

BILL NO. 18 OF 2023

A BILL

FOR AN ACT TO AMEND THE INTERPRETATION ACT 1967

ENACTED by the Parliament of the Republic of Fiji—

Short title and commencement

1.—(1) This Act may be cited as the Interpretation (Amendment) Act 2023.

(2) This Act comes into force on a date appointed by the Minister by notice in the Gazette.

Section 2 amended

2. Section 2 of the Interpretation Act 1967 is amended by—

- (a) in subsection (1), deleting the definition of “birth certificate”; and
- (b) deleting subsections (9) to (12).

July 2023

INTERPRETATION (AMENDMENT) BILL 2023

EXPLANATORY NOTE

(This note is not part of the Bill and is intended only to indicate its general effect)

1.0 BACKGROUND

- 1.1 The Interpretation Act 1967 (**‘Act’**) sets out the principles and rules for the interpretation of written laws and public documents in Fiji.
- 1.2 In 2021, the Act was amended to provide *inter alia* that where any written law authorises or requires a person to provide his or her name, the person must provide his or her name as specified on his or her birth certificate, and where any written law authorises or requires a person to provide any form of identification of himself or herself, the person must provide such form of identification which accurately reflects his or her name as specified on his or her birth certificate.
- 1.3 These changes however disadvantaged mainly women who were then mandated to change the name on their birth certificate to include their spouse’s surname in order to continue using their spouse’s surname for various purposes including official identification or documentation.
- 1.4 Therefore, the Interpretation (Amendment) Bill 2023 (**‘Bill’**) seeks to amend the Act to remove these amendments that were made in 2021 through the Interpretation (Amendment) Act 2021.

2.0 CLAUSES

- 2.1 Clause 1 of the Bill provides for the short title and commencement. If passed by Parliament, the amending legislation will come into force on a date appointed by the Minister by notice in the Gazette.
- 2.2 Clause 2 of the Bill amends section 2 of the Act by deleting the definition of “birth certificate” and subsections (9) to (12).

3.0 MINISTERIAL RESPONSIBILITY

- 3.1 The Act comes under the responsibility of the Attorney-General.

S. TURAGA
Attorney-General