

APPENDICES

Appendix I

Written Response by the Civil
Aviation Authority of Fiji

CA 23/2/1

27th September 2022

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

Dear Sir

RE: CLARIFICATION OF ISSUES

CIVIL AVIATION AUTHORITY OF FIJI 2020 ANNUAL REPORT

I acknowledge receipt of your letter dated 22nd September 2022.

I have noted the questions raised and enclose a response. My team and I will be available to clarify our responses or field any other questions the Parliament Standing Committee on Social Affairs have on Thursday 29th September 2022.

Thank you for giving CAAF the opportunity to respond.

Yours faithfully



RIGAMOTO AISAKE
ACTING CHIEF EXECUTIVE

Encl...

CLARIFICATION ON ISSUES RAISED, BY THE STANDING COMMITTEE ON SOCIAL AFFAIRS, ON THE CIVIL AVIATION AUTHORITY OF FIJI 2020 ANNUAL REPORT

Questions with CAAF Responses

- Q1. Explain why there was a substantial reduction in issuance of Aviation Security Screener Certification licenses from 623 in 2019 to 292 in 2020.**

CAAF Response: The onset of COVID-19 in March 2020 resulted in the closure of international borders with a negative trickledown effect throughout the aviation industry. International airports reduced operating hours as States' restricted aircraft movements to repatriation flights, medical emergencies and supplies and cargo flights. This resulted in a significant reduction in manpower at Nadi and Nausori International Airports and subsequently led to loss of jobs, transfer of security screeners to other areas within their organisation or outside of the airports that did not require screener certification. Furthermore, when the COVID-19 situation eased toward the second half of the year, there were fewer applications received from the respective operators for renewal of screener licences. Many certified screeners that were already on leave without pay found alternative forms of employment to support their families, hence a reduction in the need for screener certification. Screener certifications are only conducted when operators submit their applications for initial certification or renewal of licences. And, although the COVID-19 situation in Fiji appeared to have eased a bit, international borders remained closed indefinitely, hence there was no immediate need to maintain a large pool of screeners.

- Q2. We note that Fiji Airways was expected to take a delivery of 3 additional new Boeing 737 MAX aircrafts in the 2nd quarter of 2021. Confirm whether the delivery of the aircrafts have been made.**

CAAF Response: Three (3) additional Boeing 737 Max aircrafts have been delivered and form part of the Fiji Airways aircraft fleet. They were put on the Fiji Register on the following dates:

- | | | | |
|---|--------|---|--------------|
| • | DQ-FAE | – | 24 May 2021 |
| • | DQ-FAH | – | 26 May 2021 |
| • | DQ-FAF | – | 02 July 2021 |

- Q3. Provide more information on the nature of the Mandatory Occurrence Reports, challenges associated in educating certificate holders on it and how the Department is ensuring that certificate holders implement effective reporting culture and practices.**

CAAF Response: The Mandatory Occurrence Reporting (MOR) is a requirement under Fiji's Air Navigation Regulation (ANR) 1981 section 71 which mandates certain operators such as aircraft operators, crew members of both foreign and local aircraft operators), aerodrome operators etc, to report incidents or breaches to the safety of aviation. For example, damage or the likelihood of damage to an aircraft that affects or would affect the safety of flights or death or injury of a person engaged in aviation activity. The purpose of MORs is not to apportion blame but to identify gaps in existing processes/procedures and seal them.

The emphasis is on developing a robust reporting culture where staff are encouraged to report incidents, vulnerabilities and breaches without fear or favour.

Additional types of events that are required to be reported to CAAF as MOR's are stipulated in section 71 of the ANR and must be reported within 96 hours.

The challenges encountered in 2020 in terms of educating certificate holders pertain to the inability of CAAF technical staff to provide continuing awareness on MOR's in surveillance inspections, as such inspections were put on hold because of the COVID-19 restrictions.

To address this challenge, safety awareness via the CAAF Aviation Safety Bulletins and during the remote and desk-top audits were conducted. Furthermore, inspectorate staff, during audits of certificate holders' safety management systems, examine whether or not an organisation has implemented an effective reporting culture and corresponding practices.

Q4. Provide more information on each of the items listed under 'Air Safety Department Stakeholders' on Page 28 of the Annual Report and specify the stakeholders, where possible.

CAAF Response: Stakeholders listed on page 28 are those who coordinate with CAAF Air Safety Department on various aviation activities: -

- Aircraft on the Fiji Register – aircraft owners such as Air Laucala, Kokomo, Northern Air etc.
- AOC Holders – airlines domiciled in Fiji carrying fare paying passengers e.g. Fiji Airways, Fiji Link, Northern Air, Sunflower Aviation etc.
- FAOC Holders – foreign airlines carrying fare paying passengers e.g. Air New Zealand, Qantas, Virgin Australia, Air Niugini.
- Private Operators – aircraft owners who use their aircraft to make non-revenue flights e.g. Musket Cove, Skyward (microlite).
- RPAS Commercial – Remote Piloted Aircraft System (RPAS) operators who operate RPAS on a commercial basis e.g. real estate agents, movie companies, Police.
- RPAS Private – RPAS operators who operate RPAS for recreational use only.
- Miscellaneous applications – refers to any stakeholders outside those listed, e.g. modifications to aircraft.
- Parachuting Operations – aircraft operators who conduct adventure sport such as skydiving e.g. Sky Dive Fiji.

Q5. Specify the roles and responsibilities of the Personnel Licensing Office.

CAAF Response: Personnel Licensing is a State function that enables compliance with the Chicago Convention 1944 and ICAO Annex 1 Licensing requirements. It covers a number of disciplines and functional areas. The activities involved are such that it usually requires the establishment of a licensing system and a specific licensing office. The establishment varies, from State to State, depending on the size and complexity of civil aircraft operations. It is also possible, depending on the number of licences and ratings issued, for licensing activities to be combined with those of other departments in CAAF.

The essential functions of the Personnel Licensing Office (PEL) include:

- Drafting and amendment of rules relating to the training and licensing of aviation personnel;
- Assessment and approval of applications for licences and ratings; and the issue of licences and ratings;
- Application of medical fitness assessments relating to licence requirements;
- Validation of licences and ratings issued by other Contracting States; and
- Approval, designation, and supervision of individuals or organisations delegated to perform specific tasks on behalf of the Personnel Licensing Office.

To discharge its responsibilities effectively, the Personnel Licensing Office has to carry out many tasks that are normally organised around five (5) major functional areas namely:

- Examinations (flight crew, aircraft maintenance, air traffic controller, and ground operations personnel);
- Licensing (flight crew, aircraft maintenance, air traffic controller and ground operations personnel);
- Training (flight crew, aircraft maintenance, air traffic controller and ground operations personnel);
- Regulatory; and
- Administration.

Q6. Provide more information on the decision to withdraw Flight Information Service from the Rotuma, Savusavu, Matei and Labasa aerodromes. Has this decision posed any challenges to the operators and service providers concerned?

CAAF Response: The withdrawal of Flight Information Service from Rotuma, Savusavu, Matei and Labasa aerodromes was triggered by the reduction in the volume of air traffic into these aerodromes as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic. Keeping these Flight Information Service Stations open during this period of time was deemed not practical, costly and unjustifiable for Fiji Airport's sustainable operations.

As a result, a Safety Assessment was conducted by Fiji Airports, in accordance with their safety management system. This safety assessment reviewed the potential hazards and associated risks pertaining to the decision and identified mitigations to be implemented (such as arrangements with Fiji Meteorological Service for weather information to be provided by them at the aerodromes) to ensure that the removal of the flight information service from the aerodromes would be done at an acceptable level of safety.

The conduct of the safety assessment by Fiji Airports included consultation with all stakeholders (Fiji Meteorological Services, Domestic Airline Operators) and CAAF.

The permanent withdrawal of flight information service from the above-mentioned aerodromes came into effect from 30th October 2020. These airports continue to operate without flight information service and Fiji Airports and CAAF continue to monitor the situation to ensure, when required, the service is reinstated.

Q7. Update us on whether the Ono-i-Lau aerodrome certificate has been renewed.

CAAF Response: The Ono i Lau aerodrome certificate is in the process of being renewed following a validation inspection conducted by the CAAF Team upon request by Fiji Airports in 2021. The Ono-i-Lau aerodrome is a government owned aerodrome that is operated by Fiji Airports. Due to the low volume of aircraft movements into the island and the works and facilities that had to be replenished to maintain an operational aerodrome, a decision was made by Fiji Airports over 10 years ago not to renew the aerodrome certificate. Since then, operators are required to contact Fiji Airports' Manager Nausori Aerodromes forty-eight (48) hours prior to conducting an intended flight to Ono I Lau for a one-off approval. In late 2019, attempts were made by Fiji Airports to have the aerodrome re-certified, however, COVID-19 protocols disrupted these plans. Fiji Airports re-engaged CAAF in late 2021 to commence with certification and the process is almost complete.

Q8. Has the Nausori aerodrome upgrade project been completed?

CAAF Response: The Nausori aerodrome upgrade project was successfully completed on 18th November 2021 after it had initially commenced in 2018. Its completion was delayed by the COVID-19 pandemic.

Financial Statements for the Year Ended 31 December 2020

Q9. How did CAAF re-strategize its operations to cushion against the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on its resources and finances?

CAAF Response: Times of great testing require innovation, good communication, decisive leadership and bold decisions for the common good. CAAF reviewed its operations and realigned its strategy to ensure the organisation continued to 'stay afloat', fulfil its core functions satisfactorily, whilst maintaining the safety and security of aviation.

- Change in the way CAAF conducted some of its activities;
 - CAAF reached out to staff, explained its strategy and sought their support to implement the strategy, with the intention of leaving no staff behind during the pandemic;
 - Stringent controls were imposed on printing, general expenditure and other CAAF resources;
 - CAAF participated in meetings, trainings and work where possible, via virtual means (Zoom, Microsoft Teams, Skype) and was able to communicate with many more people without having to worry about physical distancing and space;
 - Aviation Safety Bulletin (quarterly publication) changed from printed copies to digital copies only; and
 - Audits and inspections were conducted remotely (desktop audits).

- Due to the substantial loss in revenue from Departure tax, the following austerity measures were implemented:
 - 6.5 months (15th June – Dec 2020) reduced workdays (Mon-Thurs) equating to 20% reduction in salary (total cost of saving \$247,494.00);
 - Nil payment of staff 2020 and 2021 annual performance management system bonuses;
 - Contingency funds in the form of Fixed Term Deposits were utilised;
 - Major capital expenditure (e.g. vehicles due for replacement & IT infrastructure up-grade) frozen;
 - Renegotiation of contracts with suppliers (e.g. TFL, Vodafone, Landscaping, Flight Examiner, Medical assessor etc.); (Total Savings of \$17,447.00).
 - Change in maintenance periods of equipment (e.g. air-conditioning and generator service);
 - CAAF Board took a 20% reduction in monthly allowance in 2020-2021 (total cost savings \$8,150.00);
 - Aviation Quality Database software upgrade put on hold till 2023;
 - Database implementation put on hold until further advised;
 - Personnel Licensing Examination Software put on hold until further advised;
 - Accounting Software upgrade put on hold till 2023;
 - Suspension of Fiji's membership to the Collaborative Aviation Security Programme Asia Pacific (CASP-AP) group, resulting in suspension to annual subscription fees;
 - Printing of Aviation Safety Bulletin ceased and continued via electronic dissemination;
 - Staff training and meetings - substantial reduction for 2020. These were conducted virtually where possible;
 - Travel for meetings, conferences and workshops frozen from March – September 2020;
 - Freeze on all recruitment for vacant posts; and
 - Reduction on surveillance activities on site by inspectors.

Q10. Provide more information on the Management Database project and confirm whether it has been established.

CAAF Response: Despite CAAF's best laid plans, the Management Database has not been established as a result of the impact of COVID-19 on CAAF's sources of revenue. Notwithstanding this, CAAF is again pursuing this project vigorously as part of its strategic plans to digitize its modus operandi and enhance its service delivery.

CAAF presently has a number of standalone databases ranging from Finance and HR to Aircraft, Personnel licenses and exams which were developed in house on an ad-hoc basis and do not have the capability to integrate with each other thus leading to manual processing of data and trends which in turn affects the efficient strategic decision-making process and efficiency of our service to our customers.

The proposed database would have integrated all CAAF's individual databases into a consolidated database for seamless and automated flow of data and information across each other and provide continuous information for effective management and control. Tasks that are presently being manually performed would be automated.

The Management Database project was approved by the CAAF Board in its first meeting of 2020. This project included implementation of an e-examination and e-licensing system for CAAF.

Q11. What is CAAF's plan to recruit and retain operational personnel holding scarce skills?

CAAF Response: CAAF is committed to training and developing competent personnel across the organisation as part of the process of continuous improvement and in support of organisation succession planning and capacity development. To achieve this objective, CAAF has strengthened its recruitment and selection policy by not only recruiting experienced technical personnel from the aviation industry, but also recruiting new graduates and staff with tertiary qualifications like diplomas and degrees in specific areas responsible to; or supporting aviation. Apart from this, CAAF also encourages staff to broaden their knowledge and skillset. As part of succession planning and in order to 'raise the bar', CAAF encourages staff to undertake additional programmes of study to equip them for supervisory and managerial responsibilities within the organisation in the future.

Comparatively, it is a known fact within aviation circles that CAAF is unable to match remuneration packages offered by operators in the aviation industry both in Fiji and abroad. The challenge for CAAF is to retain technical personnel. To address this, CAAF is undergoing a Job Evaluation Exercise which will see the restructure of remuneration to enable more successful recruitment and retention of technical personnel holding scarce skills. Furthermore, CAAF is also cognizant of the fact that not all scarce skilled personnel are motivated by financial rewards. Some have different motivations like exposure to more technical training opportunities, being in leadership roles or working as a regulator. In this respect, CAAF continuously strives to provide an amicable working environment based on our safety and security culture and compliance with international standards and best practices to keep staff focussed and challenged. Such a robust environment helps to attract and retain personnel. There have also been cadetship programmes introduced at CAAF to nurture and grow our own people.

How have projects of the organization been affected as a result?

CAAF Response: The operations of the organisation have been affected by the vacancies related to some of the scarce skills positions;

- i. Financially; it is more costly for CAAF due to the need to employ consultants at a much higher rate than having in-house personnel;
- ii. At times there are delays to actual conduct of activities due to lead time required for consultants who are stationed abroad to come in to Fiji to conduct checks on CAAF's behalf;
- iii. The absence of technical knowledge and skills in some areas in-house creates a greater dependence on external personnel to fill the void, in the process perpetuating a vicious cycle of over reliance; and
- iv. Most CAAF projects are on hold indefinitely and whilst there is optimism that things will become better as air travel normalises, the reality is that it will take time to return to normalcy.

Q12. Provide a breakdown of the “Other operating income” of \$313,269 in 2020 and \$416,761 in 2019.

CAAF Response: The details are enclosed in the table below:

Details	Amount 2019	
Dividend Income from Shares in UTOF		371,133.00
Sale of Surplus Assets	119.17	
Commissions 2.5% (LICI, BSP Life & FPSA)	1,921.42	
FNU Grant Method A Refund for 2018	32,603.93	
Dangerous Goods Approval	251.08	
Foreign Exchange Gain	93.37	
Refund of Unclaimed CAAF FNPf Contribution	9,829.53	
Others (rental arrears, visa fees refund, sale of stamps)	809.05	45,627.55
Total Income 2019		\$416,760.55

Details	Amount 2020	
Dividend Income from Shares in UTOF		278,349.00
Rental Concessions (waiver of AFL Rent & TFL Bill)	17,447.00	
Commissions 2.5% (LICI, BSP Life & FPSA)	1,266.22	
FNU Grant Method A Refund for 2019	2,267.65	
Dangerous Goods Approval	350.00	
Foreign Exchange Loss	(77.04)	
Recover of Bond/Salary for staff resigned	10,661.47	
Reversal of accrued audit fees	3,004.28	34,919.58
Total Income 2020		\$313,268.58

Q13. Inform us of the nature of the four matters in court arising out of enforcement actions taken by the Authority under the Air Navigation Regulations. Have judgments been issued on these cases and if so, inform us of the outcomes.

CAAF Response: Out of the 4 matters, 3 are civil cases and 1 is a criminal case. Find below a brief on the 3 civil cases first and then the criminal case.

- Case Name:** *Timothy John Joyce, Sunflower Aviation Limited, Joyce Aviation (Fiji) Limited T/A Heli Tours Fiji, Joyce Aviation (Fiji) Limited, Tall Pines Limited T/A Pacific Flying School and Tandem Skydive (Fiji) Limited (Appellants) - v - CEO, Civil Aviation Authority of Fiji & Controller of Air Safety (Respondents).*

Supreme Court Civil Appeal No. CBV 0014 OF 2019

[On Appeal from Fiji Court of Appeal, Civil Appeal No. ABU 32 of 2018] and [On Appeal from the High Court of Fiji at Lautoka in Consolidated Judicial Review Nos. HBJ 8 and 9 of 2015]

Nature of the case:

This matter pertains to a flight conducted by Captain Naloma into Nanuku where the aircraft went off the airstrip on landing. The pilot operated a commercial flight using a training aircraft for which he was not rated.

This Judicial Review deals with the decision of the Chief Executive, upon receipt of an appeal (section 12F of the CAAF Act) from Captain Joyce, to set aside the decision of the Controller Air Safety (CAS) and refer the file to another Controller to re-investigate the allegations of the various breaches committed by the applicant.

The Lautoka High Court held that section 12F of the CAAF Act does not allow the Chief Executive to refer the matter back to another Controller to investigate. Therefore, the Chief Executive is to look at the matter again and revisit the appeal grounds. Moreover, Captain Joyce has filed an application for stay, however, the court indicated that it would consider granting an interim stay until the stay application proper is heard and decided.

Outcome of the Case:

This matter is on ruling on notice.

2. Case Name: *Timothy John Joyce, Joyce Aviation (Fiji) Limited, Sunflower Aviation Limited & Tandem Skydive (Fiji) Limited - v – George Tudreu & Civil Aviation Authority of Fiji*
Lautoka High Court Civil Action No. 216 of 2017

Nature of the Case

This matter pertains to Captain Joyce's claims for damages for wrongful suspension of licence. CAAF considered the 29 convictions in determining Captain Joyce's fit and proper status.

The plaintiff (Captain Joyce) made an application for an amended summons for specific discovery; that is seeking specific discovery from CAAF for certain papers pertaining to the investigations undertaken by CAAF against them over the years.

This matter was called before the Master of the High Court on 19th April 2022 for hearing. CAAF objected and filed affidavits in reply on the basis of regulation 32 of the Civil Aviation Occurrence Reporting and Investigation Regulations 2009 (i.e. confidential documents relating to an investigation and as such consent for release must be obtained from the AG's office).

The court agreed to written submissions in response being filed and had given both parties 28 days to file the responses.

Outcome of the Case:

This matter is on ruling on notice.

3. Case Name: *David Leo John Sirianni and Timothy John Joyce, Sunflower Aviation PTE Limited, Joyce Aviation (Fiji) PTE Limited T/A Heli Tours Fiji –v- Civil Aviation Authority of Fiji and Theresa O'Boyle-Levestam*
Lautoka High Court Consolidated Judicial Review No's HBJ 4 and 5 of 2020

Nature of the Case:

This matter deals with the action taken by CAAF to suspend the pilot licences and Certificate of Airworthiness as a result of false and misleading data provided by Captain Sirianni and Captain Joyce.

The matter was listed before Justice Stuart for 10th January 2022; however, it was vacated as Justice Stuart had left the Jurisdiction.

The matter was called before Justice Mackie on 18th July 2022 and the following directions were made:

- (i) A joint document is filed where all related aviation law documents are filed by the parties;
- (ii) Applicant to serve their submissions within 14 days;
- (iii) Respondents to file and serve their submissions within 14 days;
- (iv) Applicants have the liberty to reply within 14 days thereafter.

Outcome of the Case:

Matter was adjourned for hearing on 15th June 2022, but because of the change in judges hearing the matter, it has been adjourned further till 27th September 2022 where the matter will be heard.

4. Case Name: *Timothy John Joyce (Appellant) –v- Civil Aviation Authority of Fiji (Respondent) Criminal Appeal No. AAU 0025 of 2019 Court Of Appeal, Fiji*
[On Appeal from the High Court - in the High Court of Lautoka Case No. HAA 2 of 2018]
[In the Magistrates Court at Nadi Private Prosecution No. 9 of 2016]

Nature of the Case:

Captain Joyce is appealing the decision of the Nadi Magistrates Court on 13th February 2019, seeking for an order that the conviction and the sentences of the Lautoka High Court be set aside and quashed and an acquittal be entered for the appellant.

On 16th June 2022, the court made the following decisions:

- (i) Appellant to file written submissions by 14th July 2022.
- (ii) Respondents to file written submissions by 11th August 2022.
- (iii) Matter adjourned to 12th August for Mention.

On 12th August 2022, the court made the following directions:

- (i) The Appellant to serve written submissions by 15th August 2022.
- (ii) 28 days thereafter for the Respondent to file written submissions.
- (iii) New mention date set for 18th October 2022.

Outcome of the Case:

On 12th August 2022, the court made new directions as stated above, thus, the new mention for review date is set for 18th October 2022. The matter is at pre-trial conference (PTC) stage.

Q14. What is CAAF's response to the Emphasis of Matter made by the auditor in relation to the two issues highlighted on Page 53 of the Annual Report?

CAAF Response: CAAF acknowledges the auditor's 'Emphasis of Matter'. COVID-19 unprecedented, striking at the heart of air travel and the global economy. It forced States to make important decisions for their people during a time of great uncertainty. It was; during the advent of COVID-19 to Fiji, that CAAF's leadership was tested. Important decisions, taking into consideration the common good, within the ambit of the law were made to ensure that even in the most difficult of times, the aviation industry would survive to be able to continue to support our economy, but more importantly, spearhead Government's economic recovery efforts.

1. Section 29 of the Civil Aviation Authority of Fiji Act 1979 [CAAF Act 1979], allows for the Authority, with the approval of the Minister, by regulation, to prescribe fees payable in connection with the issue, validation, renewal, extension or variation of any certificate, license or other document for which the Authority has been made responsible for under the Act.

Section 31 of the CAAF Act 1979 provides the Authority, with the approval of the Minister, the power to reduce, refund or waive any fees and charges payable in terms of regulations made under section 29.

Fiji Airports and Fiji Airways submitted requests for waivers from fees and charges to cushion the impact COVID-19 was having on their operations. Due process was followed and much consideration put into the matter, including CAAF's own finances, before the decision was made to grant the waiver.

2. The Authority operated on austerity mode since March 2020 (refer to CAAF's response to Q9) due to the substantial loss in its revenue from departure tax. Furthermore, the Government had allocated a \$2.5m Grant to CAAF for the 2020-2021 year to make up for the shortfall and enable the continued discharge of the Authority's functions as required by the CAAF Act 1979.

While providing a waiver from the Fees and Charges as requested by Fiji Airports and Fiji Airways impacted the Authority's cash flow, (in keeping with Government's policy of leaving no Fijian behind), it was deemed a necessary sacrifice that was justified to ensure all was not lost in the greater scheme of things.

The Authority was mindful of the impact that the COVID-19 pandemic had on Fiji Airports (a fully owned Government Commercial Company), Fiji Airways (national airline), and that the Government was providing CAAF with some reprieve through the grant it had been allocated. The CAAF, by way of waivers from certain Fees and Charges, was cognizant of the impact of COVID-19 on the entire aviation industry and provided some assistance through this unprecedented period. Today, this has triggered a national renaissance as air travel sets the platform for Fiji's economic recovery.

Appendix II

Supplementary Response by
the Civil Aviation Authority of
Fiji

CA 23/2/1

27th October 2022

Hon. Viam Pillay
The Chairperson
Parliament Standing Committee on Social Affairs
Parliament of the Republic of Fiji
P.O.Box 2352
Government Buildings
SUVA

RE: SUPPLEMENTARY QUESTIONS
CIVIL AVIATION AUTHORITY OF FIJI 2020 ANNUAL REPORT

The Civil Aviation Authority of Fiji (CAAF) acknowledges receipt of the email request, 19th October 2022, for additional information to that which was provided by us during our submission before the Committee on the 29th September 2022.

CAAF's response to the Supplementary Questions is provided in *Attachment A*.

Yours faithfully,



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THERESA LEVESTAM
ACTING CHIEF EXECUTIVE

Encl..

THE STANDING COMMITTEE ON SOCIAL AFFAIRS SUPPLEMENTARY QUESTIONS ON THE CIVIL AVIATION AUTHORITY OF FIJI 2020 ANNUAL REPORT

Questions with CAAF Responses

Q1. Provide more information on the flight information service and how it is coordinated.

CAAF Response: In determining whether an airspace or aerodrome is provided with any type of air traffic service, the appropriate Air Traffic Service Authority/Air Navigation Service Provider (Fiji Airports) shall take into consideration the following:

- a) the types of air traffic involved;
- b) the density of air traffic;
- c) the meteorological conditions;
- d) such other factors as may be relevant.

Due to the number of elements involved, it has not been possible to develop specific data to determine the need for air traffic services in a given area or at a given location. For example:

- a) a mixture of different types of air traffic with aircraft of varying speeds (conventional jet, etc.) might necessitate the provision of air traffic services, whereas a relatively greater density of traffic where only one type of operation is involved would not;
- b) meteorological conditions might have considerable effect in areas where there is a constant flow of air traffic (e.g. scheduled traffic), whereas similar or worse meteorological conditions might be relatively unimportant in an area where air traffic would be discontinued in such conditions (e.g. local VFR flights);
- c) open stretches of water, mountainous, uninhabited or desert areas might necessitate the provision of air traffic services even though the frequency of operations is extremely low.

Flight information service is a form of air traffic service provided to aircraft, in a given airspace or at a given aerodrome that has been identified to have this service.

It is different from air traffic control service in that it does not provide separation between two or more aircraft but rather, provides information, on other aircraft, weather and essential information, which is considered useful to the pilot for the safe and efficient conduct of flight.

Information on aircraft, weather and essential information such as aerodrome conditions and associated facilities, operational status of navigational aids etc, is coordinated between air traffic service units to ensure correct information is available with the flight information service officer or air traffic controller to be passed on to the pilot of appropriate aircraft in a timely manner.

The pilot shall utilise the information received combined with their own knowledge and observation and decide on the course of action to be taken to ensure adequate separation from other traffic, ground vehicles and obstacles.

Flight information service in Fiji is further categorised as:

1. Local Flight Information Service – flight information service provided by licensed officers to aircraft operating in the domestic airspace e.g. Mamanuca Sector and Vanua Sector,

2. International Flight Information Service – flight information provided by licensed officers to aircraft operating in the Nadi Flight Information Region, and
3. Aerodrome Flight Information Service – flight information service provided by licensed officers at designated aerodromes. Previously provided at Matei, Savusavu, Labasa and Rotuma aerodromes.

FLIGHT INFORMATION SERVICE COORDINATION

The tables below show the difference in coordination process prior to and after the withdrawal of flight information service from the four domestic aerodromes; Matei, Savusavu, Labasa and Rotuma.

AIRCRAFT ARRIVING AT THE AERODROME

Prior to withdrawal of Aerodrome Flight Information Service	After withdrawal of Aerodrome Flight Information Service
Information on the inbound aircraft would be passed by Nadi Local Flight Information Service to the appropriate Aerodrome Flight Information Service	
The Aerodrome Flight Information Service passes on the estimated time of arrival to the Aerodrome Rescue Fire Fighting Service to ensure they are on standby for the landing.	The Nadi Local Flight Information Service passes the estimated time of arrival of the inbound aircraft to the Aerodrome Rescue Fire Fighting Service to ensure they conduct a runway inspection 15mins prior to any arriving aircraft and are on standby for the landing.
Once the aircraft is within a specified distance from the aerodrome (normally when they commence their descent), it contacts the Aerodrome Flight Information Service	<p>The Nadi Local Flight Information Service maintains radio contact with the aircraft until the aircraft is within the circuit area/final approach of the aerodrome of landing.</p> <p>An estimated time of departure is provided to Nadi Local Flight Information Service for planning and search and rescue purposes.</p>
The Aerodrome Flight Information Service will pass on to the aircraft any potential aircraft that may pose a conflict, weather information and any other information as appropriate e.g. change in aerodrome/facility conditions etc. that may have an impact on the aircraft in question	Updated weather as obtained from Fiji Met Service and aerodrome conditions/facilities as obtained from Aerodrome Rescue Fire Fighting Service is passed to the aircraft by Nadi Local Flight Information Service. In addition, information on any aircraft that is a potential collision hazard is passed to the aircraft.
The Aerodrome Flight Information Service will then be responsible for passing wind information to the aircraft when it is established on final approach and providing information that the runway is clear.	<p>The pilots will tune into the Mandatory Broadcast Zone frequency for traffic information and broadcast their position and intentions to other traffic also on this frequency.</p> <p>The aircraft carries out the standard overhead joining procedure to ascertain situation in the aerodrome traffic circuit and on the ground before it joins the circuit to come in to land.</p>

When the Aerodrome Flight Information Service is operational, it coordinates vehicle movement (maintenance work etc.) on the runway and coordinating with emergency services during an aircraft emergency.

The only vehicles that operate on the runway are Aerodrome Rescue Fire Fighting Service and maintenance vehicles. These would be aware of the arrival time of the aircraft and will be outside the runway and strip area.

Should an emergency occur, it is the responsibility of the Aerodrome Rescue Fire Fighting Service to coordinate with emergency services as required.

AIRCRAFT DEPARTING FROM THE AERODROME

Prior to withdrawal of Aerodrome Flight Information Service	After withdrawal of Aerodrome Flight Information Service
The aircraft calls the Aerodrome Flight Information Service advising of their estimated departure time	<p>The aircraft listens out on the frequency in use to determine any potential conflicts to its estimated time of departure. If there is any change in this time, the pilot calls the Nadi Local Flight Information Service to advise of the change.</p> <p>Once the pilot is satisfied, he/she will broadcast intentions for departure and additional broadcasts when it commences taxi, line up and then take-off.</p>
<p>The Aerodrome Flight Information Service would coordinate the clearance to enter controlled airspace with Nadi Local Flight Information Service.</p> <p>Once this clearance is obtained this is passed to the aircraft along with possible conflicting traffic information (e.g. an aircraft estimated to land before or around the estimated departure time of the departing aircraft) as well as weather information</p>	The pilot will obtain clearance to enter controlled airspace from the Nadi Local Flight Information Service on taxi to depart or immediately after airborne, but before entering controlled airspace.
Once the aircraft gets airborne, it passes estimates for its route and destination aerodrome to the Aerodrome Flight Information Service.	Once this clearance is received from Nadi Local Flight Information Service, the aircraft will continue en-route as per the clearance given and pass estimates for its route and destination aerodrome to the Nadi Local Flight Information Service.
The Aerodrome Flight Information Service will pass this information to Nadi Local Flight Information Service who will in turn pass the information to the destination aerodrome (normally Nadi or Nausori Control Tower).	The Nadi Local Flight Information Service will pass this information to the destination aerodrome (normally Nadi or Nausori Control Tower).

The Aerodrome Flight Information Service will also pass information on this flight to any other aircraft under its jurisdiction which may be a potential conflict	The Nadi Local Flight Information Service will pass to the aircraft concerned information on other aircraft under its jurisdiction which may be a potential conflict and vice versa.
Once the aircraft is at a specified distance or height, it will contact Nadi Local Flight Information Service and stay on this frequency until advised to contact the control tower responsible for its arrival at the destination aerodrome.	The aircraft will stay on the frequency of Nadi Local Flight Information Service until advised to contact the control tower responsible for its arrival at the destination aerodrome.

Q2. We note that the reduction in the volume of air traffic due to the pandemic resulted in the permanent withdrawal of Flight Information Services from Rotuma, Savusavu, Matei and Labasa aerodrome, which is reinstated when required. With time, has air traffic to these areas normalised? Outline the potential hazards and associated risks pertaining to the decision to withdraw the service from these aerodromes and mitigation measures that have been identified by CAAF for each risk.

CAAF Response: As things slowly return to normal, air traffic is normalizing at the four identified aerodromes; Matei, Savusavu, Labasa and Rotuma. Aircraft movement into these aerodromes have increased, on average, to approximately 85% of the aircraft movement for the same period pre-COVID.

When the decision was made to withdraw Aerodrome Flight Information Service from the four above mentioned aerodromes, the hazards and associated risks as a result of this proposed action were identified as part of Fiji Airport's Change Management Process.

This risk assessment enabled identification of hazards and its potential risks and identification of mitigating actions to ensure that the risks identified would be maintained at a level of risk considered to be 'as low as reasonably practicable'.

The potential hazards and associated risks pertaining to the decision to withdraw the service from these aerodromes and mitigation measures identified are tabulated below.

Hazards	Risks	Mitigation
No available Flight Information Service Officer on the ground at the aerodrome to provide <u>traffic</u> (aircraft) <u>information</u> to inbound and outbound aircraft.	Air Safety Incident occurs between one or more aircraft.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The provision of Flight Information Service to all aircraft, including those departing and arriving at the four aerodromes (Matei, Savusavu, Labasa and Rotuma) will be provided by Nadi Local Flight Information Service. 2. Consultation conducted with stakeholders 3. NOTAM issued to ensure all aircraft operators are aware of the change in procedure 4. Nadi Local Flight Information Service Officers undergo training to incorporate this procedure as part of their SOPs.

		5. Air Traffic Services Instructions issued.
No available Flight Information Service Officer on the ground at the aerodrome to provide <u>meteorological information</u> to inbound and outbound aircraft.	Aircraft incident occurs as a result of inadequate meteorological information being provided to the aircraft.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Meteorology Officers assigned by Fiji Meteorology Service to each of the four aerodromes (Matei, Savusavu, Labasa and Rotuma) to provide on time meteorology information to pilots via the hourly METARs and to the Local Flight Information Service for onward transmission to the aircraft as required. 2. Nadi Local Flight Information Service Officers undergo training to incorporate this procedure as part of their SOPs. 3. Air Traffic Services Instructions issued
No available Flight Information Service Officer on the ground at the aerodrome to provide <u>aerodrome/runway and facility status information</u> to inbound and outbound aircraft.	Aircraft incident occurs as a result of inadequate information provided on aerodrome condition / facility status.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Procedure established whereby the Aerodrome Rescue Fire Fighting Service Personnel will conduct routine daily aerodrome inspections including an additional inspection 15mins prior to any aircraft movement. The information on aerodrome conditions/ facility status is coordinated with Nadi Local Flight Information Service who in turn passes this to the aircraft concerned. 2. Nadi Local Flight Information Service Officers and Aerodrome Rescue Fire Fighting Service Personnel undergo training to incorporate this procedure as part of their SOPs. 3. Air Traffic Services Instructions issued 4. Aircraft operator pre-departure procedures in place (i.e. weather, aerodrome and facility status updates before departure)
No available Flight Information Service Officer on the ground at the aerodrome to provide notification on Aircraft Emergencies /Aircraft Accident	<p>Late notification of aircraft emergencies will result in late or inadequate response by emergency services.</p> <p>Avoidable casualties and damage to aircraft and facilities.</p> <p>Avoidable damage claims being made against Fiji Airports.</p> <p>Negative publicity for</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Procedure established whereby the Aerodrome Rescue Fire Fighting Service Personnel will be responsible for aircraft emergency notification. 2. Aerodrome Rescue Fire Fighting Service Personnel undergo training to incorporate this procedure as part of their SOPs. 3. Aerodrome Emergency Plans for the four aerodromes (Matei, Savusavu, Labasa and Rotuma) amended to reflect this. 4. All Aerodrome Emergency Services undergo awareness as part of the aerodrome crash exercises conducted.

	Fiji Airports.	
A flight experiences communication failure when arriving into or departing from any of these aerodromes	<p>Inability to declare an emergency.</p> <p>Inability to broadcast position.</p> <p>May result in an air safety or ground safety incident.</p>	<p>1. ATM System; the ADS-B Monitoring system will assist in traffic monitoring</p> <p>2. FIJI Aeronautical Information Publication (AIP) documents procedures for aircraft communication failure</p>
No available Flight Information Service Officer on the ground at the aerodrome to provide coordination with Local Flight Information Service on flights departing from these aerodromes.	An air safety incident occurs as a result of information on departing flights not being available with Local Flight Information Service	<p>1. Procedure activated as per unmanned aerodrome procedure whereby the aircraft provides ETD and broadcasts on taxi and departure.</p> <p>2. NOTAM issued</p> <p>3. Fiji AIP documents procedures for operations at unmanned aerodromes and for ATC clearance requirements (i.e. prior to entry into controlled airspace).</p> <p>4. Air Traffic Services Instructions issued</p>
No available Flight Information Service Officer on the ground at the aerodrome to provide information on any parking congestion at the apron	May result in a ground safety event	<p>1. Fiji AIP documents up to date parking and ground movement procedures</p> <p>2. Aerodrome Manual for the respective aerodromes documents up to date parking and ground movement procedures</p>
No available Flight Information Service Officer on the ground at the aerodrome to monitor vehicle movement on the runway and runway strip area.	A ground safety event occurs; runway (vehicle) incursion during aircraft take-off and landing	<p>1. Fiji AIP documents procedures for operations at unmanned aerodromes (overhead joining procedures)</p> <p>2. NOTAM issued</p> <p>3. Aerodrome Rescue Fire Fighting Service Personnel kept up to date on aircraft movement times</p> <p>4. Aerodrome Rescue Fire Fighting Service Personnel monitors all vehicle movement on airside</p> <p>5. Aerodrome Rescue Fire Fighting Service Personnel undergo training to incorporate this procedure as part of their SOPs.</p>

No available Flight Information Service Officer on the ground at the aerodrome to facilitate night operations at Labasa i.e. checks on obstacle lights.	An air safety event occurs as a result of the required checks for the facilitation of night operations not being conducted.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Night operations in/out of Labasa aerodrome suspended. 2. Prior approval from Fiji Airports and CAAF to be sought 30 days prior to any proposed operations to ensure additional requirements/ procedures established
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The above risk assessment was found to be acceptable to support Fiji Airports decision to withdraw Flight Information Service at the four aerodromes (Matei, Savusavu, Labasa and Rotuma). This risk assessment forms part of Fiji Airports Safety Case on this withdrawal and remains a living document which is subject to review as and when required.

- Q3. For the 2021 and 2022 financial years, provide a breakdown of waivers (if any) provided to Fiji Airways and Fiji Airports from Fees and Charges payable, by way of regulations under Section 29 of the CAAF Act 1979. In addition to the waiver provided to these entities in 2020, did CAAF reduce and/or refund any Fees and Charges? If so, please provide specifics.

CAAF Response: Section 29 of the Civil Aviation Authority of Fiji Act 1979 [CAAF Act 1979], allows for the Authority, with the approval of the Minister, by regulation, to prescribe fees payable in connection with the issue, validation, renewal, extension or variation of any certificate, license or other document for which the Authority has been made responsible for under the Act.

Section 31 of the CAAF Act 1979 provides the Authority, with the approval of the Minister, the power to reduce, refund or waive any fees and charges payable in terms of regulations made under section 29.

Regulatory Relief, in the form of waivers granted under Section 31 of the CAAF Act 1979 for the years 2021 and 2022 are tabulated below.

Total waivers from Fees & Charges provided to Fiji Airways in 2021

Aircraft Registration Number	Total Waiver Given
DQ-FJT	71,556.60
DQ-FJU	71,522.39
DQ-FJV	71,411.04
DQ-FJW	72,604.89
DQ-FJO	70,022.96
DQ-FJP	69,993.66
DQ-FAI	84,034.58
DQ-FAJ	84,016.35
DQ-FJN	23,812.46
DQ-FJM	23,837.44
DQ-FJZ	6,911.16
DQ-FJY	5,584.93
DQ-FJS	1,703.18
DQ-FLA	1,704.11
DQ-FJX	6,654.92
DQ-FJQ	1,701.94
DQ-FJR	1,706.23
DQ-FAE	14,996.86
DA-FAF	12,362.28
DQ-FAH	14,794.20
DQ-FAB	3,647.88
DQ-FAD	4,863.85
Total Waiver for 2021 to FJ	\$ 719,443.91

Total waivers from Fees & Charges provided to Fiji Airports in 2021

Airport Name	Total Waiver Given
Vanuabalavu	3,497
Lakeba	3,497
Cicia	3,497
Moala	4,017
Koro	3,497
Gau	2,662
Bureta	2,881
Kadavu	3,697
Nausori	38,295
Labasa	7,492
Savusavu	2,278
Matei	2,274
Rotuma	8,625
Nadi	184,619
Total Waiver on Airport License	270,825

Other Fees & Charges Waiver for the year 2021	
Aeronautical Training Institute Audit Fees	2,125.50
Aeronautical Information Service Provider Audit Fees	1,700.40
Air Traffic Service Provider Audit Fees	1,629.55
Approved Maintenance Organisation Audit Fees	2,479.75
Aviation Security Provider Audit Fees	7,226.70
Total Waiver on Other Fees & Charges	\$ 15,161.90

Total Waiver for 2021 to FA	\$ 285,986.83
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Total waivers from Fees & Charges provided to Fiji Airports in 2021

Airport Name	Total Waiver Given
Vanuabalavu	431
Lakeba	431
Cicia	431
Moala	331
Koro	431
Gau	331
Bureta	355
Kadavu	455
Nausori	4,704
Labasa	921
Savusavu	281
Matei	281
Rotuma	1,060
Nadi	22,747
Total Waiver for 2022 to FA	33,187

In addition to the waivers from Fees and Charges provided to Fiji Airways and Fiji Airports, COVID-19 Regulatory Relief was provided to other operators and individual aviation licence holders through extensions to their certificate(s) or licence validity for periods between 3 and 6 months. These extensions were not charged.

Appendix III

Verbatim Report on Civil Aviation Authority of Fiji Public Submission

[VERBATIM REPORT]

STANDING COMMITTEE ON **SOCIAL AFFAIRS**

- 1. CIVIL AVIATION AUTHORITY OF FIJI [CAAF]
(CAAF 2020 ANNUAL REPORT)**

SUBMITTEE: Management Teams of:

- 1) Civil Aviation Authority Of Fiji
[CAAF]**

VENUE: Small Committee Room, Parliament

DATE: Thursday, 29th September, 2022

VERBATIM REPORT OF THE MEETING OF THE STANDING COMMITTEE ON SOCIAL AFFAIRS HELD IN THE BIG COMMITTEE ROOM (EAST WING), PARLIAMENT PRECINCTS, GOVERNMENT BUILDINGS ON THURSDAY, 29TH SEPTEMBER, 2022 AT 9.01 A.M.

Interviewee/Submittee: CIVIL AVIATION AUTHORITY OF FIJI [CAAF]

In Attendance:

1. Mr. Rigamoto Aisake - Acting CEO & Controller Aviation Security & Facilitation
 2. Mr. Niroshana Parera - Manager Corporate Services
 3. Ms. Sereima Bolanavatu - Controller Standards
 4. Capt. Matereti Tuisue - Acting Controller Air Safety & Senior Flight Operations Inspector Unit
 5. Mr. Maibulu Laliqavoka - Acting Controller Ground Air Safety & Senior Aerodrome Inspector
 6. Mr. Melvin Varma - Senior Airworthiness Inspector
 7. Ms. Alisi Namoro - Senior Air Navigation Services Inspector
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MR. CHAIRMAN.- Honourable Members, I declare this meeting of the Standing Committee on Social Affairs open. Today's hearing is open to the public and I welcome the members of the public and media who may be viewing this broadcast on the Parliament television and *Facebook* page.

We will be hearing evidence from the Civil Aviation Authority of Fiji (CAAF) in relation to its operational and financial performance for the 2020 Financial Year. This is the first of the three submissions to be received today, the other two being the Land Transport Authority (LTA) and the iTaukei Trust Fund Board (ITTF).

Before we continue, may I remind everyone that mobile phones are to be switched off. Witnesses are reminded that evidence given to the Committee is protected by Parliamentary privilege, it is important for witnesses to be aware that giving of false or misleading evidence to the Committee might constitute a contempt of the Parliament. If at any stage a witness wishes to give part of their evidence in camera they should make that request to me as Chairman and the Committee will consider their request.

Today we have with us the Acting Chief Executive and Controller Aviation Security & Facilitation of the CAAF, Mr. Aisake Rigamoto and the team. Welcome Mr. Aisake, we have 45 minutes with you I believe, before we proceed any further I will let the Members of the Committee to introduce themselves beginning with myself.

(Introduction of Committee Members)

MR. CHAIRMAN.- Thank you honourable Members, we also have our secretariat team here, so Mr. Aisake the normal procedure is that we invite witnesses to make an opening statement and introduce themselves. After this we will hear your response to the Committee's queries which were sent earlier and then we you can make yourself available for questions from our Committee Members.

MR. R. AISAKE.- Thank you Mr. Chairman and honourable Members of the Parliamentary Standing Committee for Social Affairs. Thank you for the warm welcome and the opportunity to respond to queries

that were raised by the Committee. May I take this opportunity to first and foremost introduce the team with me.

My name is Rigamoto Aisake, I am the Controller Aviation Security & Facilitation at CAAF. I am also the Acting Chief Executive of the CAAF. I will ask my colleagues to introduce themselves.

[Introduction of CAAF representatives (individually)]

MR. R. AISAKE.- Mr. Chairman, we have two presentations: first is the presentation on CAAF- what we do and our functions, and the second presentation addresses the questions that were raised by the Committee. Firstly, we would like to present an overview of what we do in CAAF, before we actually respond to the questions that are before us. We have prepared this presentation, specifically simplified it and used questions as a form of the presentation, so that it will be lot easier to understand.

The critical role of CAAF and International Civil Aviation Organisation (ICAO) is the safety and security of global aviation. An outline of the presentation is given before us: Who are we; our corporate statement; the departments within CAAF; our mandate; what do we do; who are our partners; whom do we report to; who oversees the work that CAAF does; how is this oversight done; who is ICAO; what does ICAO do; what are our obligations to ICAO; and how do we ensure the safety and security of aviation in Fiji. We have also highlighted CAAF's achievements; our challenges and how we have tried to address these challenges; the projects that CAAF is doing; conclusion and then we will respond to any questions you may have.

Mr. Chairman, CAAF is an organisation comprising of dedicated personnel who uphold the values of professionalism, accountability, commitment and integrity in all that we do. We are a regulator for the aviation industry in Fiji. We regulate certain organisations and personnel that have specific functions to perform in aviation to ensure the safety and security of aviation. For example, the pilots, aircraft engineers, air traffic controllers, aviation security screeners, airport operators and technicians who actually handle equipment at the airport.

Mr. Chairman, CAAF sets standards and rules governing aviation safety and security based on national requirements and international standards. There is a clear distinction here between national requirements that Fiji may have regarding aviation as a whole, and international requirements so we are not just governed by our national requirements. There are higher requirements that we as CAAF and Fiji need to comply with to be able to regulate effectively.

CAAF is an enabler for trade, economic development and growth. We are also one of 193 contracting States to ICAO and are obliged to comply with ICAO standards and recommended practices. I will discuss later, the functions of ICAO and why ICAO is so important to global aviation, not just aviation in Fiji. We have a brief corporate statement on our vision to be a model aviation regulator, on our mission to promote effective aviation safety and security in Fiji and the Region, and our corporate values as I had mentioned earlier – Professionalism; Accountability; Commitment; and Integrity in our conduct.

Honourable Chair and Members of the Committee, we have six departments with CAAF:

- Ground Safety Department which comprises of air navigation and aerodrome operations;
- Air Safety which comprises of air worthiness, flight operations, and dangerous goods;

- The Aviation Security and Facilitation Department which is responsible for facilitation issues at the border as well as aviation security matters relating to everything that goes on board the aircraft, from passengers from cargo, catering supplies;
- Corporate Services comprises of human resources, finance, quality assurance section, legal section;
- Personnel Licencing which is responsible for operator licences, pilots, engineers; and finally
- Standards Department which oversees both the standards that CAAF develops as well as international standards.

Our legal mandate comes from our primary legislation, the Civil Aviation Act of 1976 which empowers the Minister responsible for Civil Aviation to make regulations to fulfil Fiji's obligations to ICAO and the second is the Civil Aviation Authority of Fiji Act 1979 which establishes the Civil Aviation Authority of Fiji. It establishes the functions and also the powers for the Minister to enact regulations for CAAF in regard to funding and approved CAAF budget.

Our functions –

- We discharge Fiji's obligations arising out of its membership of ICAO, that means all the international standards that ICAO requires for aviation. Later on I will be touching very briefly on the more than 12,000 standards from safety to security right across aviation that we in Fiji are required to comply with and implement.
- We maintain an effective regulatory framework and enforcement system.
- We develop clear and concise standards and an effective consultation process.
- We assess the decisions of the aviation industry for their impact on aviation safety.
- We review and assess civil aviation system safety trends and risk factors.
- We maintain a system for conducting safety education, giving timely safety advice and improved awareness.
- Continuously review and enhance our ICT system capacity to support efficient delivery of regulatory services; and
- We maintain a competent, adequately-resourced and motivated workforce.

Our partners, as in all endeavours and ventures, we work in partnership with the aviation industry and our other partners such as:

- foreign civil aviation authorities or agencies
- government ministries
- government departments
- statutory authorities
- the police and the military
- ICAO (International Civil Aviation Organisation)
- IATA (International Air Transport Association)
- Airports Council International
- INTERPOL (International Criminal Police Organisation)
- Transportation Security Administration and the
- International Federation of Airline and
- Pilots Association and others
- Aviation Industry in Fiji and abroad
- the aircraft operators
- airport operators

- aviation security service organisations
- pilot training schools et cetera.

Our reporting line we report to the CAAF board, Department of Civil Aviation and the Minister and we also report to ICAO on the implementation of safety and security standards. So, as I had mentioned at the outset, we have an internal reporting line within the country and we also report to ICAO on the standards that we implement here in Fiji.

Who oversees CAAF? The CAAF board, the Department of Civil Aviation through the Minister, the Office of the Auditor-General who audits our account and ICAO. We also have Bureau Veritas which oversees us in terms of quality therein ISO 9001:2015. Mr. Chairman, Sir, and honourable Members of the Committee you will see that we have various organisations that oversight the work of the Civil Aviation Authority of Fiji both within the country as well as external oversight.

How is this oversight conducted? Internally we have Board meetings which focus on the health of the organisations, the performance of the organisation, the Department of the Civil Aviation, Office of the Auditor-General in auditing accounts and ICAO through the conduct of safety audits - Universal Safety Oversight Audit Programmes (USOAP), continuous monitoring approach, the in-Country Validation Mission (ICVM), the Universal Security Audit Programme-Continuous Monitoring Approach (USAP-CMA and effective implementation of the eight critical elements of an aviation safety and security oversight system.

I will now focus on ICAO. Who is ICAO? The diagram before you Mr. Chairman, Sir, and honourable Members of the Committee is a diagram showing ICAO and what is ICAO? It is the International Civil Aviation Organisation which was established in 1944 initially signed by 54 States and Fiji ratified the ICAO Convention in 1973. This ICAO was established under Chicago Convention 1944. The Chicago Convention established ICAO which is mandated to develop standards for aviation worldwide, that is why ICAO is so important. It is mandated globally under the Convention to ensure the safety and security of aviation, global aviation irrespective of whether they are small States or a large State - we all need to meet that international benchmark set by ICAO. I will talk about that in the course of this presentation.

ICAO is a specialised agency of the United Nations responsible for developing international standards and recommended practices for aviation safety and security, and Fiji is one of the 193 States. The ICAO comprises of 193 States, all known as Contracting States. It comprises of airlines made up of the International Air Transport Association, it comprises of airports which is made up of Airports Council International and it comprises of specialised groups like the Universal Postal Union (UPU), the International Federation of Airline Pilots Association (IFAPA), World Customs Organisation (WCO), International Labour Organisation (ILO), World Health Organisation (WHO), INTERPOL and the like.

ICAO conducts four yearly audits of States both for safety and security to determine the level of effective implementation. What I had mentioned earlier was the national requirement and the international requirements - ICAO audits Fiji under the international requirements. It monitors the global implementation of aviation standards across the world. It provides technical advice, support and assistance to States to develop capacity.

The next slide shows the eight critical elements. I will not delve into the technical elements of this but it shows you what ICAO actually holds its trust on. The auditor checks whether we have effective legislations in place, that is critical element number one. They also audit States to identify whether there are effective regulations in place, whether the organisation responsible for implementing these standards exists

and whether they are empowered through the legislation to meet the requirements that ICAO has, and also guidance material and procedures for implementing these standards. ICAO says this is the standard, this is how you can implement the standard.

For element 6 - licencing and certification obligations. Licencing of what? Licencing of personnel that service aircraft, air worthiness, licencing of pilots and engineers, technical air traffic controllers. Are they certified? What are the obligations? How is the State ensuring that, that is done? We also have surveillance obligations and lastly resolution of safety issues. If you see the first five critical elements in the diagram, the State will need to establish these legislations, regulations the next three it will also need to ensure that it is implemented. This is how ICAO generally oversees global aviation. Our obligations to ICAO with these charges - each obligation arising from the membership of ICAO. We maintain an effective regulative surface, framework and enforcement system and implement aviation standards consistently.

The slide covers our obligations to ICAO ensuring the safety of aviation - how do we ensure that in Fiji. We work in partnership with the aviation industry through sharing of information, providing adequate training, guidance. We conduct audit inspections, tests, surveys and train aviation industry in specific areas. I mentioned there are more than 12,000 ICAO specific standards both for Aviation Safety and Security. We audit against those standards. CAAF evaluates and monitors Operators Safety Management Systems.

Our achievements - we have dedicated staff who are our assets and the philosophy behind that in CAAF is let us translate to practice. When we say our staff are our assets let us translate that into practice - how do we ensure that staff are the focus of what we do. An example, Mr. Chair and honourable Members of the Standing Committee, just yesterday in Montreal where they are holding the ICAO 41st Assembly, Fiji was awarded the International Civil Aviation Organisation (ICAO) Council Presidents Certificate in Recognition of Fiji's Progress in establishing an effective safety and oversight system and improving the effective implementation of applicable ICAO Standards. That is an achievement for a small State like Fiji - we are punching up above our weight and it is the commitment and dedication of the CAAF team. The CAAF staff and partners within the aviation industry including Government has made this possible.

We improved Fiji's rating at the last in-country validation mission in 2019 to 78 percent. Previously we had a rating of 63 percent. At the 2019 in-country validation mission, Fiji attained 78 percent. Mr. Chair and honourable Members of this Standing Committee again made possible through the collaboration of dedicated staff at the CAAF with industry partners and Government. CAAF is ISO 9001:2015 Certified and is exploring further quality certifications in the future. We are an enabler for connectivity, trade and economic growth and as I mentioned at the outset, without aviation there can be no economic growth in terms of hastening economic recovery post COVID-19.

From the aircrafts which needs to be licensed and certified that they are air worthy to fly, to take out consignments, our exports abroad, to enable trade, to enable the export and import of medical supplies, to facilitate Government's vaccination programme during the COVID-19 period, it was made possible through collaboration and through aviation. When all flights stopped and borders closed, there were specific allowances for flights with exporting cargo, bringing in medical supplies and facilitating repatriation of persons to their respective countries. Despite the achievements, we also have challenges. Like in any good organisation, there are always challenges, recruitment, remuneration and retention of persons with scarce skills. This is perhaps is one of the biggest challenges we face - how do we recruit the right people and maintain, remunerate them accordingly so that they would like to stay with us.

Maintaining capacity to meet stakeholders' demands and expectations, managing growth in new areas, new technologies like helicopter and adventure operations and keeping abreast of new requirements.

Our strategies to meet the challenges - we are grateful for the support we continuously receive from Government and the Board and we are committed to training personnel and developing competent personnel through continuous improvement process through capacity development and in support of succession planning.

CAAF is undergoing a job evaluation exercise which is envisaged to address the issue of recruitment and the restructure of remuneration and potential. Our projects include the review of the aviation legislation where we are working closely with Government on review of legislation to ensure that our legislations are robust and able to address the grave concerns of today - strengthening enforcement strategies, improving our effective implementation rating, our job evaluation exercise.

In conclusion, CAAF acknowledges the support CAAF Board and Government has provided. We will continue to work in collaboration with the aviation industry and stakeholders to ensure the safety and security of aviation in Fiji. Mr. Chairman and honourable Members of the Committee, this is a very brief outline of what we do. Thank you very much..

MR. CHAIRMAN.- Thank you, if you can also go through the questions that were sent.

MR. R. AISAKE.- Thank you Mr. Chairman and honourable Members of the Committee. We will go through the questions one by one.

Question No. 1 – Explain why there was a substantial reduction in issuances of Aviation Security Screener Certification licenses from 623 in 2019 to 292 in 2020? The onset of COVID-19 resulted in the closure of international borders with a negative trickledown effect for the aviation industry. International airports reduced operating hours as States restricted aircraft movements to repatriation flights, medical emergencies and supplies and cargo flights. This resulted in a significant reduction in manpower at Nadi and Nausori International Airports and subsequently led to loss of jobs and transfer of security screeners to other areas within the organisation or outside of the airports, that did not require screener certification. Furthermore, when the COVID-19 situation eased towards the second half of the year, fewer applications were received from the respective operators for renewal of screener licences. Many certified screeners who were already on leave without pay, found alternative forms of employment to support their families, hence a reduction in the need for screener certification. The screener certifications are only conducted when operators submit their applications for initial certification or renewal of licences. Although the COVID-19 situation in Fiji appeared to have eased a bit, international borders remained closed indefinitely, hence there was no immediate need to maintain a large pool of screeners.

We note that Fiji Airways was expected to take a delivery of three additional new Boeing 737 MAX aircraft in the second quarter of 2021, confirm whether the delivery of the aircrafts have been made? Three additional Boeing 737 MAX aircrafts have been delivered and form part of the Fiji Airways' aircraft fleet. They were put on the Fiji Register on the following dates: delta, quebec, foxtrot, alpha, echo - 24th May, 2021; delta, quebec, foxtrot, alpha, hotel – 26th May, 2021; and delta quebec, foxtrot, alpha, foxtrot - 2nd July, 2021.

Provide more information on the nature of the mandatory occurrence reports, challenges associated in educating certificate holders on it, and how the Department is ensuring that certificate holders implement effective reporting culture and practices? The Mandatory Occurrence Report (MOR) is a requirement under Fiji's Air Navigation Regulation (ANR) 1981, section 71, which mandates certain operators such as aircraft operators, crew members of both foreign and local aircrafts, aerodrome operators, engineers and the like to report incidents or breaches to the safety of aviation. For example, damage or the likelihood of damage to

an aircraft that affects or would affect the safety of flights, death or injury of a person engaged in aviation activity. The purpose of MORs is not to apportion blame, but to identify gaps in existing processes and procedures and symptoms.

The emphasis is on developing a robust reporting culture where staff are encouraged to report incidents, vulnerabilities and breaches without fear or favour. Additional types of events that are required to be reported to CAAF as MORs, are stipulated in section 71 of the ANR and must be reported within 96 hours. The challenges encountered in 2020 in terms of educating certificate holders, pertain to the inability of CAAF technical staff to provide continuing awareness on MORs in surveillance inspections, as such inspections were put on hold because of COVID-19 restrictions. To address the challenges, safety awareness via the CAAF aviation safety bulletins and remote and desktop audits were conducted. Furthermore, inspectorate staff during the audit of certificate holders, safety management systems, examined whether or not an organisation has implemented an effective reporting culture and corresponding practices.

Provide more information on each item listed under the Air Safety Department stakeholders on page no. 28 of the Annual Report and specify the stakeholders where possible? Stakeholders listed on page 28 are those who coordinate with CAAF, Air Safety Department on various aviation activities.

- The aircraft on the Fiji Register include aircraft owners such as Air Laucala, Kokomo and Northern Air.
- The EOC holders include airlines domiciled in Fiji carrying fare paying passengers, like Fiji Airways, Fiji Link, Northern Air and Sunflower Aviation.
- Foreign air EOC holders - foreign airlines carrying fare paying passengers such as Air New Zealand, Qantas, Virgin Australia and Air Niugini.
- Private operators - aircraft owners who use the aircraft to make non-revenue flights, for example Musket Cove, Skyward (microlight).
- RPAS commercial – Remote Piloted Aircraft System operators who operate RPAS on a commercial basis. For example, real estate agents, movie companies and the police.
- RPAS private - RPAS operators who operate RPAS for recreational use only.
- Miscellaneous applications - refers to any stakeholders outside those listed, for example, when we are conducting modifications of aircraft.
- Parachuting operations - aircraft operators who conduct adventure sport such as skydiving – Sky Dive Fiji.

Specify the roles and responsibilities of the Personnel Licencing Office. Personnel licencing is a state function that enables compliance with the Chicago Convention 1944 and ICAO Annex 1 – Licensing requirements. It covers a number of disciplines and functional areas. Activities usually require the establishment of a licencing system and a specific licencing office. The establishment varies from State to State depending on the size and complexity of civil aircraft operations. It is also possible depending on the number of licences and ratings issued, for licencing activities to be combined with those of other departments in CAAF. The essential functions of the Personnel Licencing Office include:

- Drafting an amendment of rules relating to the training and licencing of aviation personnel;
- Assessment and approval of applications for licences and ratings and the issue of licences and ratings;
- The application of medical fitness assessments relating to licence requirements;
- Validation of licences and ratings issued by other contracting states; and
- Approval, designation and supervision of individuals or organisations delegated to perform specific tasks on behalf of the Personnel Licencing Office.

To discharge its responsibilities effectively, the Personnel Licencing Office has to carry out many tasks that are normally organised around five major functional areas namely:

- Examinations for (flight crew, aircraft maintenance, air traffic control and ground operations personnel);
- Licensing (flight crew, aircraft maintenance, air traffic control and ground operations personnel);
- Training (flight crew, aircraft maintenance, air traffic control and ground operations personnel);
- Regulatory; and
- Administration.

Provide more information on the decision to withdraw Flight Information Service from the Rotuma, Savusavu, Matei and Labasa aerodromes. Has this decision posed any challenges to the operators and service providers concerned? The withdrawal of flight information service from Rotuma, Savusavu, Matei and Labasa aerodromes was triggered by the reduction in the volume of air traffic into these aerodromes as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic. Keeping these Flight Information Service stations open during this period of time was deemed not practicable, costly and unjustifiable for Fiji Airports sustainable operations. As a result a safety assessment was conducted by Fiji Airports in accordance with their safety management system. The safety assessment reviewed the potential hazards and associated risks pertaining to the decision and identified mitigations to be implemented such as arrangements with Fiji Met for weather information to be provided by them at the aerodromes, to ensure that the renewal of the Flight Information Service from the aerodromes would be done at an acceptable level of safety.

The conduct of the safety assessment by Fiji Airports included consultation with all stakeholders, Fiji Met, domestic airline operators and CAAF. The permanent withdrawal of flight information service from the above-mentioned aerodromes came into effect from 30th October, 2020. These airports continue to operate without Flight Information Service, and Fiji Airports and CAAF continue to monitor the situation, to ensure (when required) the service is reinstated.

Update on whether the Ono-i-Lau aerodrome certificate has been renewed - the Ono-i-Lau aerodrome certificate is in the process of being renewed following a validation inspection conducted by the CAAF team upon request by Fiji Airports in 2021. The Ono-i-Lau aerodrome is a government-owned aerodrome that is operated by Fiji Airports. Due to the low volume of traffic of aircraft movements into the island and the works and facilities that had to be replenished to maintain an operational aerodrome, a decision was made by Fiji Airports over 10 years ago not to renew the aerodrome certificate. Since then operators are required to contact Fiji Airports Manager Nausori Aerodromes 48 hours prior to conducting any intended flight to Ono-i-Lau for a one-off approval. In late 2019 attempts were made by Fiji Airports to have the aerodrome re-certified, however, COVID-19 protocols disrupted this plan. Fiji Airports re-engaged CAAF in late 2021 to commence with certification and the process is almost complete.

Has the Nausori Aerodrome upgrade project been completed? The Nausori Aerodrome upgrade project was successfully completed on 18th November 2021 after it had initially commenced in 2018. Its completion was delayed again by COVID-19 pandemic.

Financial statements for the year ended 31st December 2020 - how did CAAF re-strategise its operations to cushion against the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on its resources and finances? Times of great testing require innovation, good communication, decisive leadership and bold decision for the common good. CAAF reviewed its operations and re-aligned its strategy to ensure the organisations continued to stay afloat, fulfil its core functions satisfactorily whilst maintaining the safety and security of aviation.

The change in the way CAAF conducted some of its activities - CAAF reached out to staff, explained the strategy and sought their support to implement the strategy with the intention of leaving no staff behind during the pandemic. Stringent controls were imposed on printing, general expenditure and other CAAF resources. CAAF participated in meetings, trainings, and work where possible via virtual means and was able to communicate with many more people without having to worry about physical distancing and space; through our aviation bulletins and through audits and inspections which were remotely conducted for desktop audits.

Due to the substantial loss in revenue from the Departure Tax, the following austerity measures were implemented:

- ✓ 6.5 months from 15th June to December 2020 reduced work days from Mondays to Thursdays, equating to a 20 percent reduction in salary with a total cost of savings of \$247,494;
- ✓ nil payment of staff 2020-2021 Annual Performance Management System bonuses;
- ✓ contingency funds in the form of fixed term deposits were utilised;
- ✓ major capital expenditure for example vehicles due for replacement and IT infrastructure upgrade were frozen;
- ✓ re-negotiation of contracts with suppliers example TFL, Vodafone, Landscaping, Flight Examiners and Medical Assessors bringing in a total savings of \$17,447;
- ✓ change in maintenance periods of equipment;
- ✓ the CAAF Board took a 20 percent reduction in monthly allowance in 2020-2021 – with a total cost of savings of \$8,150;
- ✓ Our Aviation Quality Database Software upgrade has been put on hold till 2023;
- ✓ the database implementation has been put on hold until further advice;
- ✓ Personal Licensing Examination Software has been put on hold until further advice;
- ✓ Suspension of Fiji's membership of the collaborative Aviation Security Program Asia Pacific resulting in suspension to annual subscription fees;
- ✓ freeze on recruitments for vacant posts and reduction of surveillance activities on site by inspectors.

Provide more information on the management database project and confirm whether it has been established. Despite CAAF's best laid plans the management database has not been established as a result of the impact of COVID-19 on CAAF's source of revenue. Notwithstanding this, CAAF is again pursuing this project vigorously as part of its strategic plans to digitise its modus operandi and enhance the service delivery. CAAF presently has a number of stand-a-lone databases ranging from Finance and HR to Aircraft, Personal Licences and Exams which were developed in-house on an ad-hoc basis and do not have the capability to integrate with each other, thus leading to manual processing of data and trends which in turn affects efficient strategic decision making process and efficiency of our services to our customers.

The proposed database would have integrated all CAAFs individual databases into a consolidated database for automated flow of data and information across each other and provide continuous information for effective management and control. Tasks that are presently being manually performed would be automated. The management database project was approved by the CAAF Board in its meeting of 2020. This project included implementation of an e-examination and e-licensing system for CAAF.

What is CAAFs plan to recruit and retain operational personnel holding scarce-skills? CAAF is committed to training and developing competent personnel across the organisation as part of the process of continuous improvement and in support of the organisation's succession planning and capacity development.

To achieve this objective, CAAF has strengthened its recruitment selection policy by not only recruiting experienced technical personnel from the aviation industry but also recruiting new graduates and staff with tertiary qualifications like diplomas, degrees in specific areas responsible to, or supporting aviation. Apart from this, CAAF also encourages staff to broaden their knowledge and skills-set as part of succession planning and in order to raise the bar, CAAF encourages staff to undertake additional programmes of study to equip them for supervisory and managerial responsibilities going into the future.

Comparatively, it is a known fact within aviation circles that CAAF is unable to match remuneration packages offered by operators in the aviation industry both in Fiji and abroad. The challenge for CAAF is to retain technical personnel. To address this, CAAF is undergoing a job evaluation exercise which will see the restructure of remuneration to enable more successful recruitment and retention of technical personnel holding scarce-skills. Furthermore, CAAF is also cognisant of the fact that not all scarce-skilled personnel are motivated by financial rewards. Some have different motivations like exposure to more technical training opportunities, being in leadership roles, or working as a regulator. In this respect, CAAF continuously strives to provide an amicable working environment based on our safety and security culture and compliance with international standards and best practices to keep staff focussed and challenged. Such a robust environment helps to attract and retain personnel. They have also been cadetship programmes introduced that CAAF to nurture and grow our own people.

How have projects of the organisation been affected as a result? The operations of the organisation have been affected by the vacancies related to some of these scarce-skill positions. Financially, it is more costly for CAAF due to the need to employ consultants at such a higher rate and having in-house personnel. At times there are delays to actual conduct of activities due to lead time required for consultants who are stationed abroad to come in to Fiji to conduct checks on CAAF's behalf. The absence of technical knowledge and skills in some areas in-house creates a greater dependence on external personnel to fill the void in the process perpetuating a vicious cycle of over-reliance. Most CAAF projects are on hold indefinitely, and whilst there is optimism that things will become better as air travel normalises, the reality is that it will take time to return to normalcy.

Provide a breakdown of the other operating income of \$313,269 in 2020 and \$416,761 in 2019. The details are enclosed in the table and which could be discussed.

Inform us of the nature of the four matters in court arising out of enforcement actions taken by the authority under Air Navigation Regulations - have judgements been issued on these cases and if so inform us of the outcomes. Out of the four matters, three are civil cases and one is a criminal case. All four cases are currently before the Courts.

What is CAAF's response to the emphasis of matter made by the Auditor in relation to the two issues highlighted on page 53 of the Annual Report? CAAF acknowledges the Auditor's emphasis on the matter. COVID-19 was unprecedented - striking at the heart of air travel and the global economy. It forced States to make important decisions for their people during a time of great uncertainty. It was during the advent of COVID-19 to Fiji that CAAF's leadership was tested. Important decisions, taking into consideration the common good within the ambit of the law, were made to ensure that even in the most difficult of times, the aviation industry would survive to be able to continue to support our economy, but more importantly, spearhead governments economic recovery efforts.

Section 29 of the Civil Aviation Authority of Fiji Act 1979 allows for the authority with the approval of the Minister, by regulation, to prescribe fees payable in connection with the issue, validation, renewal, extension or variation of any certificate, licenses or other documents for which the authority has been made

responsible for under the Act. Section 31 of the CAAF Act 1979 provides the authority, with the approval of the Minister, the power to reduce, refund or waive any fees and charges payable in terms of regulation made under Section 29.

Fiji Airports and Fiji Airways submitted requests for waivers from fees and charges to cushion the impact of COVID-19. Due process was followed and much consideration was put into the matter including CAAF's own finances before a decision was made to grant the waiver. The Authority operated on austerity mode since March 2020, due to the substantial loss in its revenue from Departure Tax. Furthermore, Government had allocated a \$2.5 million grant to CAAF for the 2020-2021 year to make up for the shortfall and enabled the continued discharge of the authority's functions as required by the CAAF Act 1979. While providing a waiver from the fees and charges as requested by Fiji Airports and Fiji Airways impacted the Authority's cash flow, in keeping with Government's policy of "leaving no Fijian behind", it was deemed a necessary sacrifice that was justified to ensure all was not lost in the greatest scheme of things.

The Authority was mindful of the impact that COVID-19 pandemic had on Fiji Airports - a fully owned Government commercial company; and Fiji Airways - the national airline; and that the Government was providing CAAF with some reprieve through the grant it had been allocated. The CAAF, by way of waivers from certain fees and charges was cognisant of the impact of COVID-19 on the entire aviation industry and provided some assistance through this unprecedented period. Today, this has triggered a national renaissance as air travel sets the platform for Fiji's return to economic recovery.

Mr. Chairman and honourable Members of the Committee, thank you for your attention.

MR. CHAIRMAN.- Thank you Mr. Rigamoto Aisake for the presentation and also for responding to all the questions that were sent. I will very quickly allow honourable Members for a question each as we are already running late, starting from honourable Nagata.

HON. A.T. NAGATA.- Thank you Mr. Chairman and thank you CEO. In your presentation, you mentioned that CAAF is one of the 193 Contracting States to ICAO and is obliged to comply with ICAO standards and recommended practises. Was there a time when CAAF did not comply with the ICAO standards? And what was the penalty of non-compliance?

Thank you Mr. Chairman and honourable Members of the Committee.

MR. R. AISAKE.- Mr. Chairman, there is a provision in ICAO where States are unable to meet or to comply with specific standards, each State will need to write to ICAO and notify them of a difference. Article 38 of the Convention is that specific provision. What it means is that, States that are unable to meet certain standards will need to write to ICAO asking for filing the difference. That is the technical phrase that is used – they file a difference. It means that they tell ICAO, for example, that they have not been able to screen all their international passengers 100 percent, which is the standard. So if Fiji has not been able to do that (I am not saying that we are not doing 100 percent - we are; this is an example), we would write to ICAO and tell them that we are filing a difference. We cannot screen passengers 100 percent, but by 2024 or 2025 or whatever date the State agrees to, we will implement this. Between the time we file the difference till the date of implementation, ICAO will monitor - "Fiji what is your progress? Come 2023, they will ask for our progress - where are you in relation to screening of 100 percent passengers? Where are you in relation to implementing the standard?" So that is the provision for filing a difference.

HON. DR. RATU A. LALABALAVU.- Mr. Chairman, just a question on one of your slides with regards to setting of standards and rules of governing aviation safety and security, based on national

requirements and international standards. Does the national requirement and the international standards have to be cohesive together or are there certain areas whereby national requirements are more unique to our country or small island States?

MR. R. AISAKE.- Mr. Chairman, the State sovereignty is something that ICAO respects, meaning that Fiji can have its unique set of requirements but it will still need to comply with the international requirements. I will give you an example. Under Regulation 19(c) of the Civil Aviation Security Regulations, it requires certification of ground handling service providers - that is not an ICAO requirement - to certify ground handling service providers who operate ground handling services at our airports; that is a national requirement. So Fiji has said, "We will certify ground handlers." ICAO will then say, "Fine, that is Fiji's situation." In response to that - yes. The State can have its own set of requirements, but it will still have to comply with the international requirements. That is why, at the outset, in the presentation I had made a distinction between our national requirements and the international requirements that ICAO sets. We can set our requirements for aviation as well as comply with that. It does not have to be the same.

HON. RATU T. NAVURELEVU.- Mr. Chairman, the question is related to your answer on question no. 1. Those screeners who were laid off without pay during the COVID-19 - after COVID-19 did they go back to work?

MR. R. AISAKE.- Mr. Chairman, after COVID-19, we lost around 331 screeners. Some had left the aviation industry and some had relocated to work at hotels because it was not necessary for them to do screening and maintain that certification. But many of them were without employment, so as industry starts up again, as the borders opened in December, we had a small number trickling in. Even today we still have not seen that return to full complement.

HON. RATU A.R. LALABALAVU.- Thank you. One of the core roles of CAAF is ensuring safety within the aviation industry. In terms of that safety into the airlines with regards to how airlines standardise their emergency supplies, emergency equipment on board - does the CAAF have a role with regards to reviewing or are they okay with the medical emergency supplies on board?

MR. R. AISAKE.- Thank you, honourable Chairman and honourable Member of the Committee. Yes, CAAF has a dangerous goods and cabin safety inspector, who is actually responsible for oversight of the flight cabins and that includes, not only dangerous goods that go into the cabin but the equipment that is carried by the aircraft. Everything is verified and checked to ensure that it complies with the requirements for dangerous goods as well as cabin safety on board the aircraft, so yes, CAAF has a role to play in that.

MR. CHAIRMAN.- Thank you. CEO, any final comments.

MR. R. AISAKE.- Honourable Chairman and honourable Members of this Committee, we thank you for this opportunity to respond to the questions and to make this presentation before you. We will continue to work to uphold aviation safety and security and ensure that Fiji maintains its proud safety and security record going forward. Thank you very much, honourable Chair.

MR. CHAIRMAN.- Thank you CEO and the team for the presentation and also for providing the answers to the questions that were sent. Should we need any further clarifications or any other information, our secretariat team will be in touch with you. Thank you very much for your time.

The Committee adjourned at 10.03 a.m.