



STANDING COMMITTEE ON SOCIAL AFFAIRS

Consolidated Review of Levuka Town Council Annual Reports 2014 and 2015



PARLIAMENT OF THE REPUBLIC OF FIJI
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CHAIRPERSON'S FOREWORD

I am pleased to present the report of the Standing Committee on Social Affairs on the consolidated review of *Levuka Town Council Annual Report 2014 and 2015*. The review was undertaken in accordance with SO 109 (2) (b) which mandates the committee to look into issues related to health, education, social services, labour, culture and media.

The Committee was mandated by Parliament to review the annual reports and report back on its findings as its scrutiny process.

The committee noted a few highlights for the year 2014 and 2015 which allowed the continuance of improving the councils work on Levuka. For instance;

- a) The 2015 Back to Levuka Carnival which was revived after 15 years;
- b) The partnership between the Council and Animals Fiji VET from UK for a weeklong clinic of de-sexing domesticated and wildlife animals; and
- c) The Council hosted Levuka weightlifters who represented Fiji in the 2015 South Pacific Games (SPG).

Further to the above, from 2014 to date the Levuka Town Council was assisted through the Ministry of Local Government with donor fund agencies in improving infrastructure for accessibility and better service provided to the people of Levuka by its municipal. For instance:

- a) The Japan Embassy donated a compactor truck to manage solid waste in Levuka during the financial year 2014; and
- b) Through the PSIP, continuous support and improvement provided to upgrade Levuka's road and drainage system, the improvement of the Depot and Town hall, the continuous work of beautifying and rehabilitating Levuka Town without damaging its Historical Port Town status.

Though the annual report was for 2014 and 2015, the committee acknowledged the current data and information provided by the stakeholders during the inquiry and site visitation. This assisted the committee in its review.

Levuka Town Council continues to sustain its operations through its revenue sources to maintain sites, infrastructure and buildings which is of world heritage status under UNESCO.

Therefore, I would like to thank the Standing Committee on Social Affairs, Hon. Ratu Rakuita Vakalalabure, Hon. Sashi Kiran, Hon. Parveen Bala and Hon. Viam Pillay for their valuable input and support. I would also like to extend my deepest appreciation to Hon. Iliesa Vanawalu, Hon. Ketan Lal and Hon. Penioni Ravunawa as alternate members of the committee for few occasions.

I also extend my gratitude to the Acting Chief Executive Officer (A/CEO) of Levuka Town Council, Ms Nunia Labati and Special Administrator (SA) Ms Joanne Rymell for their timely assistance in this review process.

On behalf of the Standing Committee on Social Affairs, I commend this Report to Parliament and request all members of this August House to take note of the Report.



.....
Hon. Alitia Bainivalu
Chairperson

ACRONYM

Acronym	
A/CEO	Acting Chief Executive Officer
MP	Member of Parliament
PRB	Public Rental Board
PS	Permanent Secretary
PSIP	Public Sector Investment Program
SA	Special Administrator
SPG	South Pacific Games
SO	Standing Order
TVET	Technical Vocational Education Training
VET	Veterinary Surgeon
UK	United Kingdom

COMMITTEE REMIT AND MEMBERS

The Standing Committee on Social Affairs ('Committee') is established under Section 70 of the Constitution of the Republic of Fiji and SO 109. The Committee's mandate and functions are provided under SO 109 (2) and 110 (1) (a)-(d) & (f). The Committee consist of the following members:



Chairperson

Hon. Alitia Bainivalu, MP
Government Member

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Deputy Chairperson

Hon. Ratu Rakuira Vakalalabure, MP
Government Member



Member

Hon. Sashi Kiran, MP
Government Member



Member

Hon. Viam Pillay, MP
Opposition Member



Member

Hon. Parveen Kumar Bala, MP
Opposition Member

RECOMMENDATION

The Standing Committee on Social Affairs has conducted the review of *Levuka Town Council's 2014 and 2015 annual reports* and recommends that Parliament take note of this report.

1. INTRODUCTION

On 17 February 2023 the *Levuka Town Council Annual Reports 2014 and 2015* were referred to the Standing Committee on Social Affairs ('Committee'). Pursuant to SO 38 (2) and SO 110 (1) (c), the Committee carried out its review process and formulated recommendations for Parliament to take note.

1.1. Committee Procedure

The Committee reviewed the annual report and formulated questions pertaining to *Levuka Town Council Annual Reports 2014 and 2015*. The responses were presented by the Levuka Town Council executive management on 7 June 2023.

The responses and any supporting documents is available on the Parliament website, at the following link: <https://www.parliament.gov.fj/committees/standing-committee-on-social-affairs/>

2. LEVUKA TOWN COUNCIL

2.1. Background

Levuka Town is a site rich with historical landmarks with its evidence of colonial infrastructure and cultural history that gives it a very unique and special significance to Fiji and the Pacific. The history of Levuka tells the story of different people such as the colonial white settlers, indentured labourers, Chinese, Indigenous people and other Immigrant races coming together in what is referred to as the melting pot of Levuka.

Levuka's economy is limited to fishing industry. The dynamics are no doubt changing with the introduction of eco-tourism in villages in Ovalau. Generally, employment is severely limited by the lack of service and manufacturing industries in Levuka.

2.2. Highlights of Levuka Town Council

The following are highlights for the year 2014 and 2015:

- a) Back to Levuka Carnival was held in October 2015 and raised a revenue of \$20,745.00;

- b) Levuka hosted Animals Fiji VET from UK for a week on de-sexing clinic for domesticated and wildlife animals;
- c) The council hosted Levuka weightlifters who represented Fiji in the 2015 SPG; and
- d) The council recruited an Accountant, an Event Coordinator/Web Assistant in the year 2014.

2.3. Achievements of Levuka Town Council

The following achievements were completed during the financial year 2014 and 2015 through the PSIP initiative:

- a) The improvement of the drainage system in Levuka;
- b) The construction of retaining wall for Nasova and Batiniwai creek;
- c) The upgrade of the public convenience in Levuka Town; and
- d) The fencing of old Levuka Market.

3. KEY FINDINGS

Below are the key findings that the committee compiled through its deliberation and review of the 2014 and 2015 annual reports:

- 3.1. Levuka listed as a Heritage Site, this is a challenge for homeowners and building owners as it is costly to renovate by using and keeping to its original scheme;
- 3.2. The Heritage Bill as a Legal Framework to support Levuka as a heritage site;
- 3.3. The CEO position has not been confirmed till to date; and
- 3.4. Lack of financial support to fund and maintain sites, infrastructure and buildings which are of heritage status.

4. COMMITTEES RECOMMENDATIONS

The committee recommends:

- 4.1. Timely Submission of Annual Reports;
- 4.2. The re-introduction of the Heritage Bill in Parliament as this legislation will protect and support the work in improving heritage sites in Fiji;

- 4.3. The council to work in consultation with Ministry of Local Government, relevant Ministries, tertiary institutions and resources owners to design and develop strategies to enhance trade skills in respect to TVET as well as provide higher education facilities to accommodate the students at Levuka and Lomaiviti Province as a whole;
- 4.4. The expediting of the process to confirm the CEO position is vital for the effective operation of the town council; and
- 4.5. The council to continue with the Private and Public Partnership scheme to further develop Levuka.

5. COMMITTEE SITE VISIT

5.1. LEVUKA TOWN COUNCIL, OVALAU



(Standing Committee visited Levuka Town Council on 19th September 2023)

5.1.1. BACKGROUND

Levuka Town Council consist of 14 officers who serve the council and assist the A/CEO and SAs in addressing township matters and improving the township status.

5.2. **KEY FINDINGS FROM THE SITE VISIT**

- a) Maintenance and upkeep of the council's property as well as heritage sites. It is costly for the council to upkeep and maintain these properties and sites;
- b) The Heritage Bill to be enacted to better maintain and monitor heritage sites; and
- c) The market vendors are provided tents along the Levuka town street to sell produce. This is a challenge for the council to provide for its vendors.

5.3. **COMMITTEE RECOMMENDATIONS**

- a) Enactment of the *Heritage Bill*; and
- b) Completion of the Levuka market will assist Ovalau market vendors.

6. SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOALS (SDGs) ANALYSIS

6.1. Gender Equality (SDG 5)

Levuka Town Council is a good example of implementing SDG 5 gender equality in its organisational structure with 83 percent of women are working in leadership roles. Furthermore, to SDG 5, five (5) out of six (6) management roles are held by women.

Leadership roles for women are supported, especially in the informal sector encouraging women in decision making and participation in all areas of society. For instance, as highlighted in the table below the composition of market vendors in Levuka and the market vendors association. This proves that local women are participating in socio-economic growth.

Particulars	Male	Female	Percentage (%)
Levuka Market Vendors	13 Vendors	137 Vendors	91% are female
The Ovalau Moturiki Market Vendor Association Consecutive Members	2 members	4 members	67% are female

(Figure 1 above received from Levuka Town Council as at 15 June 2023)

6.2. Sustainable Cities and Communities (SDG 11)

The Council continues to contribute to SDG 11 sustainable cities and communities. For instance, in 2014 an informal settlement known as Baba was assisted under the City-Wide Project Grant for proper sanitation. Close to 60 percent of the population in Baba who did not have proper sanitation were assisted from this project.

Under the solid waste management program, the collection of household waste, green waste and white goods are carried out accordingly as per collection schedule within the town boundary and villages. To date, 40 percent of rural villages are covered by the services provided, which includes collection of households, green and white good waste.



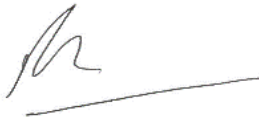
Further to the above, rain harvesting, and solar power will be installed at the new Levuka market and the dump site at Natokalau.

7. CONCLUSION

In this review, the committee highlighted various areas that needs to be strengthened by the Council and formulated recommendations for resolution of issues.

COMMITTEE MEMBERS' ELECTRONIC SIGNATURE

We, the Members of the Standing Committee on Social Affairs, hereby agree with the contents of this report:

Committee Member	Electronic Signature
Hon. Alitia Bainivalu, MP (Chairperson)	
Hon. Ratu Rakuita Vakalalabure, MP (Deputy Chairperson)	
Hon. Sashi Kiran, MP (Member)	
Hon. Viam Pillay, MP (Member)	
Hon. Parveen Bala, MP (Member)	
Date: 6 November 2023	

ANNEXURE

Published evidence

Written evidence, transcripts and supporting documents can be viewed on the Parliament website at the following link:

<https://www.parliament.gov.fj/committees/standing-committee-on-social-affairs/>