

APPENDICES

Appendix 1

Written response received from
Fiji National Provident Fund

FNPF Responses to the Standing Committee on Social Affairs

Clarification of Issues – Fiji National Provident Fund Report 2022

Submitted by FNPF
5-17-2023

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1. *The Government pledge to increase contribution from twelve percent (12%) to fourteen percent (14%) as at 1 January 2023. Did this eventuate as planned, are there plans to get back to the original contribution (i.e. 18%)?*

The current rate increased to 14% (7% each by employer and employee) as per Government announcement in the 2022/2023 Budget Address and Government is committed to restoring the rate at 2% each year (1% each from employer and employee) until the full 18% is reinstated.

The Fund continues to lobby with Government on the reinstatement to the pre-COVID rate of 18% (10% employer and 8% employee) as soon as practical considering the reduction in savings for many members over the past 2 years during the pandemic through loss of employment or with the reduction in mandatory contributory rate.

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2. *The tertiary healthcare initiative is now available in Fiji, this has resulted in the decrease of FNPF savings to finance the expenses of members requiring tertiary healthcare abroad. Elaborate on how beneficial is this initiative to FNPF, its members and the health sector? Can FNPF provide statistical data of members that benefitted from this scheme?*

Some of the benefits of the Fund's investment in the healthcare sector include:

- To improve the healthcare facilities and services available to our members and ordinary Fijians, particularly for those that do not have any private medical insurance and those that have low member balances and would not be able to afford medical insurance premiums;
- To lower costs of medical treatment as people would not have to travel overseas for specialized treatment(s);
- To provide a value chain for the tourism sector such as medical tourism and set up of retirement homes; and
- To participate in Environmental, Social and Governance (ESG) investments.

Currently, the general public including our members that are living in these areas (Ba and Lautoka) do not pay for medical services at these hospitals as is currently operating like a public hospital.

3. *Can FNPF brief the committee on the outcome of FNPF's engagement with a renowned investment firm in Australia to review its investment policy statement?*

The engagement of successful firm to undertake the review is current being finalized through FNPF tender process.

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4. *Can FNPF provide a breakdown of the 160,000 members that were assisted during COVID? (breakdown by division, gender, age and employment sector)*

The breakdown by FNPF, Govt and both by Gender is provided in the table below:

Distinct Member Count	Payment By						
	a. FNPF & Govt		b. FNPF		c. Govt		Grand Total
Age Cohort	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female	
A. <=15 YRS		1	1	1			3

B. 16 to 24 YRS	7,737	5,530	5,472	3,249	4,885	4,174	20,440
C. 25 to 34 YRS	16,530	12,170	25,405	15,223	10,589	8,614	57,079
D. 35 to 44 YRS	10,862	8,200	24,501	13,188	7,492	5,371	47,561
E. 45 to 49 YRS	3,276	2,194	9,013	4,287	2,240	1,459	16,358
F. 50 to 54 YRS	2,187	1,319	7,130	2,858	1,501	854	11,890
G. >=55 YRS	712	460	1,114	563	287	205	2,454
Grand Total	39,972	28,791	68,860	37,538	25,955	19,818	144,306

To take the sectorial perspective, it can be seen that the most affected Sector was the Wholesale & Retail Trade (19.7%), Accommodation & Food Service Activities (14.8%), and Manufacturing (13.7%). Due to incomplete data issues – we had 25.8% applying from employers that had not been classified yet.

Distinct Member Count	Payment By						
	a. FNPF & Govt		b. FNPF		c. Govt		Grand Total
Age Cohort	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female	
ACCOMMODATION AND FOOD SERVICE ACTIVITIES	6,977	7,999	7,529	6,605	4,941	6,129	21,386
ACTIVITIES OF EXTRA-TERRITORIAL ORGANISATIONS AND BODIES	58	96	114	139	46	62	313
ACTIVITIES OF HOUSEHOLDS AS EMPLOYERS; UNDIFFERENTIATED GOODS AND SERVICES PRODUCING ACTIVITIES OF HOUSEHOLDS FOR OWN USE	282	367	352	363	159	206	1,257
ADMINISTRATIVE AND SUPPORT SERVICE ACTIVITIES	4,059	2,079	5,091	2,229	2,362	1,414	11,357
AGRICULTURE, FORESTRY AND FISHING	1,122	471	1,713	399	709	353	3,305
ARTS, ENTERTAINMENT AND RECREATION	796	555	840	452	581	427	2,111
CONSTRUCTION	6,450	603	8,624	687	4,182	403	13,830
EDUCATION	395	591	686	770	275	420	2,143
ELECTRICITY, GAS, STEAM AND AIR CONDITIONING SUPPLY	551	95	982	165	316	45	1,570
FINANCIAL AND INSURANCE ACTIVITIES	390	501	723	664	145	230	2,058
HUMAN HEALTH AND SOCIAL WORK ACTIVITIES	116	231	230	361	73	153	847
INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION	812	669	1,130	783	549	485	2,965
MANUFACTURING	4,830	4,992	8,157	5,637	2,646	2,555	19,701
MINING AND QUARRYING	424	29	1,127	66	245	11	1,457
NULL	1,550	1,033	13,934	8,036	8,058	6,705	37,167
OTHER SERVICE ACTIVITIES	514	787	656	751	279	556	2,308
PROFESSIONAL, SCIENTIFIC AND TECHNICAL ACTIVITIES	1,289	516	1,606	781	688	317	3,557
PUBLIC ADMINISTRATION AND DEFENSE; COMPULSORY SOCIAL SECURITY	1,068	606	2,079	1,304	737	572	4,681
REAL ESTATE ACTIVITIES	216	149	269	147	148	102	725
TRANSPORT AND STORAGE	3,015	927	5,311	1,338	1,845	645	8,679
WATER SUPPLY; SEWERAGE, WASTE MANAGEMENT AND REMEDIATION ACTIVITIES	435	50	538	68	274	31	932
WHOLESALE AND RETAIL TRADE; REPAIR OF MOTOR VEHICLES AND MOTORCYCLES	7,618	6,878	11,710	7,361	3,847	3,914	28,465
Grand Total	39,972	28,791	68,860	37,538	25,955	19,818	144,306

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- It was highlighted that additional and voluntary contributions brought in a total of \$62.2 million, can FNPF elaborate on who are these voluntary contributors (breakdown by division, gender, age and employment sector)?

A total of 35,371 individuals had contributed to the \$62.2m. Of this, 56% of those contributed are males and 44% female.

Distinct Members	Gender		Grand Total
Age Cohort	Male	Female	
Employee Additional	5,793	3,468	9,261
Employer Additional	11,754	7,094	18,848
Member Paid Additional	790	665	1,455
Voluntary	5,612	6,629	12,241
Grand Total	19,694	15,677	35,371

In terms of age cohorts:

Distinct Members	Gender		
Age Cohort	Male	Female	Grand Total
Employee Additional	5,793	3,468	9,261
b. 16 to 24 yrs	275	200	475
c. 25 to 34 yrs	1,774	1,190	2,964
d. 35 to 44 yrs	1,943	1,211	3,154
e. 45 to 49 yrs	749	405	1,154
f. 50 to 54 yrs	625	260	885
g. >= 55 yrs	427	202	629
Employer Additional	11,754	7,094	18,848
b. 16 to 24 yrs	1,014	775	1,789
c. 25 to 34 yrs	4,150	2,709	6,859
d. 35 to 44 yrs	3,776	2,191	5,967
e. 45 to 49 yrs	1,215	652	1,867
f. 50 to 54 yrs	933	418	1,351
g. >= 55 yrs	666	349	1,015
Member Paid Additional	790	665	1,455
b. 16 to 24 yrs	64	59	123
c. 25 to 34 yrs	182	167	349
d. 35 to 44 yrs	217	194	411
e. 45 to 49 yrs	90	83	173
f. 50 to 54 yrs	87	75	162
g. >= 55 yrs	150	87	237
Voluntary	5,612	6,629	12,241
a. <= 15 yrs	465	407	872
b. 16 to 24 yrs	2,728	3,278	6,006
c. 25 to 34 yrs	681	1,170	1,851
d. 35 to 44 yrs	694	864	1,558
e. 45 to 49 yrs	364	361	725
f. 50 to 54 yrs	349	296	645
g. >= 55 yrs	331	253	584
Grand Total	19,694	15,677	35,371

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6. *How many members were assisted in the Micro-Business Withdrawal assistance during the COVID pandemic under the (i) SME projects, (ii) expansion of existing business and (iii) reopening business?*

Row Labels	Distinct Count of WITHDRAWAL_APPLICATION_ID	Distinct Count of PERSON_ID
Purpose 1 - Direct Assistance - Start Up	80	80
Purpose 2 - Direct Assistance - Capital Injection	36	36
Purpose 3 - Equity Contribution New Business	1	1
Purpose 4 – Equity Contribution Existing Business	3	3
Grand Total	120	120

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7. *What is the overall number of active FNPF members for the year 2021 and 2022?*

Refer page 14 of the AR 2023

	FY 2021	FY 2022
Mandatory	215,200	214,536
Voluntary	6,632	12,242

8. *What were the challenges and achievements of the advocacy initiative by FNPF - “Save for Life after work”?*

The number of contributing voluntary members nearly doubled from FY 2021 to FY 2022 (refer to table above). This reflects the consistent reminders that were sent to voluntary members and marketing campaigns reminding these members to pay their voluntary contributions.

Some of the challenges include:

- Potential voluntary members are reluctant to save with FNPF due to the restrictions on their ability to take out funds when they need it the most.
- Payment mode – This still remain a challenge as some of the outer islands have no access to Vodafone networks for MPAISA payments and intermittent banking services. In addition, for overseas seasonal workers, awareness of the new payment mode via credit/debit cards is still a challenge and most prefer to have face to face awareness of the new payment mode.

9. *Can FNPF elaborate on the formula for calculating the 6 monthly interest rate that is awarded to its members? Is the fund planning to review the formula?*

FNPF does not calculate 6 monthly interest rate. The FNPF Board declares a crediting rate at the end of each financial year based on actuarial assessment.

At 30 June of the financial year, FNPF credits interest to member accounts. The interest credited to member balance is calculated based on Daily Average Balance. First we calculate the average of the account’s daily balances by looking at the account balance on each day during the financial year and calculate the average; then the amount of interest is calculated as the Daily Average Balance multiplied by the declared crediting rate.

The above practice is in compliance with the FNPF legislation and policy.

10. *Can FNPF elaborate on the progress of the 5 year strategy that is formulated to guide FNPF to a future of recovery, rebuilding and sustainability?*

The 5-Year Plan of FY 2023-2027 was formulated to steer FNPF on the back of COVID-19 and a very disruptive operating setting. The changing business dynamics, member needs, employment patterns and economic environment has dictated our need to adjust to remain relevant.

As at Quarter 3 of FY2023 (July-March), on the five Strategic Focus Areas, the status is as follows:

#		
FOCUS AREA 1 - MEMBER CENTRIC & EXPERIENCE		
1.	Grow Member Balance	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – As part of restoring contribution losses made during the pandemic, we are lobbying with Government for the swift restoration of the 18% contribution rate to allow members to accumulate their retirement savings. Most members lost contributions from the deduction in rates as well as loss of employment during the period. – The recent increase in retirement age was also a strategy we would have pursued and we are thankful for that as it allows members another five years to work towards their retirement plan or build a decent enough balance to support life in retirement. – Other initiatives in the plan we would pursue or explore over the 5 years are review of the contribution design, employer compliance, and member additional contribution
2.	Grow Membership	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – A review of the self-employed (currently known as voluntary) members are in progress with the aim to entice membership of those in the growing informal sector in Fiji who currently may not have any retirement saving plan. This is particularly targeted at those in the MSME and we would like to pursue this in collaboration with Government. There are some that can be categorised as in the semi-formal sector such as taxi drivers, mini-bus etc. – Work have also commences on how we can onboard Fijians engaged for seasonal work opportunities. We will be approaching Government to assist on this front on the 'Vuvale' partnership with Australia as well as the NZ scheme. These Fijians have their contributions deducted while working but are not transferred to Fiji (or FNPF) when they return. Similar arrangement have been made with Cook Islands Provident Fund before COVID for Fijians working there and has proven successful. – Other plans is to target Fijian diaspora around in the world working in specific field attained for their skills and with plans to return to our homeland. This include rugby players, British Army, etc

3.	Member Experience	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – A review of policies, service standards, and processes have been carried out or are underway with the aim of enhancing and providing members a fulfilling experience. – A member experience framework is in the works including plan to relook at our branding as part of the five year plan
FOCUS AREA 2 - RESPONSIBLE INVESTMENT & PERFORMANCE		
4.	Diversify investments and pursue resilient sectors for sustainable returns	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Diversification plans are in progress with intention to expand more into resilient sectors as experienced during COVID-19 with our portfolio makeup – Discussions are in progress with Government/RBF on increasing access for offshore investments – Talks are undergoing for more sustainable long-term bond investments to support our retirement products
5.	Optimising returns from existing investments	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Refurbishment completed for Sheraton Nadi Resort – Refurbishment works are currently underway for Westin Resort – Opportunities for synergies, cost sharing and master planning are also planned as part of optimizing returns from existing synergies
6.	Collaborate with Government and Other Institutions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Collaborations with Government and other institutions are in the pipeline to pursue – Briefing and advisory consultation with Government and its plans has commenced. Government will be forming and Investment Committee to expedite all investments proposals in the country – Concerns have been raised with Government on the unavailability of a secondary market, limitations of local investments attracting the right return appetite
FOCUS AREA 3 - SIMPLICITY & OPERATIONAL EFFICIENCY		
7.	Customer Experience (Online)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Developments are taking place in enhancing current online submission process and revamp of the member and employer portal – Progress are in place to increase the presence of our online products – A customer relationship management process is in place
8.	Data Insights & Performance	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Data usage and analysis are prioritise to assist with behavioural patterns, services, products placement, forecasting and understanding members – Current collaboration effort with Government and other entities on centralizing national data for a more up to date and easily accessible of information will assist a lot in
9.	Ecosystem Engagement	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Digital Fiji exercise on connections with BDM are ROC completed while other agents are in underway (FRC, LTA) – Treasury bonds system connection completed with RBF and further works continuing on main national transaction integration
10.	Operating Model	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – The Fund is in undertaking an exercise of relooking at its operating model with intention to review the scheme design, undertake process reengineering and accordingly align with

		the right resources and work organization, relevant to the purpose and
FOCUS AREA 4 - GROWING & ENGAGING OUR PEOPLE		
11.	Foster a Secure, Ethical & Engaging Workforce	- A Corporate Culture plan is in development that will direct the
12.	Develop and Support Value-based Leaders	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Leadership training continue to be carried out for staff and management - A leadership plan is in development to guide the leadership development path
13.	Attract, Develop and Retain a Highly Skilled Workforce	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Retaining staff/skilled workforce is an issue for FNPF with the lure of overseas migration for better quality of life. This is something we would request for Government, business community and other relevant stakeholders to have a dialogue on and how we can tackle it. While it is an individual decision, the training, development and investment that we as a country put in is lost to other countries. - At FNPF, skills gap analysis is progressing, with the aim to ascertain the skills gap required to meet the needs of the Fund to implement its functions and the Strategic Plan
14.	Create An Adaptive Working Environment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The order of operation today requires agility and adaptation, so how do we prepare our organization to shift and people ready to adapt to the shift is the our focus in this early years of the planning period. - Review are being made to current processes and practices to align to changing business operation and right office environment.
FOCUS AREA 5 - Protection & Sustainability		
15.	Legislative Review and Scheme Design	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Policy review are currently undertaken across many functions and legislative proposals will be part of these reviews. - The full review of the Act is planned from FY2025 while the first two years are to gather all proposed changes undertaken through policy, practices and process review.
16.	Build Trust & Confidence	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - A brand consultant is in the process to engage to assist the Fund in developing the marketing and branding framework of the Fund - A review of our enterprise wide risk is currently undertaken that will reflect latest developments on the business front particularly in response to health crisis - Awareness continue be ongoing and a long-term plan is in development. More retirement advisory tools such Retirement Readiness Index, advisory brief for staff and retirement planning book. - Marketing, Forums and media fronts continue to be rolled out to inform, and educate members as well as to gathering feedbacks. This will continue over the coming years.

FNPF has been the member of ISSA since the 1980s and has participated in the Good Practice Awards since 2011. To date we have received recognition for 11 Good Practice Awards.

Good Practice Awards criteria

The Jury will apply the following criteria to attribute the Good Practice Award and the Certificates of Merit.

1. Achieved outcomes

The good practice shows that it has efficiently and effectively responded to the identified issue or challenge. There is evidence of its impact, achieved outcomes and quality of implementation e.g. targets vs actual performance, key performance indicators, before-and-after comparisons, cost-effectiveness metrics and other relevant statistics.

2. Innovativeness

The good practice demonstrates forward-looking approaches or solutions that are original, pioneering and ground-breaking for the organization, the country or the region as a whole. Innovation covers a wide spectrum of initiatives that ranges from continuous improvements and incremental changes, on one hand, and sweeping, far-reaching and cutting-edge transformations, on the other.

3. Robustness

The good practice has a track record to show that its effectiveness is not short-lived nor transitory. Its benefits and added value are well-established and are expected to last. The good practice can be depended upon to deliver predictable results time and again.

4. Replicability

The good practice shares insights on the factors that would be indispensable to its replicability as well as the risks that could stand in the way of its successful implementation. It has the potential to inspire other social security administrations that are faced with a similar issue or challenge.

The ISSA General Secretariat (in Geneva) will review the entries based on the above criteria and ensure completeness, in accordance with a submission checklist.

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12. *Can FNPF elaborate with statistics on farmers that registered and contributed to the voluntary contribution scheme?*

Of the 35, 741 voluntary members, there are currently 1,977 registered as farmers. Of this amount 468 contributed at least once in the last FY.

However due to the ongoing data cleansing exercise, the Fund continue to cleanse and update its data on member demographics. It should be noted that 21,984 members do not have existing occupations, thus the numbers provided may be understated.

13. *How many eligible members were assisted through the government-funded unemployment assistance? Can FNPF provide a breakdown by gender, age, division and employment sector?*

Refer to answers for Q4

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14. *What was the criteria for assessing the member's eligibility for accessing funds for Covid-19 assistance? How was this monitored and controlled?*

The Covid-19 Unemployment Relief Assistance was offered in phases for Compulsory Members when the scheme started in April 2020 and later on, it was introduced for Voluntary Members. The criteria for assessing member's eligibility for accessing Funds was in accordance with the criterias described for each respective Unemployment Withdrawal Phase as outlined in the COVID19 Policy and Guidelines.

The documents required and mode of submission accepted were in respect of the Product offering at the time of the assistance. These assistance included the following:-

1. **Phase 1** – COVID-500, COVID-1000, Small Enterprise and Taxi/Mini-van/Hire Vehicle License Drivers.
2. **Phase 2** - Round 1 - Category 1, Category 2 and Category 3 for members who were Unemployed and on Reduced Hrs./Wages.
3. **Phase 2** – Round 2 – 8 – For members who were unemployed including Leave Without Pay (no income)
4. **Phase 3** – Round 1 to Round 6 – Reduced Hours and Reduced Wage Rate.
5. **Phase 4** – Round 1 to Round 5 – Unemployed prior to 1st October, 2019.
6. **COVID19 Voluntary Members Relief Assistance** – Round 1 to Round 3
7. **COVID19 Lockdown Relief Assistance** – Round 1 to Round 2

Product Offering	Assistance Criteria
COVID-500 (Offered from April 2020 to June 2020)	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Offered to Non-Tourism Sector Workers who were on:- <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Leave Without Pay • Reduced working hours • Reduced Wage Rate or • Terminated or permanently laid off 2. Maximum assistance offered \$500 subject to member's available GA balance 3. Members last employment date - any date post 1st October 2019.
COVID-1000 (Offered from April 2020 to June 2020)	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Offered to Tourism and Tourism related Sector Workers who were on:- <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Leave Without Pay • Reduced working hours • Reduced Wage Rate or • Terminated or permanently laid off 2. Maximum assistance offered \$1000 subject to available GA balance 3. Members last employment date - any date post 1st October 2019.
Small Enterprise (Offered from May 2020 to June 2020)	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Offered to small business operators who were affected by Covid Pandemic. 2. Maximum assistance offered \$1000 subject available GA Balance
Taxi, Mini Van and Higher Drivers (May 2020 to June 2020)	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Offered to Drivers with class 3, 4 and 5 Driver's License who were affected by Covid Pandemic. 2. Maximum assistance offered \$1000 subject available GA Balance
	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Assisted in Phase 1 under COVID500 and COVID 1000.

Phase 2 – Round 1 Category 1 (Offered from June 2020 to August 2020)	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> Available only to those who were unemployed from 1st October 2019. Member whose GA Balance is nil Maximum assistance, \$1,100 Receives 100% top up by Government. Members were paid \$220 every 2 weeks for 5 rounds. Requests were auto registered and members did not have to lodge an application. Mode of payment was same as used in Phase 1.
Product Offering	Assistance Criteria
Phase 2 – Round 1 Category 2 (Offered from June 2020 to August 2020)	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> Assisted in Phase 1 under COVID500 and COVID1000. Available only to those who were unemployed from 1st October 2019. Member must have a positive GA Balance. Maximum Assistance was \$1,100. Government tops up to the maximum assistance for those with insufficient GA Balance. Funds are paid in 5 instalments of \$220 fortnightly. Members had to make a physical or online submission.
Phase 2 – Round 1 Category 3 (Offered from June 2020 to August 2020)	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> Member is not assisted in Phase 1 under COVID500 and COVID1000 Available only to those unemployed from 1st October 2019. Member has a positive GA Balance. Maximum Assistance was \$1,100. Government tops up to the maximum assistance for those with insufficient GA Balance. Funds were paid in 5 instalments of \$220 fortnightly Members had to make a physical or online submission.
Phase 2 Round 2 – 8 (August 2020 to December 2021)	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> Applicable for members who were unemployed and those on leave without pay from 1st October, 2019 onwards. Available only to those unemployed from 1st October 2019. Maximum Assistance was \$1,100. Government tops up to the maximum assistance for those with insufficient GA Balance. Funds were paid in 5 instalments of \$220 fortnightly Members had to make a physical or online submission for each Round.
Phase 3 – Round 1 - 6 – Reduced Hours and Reduced Pay (Offered from August 2020 to December 2021)	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> Members whose working hours have been reduced up to:- <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 1 day per week gets \$44 per fortnight with total payment of \$220 per member. 2 days per week gets \$88 per fortnight with total payment of \$440 per member. 3 days per week gets \$132 per fortnight with total payment of \$660 per member. 4 days per week gets \$176 per fortnight with total payment of \$880 per member. Government tops up to the maximum assistance for those with insufficient GA Balance. Employer make the submission online for each Round of Assistance.
Phase 3 – Round 1 – 6 Reduced Wages (Offered from August 2020 to August 2021)	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> Members whose Wages Rate have been reduced:- <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Equal to or less than 50% gets \$550 as a one off lump sum payment. More than 50% gets \$1,100 as a one off lump sum payment.

	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 2. Government tops up to the maximum assistance for those with insufficient GA Balance. 3. Employer make the submission online for each Round.
Phase 4 – Round 1 – 5 (Offered from August 2020 to March 2021)	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Members who were unemployed between 1st October, 2017 to 30th September 2019 2. Members who were aged between 18 to 54 can apply 3. Members can withdraw between 100 to \$1,100 from their GA as a lump sum payment. 4. Must have a minimum GA Balance of \$135 as \$35 will be retained for SDB premium. 5. No Government top up applicable. 6. Member makes a physical or online submission for each Round.
Voluntary COVID19 –Unemployment Assistance - Round 1 – 3 (Offered from April 2021 to December 2021)	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Must be a Voluntary Member prior to 26 April 2021 2. Members who were aged between 18 to 54 can apply 3. Members can withdraw between 100 to \$1,100 from their GA as a lump sum payment. 4. Must have a minimum GA Balance of \$135 as \$35 will be retained for SDB premium. 5. No Government top up applicable. 6. Member has not been assisted for Phase 1 to phase 4 COVID assistance. 7. Member makes a physical or online submission for each Round.
Product Offering	Assistance Criteria
COVID19 Lockdown Relief Assistance – Round 1 - 2 (Offered from April 2021 to June 2021)	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Members residing inside a lockdown zone but worked outside their lockdown zone and vice versa were eligible for the assistance. 2. An employee of a high risk and non-essential service provider Employer that had closed during the lock down period can be assisted. 3. Members who are not getting paid during the lockdown period due to 1 & 2 above. 4. Maximum Assistance allowed for Round 1 - \$220 as one off lump sum payment and Round 2 - \$440 paid in 2 x \$220 fortnightly instalments. 5. Members who were already receiving any of the ongoing Covid19 Relief assistance were not entitled to this Relief Assistance. 6. Government tops up to the maximum assistance amount for those with insufficient GA Balance. 7. Only members whose names are recorded in the White Listⁱ 8. Members had to make a physical or online submission for each Round.

The effective monitoring of COVID19 assistance criteria to determine assistance eligibility was heavily reliant on our Application System capabilities. User Acceptance Testing was explicitly rolled out to ensure confidence and readiness of the system before implementation of the COVID19 assistance phases.

The COVID19 assistance criteria were used in the design of the withdrawal business rules in our Application System (ProMIS). These business rules were specific, testable directive that served as a criterion for guiding application behavior, shaping users judgements or making decisions for applications registered and processed in the system. They ensured that COVID19 applications were processed in accordance with the COVID19 Assistance Policy and Guidelines.

COVID19 applications submitted over the counter were assessed first by our frontline officers to ensure they meet the assistance criteria before they were accepted. Applications that met

the full withdrawal criteria were then registered, processed and submitted for approval by the receiving officer. Incomplete applications were returned for members to complete while members that were not eligible for the assistance were provided explanations as to why they did not qualify.

Applications lodged by members via Mobile App would go through system validations and business rules checks first before they were automatically registered. The system validations in place helped determined whether or not the member was eligible for the assistance in accordance with the COVID19 Policy and Guidelines. Those applications that met 100% of the assistance criteria would go through Robotic Process Automation (RPA) right up to approval stage where they are eyeballed one last time before going for payment. If an application did not pass any of the system validations, they were dropped in the processing queue for further eyeballing and relevant processing.

The Fund was also furnished with the Employers' White list by Employers which served as a determinant for assistance criteria eligibility for members genuinely affected. The White List contained a list of workers names and membership details who were affected during the Covid-19 lockdown period because of movement restrictions faced in getting to work. This Whitelist was uploaded into the Withdrawal System as a source of referral for those eligible for the lockdown assistance.

Employers were also empowered to lodge applications on behalf of their employees through the Employer's Portal; as such they were responsible for vetting member's documents online and for providing accurate information. This was an alternative option offered to employers who could not submit any White list.

The System controls we had in place ensured that members can only access the product offering once. For the Phases where members were eligible for Government top ups, the system ensured that the member's full GA balance is exhausted first before Government top up is released up to the maximum assistance allowed for each member. Where Government top up is not applicable, the system controls in place will follow the minimum and maximum GA Balance rule of thumb.

Apart from the systems controls put in place for COVID19, there were generic system validation rules that would flag applications that do not meet any of the assistance criterias. These validations would be displayed as error messages that helps shape users judgement or make decisions.

15. Can FNPf brief the Committee on the challenges in carrying out the home loan (mortgage assistance) assistance for its members and how was this monitored?

The Covid-19 Housing Assistance scheme was designed to assist members who were placed on the Home Loan Lender's Moratorium program during the Covid19 pandemic. The scheme allowed these members to access their 100% GA plus 50% of their PA if required to pay monthly home loan repayment amount from a minimum of 3 months to a maximum of 12 months repayment sum.

Applications for members who were eligible for this assistance were all submitted by their respective Lender through the FNPf Employers Portal. After submission by the Lenders, the applications are automatically registered in our system and placed in our withdrawal processing queue for further assessment and processing. Payment for this assistance was directed to the

Member's Home Loan account. Members and their Lenders are notified after payment is sent to the Bank.

Challenges Faced

Challenges Timeline	Challenges Encountered	Mitigation Approach
Pre-Go Live Date	<p>Getting Lenders to come on board and agree to</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Assessing affected member's Covid-19 housing applications from their end. This was necessary for the Fund to enforce as it ensured that only members who were genuinely affected got assisted. submit eligible member's applications online from their end 	<p>The Working Committee ensured there was:-</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Continuous consultations with Lenders Organized In-house awareness for all the Lenders for the product offering. Buddy type and hands on training experience of the Employers Portal.
	<p>Internal System setbacks</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> That accommodate payment direct to Home Loan Account of Non-Bank Lenders customers. System User Acceptance testing challenges that did not meet BU 	<p>Our Operations Team and IT Project Management and Development Team deliberated on the issues and worked together in designing a workable method of payment which became the first of its kind for Housing Assistance.</p>
Post-Go Live Date	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Lenders faced Access and Login Issues to the Employer Portals 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Issue was reported to FNPF IT helpdesk and was resolved. Key Learnings were noted.
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Size of documents uploaded by Lenders affected images uploading. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Issue was reported to FNPF IT Helpdesk and size was increased and tested to ensure no issues were repeated.
	<p>Addressing members complaints regarding</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Names of eligible members not showing on the moratorium program. Member who had no knowledge of the assistance. Members who went through restructure and during COVID19 but did not meet the criteria for the Moratorium program offered by their Lenders (FRCS and Government Ministries workers) Members laid off due to "No Jab No Job law" who did not meet the criteria for the moratorium program offered by their Lenders. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Members were explained about the assistance eligibility criteria. They were also taken through counseling sessions and offered other COVID19 relief assistance and Housing debt reduction assistance that were applicable to their situation.

Challenges Timeline	Challenges Encountered	Mitigation Approach
Post-Closure Date	<p>Addressing post closure complaints raised</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Members who accessed their PA balance for the second time and were placed with a Charge on their titles, were required to pay back the amount in excess of \$9,000 taken from their preserved account. For these group of members, any contributions received into their account after the assistance would have to replenish the amount accessed from their PA first. This meant that they will not have any GA Balance for a long time until the amount accessed from their PA is fully replenished. 	<p>Members were taken through counseling sessions and offered options that were suitable to their situations.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Members reaching Entitlement Event age (Retirement and Low Account Balance) were provided counseling on pension key features information and could rejoin the Fund if they get re-employed. Members who were re-employed were counseled on additional contributions and withdrawal repayment methods available.

16. Can FNPF provide the number of members that benefitted from the Low Balance Account assistance? Under this assistance did FNPF change the amount of withdrawal or it stayed the same (\$5,000 to \$10,000)?

A total of 4,508 members were assisted between 1st July 2020 to 30th June 2022 with a total withdrawal sum of \$19,601,301.67 paid. Of this number, 3,657 members were paid in FY2022 with a sum of \$17,714,652.74.

Financial Year	No Assisted	Withdrawal Amount
FY2021	851	\$1,886,648.93
FY2022	3,657	\$17,714,652.74
	4,508	\$19,601,301.67

During the National Budget announcement on 16 July 2021, Low Balance maximum assistance amount was increased from \$5,000 to \$10,000. This change allowed members aged 50 to 54 who have been unemployed for at least a year or 12 months, with balances equal to or below \$10,000 to fully withdraw their funds. Prior to the change, the criteria required members to be unemployed for 36 months or more and have a balance of less than \$5,000 in order to qualify for the withdrawal.

The maximum assistance was increased from \$5,000 to \$10,000 and this is still the same.

17. Micro Business as one of the assistance provided to members for sustainability. How is FNPF monitoring this program and clarify on the continuance of this scheme?

Members who apply for more than \$2,000 are paid two equal instalments. 50% is paid in the first instalment. The member must provide receipts on the use of funds paid in the first instalment within 3 months from payment date in order to get the 2nd upon verification of acquittals provided, the remaining 50% will be paid out within 3 working days. Members who failed to submit the receipts within 3 months, their applications are automatically cancelled by the system.

Although it had a low take-up rate, it had served its purpose amid unprecedented times paying out \$905,231.62 to 168 members. The FNPF Board has approved the closure of the assistance to be effective on 12 May 2023 as it was intended to be a temporary relief assistance during the COVID-19 pandemic.

18. Can FNPF elaborate on the relocated office in Nakasi and how has this improved its outreach to its customers in the Nasinu and Nausori corridor?

The Fund saw the relocation of our Office to Nakasi as an opportunity to bring our services closer to a wider audience in one of Central's densely populated area; the Suva-Nausori corridor. The new location is closer to a wide range of Businesses and employers, not to mention employees thus saving travel time to Suva or Nausori for FNPF needed services. The Nakasi Office offers all services that can be accessed in Suva and Nausori including cards services, nominations, pension services, employer's services and housing withdrawal services. Employers do not have to queue at HQ to pay contributions as they are able to make payments at the Nakasi Office and access the Employers portal at their Kiosk corner.

The Office in Nakasi is the only one that offers FNPF Services on Saturdays that caters for members and FNPF Customers who have a busy work schedule during the week. The services offered on Saturday is the same one that is offered during the week.

Since the relocation of the office to Nakasi on September 1st, we have served a total of 16,324 customers. This is an average of 2,040 customers per month.

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19. Can FNPF elaborate on the reduction of registered employers in 2022 (7,732) as compared to 2021 (7,901)?

The reduction is due to the following:-

- Businesses not able to recover from COVID and thus closed down and de-registered with FNPF.
- Through data cleansing exercise, employers who are no longer operating nor submitting remittance statements are ceased upon verification with ROC and proper diligence checks.
- Employers not engaging employees are also removed from employer count. A number of employers remain registered with FNPF but are not engaging employees.

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20. Can FNPF clarify on the unpaid contribution for 2022?

Total Contribution Debt for 2022 was \$65.13m. The Fund managed to collect \$51.05m and as at 31st Dec 2022 had a remaining debt balance of \$14.07m. Current update of this 2022 Contribution Debt -\$14.07m. As at 12th May 2023, the Fund has collected \$2.41m, have successfully pursued via prosecution, 3rd party garnishee and time payment \$6.97(m). Remaining Bal from the 2022 contribution debt that has been pursued with visits, notifications and most on DPO is \$4.68m

In conclusion, the Funds overall debt recovery/success rate for the 2022 contribution debt to date was 93%.

Contribution Debt of 2022Update		
Particulars	Employer	Debt
Total Contribution Debt in 2022	7,145	\$ 65,132,064.75
Total Contribution Debt Collected in 2022	4,770	\$ 51,055,472.10
Total Contribution Debt Remaining 31st Dec in 2022	3,659	\$ 14,076,592.65
Update on 2022Contribution Debt as at 12th May 2022 : \$14076592.65		
Total 2022 Contribution Debt Collected rom 1st Jan -12th May	340	\$ 2,417,015.20
Total debt on Recovery Stage TP/OTP/PROSECUTION	418	\$ 6,971,436.56
Total 2022 contribution Debt remaining Already visited/ Notified/Issued debt letter with most on DPO	2,901	\$ 4,688,140.89
Overall Recovery Rate 2022Contribution Debt		93%

21. How is FNPF dealing with the insufficient information supplied by employers?

The FNPF Employer Portal allows employers to upload their own remittance statements, employee/employer registrations etc. The Portal has mechanisms in place to disallow employers making submissions with insufficient employee/employer information. Since its implementation, this is no longer an issue.

To address the insufficient historic data provided by employers in the past years prior to the Employer Portal, the Fund has carried out various exercises like; meetings with Employers to obtain past records, advertisements in news dailies and the social media platform are used to reach out to members to come forward with their details. The Fund continues to work closely with Employers in ensuring that way forward, all information is gathered for all employees.

22. Can FNPF provide an update on the unclaimed deposits account? How has FNPF addressed this issue?

Actions Taken

FNPF has placed newspaper adverts from 2017 and more recently added the listings to our Facebook page. In 2019 a project team was set up at Member Services for 6 months to contact members and assist them in claiming their funds. Contacts were searched from member records forms such as their Membership Registration Form, Nomination Form, card requests and/or WD application forms. The unclaimed deposits listing were also circulated to FNPF staff to assist, where a relative or friend appears on the unclaimed listing.

System enhancement was done in our ProMIS – sytsem to automate the processing Further Payment Withdrawals 3 months after a Full Withdrawal Event has occurred. This enhancement has resolved further payment transfers which is the highest count of UDA entries.

Challenges

The main challenge for the unclaimed funds is the contact details for members in our records; either they are not stated in the forms we have in our custody as it was not a compulsory requirement for FNPF members then or the contacts are no longer in use by the members. Our reach to the members, a few members who have come forward noted that they were either overseas or stay in the interiors and did not see our adverts. Only advised when they visited their relatives.

Future plans for UDA

To liaise with PR for adverts encouraging members to check their accounts to avoid it being transferred to UDA due to account dormancy. Management to include this as an item of discussion in our public forums or radio interviews. Work with Member Advocacy team to take a listing with them during their trips to the island or the interiors. More communication and partnering with branches and agencies in the north and west to have printed listings in their

offices. To also liaise with Post Fiji and District Offices, possibility of having our listing placed at their offices especially Post Office as they have a wider coverage in Fiji.

23. *Can FNPf provide an update on the pending civil litigation cases?*

As of 30th of April 2023 there are total of 38 pending civil litigation cases with the Legal Team. Out of these 18 cases were filed by the Fund against the directors personally for failure to pay FNPf contributions pursuant to section 116A of the FNPf Act 2011. 20 cases are claims filed against the Fund while 2 cases are claims against the Fund from former employees.

24. *Can FNPf elaborate on the control measures for employers to comply with the FNPf Act 2011?*

- Strengthening of employer visitation, routine inspections and awareness. Each financial year, inspection planners are compiled to ensure full coverage of all employers. This is to ensure all Employers are visited at least once a year and records are checked to ensure full compliance to FNPf.
- Employee awareness is conducted to ensure that employees are aware of their FNPf entitlements and contributions. With the mobile app, employees are also able to view their contributions paid etc. These avenues allow employees to come forward if their FNPf contributions are not paid either fully or partially.
- Strengthening of the issuance of Compliance letters to employers. Employers are issued either 1 year compliance or conditional compliance letters based on their compliance with to the FNPf Act.
- Having a Whistleblower policy intact. This assists FNPf in carrying out its role to ensure all members are paid FNPf contributions fairly and correctly.
- Penalties – deter employers from incurring debts. Providing amnesty during COVID so employers can continue to pay contributions.

25. *Can FNPf update the committee on the progress of the titles that are still in the process of discharge?*

From the period January 2023 to 30th April 2023 the Fund has discharged a total of 300 titles. Currently there is a total of 3,641 titles in the custody of the Fund that are yet to be discharged.

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26. *Can FNPf elaborate on the commercial loan to ATH?*

A short-term bridging loan of US\$20M was given to ATH who had on-lent to Digitec Communications Ltd t/a Vodafone PNG as funding of equipment for the Vodafone PNG Rollout Project. The loan was for a term of 6 months with option to extend by another term. The interest rate on the loan was 6.00%. The loan is settled as of March 2023.

27. *Can FNPf update the committee on the progress of addressing the declined local term deposits?*

The local term deposits declined from \$215.5 million last year (2021) to close at 109.5 million in 2022. The decline was due to redemption of term deposits and retaining into cash for investments and member withdrawals. The interest rates in the current business environment has been reducing due to high liquidity in the system. To address this decline in term deposit rates, we opt to invest in offshore term deposits and local government bonds to earn better interest income on our portfolio.

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28. *What sort of assistance did FNPf provide its tenants during the pandemic?*

- Rental Concessions were only provided to tenants whose business were directly and heavily impacted by the pandemic. This excluded Financial Institution, Telecommunication Industries and Government Departments/Ministries.
- Moratorium on all Rent renewal or review : All Tenants

29. *Can FNPF elaborate on the occupancy rate of 93% within its properties?*

The occupancy rate of 93% relates to the total percentage of rented or used space for all FNPF earning properties available for leasing. Portfolio leasable space was 801,372 square feet with 55,658 square feet was vacant as at Jun 22. Portfolio occupancy level was 93%. Vacancy level is including My FNPF Centre, Nadi, which was operational from 6th Dec 2021

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30. *Can FNPF provide a breakdown of the refurbishment cost for Sheraton Fiji Golf and Beach Resort and the newly renovated Marriott?*

Total Sheraton Refurbishment cost is 78.9m. This includes around \$26m directed to refurbishment the meeting areas and conference space in 2019 for the ADB meeting. The project file has been audited and now in closure status. We are also engaging KPMG to carry out an independent review on the file and processes followed.

31. *The outcome and progress of the tender process for Westin refurbishment?*

Fletcher has been engaged for the room block works through a competitive public process – contract has been signed in December 2022.

Detailed documentation of Central Facilities in progress. Tender for Central facilities works is to be issued in June.

32. *The outcome of the return on investment on properties invested by FNPF, how has this benefitted FNPF and its members?*

FNPF receives two types of returns from its investment properties; rental income and appreciation in the value of the properties over time. Both of these returns are included as part of the returns when interest rate to members is determined annually.

33. *The outcome of investing in Fiji Airways, can FNPF elaborate on the challenges pre and post Covid?*

FNPF acquired 30% shareholding in June 2022. Key challenge and concern for FNPF was Fiji Airways solvency and liquidity position which questioned whether Fiji Airways was able to continue as a business of going concern. However, to date, this has now improved greatly and the company is taking advantage of the pent-up demand to boost its cash flows.

COVID-19 restrictions had impacted Fiji Airways revenue and ability to meet full loan repayments. As such the FNPF and other lenders restructured the accounts by deferring principal repayment for a period of 3 years, which expires on 31 Dec 2023. Fiji Airways continued to meet interest repayments and has not defaulted on any obligation. Post COVID-19 performance has been great with company moving to achieve pre-CVOID levels well within 2023/2024.

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34. *Can FNPF elaborate on the modification of the myFNPF app as it has undergone many cycles of modifications?*

For FY2022, enhancement for the mobile APP included the payment integrations with BSP Internet Payment Gateway (IPG) integration and Vodafone MPAISA. This has allowed members

to make additional and voluntary contributions directly through the app and in the process enhance their user experience and remit contribution real time.

35. *Can FNPf elaborate more on employers using the new portal to access and submit documentation, how friendly is this to its users?*

The FNPf Portal is a platform introduced by FNPf to Employers, to allow them to submit their monthly contributions schedules online. This replaces the manual submission mode at FNPf Offices.

FNPf have been working on enhancing the Employer Service Portal (ESS) services and systems to improve user experience and convenience for employers making it user-friendly and intuitive. Our target is to provide employers with a streamlined and efficient process for accessing and submitting documentation related to FNPf contributions and employee information. User-friendliness of the portal achieved through clear navigation, straightforward instructions, and an intuitive interface that simplifies the tasks required.

The portal has been further enhanced to also allow employers to:

- Access information and historical data relating to their respective accounts
- View and print receipts
- View employer profile and make adjustments if need be
- View contribution schedules as far as 7 years
- View payment records
- Make adjustments to contribution amounts
- Register new members
- Register new employers
- Send messages

The Fund has conducted Portal awareness sessions with Employers since its implementation and provided User manuals and videos to guide employers. We also have three dedicated Portal Helplines set-up to assist employers if they face any user issues. As a result, transition for employers was made easier.

36. *Can FNPf provide statistics on myFNPf app users, how frequent is this used and for which type of services provided? What is the satisfaction rate of users using the app?*

From 1st July 2021 till 30th June 2022 (FY2022), about 40 % of member registered withdrawal requests came through the mobile APP i.e. about 34,985 of the 88,415. The Total digital applications received during FY2022 was totalling to 49%. This resulted increase FUND efficiency, especially during the COVID period.

USER	TOTAL No. Requests
Staff	51%
Mobile App (Digital)	40%
Employer Portal (Digital)	8.5%
Member Portal (Digital)	0.5%

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37. *Has FNPF conducted any awareness programs for students in the tertiary institutions who are nearing completion of studies and ready to join the workforce to register as members?*

Institution	Number of Awareness	Number of Participants
USP	3 sessions	308 students and lecturers
FNU	2 sessions	186 students and lecturers
Corpus Christi	2 sessions	196 students and lecturers
Marist Champagnat	1 session	60 students and lecturers

38. *Can FNPF elaborate on whether there are engagements with other stakeholders on advocacy and awareness?*

There is engagement with prominent stakeholders. FNPF has signed a number of Memo of Understanding (MOUs) to allow sharing of information and to strengthen compliance. Some examples are:

- Ministry of Agriculture - provide awareness and services to agricultural farmers to in the different locations
- Fiji Dairy Association - provides for the deduction of voluntary contributions at source for the farmers that are part of the Association.
- UNDP Reach Programme - provide awareness and services to agricultural farmers to in the different locations. For the last financial year, we visited Lau and Yasawasa and this year we have visited Rotuma, Cakaudrove, Yasawas, Gau, Batiki and Lomaiviti Group.
- UNDP Market for Change for Women - provide awareness and services to agricultural farmers to in the different locations. The team has visited Levuka and Kadavu for this FY.
- Women's Entrepreneur's Business Council - provide awareness and services to women in business during their forums.

39. *What were the challenges, benefits and cost of the ISO 31000:2009? What was the impact of this international standard (ISO) post Covid?*

ISO 31000 is a standard that provides guidelines for the implementation of risk management in organizations and generally defined as "a process that provides confidence that planned objectives of the organization will be achieved within an acceptable degree of residual risks". The Fund has benchmarked its Enterprise Risk Management Framework to this International Standard since 2014.

Key challenges on the on-going implementation of ISO 31000 for the Fund is on the Business Units resource allocation including time within Business Units to ensure on-going compliance.

This require on-going integration, review and monitoring of risk management into the activities across the Fund and continuous reporting.

In terms of costs for the reported FY, there were no new cost investments and the main costs is in the time allocated by BU for the compliance processes.

Key benefits on the Implementation of the standards are as follows;

1. It enabled the Fund to improve its risk management practices and ensuring that on an on-going basis new risks are identified, assesses and mitigated and periodic risk assessments are undertaken with risks management plans updated.

2. The process shows that FNPf committed to effectively managing its risks. Such a commitment provides stakeholder confidence that the Fund is managing its key risks to ensure that it protects and creates value for members.

The key impact of ISO 31000 post Covid for the Fund is that it validated the effectiveness of its risk management process. The Fund is able to:

1. Meet its obligations to its members in terms of COVID benefits assistance through a time of decrease contributions and the platform to continue serving the members (work from home, on-line processing of members COVID assistance withdrawals).
2. The general impact of the standard post covid on the health and building sector in terms of new ventilation requirements.

40. Can FNPf elaborate on the challenges and benefits of the execution of Business Continuity simulation test?

Business Continuity simulation test provides assurance in the Fund's readiness to resume businesses after a disruption event. It tests the Fund's processes, systems and people's preparedness to deal with unexpected events or crisis. The exercises allows the Fund to review its performances through these exercised and implement changes to its BCP plan including identification of new risks. Key challenges are:

- i) Scoping of these tests to be as realistic as possible
- ii) Ability to maintain business as usual on a BCP simulation scenario.

41. Can FNPf elaborate on the benefits of the Fund-wide training and education that it undertook in 2022?

The implementation of training is to address the critical areas that drives the Funds strategic plan and to ensure staff engagement and development. Furthermore, it builds capacity to improve organizational performance and ensure its sustainability.

FNPf is driven by a robust Training Policy and supported by a strategically aligned outcome based Return on Investment (ROI) process.

In order that the **benefits of training**, are determined the following measures have been used.

- A. Productivity & Performance
- B. In-house Succession Program Promotions (movement to an upper tier)
- C. FNU Grant Assessment
- D. FNPf Financial Performance

A. Productivity & Performance

Table 1 below shows the average Performance rating by Division / Department indicating a marked improvement by 11.1% with outperformance in the core functions 100.2% by Employers (Collections) and 101% by Investment Division.

Table 1

Division	Average of PDR Rating FY2021	Average PDR Rating FY2022
Administration	88.6%	91.1%
Business Transformation	96.8%	99.0%

Employers	99.3%	100.2%
Executive Office	77.2%	95.8%
Finance	91.9%	99.7%
Governance & Risk	82.1%	94.2%
Human Resources	94.9%	97.4%
Information Technology	71.5%	96.3%
Investments	88.9%	101.0%
Member Services	81.5%	94.7%
Projects	57.2%	81.3%
Properties	76.9%	90.1%
Research & Development	80.8%	98.6%
Securities	86.8%	91.1%
Grand Total	85.0%	96.1%

B. Succession Planning Program

Since 2018, the Funds Leadership Dev program enabled staff capabilities and prepared pathways for Team Leaders to become Managers and Managers to Gen. Managers. In 2022 the Fund recorded 14 Team Leaders Acting in Manager Positions and 3 Managers Acting in General Managers Position. The Leadership Development Framework Program also enabled two women in Manager Position to successfully secure the GM Business Transformation and GM Governance & Risk positions.

- C. The effective implementation of the Training Plan which was derived from a well-designed Training Need Analysis process resulted in an improvement in the FNU grant assessment rating of an average of 90.87% for the previous years with 2022 assessment yet to be received.
- D. Figures below from FY22 annual report below shows a clear indication of the positive correlation between Staff Training and the Funds overall Performance.

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42. *In reviewing the complaints management policy, can FNPf elaborate on the effectiveness and efficiency it had contributed to resolving complaints for its members and how has this uplifted the service provided by FNPf?*

The complaints policy sets the turn-around the time in resolving the issues raised by stakeholders and escalation processes up to the CEO for those issues that have fall beyond the turnaround time. Furthermore the reporting mechanism in terms of monthly report to management and quarterly to RBF that ensures that management is accountable for resolving the issues, identify root causes and undertake the required improvements in the Fund's processes and/ or policies where required.

43. *Can FNPf provide an overview of its annual work plan and the alignment to its strategic objective? What were the challenges of carrying out this program?*

The annual work plan is drawn from the Strategic Plan. Below is a structure of how our strategy is cascaded



Some key challenge is business disruption, some legacy issues we still have to clear and fine-tuning the 5-year sequencing of activities implementation.

General Questions – Sustainable Development Goals

44. Can FNPF elaborate on its contribution to SDG performance targets? What were the challenges?

Goal 1 – No Poverty

- FNPF is taking steps towards this SDG with its retirement savings purpose. Old-age poverty is a reality that we want to improve in Fiji enabling more members to be financially independent in their golden years. While it's still a challenge, progress have been made over the years particularly with the increase in contribution rate, reduction in withdrawal ground, recent increase in retirement age, and the preservation policy of 70/30.
- More efforts will continue to be carried out on this front over the coming years.

Goal 3 – Good Health and Wellbeing

- The Fund through its social security platform provide access to members from their retirement savings General Account under medical withdrawal ground.
- On investment, FNPF has entered into a PPP with Government and Aspen Medical for the provision of quality healthcare in Fiji. This has brought quality and overseas type of health care to our shore making services both accessible and a little more affordable for many Fijians.

Goal 4 – Quality Education

- FNPF allows members and their immediate family members to access the General Account for tertiary education.

Goal 5 – Gender Equality

- Refer to response to question 45 below.

Goal 8: Decent Work and Economic Growth

- Indirectly through our investments, employment are created and economic activity are generated

Goal 11: Sustainable Cities and Communities

- There is plan to pursue in this planning period affordable housing in collaboration with Government to allow more Fiji citizens to own home.

Goal 13: Climate Action

- Strategy are in place to adapt the Fund's policies, processes and essentially our investments to climate sustainable practices as well as our disclosures in the financial report that complies to this.
- Progresses are already in place to initiate with solar renewable energy practices for some of our properties.

45 *Can FNPf highlight its contribution towards SDG 5 – Gender and its implementation in the organization?*

In terms of staff make-up. The gender distribution at every level is as follows:

	Level	Male	Female
	Executive	7 (70%)	3 (30%)
	Management	27 (62.96%)	10 (37.04%)
	Staff	165 (48.2%)	177(51.8)
	Total	199	190

The gender distribution has always fluctuates depending on turnover, however significant improvement has been made at the Executive suit helm whereby 3 women are represented. Appointment though has always been made on the basis of competency.

ⁱ List of Employee Details submitted by their Employer whose Operations were affected due to the lockdown.

Appendix 2

Supplementary response from
Fiji National Provident Fund

From: Millie Low <MillieL@fnpf.com.fj>

Sent: Monday, September 4, 2023 6:55 AM

To: Tevita Tuivanuavou <tevita.tuivanuavou@legislature.gov.fj>

Cc: Atelaite Leba <atelaite.leba@parliament.gov.fj>; Atelaite Leba <atelaite.leba@legislature.gov.fj>; Viliame B. Vodonaivalu <ViliameV@fnpf.com.fj>; Pravinesh Singh <PravineshS@fnpf.com.fj>; Alipate Waqairawai <AlipateW@fnpf.com.fj>; Shandiya Gounder <ShandiyaG@fnpf.com.fj>

Subject: RE: Follow up Question from the Standing Committee on Social Affairs

Good morning Tevita

Please find our responses below:

For FY 2023 (ending 30 June 2023):

- Total Membership - 405,865
- Contributing Compulsory – 239,792
- Contributing Voluntary – 11,264
- Total contributing members – 251,056 (61.9% compared to 56.9% in FY22)
- Non Contributing – 154,809 (38.1% compared to 43.1% in FY22)

Reasons for non-contribution:-

1. Members are no longer working;
2. Members may have emigrated or working overseas (professionals working overseas, seasonal workers, etc)
3. Non-payment of contribution by employers (non- compliance)

Respectfully submitted for your information.

Regards
Millie

From: Tevita Tuivanuavou <tevita.tuivanuavou@legislature.gov.fj>

Sent: Friday, 1 September 2023 3:15 PM

To: Millie Low <MillieL@fnpf.com.fj>; Viliame B. Vodonaivalu <ViliameV@fnpf.com.fj>

Cc: Atelaite Leba <atelaite.leba@parliament.gov.fj>; Atelaite Leba <atelaite.leba@legislature.gov.fj>; Pravinesh Singh <PravineshS@fnpf.com.fj>; Shandiya Gounder <ShandiyaG@fnpf.com.fj>; Alipate Waqairawai <AlipateW@fnpf.com.fj>

Subject: Re: Follow up Question from the Standing Committee on Social Affairs

Some people who received this message don't often get email from tevita.tuivanuavou@legislature.gov.fj. [Learn why this is important](#)

CAUTION: This email originated from outside of the FNPF. Do not click links or open attachments unless you recognize the sender and know that the content is safe.

Thank you Millie, this is gratefully appreciated.

tevita

From: Millie Low <MillieL@fnpf.com.fj>

Sent: Friday, September 1, 2023 3:10 PM

To: Tevita Tuivanuavou <tevita.tuivanuavou@legislature.gov.fj>; Viliame B. Vodonaivalu <ViliameV@fnpf.com.fj>

Cc: Atelaite Leba <atelaite.leba@parliament.gov.fj>; Atelaite Leba <atelaite.leba@legislature.gov.fj>; Pravinesh Singh <PravineshS@fnpf.com.fj>; Shandiya Gounder <ShandiyaG@fnpf.com.fj>; Alipate Waqairawai <AlipateW@fnpf.com.fj>

Subject: RE: Follow up Question from the Standing Committee on Social Affairs

Good Afternoon Tevita

Thank you for extension. We will verify the the numbers for this year and respond before the deadline on Monday.

Kind regards
Millie

Sent from my Galaxy

----- Original message -----

From: Tevita Tuivanuavou <tevita.tuivanuavou@legislature.gov.fj>

Date: 9/1/23 3:03 PM (GMT+12:00)

To: "Viliame B. Vodonaivalu" <ViliameV@fnpf.com.fj>

Cc: Atelaite Leba <atelaite.leba@parliament.gov.fj>, Atelaite Leba <atelaite.leba@legislature.gov.fj>, Millie Low <MillieL@fnpf.com.fj>, Pravinesh Singh <PravineshS@fnpf.com.fj>, Shandiya Gounder <ShandiyaG@fnpf.com.fj>, Alipate Waqairawai <AlipateW@fnpf.com.fj>

Subject: Re: Follow up Question from the Standing Committee on Social Affairs

CAUTION: This email originated from outside of the FNPF. Do not click links or open attachments unless you recognize the sender and know that the content is safe.

Good Afternoon Sir,

I have been following up on calls on the update of the question that was sent on 29 August 2023 (email highlighted in yellow below). Due to some technical issues the email was received from FNPF on 30 August 2023. This is a query that needs clarification from the Standing Committee on Social Affairs. The response was supposedly be submitted on Wednesday 30 August 2023, Due to complications we gave time for FNPF to respond. We hoping that if the response to the question below be submitted by Monday at 10:00 am.

The members of the Standing Committee on Social Affairs would like to clarify whether the numbers have reduced in 2023 for members that were not contributing, as it was mentioned that 171,815 were members that were not contributing. What are the reasons for these members not actively contributing.

Respectfully submitted for your kind information and action.

Tevita
(8018895)

From: Shandiya Gounder <ShandiyaG@fnpf.com.fj>
Sent: Wednesday, August 30, 2023 5:12 PM
To: tevita.tuivanuavou@parliament.gov.fj <tevita.tuivanuavou@parliament.gov.fj>
Cc: Atelaite Leba <atelaite.leba@parliament.gov.fj>; Atelaite Leba <atelaite.leba@legislature.gov.fj>;
Tevita Tuivanuavou <tevita.tuivanuavou@legislature.gov.fj>; Millie Low <MillieL@fnpf.com.fj>;
Pravinesh Singh <PravineshS@fnpf.com.fj>
Subject: RE: Follow up Question from the Standing Committee on Social Affairs

Hi Tevita
Sorry – this email did not come through for some reason. Please allow time till tomorrow to respond

Thanks

From: Tevita W. Tuivanuavou <tevita.tuivanuavou@parliament.gov.fj>
Sent: Wednesday, 30 August 2023 9:33 AM
To: Shandiya Gounder <ShandiyaG@fnpf.com.fj>
Cc: Atelaite Leba <atelaite.leba@parliament.gov.fj>; atelaite.leba@legislature.gov.fj;
tevita.tuivanuavou@legislature.gov.fj
Subject: Fw: Follow up Question from the Standing Committee on Social Affairs

CAUTION: This email originated from outside of the FNPF. Do not click links or open attachments unless you recognize the sender and know that the content is safe.

Good morning Shandiya,

Please find email below sent in yesterday.

Tevita

From: Tevita W. Tuivanuavou
Sent: 29 August 2023 17:26
To: Shandiya Gounder

Cc: Atelaite Leba; atelaite.leba@legislature.gov.fj; tevita.tuivanuavou@legislature.gov.fj; Pravinesh Singh

Subject: Follow up Question from the Standing Committee on Social Affairs

Good afternoon Shandiya,

The members of the Standing Committee on Social Affairs would like to clarify whether the numbers have reduced in 2023 for members that were not contributing, as it was mentioned that 171,815 were members that were not contributing. What are the reasons for these members not actively contributing.

Hope the response could be provided by Wednesday 30 August 2023 at 12 midday.

Respectfully submitted for your kind action.

Tevita
(8018895)

From: Shandiya Gounder <ShandiyaG@fnpf.com.fj>

Sent: 26 July 2023 15:30:53

To: Tevita W. Tuivanuavou; Atelaite Leba

Cc: Viliame B. Vodonaivalu; Alipate Waqairawai; Tevita Lomalagi; Pravinesh Singh; Tevita Kalou

Subject: [EXTERNAL]RE: [EXTERNAL]RE: Names of the Standing Committee on Social Affairs

Caution: This email contains suspicious subject or content. Do not click on any link or open attachments unless you have confirmed the sender and know the content is safe.

Good afternoon Tevita

Attached please find responses to supplementary questions based on the Fiji National Provident Fund 2022 Annual Report as requested in the email trail below.

Please do not hesitate to reach out should there be any clarifications required.

Thanks
Shandiya

From: Tevita W. Tuivanuavou <tevita.tuivanuavou@parliament.gov.fj>

Sent: Monday, 24 July 2023 3:33 PM

To: Shandiya Gounder <ShandiyaG@fnpf.com.fj>; Tevita Kalou <TevitaK2@fnpf.com.fj>

Subject: Fw: [EXTERNAL]RE: Names of the Standing Committee on Social Affairs

Some people who received this message don't often get email from tevita.tuivanuavou@parliament.gov.fj. [Learn why this is important](#)

CAUTION: This email originated from outside of the FNPF. Do not click links or open attachments unless you recognize the sender and know that the content is safe.

Good Afternoon,

Please if the request could be considered and actioned accordingly.

Please do let me know of any queries.

Tevita
(8018895)

From: Tevita W. Tuivanuavou
Sent: 24 July 2023 13:18
To: ViliameV@fnpf.com.fj
Cc: tevita.tuivanuavou@legislature.gov.fj; Pravinesh Singh; Tevita Lomalagi; Alipate Waqairawai; Millie Low; r12vakalalabure@gmail.com; Atelaite Leba
Subject: Re: [EXTERNAL]RE: Names of the Standing Committee on Social Affairs

Good afternoon Sir,

I am emailing to follow up on the supplementary response that was requested by 7 July 2023. In addition to that I would like to clarify o the registered numbers on the annual report:

page 5 of the annual report mentioned the following:

total membership: 398,593
contributing compulsory: 241,536
contributing voluntary: 12,242

There is a balance of 171,815. can there be an explanation on this please.

We hope that we are able to get a supplementary response by Wednesday 26 July 2023 at 12 midday.

respectfully submitted for your kind action.

vinaka

tevita
8018895

From: Tevita W. Tuivanuavou
Sent: 29 June 2023 11:58:42
To: ViliameV@fnpf.com.fj
Cc: tevita.tuivanuavou@legislature.gov.fj; Pravinesh Singh; Tevita Lomalagi; Alipate Waqairawai; Millie

Low; r12vakalalabure@gmail.com

Subject: Re: [EXTERNAL]RE: Names of the Standing Committee on Social Affairs

Good morning Sir,

In addition to the public submission that was undertaken on Thursday 18 May 2023. The Hon. Members of the Standing Committee of Social Affairs deliberated on the responses and raised few clarifications that require your kind assistance. Sir, below are the supplementary questions.

Supplementary Questions – Fiji National Provident Fund 2022 annual report

1. FNPF mentioned a total of 37,000 members were served at Lautoka and Ba Hospital (inpatient services), can a breakdown be submitted to show how many were served at Lautoka and Ba respectively?
2. Outpatient numbers of 340,915 were served at the two hospitals? Can a breakdown be provided?
How many were FNPF members?
3. 32 patients undergone cardio operations, what was the cost of the operation? Were these patients members of FNPF that were assisted? Can a breakdown be provided on how many were operated in both hospitals?
4. Can FNPF provide on how many members have contributed up to 30% contribution (10% employer and 20% employee)?
5. As highlighted in the written response 3,641 titles are in the custody of FNPF. Can FNPF elaborate on the actions taken to ensure that these titles are issued back to its Members?
6. Can FNPF provide the cost of the Westin Refurbishment?

Sir, the members of the committee would like to receive the response by Friday 7 July 2023 at 12 midday.

Respectfully submitted for your kind information.

Tevita
(8018895)

Appendix 3

Verbatim Report

[VERBATIM REPORT]

MEETING OF THE STANDING COMMITTEE ON SOCIAL AFFAIRS

ANNUAL REPORT

Fiji National Provident Fund Annual Report 2022

INSTITUTION: Fiji National Provident Fund

VENUE: Big Committee Room (East Wing)

DATE: Thursday, 18th May, 2023

VERBATIM REPORT OF THE MEETING OF THE STANDING COMMITTEE ON SOCIAL AFFAIRS HELD AT THE BIG COMMITTEE ROOM (EAST WING), PARLIAMENT PRECINCTS, GOVERNMENT BUILDINGS, ON THURSDAY, 18TH MAY, 2023, AT 12.35P.M.

Interviewee/Submittee: Fiji National Provident Fund

In Attendance:

- | | | |
|---------------------------|---|---------------------------------|
| 1. Mr. Pravinesh Singh | - | Acting Chief Executive Officer |
| 2. Mr. Alipate Waqairawai | - | General Manager Member Services |
| 3. Mr. Tevita Lomalagi | - | Chief Financial Officer |
-

MADAM CHAIRPERSON.- Honourable Members, members of the media and the public, the Secretariat, viewers, ladies and gentlemen; a very good morning to you all. It is my absolute pleasure to welcome everyone this morning, especially the viewers who are watching this session.

I am privileged to Chair this meeting of the Standing Committee on Social Affairs which is being aired live on the Parliament Channel through the Walesi platform and livestreamed through the Parliament *Facebook* Page.

For information purpose, pursuant to the Standing Orders of Parliament, Standing Order 111 mandates that all Committee meetings are to be open to the public. Therefore, this meeting is open to the public and the media, and is also aired live, as I had earlier mentioned.

However, for any sensitive information concerning the submission that cannot be disclosed in public, this can be provided to the Committee either in private or in writing. please, note that this will only be allowed for few specific circumstances which include:

- national security matters;
- third party confidential information;
- personal or human resource matters; and
- meetings whereby the Committee deliberates on all issues before it develops its recommendations and reports.

I wish to remind honourable Members and our invited submittees that all comments and questions are to be addressed through the Chairperson and, please, be mindful that only invited submittees will be allowed to ask questions or give comments to the Committee.

This is a Parliamentary meeting and all information gathered is covered under the Parliamentary Powers and Privileges Act and the Standing Orders of Parliament. Please, note that the Committee does not condone liable or slender or any allegations against individuals who are not present today to defend themselves.

In terms of other protocols of this Committee meeting, please, be advised that whilst the meeting is in progress, movement within the meeting room will be restricted and all mobile phones are to be on silent mode, please.

Without further ado, I will now ask the Honourable Members of the Standing Committee to introduce themselves.

[Introduction of Committee Members]

With us this morning, we have representatives from the Fiji National Provident Fund (FNPF) who have been requested to provide a submission on the Fiji National Provident Fund Annual Report 2022.

The Committee, in its deliberation, have formulated questions which were sent out earlier to FNPF and it is required that they provide and present on their responses, that will then assist the Committee in formulating its recommendations in its Committee Report which will then be tabled to Parliament.

Having said that, I now invite our guests to introduce themselves before you proceed with your submission. please, note that if there are any questions from honourable Members of the Committee, that will take place after the presentation.

MR. P. SINGH.- Madam Chairperson and honourable Members, *ni sa bula*. Thank you for the opportunity for allowing the Fiji National Provident Fund (FNPF) to present and also to have a discussion on our 2022 Annual Report. Before I begin, I would like to also introduce my colleagues.

[Introduction of FNPF Officials]

With your permission, Madam Chairperson, before we proceed to the questions, I would like to take a few minutes to give an overview of the FNPF as to what it is and where our journey started and where we are today. It will not take long, I will just briefly take a few minutes before we get into the question and answer session.

The Fiji National Provident Fund is a defined contribution fund that provides superannuation services to its members. Our operations began in 1966 and we are 57 years old, and we are guided by the Fiji National Provident Fund Act 2011.

The FNPF collects compulsory contributions from employers and employees towards the retirement savings of all workers in Fiji. The Fund also provides pre-retirement benefits such as housing, medical, unemployment, funeral and education assistance.

The FNPF is a major investor in Fiji and is a largest property owner. It also owns majority shares in Amalgamated Telecom Holdings (ATH), Vodafone Fiji Limited, Home Finance and fully owns the InterContinental Fiji Golf Resort & Spa, Natadola Bay Championship Golf Course, Yatule Resort & Spa at Natadola Beach, Holiday Inn in Suva, Fiji Marriott Resort, Sheraton Fiji, The Westin, Denarau Gold & Racquet Club and Grand Pacific Hotel.

Whilst the subject today is discussion on the 2022 Annual Report, I would like to just briefly give you a glance and highlight of the 2022 financial year. Our net income for the year was \$650 million, compared to \$543 million in the year 2021. Our general reserve stands at \$1.7 billion as at the end of June 2022 and total funds held members is equal to \$6.7 billion. This has grown by \$0.3 billion from the prior year.

A total contribution that was received from our employers for the employees and the part as required under the Act equated to \$395.2 million. At the end of June 2022, FNPF credited a total of \$370.3 million as interest to members' accounts.

In terms of net increase in net assets which is available for allocation was \$600.5 million, compared to \$496.6 million for the year 2021.

In terms of benefits paid out during the year, Madam Chairperson, we paid out \$467 million as benefits. When I refer to benefits, these are pre-retirement benefits that we paid out under the various grounds of withdrawal allowed under the Act. If I were to give a breakdown:

- early retirement withdrawal equated to \$64.4 million,
- housing withdrawals was \$78.5 million,
- retirement at age 55 years and the ages that each member chose to retire beyond 55 years equated to \$209.8 million,
- withdrawal under death ground was \$48.3 million,
- withdrawal under disability was \$5.6 million,
- members who opted to migrate took out a total of \$42.9 million; and small account withdrawals which is also part of the questionnaire later on, equated to \$17.5 million.

In terms of demography, we have a total of 398,593 members, out of which 214,536 are contributing compulsory members and the split between male and female gender is 59 percent held by male and 41 percent held by females.

We also have a total of 12,242 contributing voluntary members and the breakdown by gender is 55 percent held by women which is good news because we see most of the women in the informal sector joining our voluntary scheme and getting income generated from small or medium entrepreneurial activities. If you are to do a split by gender, total female in the Fund are 43 percent and 57 percent members are male. If I were to give you a split of the share of wealth, 65 percent are held by male and 35 percent are held by female.

Member balances by age, we have got various cohorts and if I were to give a breakdown of 398,593 members, then majority of the members are in the age cohort 25 years to 34 years - 132,615; 120,094 are in the 35 years to 44 years age bracket and we also have about 18,718 in the over 55 years age cohort. For the year 2022, we had 7,732 active employers.

That was a brief highlight of the 2022 financial year, Madam Chairperson, and with that, we will now proceed to the questions that were provided to FNPF to be deliberated upon in today's session.

Page 8

Question No. 1

The Government pledged to increase contribution from 12 percent to 14 percent as at 1st January, 2023. Did this eventuate as planned, are there plans to get back to the original contribution, that is, 18 percent?

The Government is committed in restoring the full 18 percent and will continue to lobby for the full reinstatement, which is also part of our budget submission this year. If you may remember, the rate pre-COVID was 18 percent and once we were struck by the pandemic and due to the situation at that time, to assist the employer and the member community, the rate was reduced to 10 percent - 5 percent from employer and 5 percent from employee.

That has gradually been reinstated from 10 percent to 14 percent, as I speak, but it is important

that given FNPF plays a very pivotal role in the Fijian economy and the only savings for most of the members is at FNPF whom some had opted to withdraw during COVID, our humble plea to the Government of the day is to seriously consider the reinstatement of 18 percent in the Budget that will be presented in the forthcoming months.

Page 9

Question No. 2

The tertiary healthcare initiative is now available in Fiji. This has resulted in the decrease of FNPF savings to finance the expenses of members requiring tertiary healthcare abroad. Elaborate on how beneficial is this initiative to FNPF, its members and the health sector? Can FNPF provide statistical data of members that benefitted from this scheme?

The tertiary healthcare is the private public partnership with ASPEN and the Government of Fiji. Madam Chairperson, from April 2022 to March 2023, a total of 37,000 members were served at the two Facilities – Lautoka Hospital and Ba Hospital. These are inpatient services. Citizens, in general, were equated to 37,822 and cardio operations were done for 32 patients. In total, outpatient numbers of 340,915 were served at the two Facilities.

Some of the benefits of the Fund's investment in this space are to:

- improve the healthcare facilities and services available to our members and ordinary Fijians, particularly for those who do not have any private medical insurance and those who have low member balances - the ones who cannot afford medical insurance premium or assistance overseas.
- lower costs of medical treatment as people would not have to travel overseas for specialised treatment(s).
- provide a value chain for the tourism sector and this has been evidenced by countries, such as India, where medical tourism is earning them good foreign dollars. So we intend to also share in that space.
- participate in Environmental, Social and Governance (ESG) investments.

Question No. 3

Can FNPF brief the Committee on the outcome of FNPF's engagement with a renowned investment firm in Australia to review its investment policy statement?

Madam Chairperson, as you alluded to earlier this is something that is currently being evaluated, details of which are still sanity to FNPF. Once that is concluded, we will then make an official announcement.

Page 10

Question No. 4

Can FNPF provide a breakdown of the 160,000 members that were assisted during COVID (breakdown by division, gender, age and employment sector)?

Madam Chairperson, we have provided the breakdown in the table that has been already given to Tevita. I believe all of you have a copy of the details of 160,000 members. In fact, the total number of members that were assisted was 144,306.

Again, if I could briefly share the breakdown, the most members who were assisted were in the age category between 25 years to 34 years, with a total of 57,079 members. To further dissect, if we were to provide a sectorial perspective, the most affected sector was the wholesale, retail and trade; followed by accommodation and food services activities; then manufacturing. So, those are the major industries that were assisted during COVID-19.

Page 12

Question No. 5

It was highlighted that additional and voluntary contributions brought in a total of \$62.2 million, can FNPF elaborate on who are these voluntary contributors (breakdown by division, gender, age and employment sector)?

In response to that, a total of 35,571 members had contributed and the total contribution was \$62.2 million, out of which, 56 percent were male and 44 percent were female. Again, the breakdown by age cohort are provided to the Committee, and if I could further deliberate on that, the most number of members whom were assisted, again, belong to the 25 to 34 age category. You could easily deduce that these are the members who are actively in the employment sector.

Page 13

Question No. 6

How many members were assisted in the Micro-Business Withdrawal assistance during the COVID pandemic under -

- (i) SME projects;**
- (ii) expansion of existing business; and**
- (iii) reopening business?**

A total of 120 members were assisted, Madam Chairperson, for the micro business assistance, as follows:

- Startups, we had given assistance to 80 members;
- working capital, there were 36 members;
- new business equity contribution, there were three members; and to assist with the existing business, three members were assisted.

So that makes the total of 120 members.

Page 14

Question No. 7

What is the overall number of active FNPF members for the year 2021 and 2022?

That has been tabulated on Page No. 14 of the Annual Report. Again, for 2021, we had 215,200 members who are mandatory contributors. When I say 'mandatory', these are people like us who are fulltime workers - wage or salary earners, and 6,632 members who are voluntary contributors, mostly from the informal sector.

For the year 2022, for mandatory sector, the number had slightly gone down to 214,536 and we saw the number almost doubled for the voluntary sector. If we were to deduce, we could easily

say that some of the members in the compulsory sector had started some income generating activity or they have small or medium business on their own. Hence, the contribution made by themselves voluntarily, and that is why the number has almost doubled.

Question No. 8

What were the challenges and achievements of the advocacy initiative by FNPF “Save for Life after Retirement”?

The number of contributing voluntary members nearly doubled from 2021 to 2022, as alluded earlier. This reflected the consistent reminders that were sent to voluntary members and the number of awareness sessions that FNPF Officers did to these sectors.

In the informal sector, we had also included some of the challenges such as:

- Potential voluntary members are reluctant to save with FNPF due to the restrictions on their ability to take out funds.
- Currently, the preservation policy says that 70 percent of the funds that come to FNPF will go into your Preserved Account, whilst the 30 percent is available for pre-retirement assistance.

As you can understand the need for the members in the informal sector could be different. They do not have readily access to banks or can easily get loans because they have a number of requirements, and they do not have consistent income. Some of them when they harvest grog or *dalo*, that is when they receive payment, but banks expect you to do the repayments every month.

In those cases, if there is an immediate need for working capital, then they feel that once they lock in the 70 percent, it becomes a bit rigid for them to draw for working capital needs. Again, the FNPF is looking at this and some of the scheme designs are currently being worked out with our Product Team as well as the Actuarial Team to come up with a solution that will appeal to the members in this particular cohort.

Of course, the flexibility or the convenience of payment. Now, with M-PAiSA, this has become very easy, so a lot of our members are choosing this platform.

Again, if I were to give a background, if we were to choose the market vendors, the core activity is to sell their produce in the market. They do not have the luxury of time to take half-an-hour or one hour out to come to the FNPF to make their payments because of the need to sell their produce and go back home to their various villages. But with M-PAiSA now available, it is very convenient for them to just transfer money.

Question No. 9

Can the FNPF elaborate on the formula for calculating the six-monthly interest rate that is awarded to its members?

Again, Madam Deputy Chairperson, FNPF credits interests once a year, that is on 30th June every financial year, that is when FNPF’s financial year ends. That is when the Board declares a crediting rate to be paid into individual member accounts.

However, the interest is calculated on a daily average basis, very similar to how the banks calculate interests on your daily average balance. On an accrual basis, the interest is calculated, however, the actual credit is reflected in your account on the night of 30th June.

Question No. 10

Can the FNPF elaborate on the progress of the 5-year strategy that is formulated to guide the FNPF to a future of recovery?

Again, if I could go back, during COVID-19 for years 2020 and 2021, the FNPF paid out COVID-19 assistance almost to the tune of \$220 million to almost 144,000 members and that was also partly assisted by the Government - topped up by \$185 million.

Members who had partial eligibility, their top up came from the Government, but whatever they took out from FNPF was still a reduction in their FNPF balances. What that means is, to be able to put bread and butter on the table for themselves and their families, members drew from FNPF in those two years and the drawing amounted to \$220 million.

Now, the road to recovery - how we can reinstate the money that was paid out. Of course, there are various avenues. The first one that I would like to touch-based on is the reinstatement of the 18 percent, which would mean that members would be able to contribute the 8 percent from their wage/salary and the employer would have to pay the 10 percent. That is a quick one.

Apart from that there are various other avenues available. If a member has full time work and if he/she chooses, he/she can do additional contribution.

Of course, there is no limit as of now for voluntary contributors. If they got good harvest from the grog, *dalo*, ginger or whatever cash crop they are producing and if they are able to save some, FNPF, of course, has been paying the highest return in the market and that is also tax free, so why not take the full advantage of it and bring that money back to FNPF because that saves for retirement.

Again, going back to the question, there are various pillars under the Strategic Plan for the years 2022 to 2027, and our major focus area is member-centric and experience. This is an area where FNPF has invested largely to improve the customer journey, so either you come face to face or through any of the digital platforms, we want you to have the best experience.

The FNPF has invested in the facility. Apart from that, as part of the Digital Transformation Strategy, we have enhanced our mobile app, as well as enhanced our employer portal apps, just to make that experience user-friendly. I think various versions of the mobile app has been introduced and now, as I speak, we have got over 250,000 members who are currently using the mobile app to access their FNPF account - to trace whether the last contribution has been paid, to see if their contribution is up to date, to check how many withdrawals they have done in yester years, so it is very easy. You do not have to come to the FNPF. These are all the enhancements that FNPF has done to make that customer journey more convenient.

First of all, under that focussed area, we need to grow member balances and as I have alluded to earlier, those are the various ways we could do it.

Again, growing membership. For people who are in the mandatory workforce, the law is very clear, that it is the employer obligation to pay the FNPF contribution at the rate which is applicable at that particular time. As of now, it is 14 percent, so it is the employer's strategic obligation to pay that 14 percent.

However, we feel there are still gaps in the informal sector and we are doing our best to advocate to members. Our Member Education and Advocacy Team go out in numbers in the rural

sectors and at the request of employers and in the informal sectors, to advocate to the employees the benefits of savings. That is an area where FNPF strongly feels there is room for improvement, so this is a challenge that the FNPF has taken on itself - to grow membership balance, apart from growing the member balance itself because the more you save at FNPF, the more you will have for your retirement and, of course, for pre-retirement if there is an immediate need, for example, to renovate your house or pay for your medical or education.

The second focused area, as tabulated on page 6, is responsible investment and performance. We are also looking at ways we could simplify our operating models and bring in efficiency, which is our third focussed area.

Another focused area is growing and engaging our people. What we are currently experiencing is the mass exodus of people leaving our shores. That is not only unique to FNPF, but you would also hear in daily news a lot of organisations are facing this problem. As part of the staff retention strategy, we are training our people. As I speak, a few of our staff are currently doing Masters in Australia. Again, we provide the best learning platform locally so that we could retain our people and become the employer of choice.

The fifth focussed area is on protection and sustainability. The FNPF is here for the long haul. It started in 1966, we are still in a very strong and sound position today, but if I could just give you an analogy, we now have a product which we call Minor Product. So children who are aged six years could join FNPF.

If a child who is joining at age six, has a span of 49 years before they reach their entitlement age of 55. So, for those five decades, FNPF needs to take their contribution and grow it by paying interest and receive additional contribution from these members. It is not five years or 10 years; we are looking at almost five decades for this particular child.

The FNPF is a beacon of hope for every Fijian in the country. Most of us have bought our homes through FNPF, most of us have got our education through FNPF, so again, FNPF is not only here for the short run, but also here for the long run. So, the sustainability of FNPF and confidence in FNPF is very important.

We continue to invest in this space, we are doing legislative reviews so that members could build trust and have confidence in their only superannuation fund in the country.

Question No. 11

Can FNPF elaborate on the award criteria that the International Social Security Association (ISSA) awards its candidates?

Again, there are various criteria for the good practice award and those are based on the achieved outcomes and how innovative the solution or a product was, the robustness of the product and the replicability of the product. Outlined also are the various criteria under which the ISSA measures and rewards its members.

Question No. 12

Can FNPF elaborate with statistics on farmers that registered and contributed to the voluntary contribution scheme?

Of the 35,741 voluntary members, there are currently 1,977 registered as farmers. Of this amount, 468 members contributed, at least, once in the last financial year (2022).

Question No. 13

How many eligible members were assisted through Government-funded unemployment assistance?

Again, Madam Chairperson, a similar response has been provided in the table in Question No. 4.

Question No. 14

What was the criteria for assessing the members' eligibility for accessing funds for COVID-19 assistance? How was this monitored and controlled to ensure there was no abuse or fraud?

Again, whilst we did not want to be too rigid, we knew the situation at hand and there was pent-up demand for FNPF to reach out to the members who were affected by the COVID-19 pandemic. So, whilst we did not want to make it as easy as what the situation was during *TC Winston* in 2016, we had put in a bit more controls in place so that genuine members would have been assisted. So, those were in accordance with the criteria we had set for respective unemployment grounds as outlined in the COVID-19 Policy and Guidelines.

For example, we had offered COVID-19 \$500 Assistance from April 2020 to June 2020, and these were offered to non-tourism sectors who were around leave without pay, on reduced working hours, reduced wage rate or terminated or permanently laid-off, and the maximum assistance offered was \$500. This also was only paid out from their General Account balance.

Again, to give a little bit of background, these withdrawals can only be made from your General Account because we have not deviated. Whilst we understood the need at that point in time was to assist members who had lost their work and did not have any means of income to support their families and themselves, they were given the option to withdraw from FNPF. However, the core objective of the Fund is to ensure we have funds held when you do choose to retire. So, that 70 percent in the Preserved Account was not used for payment of COVID-19 Unemployment Assistance. Those were some of the controls that were put in place.

Initially, when we started assisting members who were impacted by COVID-19, we paid out \$1,000 lump sum. But from feedback we got from our members, the \$1,000 was used directly for consumption and it did not last long. The intention was to make sure the \$1,000 lasted for a duration so that you could assist yourself and your family. As a result of that, FNPF decided that we will no longer do lump sum assistance, rather we will do drip feed. Then based on that, we started paying out \$220 every fortnight and that we saw was more beneficial because that lasted them for the fortnight and the next cycle of the \$220 followed. So, those were a few controls that were put in place to ensure that members got the maximum benefit from taking out their savings from FNPF to assist them during COVID-19.

For small enterprises, it was only offered to business operators who were affected by the COVID-19 pandemic and the maximum assistance under this grant was \$1,000, subject to availability in their General Account.

We also assisted taxi, minivan and hire drivers. Again, we made sure that members who were assisted in these categories had valid driving licence and held Classes either 3, 4, or 5 categories at Land Transport Authority. Again, maximum assistance was \$1,000 and to be drawn from the General Account. Similar assistance was done for multiple rounds during 2020 and 2021.

Question No. 15

Can FNPF brief the Committee on the challenges in carrying out the home loan (mortgage assistance) assistance for its members and how was this monitored?

In December 2021, we had rolled out this assistance to assist home owners pay for their monthly mortgages because some of these members had mortgages with the banks and because they had lost their jobs, or are on reduced pay, thus in a position to be fully able to meet their repayment every month, FNPF through collaboration with the former Government, proceeded to assist members with their home loan payments and this was for a maximum of 12 months. Again, in this particular instance, we had made an exception because for many of us, our home is our biggest security, and we need to ensure that members do not lose out on their homes whilst being affected by COVID-19. In that particular instance, an exception was made to draw from your Preserved Account.

Under the current guidelines, Madam Chairperson and honourable Members, if you are a first-time homeowner, you can take 100 percent of your General Account and 30 percent of your Preserved Account. So, in total, you can take out 51 percent if you are a first-time homeowner.

If you come for an investment house subsequent to your first home, you can then only draw from your General Account, subject to availability in that Account. When we rolled out this assistance, an exception was made to use funds from your Preserved Account so that members could meet their monthly repayments.

Question No. 16

Can FNPF provide the number of members that benefitted from the Low Balance Account assistance? Under this assistance did FNPF change the amount of withdrawal or it stayed the same (\$5,000 to \$10,000)?

Low balance account, Madam Chairperson, are members who are over the ages of 50 years old and have total balance below \$10,000 either in their General Account or Preserved Account. So, during the financial year 2021, we assisted 851 members and in 2022, we assisted 3,657 members. A total of \$19,601,301.67 were paid out for the two years.

Question 17

Micro Business Assistance is one of the assistance provided to members for sustainability. How is FNPF monitoring this programme and clarify on the continuance of this scheme?

Again, we do two instalments. The maximum assistance there was also \$10,000. So, 50 percent is paid in the first instalment and subject to acquittals and provision of photographic evidence, then FNPF proceeds to pay the balance of the 50 percent.

Question No. 18

Can FNPF elaborate on the relocated office in Nakasi and how has this improved its outreach to its customers in the Nasinu and Nausori corridor?

Again, during COVID-19, because of the various measures put in by the Ministry of Health and Medical Services and due to social distancing, physical movement was restricted and we saw that there was limited traffic. In view of that, our office in Valelevu made a decision to close that office. It was a very small office and the risk of spreading the virus was high because it was very congested, so the decision taken by Management was to close the Valelevu Office.

The Suva–Nausori corridor, is one of the most populated and in order to decentralise and ensure we do maximum offerings to members in this corridor and, again, getting feedback from members, we saw there was a need for an office in the Nakasi area. This is one of the fastest and growing municipalities between Suva and Nausori and we were lucky to be able to get a space at the Rup's Mega Mall. So, we opened an office there once things normalised on 1st September, 2022. Since then, we have served a total of over 16,000 members so on average, we receive about 2,000 members every month and we also open on Saturdays.

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Question No. 19

Can FNPF elaborate on the reduction of registered employers in 2022 (7,732) as compared to 2021(7,901)?

These are basically due to some of the businesses not able to fully recover from COVID-19 and have opted to close down and de-registered with FNPF. We also took this opportunity to do some data cleansing exercises where employers who are no longer operating, we verify that with the Registrar of Companies Office and also with the Fiji Revenue and Customs Service, so once we were fully comfortable that these employers are no longer in operation, we close and de-register them from our records.

There is another category of employers who do not have any employees but for the very reason of obtaining a certificate of compliance for tenders and other needs, they register with FNPF. But with FNPF, its definition of employer is someone who has employees so, again, that was another opportunity for us to clean the employer database in our record and some of the employers who fell in this category, we delisted them.

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Question No. 20

Can FNPF clarify on the unpaid contribution for 2022?

Again, the Total Contribution Debt for 2022 was \$65.13 million but we had a success rate of 93 percent. The current debt sits at around \$14.07 million for the year 2022 .

Question No. 21

How is FNPF dealing with insufficient information supplied by employers?

Again, Madam Chairperson, as I have alluded earlier, with the Employer Portal which we can attest is a very good innovation that FNPF had done, we now receive over 96 percent of contributions online. In the past before the Portal, we had the physical form where employers would fill the contribution schedules and come to the cashiers at FNPF, drop their forms and pay their contributions. Now, with this Portal, the payroll officer or the dedicated CS contact is able to upload the Contribution Schedule through the Portal which FNPF receives.

We have also opened up our digital channels to receive contributions either through the banks or M-PAiSA, or even credit cards now or debit cards. So, referring to the question, the Portal is a mechanism whereby if the employer fails to provide full information, especially the mandatory fields, the Portal will not accept contributions for that particular member.

In the past, Madam Chairperson, if I could elaborate the process, for example, I am running a construction company, doing roads in the Rakiraki area and I hire Jone. So, I write down Jone's name, but I do not have Jone's FNPf number but because I am required under the law to pay contribution for Jone, I just write Jone - \$10. But in the country, there are many Jone, so the contribution form to FNPf, we are not able to put that \$10 in Jone's account because we do not know who Jone is.

However, with this Portal, if the employer does not provide Jone's FNPf number and TIN, the Portal will not accept. So, as part of the data cleansing exercise and ongoing exercise to be able to receive money from employers, as well as receive the contribution information on a real time basis, these are the various changes that we had done - to receive data accurately and make sure that our fiduciary duty is fulfilled whereby we collect contribution from employer, and we deposit in member accounts.

Question No. 22

Can FNPf provide an update on the unclaimed deposits? How has FNPf addressed this issue?

I think this has been as a result of data legacy issues in the past and we can comfortably say that we do not encounter such problems anymore but we still have this Unclaimed Deposits Account (UDA) account to deal with so every year, we publish this in the media, we put the names of the members sitting in this UDA account on our website, on social media platforms so that either the member or the next of kin are able to look at it, contact FNPf and we can pay the balances held in the UDA account.

Question No. 23

Can FNPf provide an update on the pending civil litigation cases?

As of 30th April, 2023, we have 38 pending civil litigation cases with the Legal Team, out of which 18 cases were filed by the Fund against directors personally for failure to pay FNPf contributions. So, in the new Act, we now can take the directors of companies to court and file litigation against them personally. So, 20 cases are claims filed against the Fund, while two cases are claims filed against the Fund from former employees.

Question No. 24

Can FNPf elaborate on the control measures for employers to comply with the FNPf Act 2011?

Of course, we have strengthened our employer visitations, we have increased our routine inspections, we have increased our awareness sessions and under the law, we are supposed to meet an employer once every year. I think we have got about 7,000 employers so practically speaking, we cannot visit every one of them, so we do an analysis in-house where we see if some of the employers who have got compliance issues, our inspectors roster inspections and go and visit them. In each financial year, inspectors have their own planners to be able to fully cover these employers in the mainland, as well as the outer islands.

We additionally do employee awareness sessions and additionally, some of the powers under the Fiji National Provident Fund Act that we have which one of them is the issuance of compliance letters, that has proven to be a very powerful tool where employers who are in need of the compliance letter, they come to FNPf and request for compliance letters. We either give them one month conditional compliance if they have got some compliance issues, but if they have a very clean account

with FNPF - contributions are up-to-date, they do not have any suspense and they do not have any cases under prosecution, we give them one year of clean compliance.

Question No. 25

Can FNPF update the committee on the progress of the titles that are still in the process of discharge?

Madam Chairperson, again, we had discussed this just two days prior in a separate meeting with the FNPF Management, the Operational Committee. Previously, under the old Act, FNPF used to take charge against members who would opt to withdraw for housing assistance. So, either we will take the first charge or second charge on the property. The titles would then be kept, depending on the mortgage variation, either with us or the banks, but whatever titles we had in our custody used to remain with our Legal Section.

Then FNPF in the new Act decided to no longer hold charge. So, we do not hold charge on any property because we have done the 37 splits and prior to 37 splits under the old Act, you could draw 66 percent from your FNPF account. So, it was operating more like a bank. When you retire, you only have 33 percent left. In fact, the equation should have been the other way round. It should have more money when you retire, earning or lesser when you are in your working age because you have got alternate sources of income. But the rules around those days prior to the current Act allowed you multiple grounds of withdrawal. In fact, we had about 23 grounds of withdrawals. You could withdraw money for whatever purposes, if it was falling in one of the 23 categories.

So, we did some design changes. We dragged the preservation policy change. So, now with the 70 percent preserved for retirement, we feel that, that is sufficient to be able to pay out the 30 percent for pre-retirement. Hence, we decided that we will no longer take charge on your property. Once the decision was made, alongside we also said whatever titles we have in FNPF's custody, we will release to members. But we still have about 3,641 titles in our custody, and we are urging members who have got titles in our custody to come forward and take them from us.

Strangely, we now have a meeting the reason I was told why some of the members opt not to take the tile is because they feel the titles are safer in FNPF hands and the title is a legal document. If it goes in the wrong hands, it is subject and open to abuse and fraud. So, some of the members feel that while the property may be free of any encumbrance, they are comfortable leaving the title with FNPF. But, again, we are doing the best we can to contact the members and say, "Your titles are here, please, come and take it away".

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Question No. 26

Can FNPF elaborate on the commercial loan to ATH?

Again, this is in a commercial space, Madam Chairperson, but a short-term bridging loan was given to ATH which was on lend to Digitec Communications in Papua New Guinea. So, ATH has invested in Vodafone Papua New Guinea, so we had to provide some lending to ATH. Again, this loan was for a term of six months and extended by another term.

Again, the terms and conditions are sensitive to FNPF, so if the Committee feels, then we can provide that to them. However we feel that we will need to provide the terms and conditions in the public space.

Question No. 27

Can FNPF update the Committee on the progress of addressing the declined local term deposits?

Term deposits declined from \$215 million to close to \$109 million, almost down by \$106 million, was due to redemption of term deposits and returning into cash for investments in member withdrawals. Moreso, for us to be cash ready because during COVID, we cannot tell a member who is affected, “please, come back tomorrow. I do not have the money. FNPF does not have money. We need to break a term deposit and pay you assistance when we have cash.” That will paint a very wrong picture of FNPF. In fact, it will question our sustainability and our ability to fund withdrawals. So, as a prudent measure, the term deposits that had matured, FNPF opted to keep them as cash in the bank in our Operating Account because we did not know the magnitude of withdrawals that would be made by members during COVID-19.

Again, as I had alluded earlier, we did not know beforehand how many members in the tourism industry or in the active workforce who actually faced difficulties. So, FNPF, given that it is a biggest financial institution, cannot turn away members and say, “Alright, we do not have cash, we will give you \$100 today and \$100 tomorrow.” So, whatever assistance that was agreed by the Board, we had to make sure we had that much money sitting in the bank account. So, when we tell Jone, “Your assistance of \$220 for six rounds has been approved”, we needed to make sure that every fortnight the \$220 was in the bank to be able to be credited to Jone’s account. So, during that period, FNPF paid out a total of \$220 million, hence the need not to reinvest in term deposits.

Investments during that period was low, however, withdrawals had more than doubled. Of course, our contribution rates were slashed. So, on one hand contribution that was coming in had reduced from an all-time high of \$650 million to a low of almost \$300 million, so impacted by \$330 million cash. And, again, contributions had gone up to close to \$470 million. So, we had to make sure we had money in the bank to be able to pay out, hence we decided not to roll over our term deposits.

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Question No. 28

What sort of assistance did FNPF provide to its tenants during the pandemic?

Of course, being the largest property owner, and we knew that because of the reduced economic activity, social distancing and limited movement, our tenants were also impacted. So, we gave them rental concessions and some of them were also given moratorium on rent renewals, so it was offered to our tenants.

Those were some of the assistance offered to our tenants so that they could also operate. Otherwise, we could face a high number of vacancies and tenants will choose not to remain with FNPF.

Question No. 29

Can FNPF elaborate on the occupancy rate of 93 percent within its properties?

The occupancy rate of 93 percent relates to the total percentage of space rented. So, occupancy is the space which is taken up and vacancy is the space which is available, so 93 percent is the occupancy rate.

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Question No. 30

Can FNPF provide a breakdown of the refurbishment cost for Sheraton Fiji Golf and Beach Resort?

This is public information and is disclosed in the 2022 Annual Report. The total Sheraton refurbishment cost was \$78.9 million.

Question No. 31

The outcome and progress of the tender process for Westin refurbishment?

Again, Madam Chairperson, this is something which is currently on going, so the details are still sensitive. But it can be made available to the Committee if required.

Question No. 32

The outcome of the return on investment on properties invested by FNPF, how has this benefitted FNPF and its members?

There are two ways on how you can receive your returns. Basically, it could be your rental income and also the capital appreciation of the property. So, both these returns are included as part of the returns when interest rate to members are determined, and it is reflected in our Statement of Comprehensive Income and under section 47, that was the interest rate declared after clearance by our Actuarial.

Question No. 33

The outcome of investing in Fiji Airways, can FNPF elaborate on the challenges pre and post COVID?

Again, this is public information, so we acquired 30 percent shareholding in June 2022. The key challenge and concern for FNPF was Fiji Airways solvency and liquidity position.

The Airline is a very strategic asset for the country and given that tourism is our number one foreign exchange earner, we cannot let the airline industry die. So, that investment was very strategic, and we had to step in and, of course, we need to think long-term.

However, to date, this has now improved greatly and the company is taking advantage of the pent-up demand to boost its cash flows from the increasing number of tourist arrivals that are currently coming, and month on month we see that the numbers are growing steadily.

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Question No. 34

Can FNPF elaborate on the modification of the myFNPF app as it has undergone many cycles of modifications?

Of course, this is the mobile app that I had alluded to earlier and there are various versions. We continue to invest in the mobile app so that the user experience is very friendly, and we receive a lot of positive feedback on this, Madam Chairperson.

Again, as I have said, this is a good innovation for FNPF to be able to pass the power back to the members where they do not have to come to FNPF. From the comfort of their homes, they can access FNPF transactions, balances and if they have got any queries, they can, of course, raise it through the mobile app where we will receive it and we will attend to those.

Question No. 35

Can FNPF elaborate more on employers using the new portal to access and submit documentation, how friendly is this to its users?

We have answered that question earlier on. We have now upgraded this employer portal and moving on, there will be more features added so that employers are able to request compliance certificates, see their transactions and are able to also transact using this portal, Madam Chairperson.

Question No. 36

Can FNPF provide statistics on myFNPF app users, how frequent is this used and for which type of services provided? What is the satisfaction rate of users using the app?

Madam Chairperson, I think that is tabulated on page 19 - staff - 51 percent; mobile app - 40 percent; employer portal - 8.5 percent; and member portal - 0.5 percent.

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Question No. 37

Has FNPF conducted any awareness programmes for students in the tertiary institutions who are nearing completion of studies and ready to join the workforce to register as members?

Yes, we are quite active, and we know that students are future employees so we always have a very good tab on students. In 2022, we did three sessions with USP, two with FNU, two with Corpus Christi and one with Marist. The number of students who had attended these sessions are close to 700.

Question No. 38

Can FNPF elaborate on whether there are engagements with other stakeholders on advocacy and awareness?

This is a space where we actively consult with stakeholders. As a result of these consultations, we have forged MOUs with the Ministry of Agriculture, Fiji Dairy Association, UNDP REACH Programme, UNDP Market For Change for Women, Women Entrepreneurs, Fiji Co-operative Dairy Company Limited and various other Ministries including Ministry of Agriculture and Fiji Revenue and Customs Service for data exchange. This has provided to be very beneficial in terms of data exchange and information exchange so that we can improve the member service offerings.

Question No. 39

What were the challenges, benefits and cost of the ISO 31000:2009? What was the impact of this international standard (ISO) post COVID-19?

Again, any investment in quality accreditations is good because you are setting a minimum standard which provides minimum guidelines for implementation. For this particular standard, it was on risk management in an organisation.

If I could give more detail on that, it was a process that provides confidence and planned objectives of the organisation which will be achieved within an acceptable degree of residual risk. So, our risk tolerance, and the Fund had benchmarked its Enterprise Risk Management (ERM) Framework to those International Standards since 2014.

Key challenges on the ongoing implementation for the Fund is on the Business Unit's resource allocation, including time within Business Unit to ensure its ongoing compliance. There are also benefits of implementing the Standards to improve the risk management practices at the Fund.

Question No. 40

Can FNPF elaborate on the challenges and benefits of the execution of Business Continuity Simulation Test (BCT)?

We have two BCT sites and the test assures that in case where there is a breakdown at Headquarters, we are able to back up and provide service from the other two sites. These are readily being tested, so in case there is a natural disaster and our HQ goes down in downtime, we can easily pick up from our Vodafone site and provide services to our members.

Question No. 41

Can FNPF elaborate on the benefits of the Fund-wide training and education that it undertook in 2022?

Again, this is to address the critical areas that drives the Fund's Strategic Plan and ensures staff engagement and development. For capacity building, improving organisational productivity for ensuring long term sustainability. We have a robust Training Policy and a Talent Manager who looks after the training programmes.

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Question No. 42

In reviewing the Complaints Management Policy, can FNPF elaborate on the effectiveness and efficiency it had contributed to resolving complaints for its members, and how has this uplifted the services provided by FNPF?

If I could go back, Madam Chairperson, the complaints had escalated in 2020 and 2021. Of course, for obvious reasons when members were not paying on time because we had to first verify so that we do not pay the wrong person, and there was influx of members that had opted to seek FNPF assistance for COVID-19.

In any given year, pre COVID-19, we normally serve around 60,000 members but during COVID-19, the number had gone up to 144,000, Madam Chairperson. So, you can experience with some of our workers working from home, some of the workers who were affected by COVID-19, some of them were working from the office, but the numbers continue to increase. As the COVID-19 restrictions were relaxed, we saw the influx of members coming to our doors.

We still had to make sure that we do not shortcut on any of the applications. There were people who were trying to dodge the system and profit from it, not realising they are going to only take out their money. However, there was another element which was the Government top up they could profit from, but we still had to make sure the verification exercise was complete and the controls that we have set in place were duly followed.

Whilst majority of the applications went through on time, there were some that needed to be eyeballed because some information, such as bank accounts or other evidence were not provided, so we had to withhold those.

If a member is not getting the \$220 every fortnight, so they see their bank account because you can easily access your bank account and see if the money is paid or not. In the event, what they do is, they would complain, “Ah, we have not received our money, what is the problem? Why is FNPF not paying us?”

During COVID-19 period, especially in the years 2020 and 2021, we saw complaint numbers going up. But that has gradually gone down so if you look at 2020, there were more complaints in 2021.

Again, we have a Complaints Management Policy to deal with complaints. This sits with the Corporate Governance Unit and there is a procedure and standard turnaround time within which the complaint needs to be resolved. There is a dedicated Complaints Officer looking after this.

In case, if it is escalated to me and if I do not resolve it within my delegation, then it goes to the next officer who is my superior for action. My superior will obviously ask me, “Hey Pravinesh, why have you not resolved this?” So, this is how effective the complaints management process is.

Question No. 43

Can FNPF provide an overview of its annual work plan and the alignment to its strategic objective? What were the challenges of carrying out this programme?

Again, the Annual Work Plan is drawn from the Strategic Plan. The Strategic Plan is a five-year Plan and Annual Work Plan is a shorter version which is a one-year plan which is the Annual Operating Plan. We have various key result areas; key performance indicators and we have the Corporate Scorecard in there against which we measure our results.

Question No. 44

Can FNPF elaborate on its contribution to SDG performance targets. What were the challenges?

Again, FNPF being the only retirement fund, being the only superannuation fund in the country, there are various SDGs which relate to us, as follows.

Goal 1 - No Poverty

We also operate in the social protection space; we provide social security. When we talk about social security, more so this relates to the pre-retirement benefits that FNPF provides - housing, medical, funeral, unemployment and education.

Goal 3 – Good Health and Wellbeing

It is a right enshrined in the Constitution, so retirement is your right. We have to look after you in your retirement years.

Goal 4 – Quality Education

This is clearly stipulated as one of the approved withdrawal grounds.

Goal 5 – Gender Equality

I have shared the statistic in my opening remarks. The FNPF, staff-wise, we are quite equal. We have, in fact, 51 percent of our workforce who are women and if you look at the split between the members – 43 percent are female.

Goal 8 – Decent Work and Economic Growth

Indirectly through our investments and employment that are created which results in the GDP of the country.

Goal 11 – Sustainable Cities and Communities

There is planning to pursue in this planning period, affordable housing in collaboration with Government, to allow more Fiji citizens to own homes.

Goal No. 13 – Climate Action

We have strategies in place for the Fund's policies, processes and essentially our investments, to adapt to climate sustainable practices, as well as our disclosures in the financial report. Earlier on, when I said IPS is currently under review, we will ensure there is compliance to the Climate Change Act.

Question No. 45

Can FNPF highlight its contribution towards SDG 5 – Gender, and its implementation in the organisation?

If I could give a breakdown at the Executive level, we have a total of 10 Executives of which, 30 percent are held by female. At Management level, we have a total of 37 percent which are held by female and at staff level, we have 51 percent of our staff who are female. So we are quite equal in that space and we continue to bridge the gap in areas where we see deviations, Madam Chairperson.

Madam Chairperson, that brings us to the end of questions and answers, and we are happy to take any other questions that you may have. *Vinaka vakalevu.*

MADAM CHAIRPERSON.- *Vinaka vakalevu*, Mr. Singh and Team. We thank you for your very clear responses and I leave the floor now to honourable Members for any supplementary questions that they may have.

HON. RATU R.S.S. VAKALALABURE.- Thank you, Mr. Singh and Team. This is not more so a question but a thank you.

Firstly, your updated Annual Report. We are part of some other Standing Committees and FNPF is always one of the organisations that is always up to date. We deal with some that have been very outdated, so thank you for that.

Secondly, a well-presented Report that covers all the questions, and I also thank you for that. Please, do take this back to your CEO and Team and thank you for this work. This really helps, especially with the deliberations of the Standing Committee and their recommendations to Parliament. Again, we thank you for that.

I have a question, Sir, you were talking about the Apps. For example, if I am a voluntary member, can I make a straight deposit from my bank account? The reason I ask this question is because everything is online and on the phone, so is that possible?

MR. P. SINGH.- Yes, Sir, that is possible now. You can pay from your bank or if you have M-PAiSA, you can pay directly from your account to your FNPF account.

HON. RATU R.S.S. VAKALALABURE.- That goes for all banks?

MR. P. SINGH.- Yes.

HON. RATU R.S.S. VAKALALABURE.- My final question, this is now post COVID-19 and the pandemic was a big challenge on us. Should anything such as the pandemic come again, do you have plans and mechanisms in place ready for an event as such that has just previously left us?

MR. P. SINGH.- Thank you, honourable Member. I am sure that it does not happen again, but if it does happen, FNPF is ready. This has tested our people, our systems and our processes. If it happens again tomorrow, we can easily work from home.

Our systems have been tested, our people are ready to be able to assist. When we had implemented our promised system which is the Member Administration System that handles all the members accounts - your FNPF account and my FNPF account, it actually sits in the PROMISE system, which we call the Member Administration System.

During COVID-19, the system was put to test. Before COVID-19, there were only 200 people who were active users of PROMISE. So, when COVID-19 hit, all hands on deck, whether you were on the Member Service Division, Finance Division or Legal Division, we needed was everyone to come and serve. So we made sure that the system was ready to be able to take that load and that was one of the testing times that we saw that the system did not give up.

Obviously with that, a lot of innovations were done, robotic process automation was done and these are digital transformations. In fact, COVID-19 was also a blessing for us that able to speed a lot of innovations and automation. Sir, to simply answer your question, yes, we are ready.

HON. RATU R.S.S. VAKALALABURE.- Thank you very much, Mr. Singh.

Madam Chairperson, a final comment and it is not a question, Mr. Singh. I know you deal with a lot of complaints, and I wish you well. In FNPF, you were saying a lot of complaints especially during the COVID-19 days and it is not going down and because you are there to serve the members, I find it comfortable, and it is good to see that you are continuing with your awareness outreach to communities. So, thank you for that, Mr. Singh and Team.

MR. P. SINGH. – Thank you, Sir.

MADAM CHAIRPERSON.- Mr. Singh, I have a question. With the retirement age now moved to 60, what does it mean for FNPF?

MR. P. SINGH.- Thank you for the question, Madam Chairperson. We saw the announcement that was made to increase the retirement age to 60, so FNPF has decided that we will maintain with our retirement age at 55 years, given that if a member chooses to retire at age 55, then he/she can re-enter once and continue working and get their contributions paid to FNPF. So, there is no restriction. However, if the member chooses not to retire, they can work up to 60 years and then retire, so our retirement age has remained.

The Civil Service has extended to 60 years. If a civil servant decides to withdraw, they can come at the age of 55 years, take their money and there is an option to re-enter once. They will fill a form, we will re-enter them, admit them and they can continue to work for another number of years, so there is no change on that. However, we have maintained the age at 55 years because some of the members may choose to retire early. If we increase it and extend it to 60 years, then they will have to wait for another five years.

Some people actually plan their retirement, whilst majority if you ask them whether they are ready for retirement, that is a question they dread to answer. This is the reality, and it will happen one day. One morning, you will wake up and find out that you are not going to work, and we age. That is why in all our sessions, we urge our members to start planning for their retirement because one day, you will not have that work. You will not get up to go to work and one day, you will not have that fortnightly salary coming to your bank account.

Some members do plan for their retirement, and they want to retire at the age of 55 years. They must have worked hard during their entire life, so we feel that we will maintain at the age of 55 years and if they choose to continue, they have the option to re-enter once.

MR. A. WAQAIRAWAI.- Madam, Chairperson, just to further expound on the question relating to retirement age, the Fund is already an age-based scheme, which means that once you reach the entitlement age which is 55 years, you can decide as to which time you can retire. You can either retire at 55, 56 or 57, so the decision for you to retire is already up to you whether you want to retire at 55, 56 or 57. However, as the Acting CEO has alluded to, people have made plans regarding their entitlement age. Everyone is given an opportunity to re-join FNPF. I thought I just expound on that.

The other one regarding honourable Ratu Rakuira's question about the Annual Report, for us, it is very important, our accountability is important. For FNPF, a requirement in our Act is to make sure that we produce our Annual Report four months after the financial year end, which is June. So, by October, it should be there. It also requires us to go out and conduct Member Forums which is to engage with our people, and we welcome that opportunity too. For us it is important, and we believe that when it is enacted in the Act, it also forces all of us to ensure that we produce the Annual Report on time, in terms of transparency and good governance which is important. We need to account for our actions.

HON. T.N. TUNABUNA.- Madam, Chairperson, this is regarding the investment property; what is the percentage you give for those who want housing assistance?

MR. P. SINGH.- The investment for your additional property is through your 30 percent. As long as you have got the eligibility and you want to go for an investment property, you can draw from your General Account.

The first property, as I had said earlier, you can take away 51 percent - 30 percent from your Preserved Account and 100 percent of your General Account. But many people who have built on or accumulated more in their General Account and are able to fund additional properties for additional income, they are free to do so, as long as it is only coming out from their General Account. We do not allow any subsequent withdrawals from the Preserved Account for housing.

HON. T.N. TUNABUNA.- *Vinaka*, Mr. Singh. Lastly thank you very much for your presentation this afternoon. I always access the FNPF app and thank you for that.

MADAM CHAIRPERSON.- Thank you, again, for the very comprehensive presentation and your clear responses. I wish to sincerely thank all honourable Members this afternoon for availing yourselves to be at the meeting.

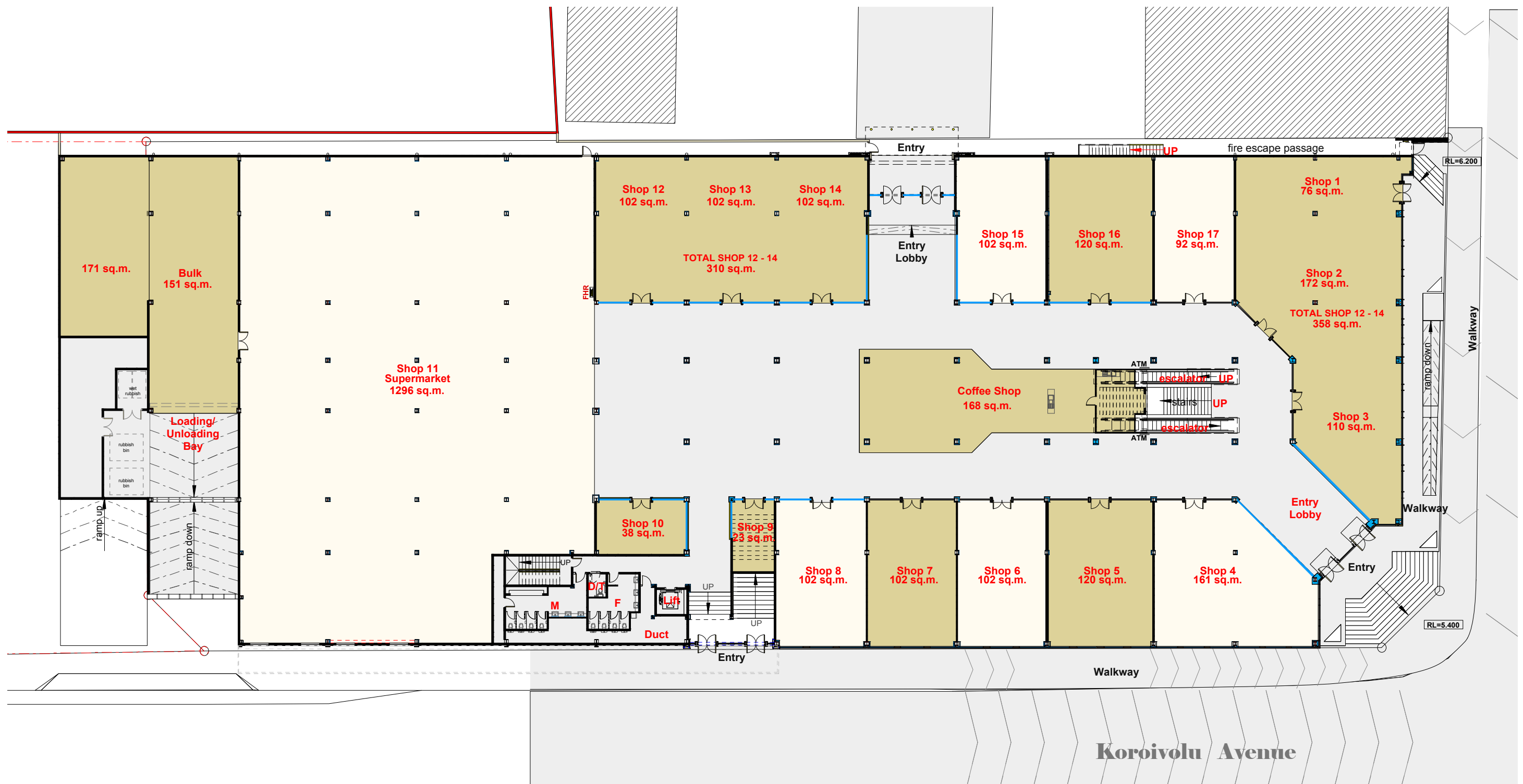
I also wish to thank the team from FNPF - Mr. Singh, Mr. Waqairawai and Mr. Lomalagi, for availing yourselves to be at the meeting this afternoon. We note that there are few questions that are still sensitive to FNPF at this point and the Committee hopes that when the time is right, you will furnish the information to the Committee.

I also would like to thank the hardworking Secretariat for putting together our submission to FNPF.

The Committee adjourned at 2.00 p.m.

Appendix 4

Additional information obtained
from site visitation to FNPF,
Nadi




Ground Floor Plan

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Second Floor Plan

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						DATE : 15.08.19	
						SCALE : 1:350	REV. <table><tr><td></td><td></td><td></td><td></td></tr></table>

Ground Floor	
Shop No.	Tenant
1	Vinod Patel
2	Vinod Patel
3	Vinod Patel
4	Vodafone
5	TFL
6	Asgar
7	Summer trading
8	FNPF Pension
9	Supercutts
10	Word Works
11	R B Patel
	R B Patel - Bulk
12	Vinod Patel
13	Vinod Patel
14	Vinod Patel
15	Vinod Patel
16	Vinod Patel
17	Vinod Patel
Coffee Shop	
Kiosk	Fonex
Kiosk	Fexco

Level 1	
Shop No.	Tenant
18	
19	Oben
20	Oben
21	Oben
22	Oben
23	Oben
24	Sama perfumes
25	chatori chaat
26	Smart Eyes
27	Unique Accessories
28	Fexco
29	Dollar King
30	
31	Dollar King
32	Goundar Shipping
33	Fiji Sun
34	

Level 2	
Shop No.	Tenant

35	
36	
37	FNPF
38	FNPF
39	
40	
41	
Kiosk 3	
Kiosk 4	Indiana Restaurant
Kiosk 5	J NR FISH N CHIPS
Kiosk 6	
Kiosk 7	Ji's Hand Pulled Noodle
Kiosk 8	YamYam Fabulous Food
Kiosk 9	Wild tigers
Kiosk 10	3 Hungry Bears
Restaurant	DNC