



STANDING COMMITTEE ON FOREIGN AFFAIRS AND DEFENCE

Review Report of the Fiji Airports 2022 Annual Report



PARLIAMENT OF THE REPUBLIC OF FIJI
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Acronyms

ACI	- Airports Council International
ANES	- Air Navigation Engineering Services
ATM	- Air Traffic Management
ARFFS	- Airport Rescue and Firefighting Services
FIR	- Flight Information Region
ICAO	- Chicago Convention and the International Civil Aviation Organization
ICAO GRF	ICAO Global Reporting Format
LEED	- Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design
Nadi FIR	- Nadi Flight Information Region
SCFAD	- Standing Committee on Foreign Affairs and Defence
SSeC	- Significant Security Concerns
SDG	- Sustainable Development Goals
SO	- Standing Order
SWIM	- System Wide Information Management

Chairperson's Foreword

The Standing Committee on Foreign Affairs and Defence (the Committee) hereby submits to Parliament its Review Report on the Fiji Airports 2022 Annual Report, which was referred to the Committee on 28 April 2025.

Fiji Airports is a whole of government-owned commercial entity, established on 12 April 1999 under the Public Enterprise Act 1996. It is responsible for managing 15 airports across the country, including the two international gateways, Nadi and Nausori, as well as 13 domestic airports located throughout Fiji's maritime region.

In addition to managing airport infrastructure and operations, Fiji Airports provides Air Traffic Management (ATM) services within the Nadi Flight Information Region (Nadi FIR), which covers the sovereign airspace of several Pacific Island nations, including Tuvalu, New Caledonia, Kiribati, and Vanuatu.

As part of its review process, the Committee received an oral submission from the Fiji Airports on 4 June 2025 and conducted site visits to Nadi International Airport. The Committee's review is presented as a bipartisan report and includes six key recommendations for Parliament's consideration.

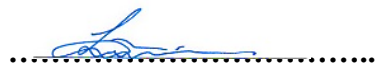
The Committee commends Fiji Airports for its proactive leadership in sustainability and climate action, particularly in achieving Level 4 of the Airports Council International (ACI) Carbon Accreditation and implementing forward-looking initiatives such as solar energy integration, mangrove planting, and climate-resilient infrastructure planning. To build on this momentum and address broader strategic priorities, the Committee recommends:

- 1.0 Prioritising the replacement of ageing airport assets and expediting delayed capital projects, leveraging blended financing models and public-private partnerships to support the timely implementation of the Nadi Airport modernisation plan;
- 2.0 Formalising and expanding the Gender Equality and Inclusion Strategy, with measurable targets to increase female representation, particularly in technical and leadership roles, in alignment with Sustainable Development Goal 5 and national gender equity commitments;
- 3.0 Continuing the trajectory toward Level 5 ACI Accreditation and net-zero emissions by 2050, through increased investment in renewable energy and adoption of international green infrastructure standards;

- 4.0 Developing the Fiji Airports Aviation Academy into a fully accredited regional centre of excellence, with a focus on addressing technical skill shortages across the aviation sector;
- 5.0 Adopting international best practices in slot and gate management, benchmarking against high-performing airports to optimise operations and enhance Nadi's role as a competitive regional transit hub; and
- 6.0 Strengthening security protocols at outer island airports, including the implementation of ICAO-compliant screening and a whole-of-government response to emerging transnational threats such as drug trafficking.

The Committee extends its appreciation to the CEO of Fiji Airports and his team for the timely submission of the 2022 Annual Report and their cooperation throughout the review process. I also thank the members of the Standing Committee on Foreign Affairs and Defence for their contributions to this bipartisan report, and acknowledge the Secretariat for their invaluable support.

On behalf of the Standing Committee on Foreign Affairs and Defence, I respectfully submit this report to Parliament.



Hon. Lenora Qereqeretabua
Chairperson

Recommendations

- 1.0 The Committee recommends that the Government of Fiji, in collaboration with Fiji Airports, prioritise the replacement of ageing airport assets and accelerate delayed capital projects. This fund should leverage existing international support (e.g. World Bank, IFC) and explore blended financing models, including public-private partnerships (PPPs), to ensure timely implementation of the Nadi Airport modernization plan and prevent further deterioration of critical infrastructure (*reference to point 3.3.2 and 3.3.3*).
- 2.0 The Committee recommends that Fiji Airports formalise and expand its Gender Equality and Inclusion Strategy, setting measurable targets to increase female representation across all levels, particularly in technical and leadership roles. This should include sustained investment in leadership development programmes, mentorship, inclusive workplace infrastructure, and gender-sensitive recruitment practices, in alignment with SDG 5 (Gender Equality) and national gender equity commitments (*reference to point 3.3.4*).
- 3.0 The Committee commends Fiji Airports for its proactive commitment to sustainability and climate action, notably achieving Level 4 of the ACI Carbon Accreditation, and for implementing forward-looking initiatives such as solar energy integration, mangrove planting, and climate-resilient infrastructure planning. The Committee recommends that Fiji Airports continue its trajectory toward Level 5 ACI Accreditation and net-zero emissions by 2050 by expanding renewable energy capacity, strengthening partnerships with airport ecosystem stakeholders (e.g. airlines, concessionaires), and adopting international green building standards such as Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design (LEED) for all future infrastructure developments (*reference to point 3.3.5*).
- 4.0 The Committee recommends that Fiji Airports prioritise the development of the Fiji Airports Aviation Academy into a fully accredited regional centre of excellence for aviation training, with a focus on addressing technical talent shortages both locally and in the Pacific region. This should include curriculum expansion, partnerships with regional and international aviation bodies, and scholarship programmes to attract and retain skilled professionals in critical areas such as air traffic management, engineering, and airport operations (*reference to point 3.3.6*).
- 5.0 The Committee recommends that Fiji Airports adopt international best practices in slot and gate management, benchmarking against high-performing Australian airports such as Brisbane and Sydney. This includes implementing dynamic slot coordination systems, optimising flight schedules in collaboration with airlines, and utilising real-time data analytics to improve gate turnaround efficiency. Such measures will reduce peak-hour congestion, better distribution of traffic across the day, and strengthen Nadi's potential as a competitive regional transit hub (*reference to point 3.3.7*).
- 6.0 The Committee recommends that the Government, in collaboration with Fiji Airports, the Civil Aviation Authority of Fiji, and border security agencies, review and upgrade security protocols at outer island and regional airports. This should include the progressive

introduction of ICAO-compliant screening procedures, staff training, and investment in appropriate security infrastructure. Given the rise in drug trafficking and transnational crime, the Committee further recommends a whole-of-government approach to airport security, recognising these issues as national threats requiring integrated aviation and border control responses (*reference to point 3.3.10*).

1.0 Committee Remit and Composition

Under Standing Order 109(2)(e) the Standing Committee on Foreign Affairs and Defence is mandated to look into matters related to Fiji's relations with other countries, development aid, foreign direct investment, oversight of the military, and relations with multi-lateral organizations. The members of the Standing Committee on Foreign Affairs and Defence are as follows:



Hon. Lenora Qereqeretabua
Chairperson

*Deputy Speaker of Parliament
Assistant Minister for Foreign Affairs*



Hon. Rinesh Sharma
Deputy Chairperson



Hon. Ratu Isikeli Tuiwailevu
Member

Assistant Minister for iTaukei Affairs, Heritage and Arts



Hon. Penioni Ravunawa
Member

Assistant Minister for Health and Medical Services



Hon. Virendra Lal
Member

1.1 Committee Secretariat Team

Supporting the Committee in its work is a group of dedicated Parliament Officers serving as the Committee Secretariat. These officers are appointed and delegated by the Secretary-General to Parliament by Standing Order 15(3)(i). The Secretariat officers are as follows:

- Mrs. Susana Korovou – Senior Committee Clerk
- Mrs. Elesi Tabuyaqona – Deputy Committee Clerk

2.0 Background and Terms of Reference

The Standing Committee on Foreign Affairs and Defence (the Committee), was referred the Fiji Airports 2022 Annual Report on 28 April 2025. The referral of the Annual Report was done in accordance with SO 38(2), whereby the Committee was assigned to investigate the contents of the report and provide a report to Parliament at a future Sitting. This report is outside the usual mandate of the Committee, but the referral was made to help ease the workload of the other Standing Committees.

2.1 Procedure and Program

Public Submission (written and oral submission)

In relation to Standing Order 111 (1), the Committee is committed to upholding public trust in Parliament, by ensuring that there is public participation and that all such participation is given due consideration. The Committee had an oral public submission from the Fiji Airports on 04 June 2025 and conducted site visits at Nadi International Airport.

A summary of the submission is provided in a later part of this report, under the heading ‘Committee’s Deliberation and Analysis’. Copies of the written submission and the verbatim from the meeting can be obtained from the online Appendices of this report, which can be accessed from the Parliament website: www.parliament.gov.fj.

3.0 Committee Deliberation and Analysis

3.1 Introduction

Fiji Airports is a wholly government-owned commercial entity, established on 12 April 1999 under the Public Enterprise Act of 1996. The company manages 15 airports across the Fiji Islands, including the two international gateways, Nadi and Nausori, as well as 13 domestic airports located throughout Fiji's maritime zone.

In addition to airport operations, Fiji Airports is responsible for providing Air Traffic Management (ATM) services within the Nadi Flight Information Region (Nadi FIR). This region encompasses the sovereign airspace of several neighboring Pacific nations, including Tuvalu, New Caledonia, Kiribati, and Vanuatu.

The events of 2022 highlighted the unprecedented impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on global travel and aviation. Despite having a robust strategic business plan and risk mitigation measures in place, Fiji Airports, like many others, was unprepared for the scale of disruption caused by the pandemic. The second wave led to prolonged border closures and a sharp decline in air passenger traffic. Nevertheless, Fiji Airports remained operational, continuing its essential functions and maintaining critical services.

At the heart of these operations is Nadi International Airport, the flagship of Fiji Airports and a crucial hub for international and domestic travel. Prior to the pandemic, it facilitated the movement of nearly a million passengers annually and played a key role in connecting Fiji to the world. Nadi International Airport supports over 100,000 aircraft movements each year within its Flight Information Region (FIR), serving more than 2 million international and domestic passengers, handling over 1.3 million tons of freight, and hosting 20 airlines that connects Fiji to 15 cities, internationally.

3.2 Summary of the 2022 Annual Report

3.2.1 Operational Review

Fiji Airports has remained resilient through the challenges of COVID-19 by strengthening relationships with airlines, industry partners, and government agencies. These collaborations helped navigate evolving health protocols and supported efforts to maintain operations during fluctuating travel restrictions.

As international travel resumed, Fiji Airports focused on workforce resilience, resource scaling, and maintaining high safety and hygiene standards. The organization worked closely with stakeholders to streamline processes, adapt to regulatory changes, and plan for future disruptions, all while aiming for a stable return to normal operations.

3.2.2 Selection of Fiji Airways to manage Fiji Airports Operations

Fiji Airways, the national airline, has been appointed under a management contract to lead the operations of Fiji Airports Limited, providing strategic leadership while operating under the oversight of the Fiji Airports Board and its shareholders. This partnership integrates the expertise of both organizations to manage airport infrastructure, terminal operations, ground handling, air traffic management, and regulatory compliance, while also ensuring a high-quality customer experience and a safe, efficient travel environment.

The collaboration aims to strengthen Fiji Airports' recovery from recent industry disruptions and create new opportunities for staff development and economic growth through the expansion of skilled roles. Plans are underway for infrastructure upgrades at key airports, including Nadi, Nausori, and several outer island locations, to enhance the passenger experience.

3.2.3 Airport Landside Operations and Customer Service

Fiji Airports oversees the operations of Nadi International Airport, Fiji's primary international gateway. Within this, the Landside Operations and Customer Service department plays a key role in ensuring a smooth and welcoming experience for all passengers, whether arriving, departing, or transiting through the terminal.

This department is responsible for a range of essential services, including passenger meet-and-greet, baggage handling, lost and found, and terminal cleaning and maintenance. It also manages retail and concession operations, supports passengers with special needs, coordinates with security teams to manage passenger flow through screening, and operates information desks to assist with inquiries.

3.2.4 Aviation Security Services

Nadi and Nausori airports are classified as Security Airports, staffed 24/7 in accordance with international aviation security standards. Fiji Airports maintains a written security program as required by global regulations, supported by certified equipment and regular audits. Strong compliance with the Civil Aviation (Security) Act 1994 has resulted in no Significant Security Concerns (SSeC) being raised for Fiji.

3.2.5 Air Traffic Management Operations

In April 2021, Fiji Airports launched the advanced Aurora Air Traffic Management (ATM) System at the Nadi ATM Centre. This system integrates Oceanic, Approach, and Tower control, along with a high-tech ATC simulator for training. Aurora enhances airspace

efficiency, supports fuel-saving routes, and offers modern surveillance tools, positioning Fiji among the global leaders in procedural and domestic airspace management.

Fiji Airports has achieved major milestones in air traffic management, becoming the first in the world to implement Surveillance Control using ADS-B technology without radar in its domestic airspace in October 2022. It also successfully introduced the ICAO Global Reporting Format (GRF) at Nadi and Nausori airports in 2021, ensuring compliance through thorough testing and staff training.

Ongoing innovations include transitioning to Aeronautical Information Management (AIM), exploring Remote Tower Technology, and adopting System Wide Information Management (SWIM). With 40% female representation in its ATM team and one of the world's most advanced ATM systems, Fiji Airports is committed to safety, efficiency, and technological leadership.

3.2.6 Air Navigation Engineering Services (ANES)

Air Navigation Engineering Services (ANES) at Fiji Airports is responsible for maintaining and supporting critical ground-based navigation and communication systems essential for safe aircraft operations. This includes systems like the Instrument Landing System (ILS), VOR, and DME, which guide aircraft during take-off and landing.

ANES ensures these systems are accurately calibrated, maintains communication equipment such as VHF radios for air traffic control, and provides technical support to air traffic controllers. The team also stays current with evolving aviation technologies, playing a key role in adopting and integrating new air navigation solutions.

3.2.7 Airside Operations

Fiji Airports has partnered with Australian airport innovation company AeroAscent to enhance its airside operations through advanced technology and mobile apps. This collaboration follows a comprehensive review of the airport's operational and intelligence needs, aiming to modernize and streamline performance.

Through this partnership, AeroAscent will deliver a suite of innovative applications designed to improve operational efficiency, business intelligence, risk management, and the overall customer experience, keeping Fiji Airports at the forefront of airport operations and technology.

3.2.8 Aviation Rescue Fire Fighting Services (ARFFS)

The Airport Rescue and Firefighting Services (ARFFS) at Fiji Airports handle a wide range of emergencies across its 15 airports, including aviation, industrial, road, marine, and

medical incidents, all aimed at protecting lives and ensuring safe operations. In early 2022, ARFFS launched a recruitment campaign focused on attracting a diverse pool of candidates, raising awareness about life and work at fire stations across Fiji's airports, and supporting applicants through the demanding selection process. Notably, the team now includes two female fire officers at Nadi International Airport, with ongoing efforts to recruit more women into the service.

In 2022, ARFFS at Nausori International Airport held a comprehensive emergency mock exercise simulating an aircraft crash landing to test and improve response procedures in collaboration with multiple emergency agencies. The exercise focused on the recovery phase, involving a mock fuselage, debris, and injured passengers, providing a valuable opportunity for all involved to understand roles, responsibilities, and investigative processes, strengthening overall emergency preparedness.

3.2.9 2022 Major Projects

- **Nadi International Airport Upgrades (Japan Grant – FJD 6.3 million):**
 - Funded by the Government of Japan via the Japan Fund for Prosperous and Resilient Asia and the Pacific.
 - Focused on enhancing COVID-19 readiness.
 - Includes:
 - New COVID-19 testing facility with RT-PCR equipment.
 - Construction of a new lounge, isolation room, and boarding gate.
 - Purchase of disease control and infection prevention equipment.
- **Commercial Expansion in Nadi:**
 - Plans to develop land owned by Fiji Airports in Nadi.
 - Goal to diversify business and develop alternative revenue streams.
 - Response to a significant drop in passenger traffic (from 2.29 million to 400,000).
 - Operational cost reductions achieved (from \$73M in 2019 to \$51M).
- **Manufacturing & Infrastructure Projects:**
 - Many capital projects postponed in 2020 to preserve cash flow.
 - Two major projects continued:
 - Nausori Runway Upgrade – Completed in 2021.
 - Expansion of Aircraft Parking at Nadi Airport – Ongoing.
 - Additional development at outer island airports totalling \$4.1 million.

3.3 Committee Findings

The Committee’s findings are outlined below:

3.3.1 Digital Transformation

The Committee commends Fiji Airports for advancing to digital transformation by implementing real-time, paperless airport operations management across all its airports. Following a knowledge-sharing visit to Brisbane Airport in 2022, the organization adopted digital systems that provide daily operational reports and ground operations intelligence, enhancing decision-making, efficiency, and staff productivity at both major and outer island airports.

3.3.2 Ageing Infrastructure and Capital Project Delays

During the reporting period, it was noted critical airport infrastructure, including aerobridges, belt systems, and scanning machines, were severely outdated (25–30 years old), exceeding their intended lifespans. Capital project implementation was also significantly delayed.

3.3.3 Major Capital Investment Needs

A \$2.3 billion modernization project for Nadi Airport is planned over 10 years. Funding challenges persist, but there is strong support from institutions like the World Bank and IFC.

3.3.4 Gender Inequality in Workforce

Fiji Airports remains a male-dominated organization, but recent efforts have slightly improved female representation to over 20%. Initiatives like leadership development and targeted recruitment are being implemented.

3.3.5 Sustainability and Climate Action

Fiji Airports has made progress on sustainable practices, reaching Level 4 on the ACI Carbon Accreditation and aiming for Level 5 and net-zero emissions by 2050. Initiatives include a solar farm, mangrove planting, and climate-resilient infrastructure planning.

3.3.6 Talent Shortages and Training

Staff shortages remain a challenge, especially in technical areas. The Fiji Airports Aviation Academy is positioned to become a regional hub for training aviation professionals.

3.3.7 Passenger Growth and Congestion Challenges

Fiji Airports currently processes over two million passengers annually, with forecasts of up to eight million in the coming years. Congestion is significant during peak “morning and afternoon waves,” with infrastructure underutilized during off-peak hours. Up to 50% of passengers are transit travelers, showing growing potential for Nadi as a regional transit

hub. Poor slot and gate management contribute to peak-hour bottlenecks and underused capacity at other times.

3.3.8 Land Constraints

Land constraints around Nadi Airport limit physical expansion, and there are restrictions on vertical expansion due to flight path regulations.

3.3.9 Infrastructure Projects and Capacity Building

Key upgrades underway include expansion of the departure and arrival lounges, and development projects at Labasa and Savusavu airports. Labasa's terminal project (initially \$18.6 million) may face delays due to community-driven upgrade requests (e.g. air conditioning, carousel). Savusavu is operational but limited to Twin Otter aircraft, with long-term plans requiring major investment for expansion.

3.3.10 Security Concerns and Limitations

The Committee was informed that only Nadi and Nausori Airports are classified as secure under ICAO standards. Outlying airports lack security screenings, relying on airline-initiated questioning, a weak link in countering drug trafficking and transnational crime. Security threats from drugs or illegal items are handled by border agencies, not considered threats to aviation safety under current frameworks.

3.3.11 Emergency Preparedness and Inter-agency Collaboration

Emergency mock drills include traffic management, hospitals, police, military, and local communities. The Nadi Airport Emergency Plan and its equivalents in outer islands include collaboration with village heads and local responders.

3.3.12 Sustainability and Solar Energy

Fiji Airports confirmed that Labasa, Savusavu, Matei, and Rotuma airports are now fully solar-powered. Environmental resilience is growing, supported by initiatives like mangrove planting, waste management, and EDGE/LEED-compliant infrastructure design.

3.3.13 Community Development and Housing

Fiji Airports owns community housing but is shifting away from direct renovations to commercial development, aiming to monetize landside assets for funding airside improvements.

3.3.14 Strategic Planning and Governance

A 10-year Strategic Plan (2025–2034) aims to position Fiji as a world-class aviation hub for the Blue Pacific Strategy. Strategic alignment includes investment planning, tourism integration, long-term development of infrastructure in the Northern Division (e.g., feasibility studies for an international airport).

4.0 Relevance to Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)

Fiji Airports has begun implementing initiatives aligned with the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), with strong encouragement from the Parliamentary Standing Committee on Social Affairs. Notably, it is the first state-owned enterprise in Fiji to appoint a Gender and Social Inclusion (JETSEA) Officer, driving gender equality and embedding decent work and economic growth into organizational planning. Innovation, infrastructure development, and evidence-based decision-making are also central to the company's strategy, learning from global best practices while tailoring solutions to local needs.

On sustainability, Fiji Airports began its journey in 2014 and has since achieved Level 4 in the Airport Carbon Accreditation, now targeting Level 5 within five years as part of its net-zero emissions goal by 2050. Major contributors include its solar farm, climate-resilient infrastructure designed using World Bank EDGE criteria, and mangrove planting near coastal areas vulnerable to sea level rise. These efforts are also aligned with SDG13 (Climate Action). Community engagement remains a priority, particularly involving landowners and fostering inclusive development in airport-adjacent communities. Looking ahead, the organization aims to meet international environmental standards such as LEED in its infrastructure projects.

5.0 Conclusion

The Standing Committee on Foreign Affairs and Defence has conducted a thorough review of the Fiji Airports 2022 Annual Report. The Committee report is bi-partisan and has six recommendations for consideration. The Committee commends the Fiji Airports for tabling its report to Parliament.

6.0 Committee Members' Signatures



Hon. Lenora Qereqeretabua
Chairperson



Hon. Rinesh Sharma
Deputy Chairperson



Hon. Ratu Isikeli Tuiwailevu
Member



Hon. Penioni Ravunawa
Member



Hon. Virendra Lal
Member

7.0 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-foreign-affairs-and-defence/>