



PARLIAMENT OF THE REPUBLIC OF FIJI

MINUTES

of Proceedings of Parliament at Suva on Thursday, Fourteenth day of September, 2023

1. The House met at 9.30 a.m. pursuant to adjournment.

2. Hon. Speaker took the Chair and read the Prayer.

3. MEMBERS PRESENT

All Honourable Members were present except for the Hon. Parveen Bala.

4. CONFIRMATION OF MINUTES

The Hon. Speaker allowed the Minister for Public Works, Meteorological Services and Transport the Hon. Ro Filipe Tuisawau to move that the Minutes of the sitting of Parliament held on Wednesday, 13 September 2023 as previously circulated, be taken as read and be confirmed.

Motion seconded.

Question put.

Motion agreed to unanimously.

5. COMMUNICATIONS FROM THE CHAIR

Hon. Speaker welcomed all Honourable Members to the sitting, those seated in the gallery and those watching the live proceedings on television and the internet.

Hon. Speaker informed all Honourable Members that the back-to-office report for the CPA Post Election Seminar which was held in Tonga was available in the Library.

6. PRESENTATION OF REPORTS OF COMMITTEES

(a) Standing Committee on Foreign Affairs and Defence

The Chairperson of the Standing Committee on Foreign Affairs and Defence the Hon. Viliame Naupoto tabled the Committee's review report on the Fiji Police Force 2017-2018 and 2019-2020 annual reports.

The Chairperson of the Standing Committee on Foreign Affairs and Defence moved a motion without notice pursuant to Standing Order 121(5) that a debate on the content of the report be initiated at a future sitting. The motion was seconded and agreed to unanimously.

(b) Standing Committee on Public Accounts

The Chairperson of the Standing Committee on Public Accounts the Hon. Esrom Immanuel tabled the Committee's review report on the Performance Audit Report of the Office of the Auditor-General on the Monitoring of Implementation of the Sugarcane Development and Farmers Assistance Programme.

The Chairperson of the Standing Committee on Public Accounts moved a motion without notice pursuant to Standing Order 121(5) that a debate on the content of the report is initiated at a future sitting. The motion was seconded and agreed to unanimously.

7. MINISTERIAL STATEMENTS

The Minister for Agriculture and Waterways the Hon. Vatimi Rayalu delivered a Ministerial Statement. The Leader of the Opposition the Hon. Inia Seruiratu subsequently responded.

8. QUESTIONS

Oral Questions

126/2023 Hon. Parveen Bala to ask the Minister for Multi-Ethnic Affairs and Sugar Industry – Can the Minister inform Parliament if there are plans in place along with a proper timeline to solve the numerous breakdowns at the Rarawai Sugar Mill, which is affecting farmers, lorry drivers and national productivity.

127/2023 Hon. Alitia Bainivalu asked the Minister for Housing and Local Government – Can the Minister update Parliament on the approved changes to the Policy for Housing Assistance to Fire Victims Grant.

128/2023 Hon. Alipate Tuicolo asked the Minister for Employment, Productivity and Industrial Relations – Extramarital affairs and marriage/family breakdown have been an issue affecting Fijians contracted under the Pacific Australia Labour Mobility (PALM) and the Recognised

Seasonal Employer (RSE) schemes – Can the Minister inform Parliament on the Ministry’s plan to address the problem.

- 129/2023 Hon. Jovesa Vocea asked the Deputy Prime Minister and Minister for Trade, Co-operatives, Small and Medium Enterprises and Communications – Can the Deputy Prime Minister inform Parliament on the Ministry’s work plan to address the Black Spot areas in the country.
- 130/2023 Hon. Hem Chand asked the Minister for Women, Children and Social Protection – Can the Minister inform Parliament if the Ministry has any plans to open Child Care Centres for 3 to 5 year-olds.
- 131/2023 Hon. Lenora Qereqeretabua to ask the Minister for Agriculture and Waterways – Can the Minister inform Parliament on the planned dredging and engineering works in the major rivers or water inland water systems in Fiji to curb and control incidences of flooding and to avail low value minerals for construction works.
- 132/2023 Hon. Jone Usamate asked the Minister for Public Works, Meteorological Services and Transport – With the people of Naceva and Nakasaleka in Kadavu anticipating the completion of the Vunisei Kavala Road, can the Minister update Parliament on those roads, and when is it likely to be completed and commissioned.
- 133/2023 Hon. Sashi Kiran asked the Minister for Education – Can the Minister inform Parliament on the measures being undertaken to enhance the quality and accessibility of technical and vocational education and training (TVET) programmes in the country.

Written Question

- 134/2023 Hon. Jone Usamate asked the Minister for Public Works, Meteorological Services and Transport – Can the Minister provide the following –
- (a) a detailed breakdown of the list of projects and programmes that will be implemented to utilise the Ministry’s budget for the 2023 to 2024 budget; and
 - (b) the targeted cost of each programme and project, together with planned completion dates.

The responses to the Oral Questions and Supplementary Questions were provided by the respective Ministers. The Hon. Speaker allowed the Hon. Alvick Maharaj to ask Oral Question 126/2023. The Hon. Speaker ruled that Oral Question 131/2023 had been omitted given that the Hon. Minister for Agriculture and Waterways had delivered a Ministerial Statement on the same subject matter. The response to the Written Question would be submitted by the Minister in accordance with Standing Order 45(3).

9. HIGH COURT (AMENDMENT) BILL 2023 (BILL NO. 20 OF 2023)

The Attorney-General and Minister for Justice the Hon. Siromi Turaga moved that pursuant to the resolution of Parliament on Monday, 11 September 2023 that the High Court (Amendment) Bill 2023 be debated, voted upon and be passed.

Motion seconded.

Motion debated.

Question put.

Votes cast –

Yes	–	29
No	–	24
Not Voted	–	2

Motion agreed to.

A Bill for an Act to amend the High Court Act 1875 (Bill No. 20 of 2023), enacted by the Parliament of the Republic of Fiji.

10. LOCAL GOVERNMENT (AMENDMENT) BILL 2023 (BILL NO. 21 OF 2023)

The Attorney-General and Minister for Justice the Hon. Siromi Turaga moved that pursuant to the resolution of Parliament on Monday, 11 September 2023 that the Local Government (Amendment) Bill 2023 be debated, voted upon and be passed.

Motion seconded.

Motion debated.

Question put.

Motion agreed to unanimously.

A Bill for an Act to amend the Local Government Act 1972 (Bill No. 21 of 2023), enacted by the Parliament of the Republic of Fiji.

11. SUSPENSION MOTION BY THE LEADER OF THE GOVERNMENT IN PARLIAMENT

The Leader of the Government in Parliament the Hon. Lynda Tabuya moved under Standing Order 6 that so much of Standing Order 23(1) be suspended so as to allow the House to sit beyond 4.30 p.m. to complete the remaining items listed on the Order Paper.

Motion seconded.

Motion debated.

Question put.

Motion agreed to unanimously.

12. DRAINAGE (AMENDMENT) BILL 2023 (BILL NO. 22 OF 2023)

The Attorney-General and Minister for Justice the Hon. Siromi Turaga moved that pursuant to the resolution of Parliament on Monday, 11 September 2023 that the Drainage (Amendment) Bill 2023 be debated, voted upon and be passed.

Motion seconded.

Motion debated.

Question put.

Votes cast –

Yes	–	29
No	–	23
Not Voted	–	3

Motion agreed to.

A Bill for an Act to amend the Drainage Act 1961 (Bill No. 22 of 2023), enacted by the Parliament of the Republic of Fiji.

13. STATE LANDS (AMENDMENT) BILL 2023 (BILL NO. 23 OF 2023)

The Attorney-General and Minister for Justice the Hon. Siromi Turaga moved that pursuant to the resolution of Parliament on Monday, 11 September 2023 that the State Lands (Amendment) Bill 2023 be debated, voted upon and be passed.

Motion seconded.

Motion debated.

Question put.

Votes cast –

Yes	–	27
No	–	24
Not Voted	–	4

Motion agreed to.

A Bill for an Act to amend the State Lands Act 1945 (Bill No. 23 of 2023), enacted by the Parliament of the Republic of Fiji.

14. HIGHER SALARIES COMMISSION BILL 2023 (BILL NO. 24 OF 2023)

The Attorney-General and Minister for Justice the Hon. Siromi Turaga moved that pursuant to the resolution of Parliament on Monday, 11 September 2023 that the Higher Salaries Commission Bill 2023 be debated, voted upon and be passed.

Motion seconded.

Motion debated.

Question put.

Votes cast –

Yes	–	28
No	–	23
Not Voted	–	4

Motion agreed to.

A Bill for an Act to provide for the establishment of the Higher Salaries Commission and related matters (Bill No. 24 of 2023), enacted by the Parliament of the Republic of Fiji.

15. ADJOURNMENT

The Hon. Speaker thanked all Honourable Members for their contributions and adjourned Parliament until Friday, 15 September 2023 at 9.30 a.m.

Parliament adjourned at 6.45 p.m.

Speaker of Parliament

Secretary-General to Parliament

14th September, 2023.