

APPENDICES

Appendix I

**Written Response by the
Itaukei Trust Fund Board**

2019 ANNUAL REPORT

QUESTIONS & ANSWERS

QUESTION 1

We note that plans were in place to extend the traditional leadership and good governance program to Rotuma. Confirm whether this training has been conducted and the outcome of the training needs analysis carried out in 2017 to determine the approach and types of training suitable for the seven district chiefs in Rotuma.

No TNA was planned for 2017.

It was determined in early 2020 that to successfully carry out a TNA and coordinate programs for the Rotuman community, a Rotuma Project Coordinator position had to be created. In June 2020, the first incumbent to the position was recruited. This role was designed to manage and coordinate projects regarding the preservation and promotion of the Rotuman language and culture, and the enhancement of quality of leadership and management in partnership with relevant stakeholders. Following this establishment, a training needs analysis was conducted in August 2020, as part of initial consultations with the Rotuman community.

QUESTION 2

Inform us on whether works on the Phase II development of the Draiba Complex have commence and whether it will be able to meet its return on investment (ROI) benchmark.

In 2020, the Board of TTFB decided to discontinue Phase II development of the Draiba Complex due to the Project not meeting the Return on Investment (ROI) benchmark.

QUESTION 3

How has the Fund progressed in establishing a Joint Venture with other parties to develop a Culture & Arts and Commercial Centre? Has due diligence, design concepts, feasibility and market studies leading up to the full proposal of the Project been carried out?

In 2020, the Fund, through an expression of interest, signed a Memorandum of Understanding with a Strategic Partner. The MOU established a framework for the partner to work on the details towards forming a Joint Venture with the Fund, in developing a Culture & Arts and Commercial Centre Project.

The following has been completed:

- 1) Design concepts;
- 2) Financial feasibility; and
- 3) Master plan and architectural drawings layout of the Project;

- c) Contractor through tender process is expected to be appointed in the last quarter of 2022.

Construction phase is expected to be completed in 18 months.

- d) The building with contents was insured for \$6.5million.

Insurance payout received on 11th November 2020. This has been invested while awaiting the commencement of the Redevelopment Project.

QUESTION 5

Has the investment review of the Funds whole investment portfolio been completed by Mercer Australia? What was the outcome of the tendering process?

The review of the Fund's Investment Portfolio has been completed and the Board is in the process of implementing the recommendation of the Report.

QUESTION 6

How does TTFB ensure that traditional practices like weaving and fishing using traditional means, is preserved and revived in traditional villages across the country? Is there any work done in documenting traditional knowledge and formalizing these activities to ensure that it is passed onto future generations?

The purpose of the Vanua Fieldwork project is to research and document distinct cultural practices and produce educational resources for iTaukei. Research and documentation also involve the revitalization of traditional skills and knowledge. Community members, men, and women, young and old are engaged in this process, including the Provincial Office to facilitate knowledge transmission. For instance, the practices of Vilavilairevo and Yavirau known to the Sawau tribe of Beqa were documented in December 2020. Leaders of the tribe ensured that oral histories concerning the two practices were documented, and all protocols were observed for the younger generation to see and learn to maintain the traditions.

The documentaries are now available on video and have been shared with the Sawau tribe for circulation within the community and with members based overseas. TTFB will be able to publish and share on media platforms once the documentation for the Province of Rewa is completed in 2022.

QUESTION 9

Under the MOU signed between TTFB and Fiji Arts Council, what plans are in place to carry out community-based upskilling workshops on craft development in rural, urban and maritime communities?

Community-based upskilling workshops on craft development were implemented in 2019 for Nadakuni in Naitasiri, and Sawakasa in Tailevu. The workshops involved revitalization of traditional crafts and leveraging local resources to develop other crafts for the market. Community upskilling workshops could not be pursued due to Covid-19. However, TTFB supported FAC through market day programs to help generate income and sustain livelihoods for the artisans during the recovery period. Due to COVID-19 and the restriction in visiting the rural communities, the focus is now on the development of an online marketing platform for registered artisans to promote and sell artworks online.

QUESTION 10

How is TTFB collaborating with other stakeholders to further explore and strengthen Fiji's creative arts industry for future displays and exhibitions, particularly in the areas of drama and theatre productions?

The planned Culture and Art Centre will house displays and exhibitions on all art forms, including drama and theatre productions. It is envisaged to be a unique selling proposition for Cultural Tourism, hence a source of education and employment for iTaukei and Rotuman youths. The design and concept of the Centre was developed in consultation with stakeholders such as the Ministry of iTaukei Affairs, Department of National Heritage and Arts, Fiji Arts Council, Fiji Museum, University of the South Pacific to mention a few. Hence, the development of the CAC is TTFB's contribution in strengthening Fiji's creative arts sector.

QUESTION 11

How has TTFB worked to identify and convert cultural significant sites (old village sites, historical sites) to heritage sites for cultural promotion and income generation for nearby villages? Some such cultural sites can be found in Nasolo village in Ba and also Taleya Lake close to the village. What support is provided to maintain / preserve these sites?

The National Trust of Fiji (NTF) is the body that administers the conservation of Fiji's historical and heritage sites. TTFB contributed to the research findings to the NTF on the Korowaiwai Park at Laucala Beach for evaluation and whether it can be declared a 'Heritage Site'. Also, in 2020, TTFB started the Vanua Fieldwork program for the district of Burebasaga in the Province of Rewa, which involved the documentation of a cultural site or the original settlement of the ancestral Vu god, Romelasiga. Hence, similar documentation processes will be carried out for the other provinces, and research results can be submitted to the NTF for consideration.

APPENDIX II

Verbatim Report on the Itaukei Trust Fund Board Public Submission

The Committee resumed at 10.11 a.m.

Interviewee/Submittee: iTaukei Trust Fund Board

In Attendance:

- | | | | |
|----|--------------------|---|---------------------------|
| 1. | Mr. Aisake Taito | - | Chief Executive Officer |
| 2. | Mr. Mosese Seavula | - | Senior Investment Analyst |

MR. CHAIRMAN.- Honourable Members, I declare this Standing Committee on Social Affairs meeting open. Today, we are hearing the submission from the iTaukei Trust Fund Board in relation to its operational and financial performance for the 2019 financial year.

Today's hearing is open to the public and I welcome members of the public and media who may be viewing this broadcast. I have also been advised that there would be delayed broadcast of this hearing. I remind everyone in this room that mobile phones are to be switched off.

Witnesses are reminded that the submission given to the Committee is protected by Parliamentary Privileges, so it is important for the submittees to be aware that giving false or misleading information to the Committee may constitute contempt of Parliamentary privileges. If, at any stage, you wish to give part of their evidence in camera, you should make that request to me as Chairman and the Committee will consider your request in accordance with the Standing Orders of Parliament.

Today, we have with us the Chief Executive Officer (CEO) of the iTaukei Trust Fund Board, so we would like to welcome Mr. Aisake Taito. We have an hour with you, Sir, and before we proceed any further, I will let the Committee Members introduce themselves.

(Introduction of Committee Members)

The normal procedure is that, we invite submittees to make an opening statement and introduce themselves, after which we will hear your response to the Committee's queries which were sent earlier and then you can make yourselves available for questions from the Committee members. Thank you and welcome, once again, CEO. I will now request you to make your presentation and responses to the Committee.

MR. A. TAITO.- Thank you, Mr. Chairman, and honourable Members of the Standing Committee on Social Affairs. Before we start, I would like to introduce the two of us from the iTaukei Trust Fund Board. My name is Aisake Taito and I am the CEO for the Trust Fund and on my right is Mosese Seavula, who is the Senior Investment Analyst for the Fund.

Mr. Chairman and honourable Members of the Committee, I thought I will just give a very brief overview in terms of our performance for 2019. We had a net profit of around \$1.4 million, which was a decrease from 2018 primarily because of the building that was burned down at the complex in 2019. Sir, 2019 also is the year that we started the implementation of our Strategic Plan 2019-2023.

We continued to do what we were expected to do as mandated in terms of our mandate which is under our iTaukei Trust Fund Act 2004 where we continue to invest funds so that we can generate

The Board decided that in late 2019 and at the beginning of 2020 not to continue with Phase II of the project, primarily because the project was not able to meet the ROI benchmark. Benchmark is around 8 percent and project ROI is way less than that, hence the reason the Board decided not to continue with that project.

Question No. 3: How has the Fund progressed in establishing a joint venture with other parties to develop a culture and arts and a commercial centre? Has due diligence, design concept, feasibility and market studies leading up to the full proposal of the project been carried out?

The Fund through an expression of interest signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with a strategic partner and under the MOU, it established a framework for which to partner to work with us in terms of the details of the joint venture and also the development of a culture and arts centre and a commercial centre project. So, the following have been completed:

1. Design concept;
2. Feasibility study; and
3. A master plan and architectural drawing layouts of the project.

All of those have been completed.

The following are in progress. Due to COVID-19 in the last two years - 2020 and 2021, there has been a delay in terms of due diligence, basically because of the restrictions of COVID-19. However, we are currently in the process of doing a peer review on our financial feasibility of that project and hopefully, this will be completed this year.

Question No. 4: In relations to the *Vale ni Bose* which was destroyed in a fire in December 2019:

- (a) Update us on the outcome of the Police investigations into the fire;
- (b) Plans in place to redevelop the *Vale ni Bose* and create the economic activities that will complement the redevelopment;
- (c) When redevelopment is expected to commence; and
- (d) How much was the building insured for and whether the insurance payout has been made?

(a) Based on the fire report of the National Fire Authority, the Police has closed this case.

(b) The Vale ni Bose Redevelopment Project involves several stages, as follows:

Stage 1: Pre-construction phase is in progress. This involves four phases:

1. Site assessment;
2. Market review and preliminary feasibility;
3. Architectural design process management & facilitation; and
4. Project feasibility & tenancy activities. This phase is expected to be completed soon.

Stage 2: Construction.

1. We have appointed a Project Manager through an Expression of Interest.
2. We are currently in the process of appointing other consultants for the project for instance like Structural and Civil Engineer, Building Services Engineer, Quantity

documentations that we have collected have been agreed to by those who hold those traditions in terms of the rights.

Question No.7: We note the three-year MOU signed between iTaukei Trust Fund Board and USP to sustain the Fijian Language Studies Programme, offering Fijian language courses toward a Diploma in Fijian Language. We also note the iTaukei Trust Fund Board sponsorship of iTaukei school teachers, as well as Ministry of iTaukei Affairs staff, to undertake a Diploma in Fijian Language Studies at USP. Accordingly, inform us of the following:

- (a) **What are the other career options available for iTaukei Trust Fund Board sponsored teachers and students?**

For the teachers, this has been very helpful, especially for those teachers who were not taught on this in terms of Diploma Fijian Studies at USP. This programme allows them to teach vernacular language in schools. Also, those who graduate, will be able to continue further studies in linguistics and sociology at USP, FNU and University of Fiji. There are also careers for teachers in terms of curriculum writers, research, book authors, translators and interpreters. A good number of these graduates serve in the Ministry of Education and in the Ministry of iTaukei Affairs and Provincial Council Offices.

- (b) **Clarify if the wider community has a fair knowledge regarding the sponsorship provided by iTaukei Trust Fund Board for students to study iTaukei at USP.**

The USP and iTaukei Trust Fund Board publish their advertisements via newspapers and all social media platforms. Hence, we believe that we have a fair amount of coverage in iTaukei Trust Fund Board sponsorship.

- (c) **What are the plans for more teachers to teach iTaukei and mechanisms to influence more students to study the subject at all levels of education?**

We plan to provide more part-time scholarships for Postgraduate Studies in the Fijian language at USP.

Also, work has started in collaboration with the Ministry of Education and the Fijian Teachers Association towards the development of supplementary resources/texts for the *Vosa VakaViti* in school curriculum. Last year, we published around 10 books for Grade 1 and Grade 3 in iTaukei language and these are currently being used by the Ministry of Education for those in primary schools.

We have also published since 2010, a lot of vernacular books which are available on our website and under the Ministry of Education's website as well.

Recently we launched *solesau* platform. This is in relation to after COVID-19 where a lot of students and also youth were using technology as a way to educate themselves. So, we decided to use that interest using the technology by launching what we call the *solesau* platform that teaches basic Fijian language and culture for iTaukei youth, not only in Fiji but also the diaspora.

Question No. 8: What are the Fund's plans to extend the Sauvaki ni Vanua Programme to other villages and traditional leaders?

project with them. This is in regards to Korowaiwai Park at Laucala Beach next to the Golf Course where we did a research and this report has been submitted to the National Trust of Fiji (NTF).

We also started some work in the district of Burebasaga in the Province of Rewa. This involved the documentation of cultural sites or original settlements of their ancestral *Vu* (god) called *Romelasiga*. Hence, similar documentation processes were carried out for other Provinces and the research report would be submitted to NTF for their consideration.

The promotions of such sites as potential tourist sites can now be explored through our partnership with Market Development Facility (MDF), an Australian funded programme. The areas that we would focus on are mainly in terms of research and documentations of this site before we pass those documents or report to the NTF for them to consider.

Question No. 12: We noted that the OAG issued an unmodified audit opinion on the financial statement of iTaukei Trust Fund Board for 2019 and no adjustments were made to it for the impacts of COVID-19. Can you explain why this was the case and whether those adjustments have been made to subsequent financial statements?

Yes, we note that there is an unmodified audit opinion issued. These propositions are in relation to COVID-19 and that is mentioned under the Emphasis of Matter on page 25 of the Report. This is due to the pandemic that was declared by the World Health Organization. This is termed as an event after the reporting as the reporting was conducted in December 2019.

The event was disclosed only as a note in the financial statement as required by the accounting standard on reporting and various publications on presentation of impacts of COVID-19 in the financial statements by the International Accounting Standards Board (IASB). The auditors were of a view that despite this being a subsequent event, the impact from COVID-19 did not result in adjusting subsequent event that required adjustments to the numbers disclosed in the financial year of 2019. The adjustments to any financial statements are only made if a situation or a condition directly affects the financial of the company and are material when compared to the net worth of the company.

Mr. Chairman and honourable Members, those are our responses to the questions raised by the Committee in relation to our 2019 Annual Report, and we will be more than happy to answer any other questions that the Committee may have in relation to our Report. Thank you, Mr. Chairman, for the opportunity.

MR. CHAIRMAN.- Thank you, CEO, for your presentation and the responses provided for the questions that were sent. Now, I will open the floor for our honourable Members to ask any further questions.

HON. A.T. NAGATA.- Mr. Chairman, I have a supplementary question to Question No. 6. I am aware that each District and Province have their own traditions. Are there plans to document all those traditional practices and protocols for every District and Province in Fiji?

MR. A. TAITO.- Yes, Mr. Chairman, that is part of our plan, and it also depends in terms of our budget and the revenue that we get from our investments. So that will determine in terms of number. Then we can document and collect those information in a year because travelling to villages and settlements is not cheap, it is very expansive because of the different protocols you have to go through in the Provinces, but that is in the pipeline.

coach and nurture them in terms of the various value chain within that process. They are paying their loan well in advance and the bank is happy, so that is the model that we are taking through to other Provinces and sectors in relation to that.

As far as the question whether holistically you can provide a scholarship probably like management, business studies and others which are provided in TELS, that is something which is not in our mandate under that. We have started something in terms of the scholarship in relation to language which is under the Fijian study and we hope to continue and do a review. If the Board decides later on to go into other space within the mandate, if the Board agrees that it is within our mandate, I am sure we can consider that in the future.

HON. RATU T. NAVURELEVU.- My is in relation to Question No. 4(a) regarding the *Vale ni Bose*, based on the National Fire Authority Report, the police had closed the investigation. My supplementary question, Sir, is, what was the finding of the investigation by the National Fire Authority and the police investigation to draw a conclusion as to what could have been the cause of the fire?

MR. A. TAITO.- Thank you, honourable Member, for the question. The evidence was collected by the Forensic Team from the Fiji Police Force. They stated that there was a carton and the security guard placed the mosquito coil inside the carton. The wind blew the carton and hit the wooden door which was etched with *magimagi*. Because it has been there for some time since 2009 and it is almost 10 years old, obviously the wood and the *magimagi* are very dry so when it hit that, it created the fire. That is as far as the Police Forensic investigations is concerned. To them the accident was created by their security guard so it was not arson according to their report and also based on the evidence that they have collected on that site.

HON. S.V. RADRODRO.- Thank you, Mr. Taito, for your explanation on my question. Just a supplementary question to that, you had mentioned MSMEs and that is exactly where I am also coming from because from my conversation with people on the ground, you are focussing on iTaukei language and teaching, et cetera, which is good.

In regards to leadership and entrepreneurial knowledge and skills of iTaukei people and Rotumans, like for SMEs application, are all in English. The iTaukei people on the ground have problems in having to fill in those applications so this is a kind of mismatch and most of the times, they lose out on Government assistance programmes because of their inability to correctly fill in the forms, which most of the times are in their IT system and you can only do it with the IT system and these are disadvantaged people. So if they do not have the English language ability to be able to fill in the forms, then they will always miss out on opportunities which the Government affords to people with regards to business and other opportunities. That is why my question with regards to an open system of scholarship rather than just being in *iTaukei* or the development of *iTaukei* language.

MR. A. TAITO.- We note the comment made by the honourable Member, but we are also very much aware in terms of the boundary of our mandate, especially in terms of the SMEs because they are carried out by the Department of Co-operatives through the Ministry of Commerce. Also we have the Ministry of iTaukei Affairs Commercial Unit and the iTLTB that are also undertaking those exercises in terms of assistance, but we do take the point.

As far as some of the assistance that we are providing to SMEs, especially in relation to women, that will probably come out in our 2020-2021 Report in terms of the exercise that we are doing of promoting entrepreneurship to rural women, which we have already started and that is exactly what the honourable Member has mentioned, that we are engaging tertiary institutions. We are engaging

because of Dr. Paul Geraghty's extensive experience in other languages, et cetera, there is a Unit in that Course that requires him to teach some aspects in terms of that curriculum and that is why he was engaged.

However, as far as the *iTaukei* is concerned, we have Dr. Apolonia Tamata who was part of the iTaukei Trust Fund Board staff in 2019. So we thought that that would be a good idea for her to move to USP and start training iTaukei for those who are interested in Fijian studies. Hence out of the four, Dr. Paul Geraghty is only a consultant on that through USP, so he comes in and teaches the Unit that is expected of him through his arrangement with USP but the rest of the staff are *iTaukei* and they are headed by Dr. Apolonia Tamata. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

MR. CHAIRMAN.- Thank you, CEO. Thank you very much for your time. On behalf of the Standing Committee, I would like to thank you for the presentation and the information provided on the number of questions that were sent to you. Should we need anything further, queries or any further answers, definitely our Secretariat team will write to you. Thank you very much and *vinaka vakalevu*.

The Committee adjourned at 11.12 a.m.