations Officer WAF and National Fire Authority were held to discuss a way forward to solve the frequent intermittent water shortage in case of emergency. The WAF team is finalizing the list of these areas before submitting it to NFA. These areas identified will also be plotted in the Computer Aided Dispatch (CAD) System at NFA Command Centre for ease of reference.

Also, WAF has provided a list of contact persons who will be liaising and working closely with NFA within the respective divisions. These include on-duty technicians who can divert and boost the water pressure in the water pipelines to these intermittent areas should the need arise during any emergency. NFA has established a mutual working relationship with the WAF team who has offered to assist NFA in emergency situations. In addition, WAF will also provide GIS access and also information on water mains and pipelines as well as hydrant locations and information.

4. Further highlight the role of NFA during disasters.

One of NFA's core function is to respond to Natural Disasters. NFA actively coordinates with NDMO during disasters and all our Stations within the 3 Divisions (Central Eastern, Western, Northern) work closely with and assist the Commissioner's Office in providing emergency services during cyclones, floods, tsunami and earthquakes.

NFA assists in conducting rescue operations and evacuating people safely to evacuation centers. Also, NFA assists in the manning of the Emergency Operation Centre (EOC) at National, Divisional, Provincial and District levels. However, NFA extends its services beyond its core functions by assisting in cleaning of towns, Government buildings, schools, golden age homes in the areas affected by the flood. NFA also assists with activities such as initial damage assessments and distribution of rations. During the COVID-19 pandemic, NFA worked closely with the Ministry of Health (MOH) in providing services such as screening of people, fumigation activities and awareness to the public.

5. With the increase of high-rise buildings in the country, how well equipped is NFA to cater for fire outbreaks in such buildings?

NFA has a total of 3 aerial ladder trucks to assist in attending to high rise building fires and emergencies. These appliances can reach a maximum working height of 22m to 28m or reach up to levels 7 to 9 of a high-rise building.

However, this does limit NFA's capabilities in attending to fires and other emergencies on a higher level. Strict measures and requirements are specified for the construction of buildings to meet NFA's approval as per the National Building Code of Fiji.

Building Plans are vetted to meet NFA's compliance standards and approval. Recommendations such as the installation of wet and dry risers with booster pumps and water sprinkler system in these high-rise buildings would allow firefighters to access these levels and fight fires efficiently and effectively.

NFA has also initiated discussions, which are still in progress, with Helicopter Service providers such as Lifelight Fiji and Heli Tours Ltd to assist NFA during emergencies such as rescues and evacuation from high rise buildings.

B. Questions - National Fire Authority Annual Report 2015

6. Page 5 of Annual Report (Overview) – What sort of training was provided to the Officer responsible for hazmat?

Officers have attended local and overseas training on HAZMAT response and the knowledge and skills acquired have enabled them to impart their acquired knowledge to the Training Department and the other officers during drills.

Overseas training was provided through JICA sponsored programs whereby officers were selected for Firefighting Techniques and Fire and Disaster Management Training Courses. These courses had also covered trainings on HAZMAT responses.

Local training programs have also been conducted by ORICA Fiji Ltd and these training covered the basics of chemical spill response. Also, mock simulations and combined drill exercises have been conducted with various organizations such as the Ministry of Environment, ORICA Fiji Ltd, Total Energies Fiji, Mobil and Pacific Beverages.

All divisions are equipped with HAZMAT response equipment such as gas suits, chemical splash suits and breathing apparatus to attend to these incidents.

7. Provide the breakdown of total liabilities amounting to \$5.4 million. National Fire Authority Financial Statements for the Year Ended 31st December 2015.

The Authority has been recording an average annual of approximately \$10 million which is inclusive of creditors, advance revenue and accruals.

8. The committee notes that the auditor issued a qualified audit opinion on the 2015 accounts of NFA on the four grounds provided on Pages 26 and 27 of the Annual Report. Confirm whether these issues have been resolved and the internal controls instituted to prevent their recurrence.

- a) Qualification 1 – PPE verification will be an issue until 2018. From 2019 onwards this will not be a qualification issue because the OAG has since been engaged to oversee the annual stock verification exercise.
- b) Qualification 2 – the issue of treatment of government grant; this was adjusted in the 2016 accounts and should not be a recurring issue.

- c) Qualification 3 – Leave liability balance – the long service leave was rectified and adjusted in 2016 and should not be a recurring issue.
- d) Qualification 4 – Annual inventory stock take is usually undertaken with the BOS. From 2019 onwards this will not be a qualification issue since from then OAG has been engaged to oversee the annual stock verification exercise

9. Emphasis of Matter (Page 27 of Annual Report) – We note that as at 31 December 2015, no adjustments were made to the financial statements of NFA for the impacts of COVID-19. Explain why this was the case and whether this issue has been rectified.

The adjustment refers to the adjustment of the Financial Statement to include the impact of COVID-19 to the Authority. The audit identified that COVID-19 was not part of the disclosures in the subsequent events since it did not have any effect on the Financial Statements. The Authority sees no material impact of the Covid-19 on the balances and on the estimates. However, based on Audit recommendation, the same has been recorded in the 2016 Financial Statements and the ensuing years.

10. Other Matters (Page 27) – Explain whether the three issues have been resolved.

- a) Issue 1 – Uninsured Properties - A total of \$60k had been billed which is part of the outstanding debtors at date.
- b) Issue 2 – As of 2016, the Provision for doubtful debts had been resolved to \$17k only after careful considerations of continuity and existence of the debtor.
- c) Issue 3 – The water levy was adjusted in 2016. The adjustment was carefully inspected and referenced to the realties in the accrued amounts.

We would be happy to provide you with any further information or clarification, if you so wish.

Yours faithfully

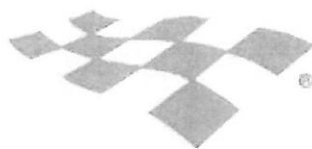


Puamau T. Sowane (Mr)
Chief Executive Officer
National Fire Authority

Appendix II

Supplementary Response by the

National Fire Authority



NFA
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FIJI ISLANDS

Always Ready

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25 April 2022

Hon. Viam Pillay
Chairperson
Standing Committee for Social Affairs
Parliament of the Republic of Fiji
Government Buildings
SUVA

Dear Sir

Responses to the Supplementary Questions for the 2015 Annual Report

1. **Response to Q1 – We note that NFA anticipated collecting \$20m annually in revenue, can the Authority provide a breakdown of revenue collected from each fire station?**

Anticipated 20M revenue as from 2022	
Admin & Finance	18,437,263
HQ - CT & SFS	296,408
Suva	336,564
Valelevu	66,693
Nausori	31,921
Korovou	14,758
Nakasi	13,081
Lami	28,020
Levuka	1,048
Navua	7,899
Pacific Harbour	14,740
Rakiraki	14,089
Tavua	32,970
Ba	83,143
Lautoka	219,191

Nadi	215,641
Sigatoka	48,623
Korolevu	19,573
Labasa	65,867
Savusavu	25,989
Seaqaqa	6,592
Taveuni	20,006
Anticipated	20,000,079

2. Provide more information on the following

(a) How the Authority provide its services to the rural communities?

We wish to clarify to the standing committee that according to the NFS Act Section 3, the Act dictates that the Authority operates within its fire boundaries and districts. Extensions outside the Fire Boundaries areas (rural) can only be made if:

- i) Expansions outside the municipal council require the service provided by the Authority
- ii) The authority has the required capacity to meet those needs if fire services are required
- iii) The community is willing and is able to assist the Authority establish and coordinate good fire service and emergency service relations

NFA continue to identify growth areas outside the fire boundaries including rural areas where we have established fire stations for example, the Seaqaqa Fire Station where there is no municipality but NFA had set a fire district to protect the community. Another is the Korolevu area where Nfa had established a fire station. The latest which is going to be commissioned is the Nabouwalu Fire Station. In addition to our initiative to reach out to rural communities, the Authority had acquired lands for future establishments like Namelimeli in Navua, Naitonitoni in Navua, Korovisilou in Serua, Vunidawa in Naitasiri, Keyasi in Navosa, Nayavu in Wainibuka, Navakai in Nadi and Kabisi near Natadola. There are also areas that Nfa had identified but yet to be acquired like Matei in Taveuni, Dreketi in Macuata and a few others.

Following the official launch of the Community Fire Warden Framework at Yako Village in 2021, the NFA has engaged with a total of 22 communities around the country and has trained a total of 405 Community Fire Wardens who have volunteered their time to undergo fire safety training to learn the necessary skills that will enable them to effectively maintain regular surveillance of fire safety compliance in their communities or villages in the Western, Northern and Central Divisions. These 22 communities comprise of 11 communities in the Western Division, 4 in the Northern Division and 7 in the Central Division.

One of the recent Communities that have completed their Community Fire Warden training program has been the Community in Bau Island, Tailevu. For this fiscal year,

the Fire Authority has planned to engage and conduct training in 36 communities comprising of 9 in the Northern Division, 16 in the Central/Eastern Division and 11 in the Western Division. The NFA's implementation program was hampered heavily by the Covid-19 last year and now with the lifting of most of the Covid-19 restrictions, they have started to re-engage with the Communities earmarked for this fiscal year.

(b) Does the Authority have suitable transportation type that is conducive to all road conditions and work type and loads?

Legally yes, according to the NFS Act 1994, Section 3, the authority is mandated to work within the fire boundaries. The Authority's current fleet is able to operate and is conducive to the road conditions in all the current fire and municipal boundaries. The current transportation includes 22 Twin cabs, 53 fire and specialized appliances, 10 emergency ambulances and 3 executive vehicles, which totals to 88. We will be procuring another 2 x 3,000L fire trucks and 2 x Ambulances which are currently under our procurement process for this financial year.

Lately, we have procured 2 x 4x4 3000L fire appliances which are designed for rugged roads. We also have our Vehicle Replacement Policy in place where we will work on in accordance to our financial capability.

3. What action have been taken by the Authority to address death on locked properties,

Under the NFA 5-year Strategic Plan 2021 to 2026, Strategic Goal 1, Safety and Prevention, under the Strategic Outcome 1.1 on the Reduced Likelihood of Unwanted Fires, the large number of fires, majority of which are residential properties are known to have been caused by negligence on the part of members of the community. This presents NFA with an opportunity to reduce the number of fires with an integrated approach, conducted, targeted community education programs as part of its fire safety strategy to enhance public safety behavior, thereby, reducing the number of unwanted fires.

To achieve the outcome, the priorities are:

- i) Review the fire and emergency safety operation plans
- ii) Enhance the fire and emergency safety promotion program
- iii) In consultation with relevant stakeholders, draft a plan for recovery, including relevant contingency plans and considerations and standby arrangements for administrative action and financing in the event of the fire and emergencies.

The sub activities for the Strategic Goal 1 on Safety and Prevention, are covered in details in the NFAs 2021-2022 cost operational plan.

In the event of locked properties, the Authority has breaking tools like hydraulic cutters, grinding discs that enable the fire fighters to access through locked doors. We continue to advise home owners and members of the public that have installed burglar grills to have escape routes in the event of fires. The family members are also advised to keep their door key in a place known to all members.

4. If there are awareness carried out to address this, provide us with data on the outreach Programme and the area covered?

Data collected for the awareness conducted in 2019 Pre-Covid19 pandemic follows:

Station	House to House Visit		Community Awareness Program		Education Institution		TOTAL	
	No of House	Population	No of Program	Population	No of Program	Population	Program	Population
Suva	111	392	1	57	0	0	112	449
Valelevu	94	599	3	195	0	0	97	794
Nausori	115	664	4	715	0	0	119	1379
Korovou	61	594	1	53	0	0	62	320
Levuka	34	153	1	40	1	58	36	251
Navua	97	372	0	0	0	0	97	372
Pac Hbr	46	221	1	226	0	0	47	447
Sub Total	558	2995	11	1229	1	58	570	4012
Lautoka	33	225	0	0	0	0	33	225
Nadi	44	164	1	20	0	0	45	184
Sigatoka	31	405	0	0	0	0	31	405
Ba	37	137	3	198	0	0	40	335
Tavua	31	148	0	0	0	0	31	148
Rakiraki	28	134	1	170	0	0	29	304
Korolevu	35	158	1	35	0	0	36	193
Sub Total	239	1371	6	423	0	0	245	1794
Labasa	900	2044	3	149	0	0	903	2193
Savusavu	120	367	3	62	0	0	123	429
Taveuni	90	467	1	193	0	0	91	660
Seaqaqa	3	101	1	17	0	0	4	118
Sub Total	1110	2979	8	421	0	0	1121	3400
Grand Total	1907	7345	25	2073	1	58	1936	9206
YTD	25,812	98,758	407	31,051	502	67,270	27,010	194,815



Puamau T. Sowane (Mr)
Chief Executive Officer
National Fire Authority