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Verbatim Report

[VERBATIM REPORT]

STANDING COMMITTEE ON FOREIGN AFFAIRS AND DEFENCE

ANNUAL REPORTS

- (1) Department of Immigration
2019-2020 Annual Report
2020-2021 Annual Report
2021-2022 Annual Report
2022-2023 Annual Report**

ENTITIES: Ministry of Immigration

VENUE: Big Committee Room (East Wing)

DATE: Thursday, 11th June, 2026

**VERBATIM REPORT OF THE MEETING OF THE STANDING COMMITTEE ON
FOREIGN AFFAIRS AND DEFENCE HELD AT THE COMMITTEE ROOM (EAST
WING), PARLIAMENT PRECINCTS, GOVERNMENT BUILDINGS, ON MONDAY, 15TH
JUNE, 2026, AT 09.06 A.M.**

Present

- | | | |
|-----|---------------------------|--------------------|
| (1) | Hon. L.S. Qereqeretabua - | Chairperson |
| (2) | Hon. R.R. Sharma - | Deputy Chairperson |
| (3) | Hon. P.K. Ravunawa - | Member |
| (4) | Hon. V. Lal - | Member |
| (5) | Hon. T.R. Matasawalevu - | Member |

Apology

- | | | | |
|-----|--------------------|---|--------|
| (1) | Hon. I. Tuiwailevu | - | Member |
|-----|--------------------|---|--------|

Interviewee/Submittee: Ministry of Immigration In

Attendance:

- | | | | | |
|-----|------------------------|---|---|--|
| (1) | Mr. Alik Salusalu | - | Permanent Secretary | |
| (2) | Mr. Jese Cirikisuva | - | Manager, Border Security &
Enforcement | |
| (3) | Mr. Sakario Rabuli | - | Manager, Human Resources | |
| (4) | Mr. Alekio Sela | - | SIO, Permits & Visas | |
| (5) | Ms. Silina Tuikilakila | - | Immigration Officer, Passports & Permits | |
| (6) | Ms. Akeshni Prasad | - | Immigration Officer, Citizenship | |
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MADAM CHAIRPERSON.- Good morning, honourable Members; the Ministry of Immigration representatives - PS and your Team; members of the media; and members of the public. I hope you have all had a good weekend. I welcome the Members of the Committee and the Secretariat, including Wati from Hansard. A very good morning and welcome to this meeting.

I wish to advise that pursuant to the Standing Orders of Parliament, specifically Standing Order 111, Committee meetings are open to the public and to the media. So, accordingly, this submission is open to the public and members of the media. However, if there is any sensitive information relating to this submission that you cannot disclose publicly, this information may be provided to the Committee either in writing or in a closed session. However, this is only permissible in particular cases, including matters relating to national security, third party confidential information, personnel or human resource matters, and also during our close deliberation as a committee, as we develop our report back to Parliament.

I wish to advise honourable Members and our submittees this morning that all comments and questions should be directed through me, the Chairperson. For viewers who are following this

meeting live on *Facebook*, you may submit your questions via the comments section but note that only relevant questions will be considered by the Secretariat and the Committee. Members of the Committee may interject during the submission, or if you wish, we can hold our questions till after your presentation.

I want to remind everyone present that this is a parliamentary proceeding and all information provided is protected under the Parliamentary Powers and Privileges Act 2016 and the Standing Orders of Parliament. We will not condone any slander or libel of any sort, and all information presented to the Committee should be factual.

In terms of meeting protocols, movement within the meeting room should be kept to a minimum, and also the usage of mobile phones is discouraged. I beg your pardon, speaking of myself, and I ask that we all place our phones on silent mode. I now want to introduce to you the Members of this Committee.

(Introduction of Committee Members and Secretariat)

Members of the public and members of the Committee, today, we will receive an in-person submission from the Ministry of Immigration in relation to the Office of the Prime Minister and Fiji Immigration Department's 2019-2020, 2020-2021, 2021-2022 and 2022-2023 Annual Reports. I now invite the Permanent Secretary (PS) and representatives from the Ministry of Immigration, to introduce yourselves before you proceed with your submission. I also ask that we, please, turn our microphones on before we speak and just remember to turn them off to avoid any disruption towards our live submission. *Vinaka saka*, and over to you, Sir.

MR. A. SALUSALU.- Madam Chairperson, *ni sa yadra saka*, and honourable Members of the Committee. This morning we are so thankful to be given an opportunity to come and share some of the responses based on some of the questions that was forwarded to the Ministry. We apologise if our submission was a bit late. Last week, we hosted the Pacific Immigration Development Community Conference, comprised of 21 countries which started on Monday and finished on Friday. We apologise for any inconvenience that we may cause on the presentation of our submission, but it was a highlight of the Fiji Government that we were able to host that meeting on behalf of the Fiji Government.

This morning, I am going to introduce my Team.

(Introduction of Ministry of Immigration Officials)

We will try our best to answer any questions that may be raised to us in regard to the period of the Annual Reports.

This morning, if I am allowed, I wish to share a presentation which gives a bit of a picture on our journey from a Department to a now standalone Ministry.

Honourable Members, on the screen, it shows a slide that states the Ministry of Immigration journey to a stand-alone Ministry. For many, many years ago, the Department of Immigration was always under another Ministry, normally, with the two big agencies - the Fiji Police Force and the Republic of Fiji Military Forces. So, we were either together at the Ministry of Defence, Home Affairs, and lately, with the Office of the Prime Minister (OPM).

The period that was given on the Annual Report that we were supposed to report on, I can share a bit of history. From 2019 to 2020, we were under the OPM. From 2022 to 2021, we were still with OPM. From 2021 to 2022, we were with OPM but halfway through, we moved to the Ministry of Defence. From 2022-2023, we were still with the Ministry of Defence. From 2023-2024, again, we were with the Ministry of Defence and then halfway through, we moved back to OPM until we became a standalone Ministry from 2025 to 2026. So, we have grown from a Department to a Ministry.

Our Minister was sworn in on 10th January, 2025. I joined the Ministry on 11th June, 2025 as well. We have a slide that shows an overview of our journey. It is where we started the establishment of the Ministry of Immigration, the impact of becoming a Ministry,

the challenges and some of the achievements. I am sure that while we go through the slides, we might be able to answer some of the questions that may arise during the period of reporting in terms of digitisation and improvement of services.

The next slide shows where we started. Those few circles there – we apologise if they are not readable, but they show the path that we followed. So, we have a journey on a few circles that shows where we were as a department before, and now a Ministry. You can see on the blue circle, it says limited independence, policy direction, some budget issues and one important thing, we lack visibility. Our voice was very dim in volume when we were tucked under another Ministry so today, we are able to put the volume up and our visibility and our role in Government as a Sovereign Border Enforcement Agency has now become visible.

Madam Chairperson, with the meeting concluded on Friday, Fiji has now become the Chair of the Pacific Immigration Development Community (PIDC). The Representative from the Kingdom of Tonga was the Chairman and I resumed chairmanship last week, so thank you, Madam. It is a big milestone for Fiji. We are now going to be leading 21 Countries in the Pacific, on ways to improve mobility in the Pacific in terms of labour, mobility in terms of travellers management, border security and enforcement, and the most important one that is very much in discussion now is

transnational crime. We are at the centre of transnational crime because we allow or disallow people to cross the border, so we have a big task ahead of us.

Honourable Members, the next slide shows the challenges on our journey which include limited independence on policy direction, budget, strategic influence, et cetera. As I had mentioned, because of lack of visibility, we do not have a strategic influence in our position because we are always tucked under the two big agencies that are responsible for enforcement and security in Fiji - the RFMF and FPF. Therefore, most of our work was delayed because it becomes, and I cannot say less priority, but because they have big Ministries that they need to look after.

We have a policy and legal gap capacity limitation. At the moment, we are operating as a ministry, but with the strength of a department because we are supposed to go through a few processes on our job evaluation that was put on hold, and we are not able to provide the manpower that we are supposed to operate on as a ministry. We do not have a corporate office. The only two appointments that was added to our department and now became a Ministry was the Minister and myself as PS. These are only two appointments. It is still department strength.

We are operating at that level at the moment. It is a big challenge for us because we provide security at the border on all ports of entry - Nadi, Nausori, Suva, Lautoka, Malau, Savusavu and Levuka. In Nadi, almost a million or 950,000 passengers arrived last year; about 29 to 32 flights a day, so with the number of our staff, we have a big challenge. So we want to put some challenges on our journey.

On the next slide is the establishment of the Ministry of Immigration and the recognition of migration as a national security pillar. Our decision at the border is sovereign. When we stamp on arrival or decline entry, it is a sovereign decision that was given to the Ministry on entry or to decline any entry.

On economic enabler, we are now a default Ministry that assesses investors. Many years ago, investors normally go through the Fiji Trades and Investment Board (FTIB) for them to do the scrutiny on any investor. When they pass on that role to Immigration, we were not designed to scrutinise investors. Our role is to clear passengers at the border on the issue of permits and visas, the processing of citizenships, and also for passports.

The discussion now is that we have to reestablish that function again for investors. For every investor who wants to come to Fiji, from financial point of view, he or she was supposed to have \$300,000 minimum as investment. A time has come in the last few years that investors were given some kind of privileges as zero dollar investors, so we need to enforce our law and the Act that was in place. As I had mentioned, the sovereign functions of border entry and the decline of entry for any passenger is with the Ministry of Immigration.

On the next slide, honourable Members, we can see this as our journey. We make a lot of improvements on our processes and a lot of improvements on the system we use to make sure that we are aligned to best practices and international standards. We can see from the slide that we have many things that are clear now - clear governance, clear operation on our roles, faster operation decisions, and overall, an improved service delivery of the Ministry. Those are some of the improvements that was highlighted in the earlier report and we are now resolving them.

The next slide, honourable Members, shows the impact of becoming a Ministry. As I had mentioned before, we have a stronger border management, improved national security, better interagency coordination, and enhanced global alignment for Global Compact Migration and Traffick in Person (TIP).

The TIP report that we received from the US says that we probably did not do enough in terms of prosecution and in terms of enforcement. So from the last report that was sent to us from the US last year stated that we were at Tier 2 Watchlist. Many other countries, like Australia and New Zealand, they are probably had Tier 2, but we are on the lower step of the Watchlist.

We did all the submissions back to the US Government last year and this year before the end of March, and we are now under the new assessment. If they find out that we did not do even enough, we are going to be at Tier 3. Madam Chairperson and honourable Members, I think that is alarming for us if we go down to Tier 3. Many things about trade and development cooperation will be affected.

On the next slide, Madam Chairperson and honourable Members, these are some of the servers that we are going to be improving that will resolve some of the questions that were highlighted in the Report. First one is, in abbreviation, API, which stands for Advanced Passenger Information. The second is PNR which is Passenger Naming Record. The third is ETA which is Estimated Time of Arrival and fourth is APP which is Advanced Passenger Profiling. We are going to access these systems very soon.

Probably, in the next two months, we will be able to access the first two - API and PNR. This will allow immigration to know who is coming before they board the plane from Hong Kong or Singapore or the US or Australia. It will allow us to analyze the passengers, profile them, as well as give us the opportunity to say, "He is a person of interest, maybe red flag in nature. Please, can you offload?" So, we are pushing our borders to the departing airline or departing airport. That will be with us very soon. We will improve our border security and enforcement.

On automated passport and visa application, our visa and permits were online since 2024. Citizenship is also online from last year. The only one that we are going to put online this year is

passport. So, our citizens, either diaspora or local, can log into the system and apply online. We have also have room for those whom I can call 'old school' and who are not user friendly to computers, so we allow walk-ins. They still can submit if they visit an office.

Madam Chaiperson, VFS is for our diaspora. They can go to stations in Brisbane, Darwin, Perth, Sydney and Melbourne, as a pilot, for them to go and apply for passports or renew passports. Australia is using them in Suva and we are in discussion for us to provide that service to our diaspora.

On the decentralization of our service, I think the honourable Minister for Immigration mentioned this in Parliament, that we are going to open two more offices soon, one in Rakiraki and the other one in Nakasi. This is to decentralize our service, to help people with lesser movement, and maybe our contribution to ease traffic jam in the morning because people from Tailevu, Naitasiri and Rewa, as well as those living between Valelevu and Nausori can go to Nakasi. That will limit movement to Suva. Rakiraki Office is to cater people from Rakiraki to Tavua and Rakiraki to Nayavu. Those are the areas.

On Document Forensic Equipment, this is a new equipment that has just arrived. In the next few weeks, we are going to have that capability to have an extra lens that will look deeper into the document and to confirm if it is fraudulent. So, it is a document forensic equipment. We have two, one at Nadi Airport for arriving passengers in case we are in doubt of their passport. We can put them under the lens and see if they have been tampered with.

On training and capacity building, we have just completed a five-week induction training funded by Australia and New Zealand. This is for Border Security Enforcement staff and Immigration staff. We are trying to build a career for Immigration Officers, similar to Police Officers and Military Officers because we are a law enforcement agency. We have a bit of authority to detain/arrest some of the people who may have breached our immigration law, and we are building this capacity towards those areas.

On the last one which is Immigration (Amendment) Act 2026, Passports (Amendment) Act 2026 and Citizenship of Fiji (Amendment) Act 2026, I would like to thank the honourable Members for the passage of these legislations in Parliament. We are now going through the revision of the regulations, and I think we have also received the notice.

Madam Chairperson and honourable Members, that concludes the presentation on our journey as a Ministry, and we are ready for any questions.

MADAM CHAIRPERSON.- Thank you, PS. I know it has been an interesting journey for the then Department and now a full Ministry. We appreciate you taking us through the steps and the years that you have gone through this journey, especially tucked under different Ministries. That could not have been hard, and I understand what you are saying about being a fully fledged Ministry, but still with the strength of a Department, so I understand that.

I will give it to the floor for questions and I see honourable Sharma has got his microphone on, so over to you, Deputy Chairperson.

HON. R.R. SHARMA.- Thank you to the Ministry. Very quickly, I would like to highlight the point where you talked about data forensics. That is extremely important because I myself have seen AI-generated bank cheques and passports and some of the people who showed it to me were just doing that for fun. So, imagine if this is utilised, with the growing number of transnational crimes that is rising. I commend the Ministry on that.

I also agree that when transnational crimes are on the high, cost of living is on the high as well domestically, so our Immigration Officers need to be paid well. PS, we did not receive the attendance list which we had sent out earlier. The questions sent by your Ministry came in at 12.43 a.m. so we did not get a chance to view it. I am also disappointed with the presentation. It could have been made better for the Committee because you had to put in extra effort to explain to the Committee of the presentation.

My question is regarding staffing - a standalone Ministry but functioning like a Department at a time where new measures are kicked in and, basically, Government is going into its national budget for the year. If this is the response to the Standing Committee of Parliament regarding the scrutiny of your Annual Report, we would best present your report and debate this in Parliament. This is the job of the Committee. Why do we still have people complain about no response from the staff, no updates from the staff of the Ministry of Immigration regarding their issues? Why do people reach out to Opposition MPs? Why do people reach out to the Minister for Immigration? When the Minister for Immigration is responding to me and the public, I ask the question, why is the staff not doing such? That is my question to you. Why are staff not responding, or why is there staffing issue ever since 2019 until 2026? What is the issue, PS? How can this be mitigated?

MR. A. SALUSALU.- Just in response to questions, first of all, we apologize for the late submission. As I had mentioned, Madam Chairperson, we were hosting PIDC and we were preparing for the last two weeks. We requested an extension, but we were only given another week. As we became Chair, we prepared the hosting and all the programmes associated with it.

My apologies, Madam Chairperson. Some of the questions that were raised on Immigration staff not responding, when I started with the Ministry, that was the first complaint that came from the public. Most of the mornings, I normally join the line downstairs. They had no idea who I was. I

was standing and I can hear the complaint. "I called yesterday, there was no response", and I was standing there listening. They only knew me the time when they entered and I was there to respond to their question. So, every morning I make an effort to stand in the line - those who have come in about 6.30 a.m., 7.00 a.m. or 7.30 a.m., and to hear the voices of the people.

One of the reasons we are opening our outer office, honourable Member, is for that reason - to improve our service. One morning, I asked a gentleman, "How far did you travel?" He said, "Oh, I travel all the way from a place close to Korovou." I asked, "What time did you leave?" He said, "About 4.00 a.m." To them, it seems to be 'first come first serve'. When they come, they want to be first in line. I said, "You can have a cup of tea." He said, "No, I don't want to leave the line, someone might take my spot." So, we have improved our service by opening two more offices in Nakasi and Rakiraki.

You are correct, honourable Member, that is our response from time to time. We are trying to improve now with our telephone system. We now have a service desk, both on incoming, when you come to the ground floor, there is a service desk for any queries.

Some of the people just come to ask questions, not really to come and apply for passports. I was standing in line one day when someone asked, "What are the requirements for a new passport?" The lady said, "This is for the new passport. Do you want to join the line? He said, "No, I just want to find out and go and get it."

We are also trying to improve our website. The honourable Minister mentioned last week and the week after the improvement to the website and to put more information on the website.

I agree, honourable Member, on the responses. Opposition Members do call me at times as well. "Oh, what is happening to this?" I said, "Sir, that is because of our strength." I am not trying to give an excuse, but we are trying to build it up, perhaps moving towards digital capacity.

As I mentioned before, our passports will be online soon - they are doing the current upgrade as we speak. The consultants are from Malabo, Germany, and are doing the upgrade. After this upgrade, in the next five to six weeks, the citizens of Fiji or whoever wants to apply for a new passport will be able to do so from the comfort of their home. Those are some of the improvements. However, for an old school like me, we still can still walk in to stations around Fiji.

For responses, one of the things I raised with our HR is the response that they need. Sometimes, they e-mail today, there is no response, because I normally see in the trail. The next three days, they e-mail me and I can see the responses. So, I always ask my staff to acknowledge the emails. "We will come back to you". This is a digital world. Just a few seconds on the keyboard will give the person who asked the question the comfort that you have read his or her e-mail.

HON. R.R. SHARMA.- PS, do you have any time limit? Can you inform the Committee on the framework, the departments, and the number of staffing that you require and the budget for it. It can be done in written, so that is what I would like to see from your Ministry so that we can put in our recommendations.

MR. A. SALUSALU.- *Vinaka*, honourable Members. We have a strategic plan and in the plan, we have our staffing. I can share a copy. In that way, it is quite clear - the direction we are going. For us, this strategic plan is very much the answers to some of the questions that were raised during the period.

We want to make sure that every citizen of Fiji have the right, first, to have a passport. Each day, more than 120 applications come in for new passports. That alone are bookings, but people just walk in. One of the things that I advise my staff is not to send anyone home. They travel far, and they are elderly people, so make sure we look after them. If the time is close to 3 o'clock, you serve everyone who is inside the building. Sometimes, they end up to 4.30 p.m. or 5.00 p.m. That is the service we are going to make sure that it is improved. So, honourable Member, I can share a copy just to show where we are trying to go and the targets we want to fulfill.

HON. R.R. SHARMA.- Thank you, PS. If you can just be very mindful to keep the answers very short and precise because the other Members have a lot of questions to ask as well.

MR. A. SALUSALU.- My apologies, Sir.

MADAM CHAIRPERSON.- Thank you, PS. I have a question; in seeing the Civil Service freeze on recruitment, how is that going to affect your frontline service in the areas you already have opened, for example, Nadi Airport? When you are not allowed to recruit, who is going to be sent to Rakiraki, or who is going to be sent to Nakasi?

I know this has been an issue with a lot of other Ministries who say that they want to improve their services but they are limited by the fact that there is a Civil Service freeze. Perhaps, I can ask your Manager HR. How do you intend to keep that level of service while you are opening new outlets?

MR. A. SALUSALU.- Thank you, Madam Chairperson. Perhaps, I will start off and then Manager HR can provide some more information.

When we received the notice that all recruitment had to be put on hold, we were to be one of the five Ministries to be in the job evaluation. There was a Cabinet decision back in 2023 that we have to bring back frontline service Immigration. At the moment, the frontline in Nadi and Nausori are

being manned by Customs Officers. They are working on the delegation of powers by the Permanent Secretary. So, in 2023, that power needs to return to the Ministry. I will now hand over to Manager HR.

MR. S. RABULI.- Madam Chairperson and honourable Members, we have submitted our budget proposal for 103 new positions to cater for the need. Most positions are at the border, and to enhance our border security enforcement as well. Unfortunately, in our budget submission, we were told that no positions will be given in the next financial year. So, we thought that we will look within, and send some of our Officers from Suva or Lautoka and Nadi to cover for Nakasi and Rakiraki. It will be a big challenge for us, but we will try and still ask Ministry of Finance to support us on the new initiative.

MADAM CHAIRPERSON.- Thank you, Sir, for your reply. I open the floor to questions from Committee members.

HON. P.K. RAVUNAWA.- First, we congratulate you, PS, for being the Chair for the Pacific Islands Immigration Development Committee. I thank the efforts that are put into the reform that is going on within the Ministry.

I have a supplementary question to Manager HR; people are dying young in Fiji, those who are in active workforce. What are some of the coping mechanisms that you need to also understand and try to implement within your Ministry?

MR. S. RABULI.- Basically, what we are currently doing to motivate our Officers is that for every three quarters, we all meet and celebrate our achievements, and we award certificates to those Officers who perform exceptionally well during that quarter. We also celebrate birthdays for all the staff around and in all our stations. That is basically one way to motivate our Officers. Unfortunately, we still prefer that job evaluation needs to be done so that the Officers are paid rightfully in terms of the work that they are doing.

HON. V. LAL.- Thank you, Madam Chairperson. First of all, PS, congratulations on your appointment and thank you for your presentation.

Madam Chair, what we have noticed is that there are a lot of foreign workers in Fiji coming from all over the world to Fiji especially. When these workers come here, we have seen some of them doing what they are not supposed to be doing. My question to you, Sir, what systems are in place to ensure that foreign workers working in Fiji do comply with the provisions of their permit?

MR. A. SALUSALU.- Madam Chairperson, may I may ask our Manager, Border Security and Enforcement to provide some responses.

MR. J. CIRIKISUVA.- Madam Chairperson and the honourable Members, the PS has just mentioned that we have revised our legislations. The current legislations that we have at the moment, there is an absence of enforcing penalties and infringement notices. So that is a gap that we have identified in terms of foreign workers when they are in the country. They fail to adhere to the terms and conditions of whatever permit they have.

Thankfully, the legislations have been revised and that is something that we have incorporated in terms of enforcing infringement notices and penalties for those who have breached the terms and conditions of their permit.

HON. V. LAL.- Just supplementary to that; how does Immigration coordinate with the Ministry of Employment to prevent the abuse of work permits?

MR. J. CIRIKISUVA.- In that context, we are working with our Permits and Visa Team. What we do is that we identify companies who have employees that are not compliant, and not only with our Permits and Visa Section, but we also coordinate with the Ministry of Employment whereby we conduct joint operations or awareness sessions and go out to the various employers, just to inform them of the need for their employees to adhere to their terms and conditions. Also, we meet with employees themselves, ensuring that whatever is afforded to them is provided by the employer, meaning from the shelter, ensuring there is not OHS issues in their workplace, et cetera.

HON. V. LAL.- Madam Chairperson, have there been cases where employees have been abused and those who have breached their permit have been sent back to their original countries?

MR. J. CIRIKISUVA.- Yes, there have been multiple cases where foreign workers have been abused by their employers themselves. At the moment, we have three Nepalese who are currently accommodated at the Immigration safehouse. They have been identified to be victims of trafficking in person. In that particular case, the employer brought them over to Fiji in promises to work. However, the employer continues to exploit them in undertaking other form of activities. We were notified of that particular situation where we went in and brought them out, and that case is currently before Court at the moment.

HON. V. LAL.- What about employers here who have foreign workers and are abusing their workers, what action is taken against them? There are two ways. It is the employees who are abusing and also the employers who are abusing. So, in employees' case, we can send them back if they are abusing? What action is taken against the local employers?

MR. J. CIRIKISUVA.- Thank you, Sir. Unfortunately, as I had mentioned, the current legislation, at the moment, is only focused on the foreign worker - how it was drafted there. That is something that we have identified where we continue to penalise the foreign workers. Sometimes, they might be victims, however, there is no penalties addressed to the employer. That is something that has been considered in the revised Immigration legislation where we can penalise employers as well.

HON. P.K. RAVUNAWA.- Just a follow-up question on that, Madam Chairperson, through you; the Ministry stated that becoming a stand-alone Ministry has resulted in stronger border management, improved national security, and faster operational decision-making. What measurable performance indicator can you provide to the Committee, to demonstrate this improvement, compared to the time when you are operating as a Department?

Also, in supplementary to that, can you provide data on border refusal overstayers detected, permit compliance inspections, deportation and processing time before and after becoming a standalone Ministry? If you can enlighten the Committee on that, thank you.

MADAM CHAIRPERSON.- Honourable Ravunawa, just to make it easier, would you mind just asking your questions one by one, please, Sir?

(Questions repeated by honourable Ravunawa)

MR. J. CIRIKISUVA.- Thank you, Sir. Before you, I believe you have the report from the Ministry in terms of our numbers, which is specified in Question No. 10. We provided the numbers based on the reporting period, which is from 2019 to 2023.

Before you, you have your numbers where we executed around 135 removal orders and were issued by the Permanent Secretary, and 47 were enforced. I just want to clarify the differences in terms of the categories. The 135 removal orders were issued by the Permanent Secretary whereby we had coordinated with the employer, to ensure that they repatriate. The enforced orders is where the employer failed to repatriate and we had to come in, detain and arrest the prohibited immigrant in this case. So, that is the difference in terms of categories. Based on those numbers, we have over 135 removal orders issued and 47 are enforced.

That was the number when we were a Department. Now that we are a Ministry, I just want to highlight that last year, we managed to remove over 75 prohibited immigrants from the country. That is our current number at the moment, noting the shift from a Department to a Ministry in terms of our enforcement mechanisms.

For permits, I can hand over to our Permits Team member who can deliberate further on your question. *Vinaka*.

MR. A. SELA.- *Bula vinaka*, Madam Chairperson and honourable Members. In response to permits and visas, first and foremost, if you look at Page 2 of our responses, you can see the total number of applications that were lodged in 2019 and 2020. Then over the years, that gradually increased to about 6,371 in 2023.

On the far end, you can see the number of applications that were refused and closer to that is the number of applications that were approved. That basically shows an increase in the demand for foreign workers in the country over the last couple of years.

As we have moved on to our digital platform in late 2024 to 2025, this has just increased. Previously, we were working on a manual system that was paper-based and the, of course, we moved on to a partially electronic system where we collected documents from our applicants and employers, and now we have moved on to a more digitalized system that is actually collecting documents from them digitally, and then we can assess those applications. I hope that assists with the response.

HON. P.K. RAVUNAWA.- Thank you for those numbers. On the summary of the prohibited immigrants that are identified, as you have mentioned in Page 9, noting that we just received your response this morning, only 35 percent were enforced. From the 135 issued, only 47 were enforced. Can you briefly enlighten the Committee on that as well? As a layman, it is like 35 percent success rate.

MR. J. CIRIKISUVA.- Thank you, Sir. I have briefly explained this a little earlier. The 135 removal orders were orders that were issued, and we had coordinated with employers for them to willingly repatriate, meaning they paid for the expenses and everything for their particular prohibited immigrant. Enforce is where the employers failed to adhere to our instruction where and we, as a State, has to come in and remove the prohibited immigrant because under our legislation, the State is obligated to fund the repatriation of a particular prohibited immigrant should we issue them with a permit to reside in the country. That is where the State comes in and it is obligated to enforce the removal orders.

HON. R.R. SHARMA.- Through you, Madam Chairperson, I was going to ask something else but from your response, was this the reporting period where the Vice-Chancellor from USP was removed from the country?

MR. J. CIRIKISUVA.- Yes, Sir.

HON. R.R. SHARMA.- Was it necessary to do what was done in that manner?

MR. J. CIRIKISUVA.- From the Ministry's perspective on this particular case, the Ministry acted on the directive and instruction of the Minister for Immigration at that particular time.

HON. R.R. SHARMA.- I know that this sends out a very wrong message to our international partners on people who are wanting to come into Fiji to work, that if this is the level of treatment they will get. In fact, if there is an order against someone, can you just highlight the Committee on that? How long of a time do you have to pack your bags; is it a 24 hour, or is it an overnight? Does the timeline change or is it for everyone? Can you just explain a bit on that so that the public can also understand what actually transpired, if it was within the laws?

MR. J. CIRIKISUVA.- Thank you, Sir. In terms of the timeline, normally, there is no specified timeline. What happens is that when someone has been issued with the removal order, we go out, identify that particular person, and inform him/her that within this particular period he/she needs to leave the country. When he/she fails to do so, that is when we act on the powers as an Immigration Officer where we have to detain and remove.

HON. R.R. SHARMA.- Thank you. I will go back to my earlier question regarding your staffing because for me, to make a functioning Department into a standalone Ministry, the investment goes into the staff, the PS, the Minister, and all of you.

In fact, our Committee has visited the Airport several times because of BAF, FRCS and Airports Fiji Limited. We have always heard about the issue of space. My first question is, do you assess the visitor arrival processing timelines? Do you have an assessment on how long someone has to wait in line? Secondly, on Question No. 17, you have given your response. However, I just want to know how frequent are these trainings so that our officers are equipped with the best skills and knowledge to address the complexities of these transnational crimes - of trying to smuggle in people into the country? Also, the investigation rooms that you have, are they equipped with cameras, not only for the safety of the traveler but also the safety of our Immigration Officers?

MR. J. CIRIKISUVA.- Madam Chairperson, through you, at this moment, when it comes to risk assessments, the airlines, when it comes to airlines, they are mandated to provide their manifest within one hour before leaving for Fiji. For maritime operations, for all vessels that are coming in, during weekdays, they are mandated to provide their manifest to Immigration within 24 hours, and on weekends, on 48 hours. At the moment, once Immigration receives those lists, we conduct our risk assessment based on the passenger information that was provided.

We do not have staff in terms of assessing the passenger information. Why? Because there is no such system in place at this moment; everything is done manually, and we are talking about over 80,000 passengers coming into the country every month, which is over 2,000 or up to 3,000 passengers per day. That is something that the Ministry has identified and we are working to establish the API-PNR system, which is an automated system that can assist us to identify highrisk travellers coming into the country.

In terms of the border surveillance technology, we are working very closely with Airports Fiji Limited (AFL) to have all these necessary cameras and systems in place to act as an extra layer of security for Immigration.

HON. R.R. SHARMA.- Is space a challenge at the moment, looking at how you would want to expand and have these departments in place, but the airport is running short of space?

MR. A. SALUSALU.- Thank you, Madam Chairperson and honourable Member, that is certainly correct. Based on the history of Nadi Airport, it was never designed for transit. It was a final destination. At the moment, because of our opening up to the world from Singapore, even Australia, New Zealand, new airports are opening now, passengers are going through Fiji to go somewhere else, perhaps, go to Samoa, Tonga and our neighbouring islands.

We are working now with the AFL on the improvement of our service in terms of the service use of space. You might have probably seen some of the kiosks already there at the moment, from checking in to baggage area, even for boarding and scanning of boarding pass. The only system that is not automated there is Immigration. From baggaging, it is automated, even for passport scanning, it is automated, so the only one we are working on now is the immigration e-gate. That is going to come on board after working with the Australian Government on a new border management system called MERIT. I am sure the honourable Minister did mention that in Parliament. So, the border management system, which is the MERIT System, will work together with the Immigration e-gate so that Nadi Airport can be fully automated.

In Nadi, they are also working on the route, maybe, for transit passengers. As you know, when we arrive in Nadi, we work together with transit passengers and final destination passengers. That same line, there are a few risks there. First, someone can just hop onto the line and say, "I want to see an Immigration Officer. I seek asylum". As long as they meet the Immigration Officer, under the UNHCR Convention which we are a signatory to, we have to accept that. So, we are trying to change the direction of the lane so that they do not have a chance to meet with an Immigration Officer. We are just trying to improve the movement of passengers.

MADAM CHAIRPERSON.- Thank you, PS. I am mindful of the time. We have another submission from another organisation. They might be on standby right now, so I am going to give the microphones to honourable Matasawalevu and honourable Lal for your final questions, please.

HON. T.R. MATASAWALEVU.- Through you, Madam Chairperson, I thank the Ministry for their presentation this morning. The public are listening to your submission right now. My question is about the lodgment of new passports. People go to the Immigration Office when they need a new passport or to renew their passport. They lodge their application and the answer from your office is that they go back after two or three months to get their passport. Why is it taking so long to get a new or a renewed passport?

MR. A. SALUSALU.- Madam Chairperson and honourable Members, many years ago, we did not have e-passport. From 2019, we migrated to that new capability of epassport. After five years from 2019, there was supposed to be a passport upgrade, so now we are receiving the passport upgrade as we speak - the system. This new passport upgrade will help our citizen or our customers who wish to apply for passport at the comfort of their own home because when they try to apply and because it is still manual, it causes lots of delays on the submission of the documents that are required. Does that answer your question, honourable Member?

HON. T.R. MATASAWALEVU.- Thank you, PS. From your explanation, you have indicated that you will open a new office in Rakiraki and one in Nakasi, so that will make it easier for the people to get their passport.

MR. A. SALUSALU.- Correct, Sir. That will ease the processing of passport timeline. The printing of passport is done centrally to keep the security of it. No printing will be done on those locations – Rakiraki and Nakasi, just to keep the integrity of our book. Thank you, Sir.

HON. V. LAL.- Madam Chairperson, looking at the number of foreign workers in Fiji, when a local company applies to recruit foreign workers in a specialised area, as Ministry of Immigration, do you make your own assessment that there are enough people in that field, or you just go ahead and facilitate their application?

MR. A. SALUSALU.- Thank you, Sir, through you, Madam Chairperson, I will respond to the question and will hand over to the Permits Officer. We are working with the Ministry of Employment where they do an assessment on labour shortage or area of skills. They give us those skillset areas that we may lack or we need. The others that are not on the list, we can request employers to source locally. Our relationship with the Ministry of Employment is well coordinated because many things come with it - trafficking in person, employers that are not meeting or compliant as an agent, et cetera.

We now receive a list of agencies that are licensed because of compliance purposes. They understand the rules in labour laws. So, when agents are submitting submissions, we make sure that they are one of the agents in that list. Based on the skill scarcity in Fiji, we can say these are the ones we can process.

MR. A. SELA.- Madam Chairperson and honourable Members, as a rule, we do not just look at permits in general, we need to look at the specific area that you are looking at. For example, if you are looking at doctors and nurses, or people within the medical profession, or in a specialised field, we would need approval from the Ministry of Health, so that would come with the application to support that. That particular skill is not available locally and needs to be sourced overseas. So, there are certain areas that we would need certain approval first from relevant Ministries and bodies that are provided to us. Without that, we would not be able to provide the relevant permit. Thank you very much.

MADAM CHAIRPERSON.- Thank you. One question from me, PS, in regard to the trafficking in persons' report, we were that close to dropping down the ladder. How much time have we got now to fully get back to Tier 2?

MR. A. SALUSALU.- Madam Chairperson, the submission from Fiji closed at the end of March. We will be assessed based on the report that we have submitted towards the end of March.

However, a lot was done, especially, our laws were amended that have prosecutorial powers in it – an infringement notice. So, these are some of the mechanisms that the US is looking for.

Also, on our addressing of issues around exploitation. They want to see action, and we have put in place some of the actionable items that the US has received and some of the Government initiatives. One of them is the provision of a TIP funding, which is about \$500,000. The US came back to us and said that the Fiji Government is not making an effort. The reason is that there is no funding in that sector, so we do not see any commitment, so thanks to the Fiji Government for giving us the \$500,000 TIP funding.

MADAM CHAIRPERSON.- Thank you very much, PS. We do not have any more questions from the Committee. I thank you very, very much, PS and your Team, for making the time to appear before the Committee today.

Before I close this meeting, I just wish to draw the attention of the Ministry of Immigration representatives to the requirements of the Standing Orders of Parliament, in particular, Standing Order 121(6)(b). It provides that the Minister responsible for the relevant Ministry tables a substantive response to the Standing Committee's Report, which we will put together, and we

hand to Parliament 21 days after that. We want to hear from the Ministry about your replies to our recommendations.

In that regard, the Committee looks forward to receiving the Ministry of Immigration's formal response to the Committee's Review Report on the Consolidated Office of the Prime Minister and Fijian Immigration Departments' 2019 to 2023 Annual Reports within the prescribed timeframe. Following our tabling of the Report to Parliament, the Committee trusts that the response will address the findings and the recommendations contained in the report and this will greatly assist Parliament in its ongoing oversight role.

That just leaves me to say thank you very much Permanent Secretary and thank you very much to your leadership team for making the time to appear before the Committee. We appreciate it very much, and we look forward to your continued engagement, should the Committee require any more information. I now close the meeting.

The Committee meeting adjourned at 10.10 a.m.

Written Response





REPUBLIC OF FIJI

Introduction



Where we started



Challenges



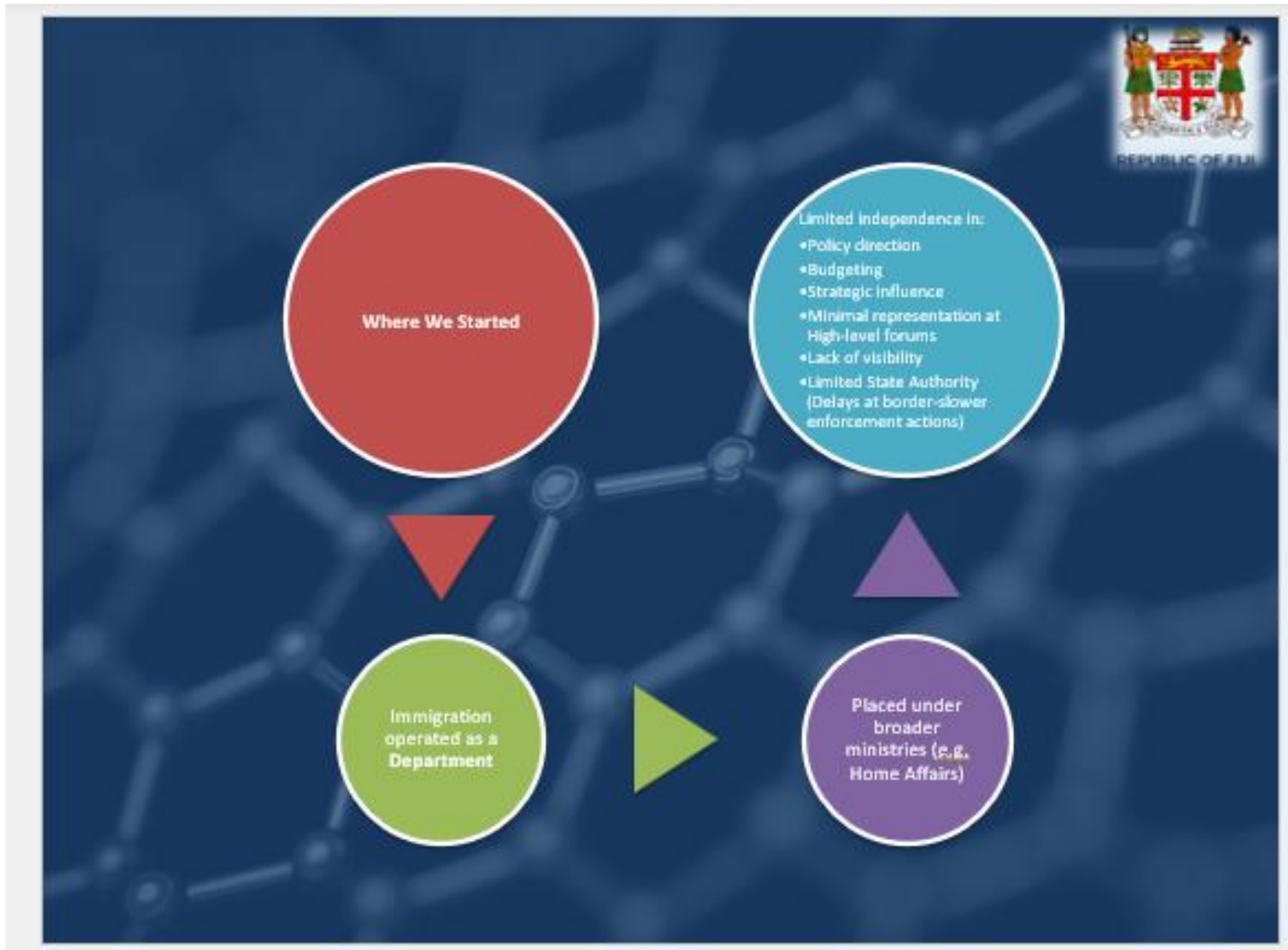
Establishment of the
Ministry of
Immigration



Achievement



Impact of Becoming a
Ministry





Challenges

- Limited independence in:
 - Policy direction
 - Budgeting
 - Strategic influence
 - Minimal representation at High-level forums
 - Lack of visibility
 - Limited State Authority (Delays at border-slower enforcement actions)
 - Policy and legal gaps
 - Capacity limitations
 - Technology (systems)



REPUBLIC OF FIJI

Establishment of the Ministry of Immigration

- Recognition of Immigration as:
 - National security pillar
 - Economic enabler
 - Sovereign function





Impact of Becoming a Ministry

- Stronger border management
- Improved national security
- Better inter-agency coordination
- Enhanced global alignment (GCM, TIP)

**“From limited voice to national leadership-
Immigration now stands at the center of
Fiji’s security, sovereignty, and future”.**



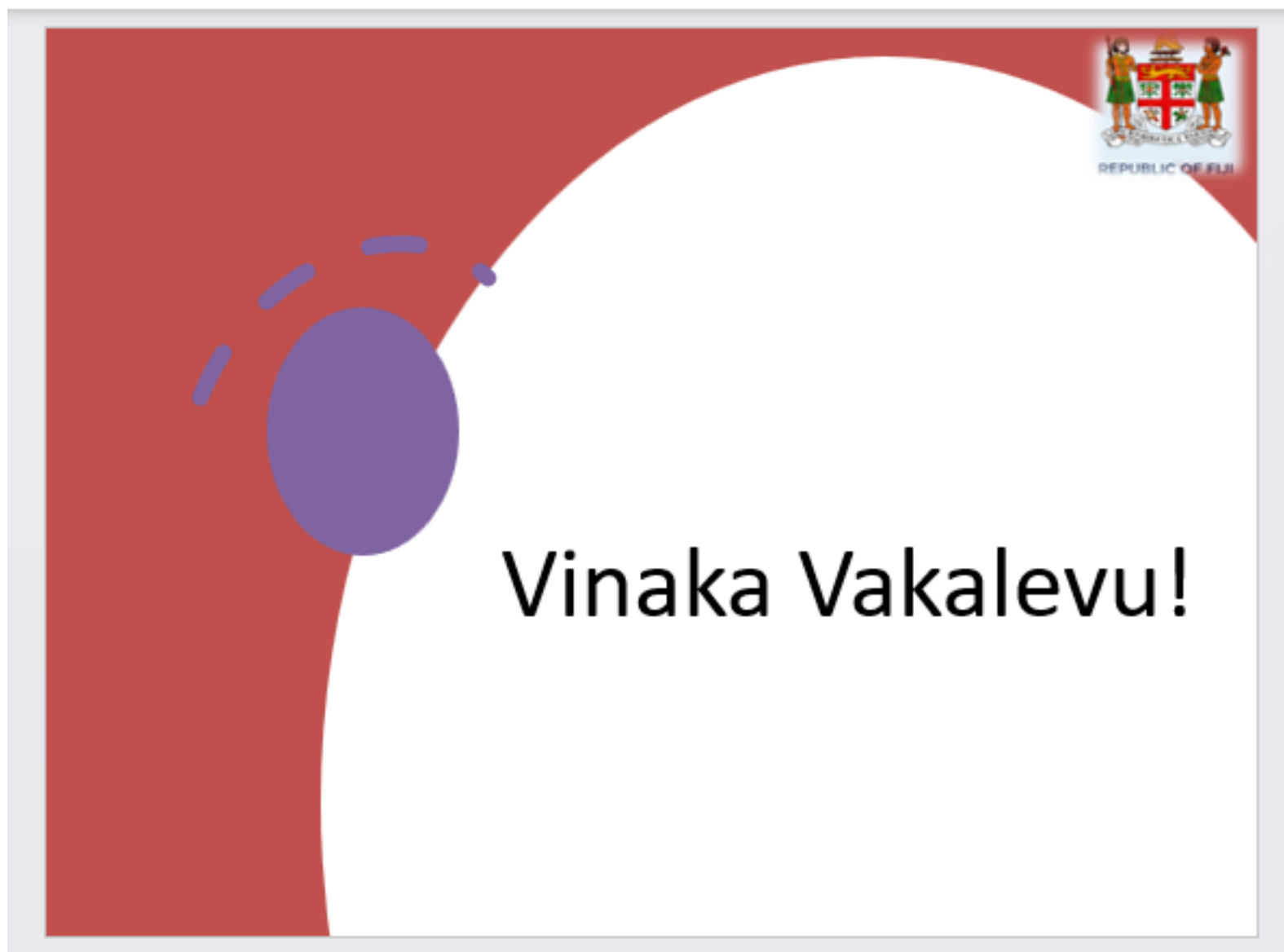
REPUBLIC OF FIJI

Fiji Immigration Services Improvements

- API/PNR/ETA/APP
- Automated Passport and Visa Applications
- VFS Services – Passport and Visa Applications expansion overseas
 - Australia (Pilot) Diaspora
 - Brisbane
 - Darwin
 - Perth
 - Sydney
 - Melbourne
- De-centralisation of Services
- Document forensic equipment
- Training and capacity building
 - Five weeks Induction (Design and Delivered by ABF and NZ Immigration)
- Immigration, Passport and Citizenship Amended Acts 2026, passed in Parliament
 - Regulations revision in progress



“Immigration decision is Sovereign and must be final for National security, sovereignty, and future”.



**SCFAD Questions to the
Ministry of Immigration on the Office of the Prime Minister
and Immigration Department
2019-2020, 2020-2021, 2021-2022 and 2022-2023
ANNUA REPORTS**

GOVERNANCE AND STRATEGIC DIRECTION

1. What are the Department's current strategic priorities, and how do these align with Fiji's national security, economic development, and labour mobility objectives?

The Department's strategic priorities are centered on strengthening border security, enhancing immigration compliance and enforcement, improving the integrity of labor mobility systems, and advancing the modernization of immigration services. Key focus areas include risk-based border management supported by advanced passenger information systems, improved detection and management of immigration offenders, strengthened oversight of visa and work permit processes, and enhanced intelligence-led border operations. The Department is also prioritizing digital transformation to improve data integration, operational efficiency, and evidence-based decision-making.

These priorities directly support Fiji's national security objectives by strengthening border integrity, improving early detection of high-risk travelers, and reducing exposure to transnational crime, identity fraud, and irregular migration. In relation to economic development, the Department supports safe and efficient facilitation of legitimate travel, tourism, and investment while maintaining strong security safeguards. For labor mobility, the Department ensures regulated entry of foreign workers, improved compliance monitoring of employers, and strengthened protection of both the domestic labor market and migrant workers through tighter permit governance and enforcement mechanisms.

2. What key performance indicators does the Department use to measure its effectiveness, and what has been its performance against these indicators over the reporting period?

The Department utilizes key performance indicators to measure effectiveness across border security, compliance, enforcement, and service delivery functions. These include detection rates of inadmissible persons at ports of entry, number of immigration breaches identified and actioned, enforcement outcomes such as removals and voluntary departures, visa and permit processing times, fraud detection rates, and system alert resolution performance. Additional indicators include compliance audit outcomes and the effectiveness of inter-agency coordination in operational responses.

During the reporting period, the Department maintained stable operational performance across core functions. Immigration non-compliance cases, including over stayers and inadmissible arrivals, were identified and managed through enforcement action in accordance with legal provisions. Strengthened border screening contributed to improved identification of high-risk passengers prior to clearance. Visa and permit processing times showed gradual improvement for standard applications, although complex cases requiring enhanced verification continue to affect turnaround times. Inter-agency coordination also improved, particularly in intelligence sharing and joint responses to fraud, compliance risks, and transnational movement concerns. However, limitations in system integration and data interoperability continue to impact real-time risk analysis and full automation of decision-making processes.

3. What are the major operational and legislative challenges currently facing the Department, and what measures are being taken to address them?

The Department continues to face operational challenges including staffing constraints in key functional areas, increasing complexity of migration-related offences, and workload pressures across visa, compliance, and enforcement operations. System limitations and fragmented data platforms also restrict real-time risk assessment, case tracking, and analytics capability.

On the legislative side, the existing immigration framework requires continued modernization to address evolving border security threats and migration trends. Key gaps include limited provisions for digital identity management, expanded biometric integration, and strengthened enforcement mechanisms for complex immigration offences. There is also a need for improved alignment between immigration legislation and labor mobility governance frameworks to ensure consistency across employment-related migration pathways.

To address these challenges, the Department is undertaking targeted recruitment and capacity building, particularly in intelligence, investigations, and compliance functions. System upgrades are being implemented to improve data integration, advance risk profiling capability, and support pre-arrival screening through enhanced passenger information systems. Legislative reforms, including provisions under the Immigration (Amendment) Act 2026, are strengthening enforcement tools such as infringement notices, fixed penalties, and enhanced prosecutorial authority for immigration officers. In addition, inter-agency cooperation with national security and border agencies continues to be strengthened to improve intelligence sharing, operational coordination, and overall border security outcomes.

Permits and Visas

4. Please provide a breakdown of all permit and visa applications received, approved, rejected, and pending during the reporting period by permit category.

Years	Types of Permits & Visas	Total Lodged	Total Approved	Total Refused
2019	Work	4813	3451	1362
	Investor	499	323	176
	Residence	3099	1875	1224
	Study	3862	3552	284
	Visitor Permit Extension	10705	7194	3511
	Visa – Multiple	689	623	66
	Single	4543	3511	1032
2020	Work	3143	2243	900
	Investor	433	325	108
	Residence	3143	2498	645
	Study	3681	3416	265
	Visitor Permit Extension	3904	3456	448
	Visa – Multiple	260	227	33
	Single	1324	1036	288
2021	Work	2457	2004	453
	Investor	253	223	30
	Residence	2842	2421	421
	Study	2364	2296	71
	Visitor Permit Extension	1208	1144	64
	Visa – Multiple	129	124	5
	Single	413	308	105
2022	Work	4502	3805	697
	Investor	402	352	50
	Residence	2350	1969	381
	Study	2335	2250	85
	Visitor Permit Extension	1663	1187	476

	Visa – Multiple	442	407	35
	Single	2376	1674	702
2023	Work	6371	4215	2156
	Investor	471	239	232
	Residence	2322	1671	655
	Study	4125	3829	28
	Visitor Permit Extension	1621	1115	506
	Visa – Multiple	638	541	97
	Single	4208	2614	154

Table 1: Breakdown of All Permit Types (2019–2023)

Summary of Permits & Visa Trends (2019-2023)

Overall, the data shows fluctuating demand during COVID-19 (2020-21), followed by a strong recovery and growth in applications from 2022 to 2023, particularly in work permits and visas.

i. Overall Trend

- 2019–2020: High application volumes but decline begins in 2020 due to COVID-19
- 2021: Lowest overall activity across most categories due to border restrictions
- 2022–2023: Strong rebound, with significant increase in work and single permits

ii. Key Permit Trends

- Work permits: Steady growth, peaking in 2023 (highest demand for foreign labour)
- Study permits: Strong recovery in 2023 after COVID disruption
- Residence permits: Relatively stable but slightly declining in later years; and
- Investor permits: Low but fluctuating, with slight decline in approvals in 2023.

iii. Visa Trends

- Single visas: Significant increase in 2023, indicating higher travel mobility.
- Multiple visas: Stable but lower volumes compared to single visas; and
- Overall visa activity reflects post-pandemic recovery in travel demand.

iv. Visitor Permit Extensions

- High demand in 2019 and 2020
- Declined in 2021 due to restrictions; and
- Stabilised in 2022–2023 but below pre-COVID levels.

v. Key Observations

- Work and single visa categories drive post-pandemic growth.
- 2021 represents the lowest point due to border closures.
- 2023 shows strongest overall recovery in labour and mobility demand; and
- Increasing demand reflects labour shortages and renewed international movement.

In conclusion, the data reflects a clear COVID-19 disruption followed by strong recovery and increased migration activity, particularly in work-related permits and travel visas, highlighting growing labour mobility and economic demand in the post-pandemic period.

5. What is the average processing time for work permits, investor permits, student permits, and residency applications, and how does this compare with the Department's service standards?

The standard processing timeframe is 21 working days for permit applications and 14 working days for visa entry applications. However, where all documentary requirements are in order, the applications are processed within the timeframe.

Applications may be subject to extended processing times where all required supporting documents are not provided. In such cases, applications may also be referred to the Compliance and Investigation Unit for further verification and assessment.

6. What measures are in place to ensure that permit approvals are transparent, consistent, and free from undue influence?

Permit approvals are managed through a **clear, rules-based and structured system** to ensure they are transparent, consistent, and free from undue influence.

All applications are assessed strictly under the provisions of the Immigration Act 2003, the Immigration Regulations, Policy and Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs). These clearly define the eligibility criteria, documentary requirements, and assessment standards for each permit category.

To ensure consistency, officers follow standardised operational and assessment processes, supported by checklists and documented procedures, so that all applications are treated fairly and evaluated against the same criteria.

The process is also strengthened through multi-level review and approval mechanisms, where applications are assessed and verified at different levels before final decisions are made. This reduces the risk of individual discretion influencing outcomes.

In addition, all decisions are supported by documentary evidence and system records, ensuring that approvals or refusals can be justified, traced, and audited when required. This promotes transparency and accountability in decision-making.

The Department also applies internal controls and oversight mechanisms, including supervisory checks and compliance reviews, to ensure decisions are consistent with legislation and policy.

Overall, the combination of legislative compliance, SOP-driven processes, structured assessments, and layered approvals ensures that permit decisions are fair, transparent, and protected from undue influence.

7. Has the Department undertaken any review of the permit system to improve efficiency and reduce processing delays? If so, what were the outcomes?

The Department has undertaken continuous review and modernisation of its permit and visa processing systems to improve service delivery, efficiency, and accessibility.

In **2019**, permit and visa applications were processed through a manual system, where applicants physically lodged their applications at the Customer Service counter. Applications were then manually vetted, recorded, and processed by officers, which often resulted in longer processing times and higher administrative workload.

Towards the end of 2019, the Department transitioned to an online JotForm system. This shift was particularly important during the COVID-19 pandemic, as it enabled continued service delivery while reducing physical contact and supporting remote application lodgment.

As part of ongoing digital transformation, the JotForm system will be replaced to a more structured, secure, and integrated platform for application processing, tracking, and decision-making.

Overall, this evolution from a manual system to JotForm reflects the Department's commitment to modernising operations, improving service delivery, and strengthening governance through digital transformation.

8. What mechanisms are in place to monitor compliance by permit holders with the conditions attached to their permits?

The Department has established a comprehensive compliance and enforcement framework to ensure that permit holders and their sponsors fully comply with the conditions attached to their permits.

Each permit category, once approved, comes with clearly defined Terms and Conditions, which are formally stated on the permit issued to the applicant. These conditions are tailored to the specific purpose of the permit and serve as a legal guide for the permit holder's stay and activities in the country.

The Terms and Conditions typically outline key requirements such as:

- The approved purpose of stay (e.g. employment, business, study, residence)
- Restrictions on employment or business activities
- Duration and validity of the permit
- Sponsorship obligations, where applicable

- Compliance with national laws and reporting requirements

These conditions are not merely advisory—they are legally binding, and permit holders are expected to fully understand and adhere to them.

Permit holders are required to comply with these conditions at all times throughout the validity of their permits. Any breach—such as engaging in unauthorised work, overstaying, or failing to meet sponsorship or reporting obligations—may result in enforcement action, including cancellation of the permit, penalties, or removal from the country.

This structured approach ensures clarity, accountability, and consistency, while also supporting effective monitoring and enforcement by the Department.

The Department actively monitors compliance through inspections and investigations. Immigration officers may conduct:

- Workplace inspections to verify employment conditions and employer compliance.
- Site visits for business or project-related permits
- Institutional checks for student permit holders to confirm enrolment and attendance; and
- Follow-up investigations where there are reports or indicators of non-compliance.

These checks help detect breaches such as working outside permit conditions, illegal employment, or misuse of permits.

The Department works closely with key stakeholders to strengthen monitoring and verification processes. This includes collaboration and information sharing with:

- Fiji Revenue and Customs Service (FRCS)
- Fiji Police Force
- Ministry of Employment
- Fiji National Provident Fund (FNPF)
- Other relevant government agencies

This coordinated approach allows for cross-checking of data, verification of employment and business activities, and early identification of potential non-compliance.

Where breaches are identified, the Department may take appropriate enforcement actions, including warnings, permit cancellations, fines (where applicable), or removal.

Overall, through a combination of clear permit conditions, active inspections, inter-agency collaboration, and enforcement measures, the Department ensures that permit holders remain compliant, and that the integrity of the immigration system is maintained.

COMPLIANCE AND INVESTIGATIONS

9. How many investigations were conducted during the reporting period relating to immigration breaches, illegal employment, visa overstays, and fraudulent documentation?

INVESTIGATION TYPE	2019 - 2020	2020 - 2021	2021 - 2022	2022 - 2023	OV
(1) Category - Investigations - Complaints	137	160	137	73	
(2) Category - Investor Inspection	49	24	1		
(3) Category - Exemption Inspection	2	3		1	
(4) Category - Citizenship	19	5	1	1	
(5) Category - Over Stayers	1	6	6	18	
(6) Category - RSD				16	
(7) Category - RSD Appeal	1	1			
(8) Category - Travel History Request				25	
(9) Category - BDM				1	
(10) Category - Administration				1	
(11) Category - Marriage				6	
(14) Category - Permits Referred				3	
(15) Category - Legal Advice (SG)				1	
GRAND TOTAL	209	199	145	146	

Table 2: Types of Investigation, 2019-2023.

Analysis of Investigation Activities (2019–2023)

Between FY 2019–2020 and FY 2022–2023, the Department recorded a total of **699 investigations**, with activity distributed across multiple compliance and immigration integrity categories.

i. Overall Trend

- Total investigations remained relatively stable across the period:
 - 2019–2020:** 209 cases
 - 2020–2021:** 199 cases
 - 2021–2022:** 145 cases
 - 2022–2023:** 146 cases
- There is a **gradual decline from 2019–2020 to 2021–2022**, followed by stabilization in 2022–2023.

ii. Key Drivers of Investigations

(a) Complaints – Dominant Category

- Total: **507 cases (73% of all investigations)**
- Consistently the largest category across all years:
 - 137 (2019–20), 160 (2020–21), 137 (2021–22), 73 (2022–23)

- Indicates that most investigative workload is **reactive**, driven by public or stakeholder complaints.
- Notable decline in 2022–2023 suggests either:
 - improved compliance, or
 - reduced reporting / referral volumes.

(b) Investor Inspections

- Total: **74 cases**
- Significant decline over time:
 - 49 (2019–20) → 24 (2020–21) → 1 (2021–22) → 0 (2022–23)
- Reflects reduced inspection activity, likely due to:
 - shifting compliance priorities, or
 - improved investor compliance / reduced referrals.

(c) Overstayers – Increasing Concern

- Total: **31 cases**
- Clear upward trend:
 - 1 (2019–20) → 6 → 6 → 18 (2022–23)
- Indicates **growing enforcement pressure on overstaying cases**, particularly in the latest year.

(d) Emerging Case Types (Post-2022 Expansion)

Several categories appear only in 2022–2023, showing diversification of investigative scope:

- RSD cases (16)
- Travel history requests (25)
- Marriage-related cases (6)
- Permits referred (3)
- BDM, administration, legal advice cases (small numbers)

iii. Citizenship and Related Matters

- Total: **26 cases**
- Gradual decline across years (19 → 5 → 1 → 1)
- Improved vetting earlier in the application process or reduced referrals.

iv. Key Observations

- Investigations are **heavily complaint-driven (over 70%)**, indicating reactive enforcement rather than proactive detection.
- Overall workload decreased after 2020–2021, stabilising at around **145–146 cases annually**.
- New investigative categories in 2022–2023 reflect **broader compliance scope and increased inter-agency coordination**.
- Overstayer cases show a **rising enforcement priority area**.

The 2019–2023 period shows a **transition from high complaint-driven investigations toward a more diversified compliance environment**, with stable overall caseloads but increasing focus on overstayers and expanded verification functions.

10. Please provide a breakdown of the number of prohibited immigrants identified, detained, deported, or removed from Fiji during the reporting period.

	2019 -	2020 -	2021 -	2022 -	
OVERSTAYERS	2020	2021	2022	2023	OVERA
Removal Order (RO) Issued	50	14	33	38	135
Enforced	24		2	21	47

Table 3: Breakdowns of Prohibited Immigrants, 2019-2023.

Summary: Overstayers (2019–2023)

Between 2019 and 2023, a total of **135 Removal Orders were issued** for overstayers, while **47 were enforced**.

Removal Orders fluctuated over the period, with a low in 2020–2021 and a gradual increase thereafter, peaking again in 2022–2023. Enforcement remained lower than issuance throughout the period, though it improved in the later years.

Overall, the data shows **growing overstayer enforcement activity, but with a continued gap between orders issued and enforcement completed**.

11. What are the most common immigration offences encountered by the Department, and what trends have been observed over recent years?

The most common immigration offences, are: -

- a) Often arise when individuals do not comply with the “Terms and Conditions” attached to their permits. These conditions are clearly outlined at the time a permit is issued and are intended to regulate and protect the local labour market and ensure fairness in employment practices.

For example, a person may be granted a work permit to be employed by a specific employer in a defined role and permits issued under the defined role. An offence occurs when that individual works for a different employer without proper authorisation or takes on additional work outside the scope of the approved position. Similarly, engaging in duties that are significantly different from what was approved under the permit is also considered a breach.

- b) When permit holders engage in activities that may undermine local workers. This can include taking up roles, or working in sectors where there are qualified local candidates available.

Compliance with these conditions is essential to maintain the integrity of the immigration system and to ensure that opportunities for local workers are safeguarded.

- c) **Trend:** Local employers are increasingly using overseas recruitment agencies to hire foreign workers. This result in workers signing multiple contracts—one with the agency and another with the employer.

For example, a worker may first sign a contract overseas with attractive terms and conditions. Upon arrival, they are then required to sign a second contract with significantly different—and often lower—pay and conditions than originally agreed.

12. How does the Department collaborate with the Fiji Police Force, Fiji Revenue and Customs Service, and other agencies in addressing immigration-related offences?

The Department maintains strong collaboration with the Fiji Police Force, the Fiji Revenue and Customs Service (FRCS), and other key agencies through a coordinated, whole-of-government approach.

This collaboration is underpinned by regular information sharing and intelligence exchange, enabling timely detection and response to immigration-related offences. The Department also provides information on Persons of Interest (POI) to partner agencies upon request and approval, strengthening collective enforcement efforts.

Joint operations and enforcement activities are conducted to address issues such as illegal entry, visa breaches, human trafficking, and employment-related violations. The Department further reinforces coordination through active participation in inter-agency taskforces and committees, ensuring aligned actions and timely decision-making.

The Department is a member of the Transnational Crime Unit (TCU), established under a Memorandum of Understanding with the Fiji Police Force and Customs, to enhance joint responses to organized and cross-border crime. In addition, a joint taskforce under the National Action Plan to Combat Trafficking in Persons (NAPTIP) brings together relevant agencies to combat trafficking in persons.

Operational collaboration is further strengthened through secondments - two Police Officers are seconded to the Department, bolstering investigative and enforcement capacity, and supporting joint operations, case management, and intelligence-led interventions.

These efforts are formalized through Memoranda of Understanding (MOUs) with key border and national agencies, including FRCS, the Biosecurity Authority of Fiji (BAF), the Ministry of Health, the Fiji National Provident Fund (FNPF), the Fiji Independent Commission Against Corruption (FICAC), and the Tertiary Education Loans Service (TELS), reinforcing a unified and effective approach to immigration management and enforcement.

13. What challenges does the Department face in detecting and investigating immigration fraud and people smuggling activities?

The Department faces several key challenges in effectively detecting and investigating immigration fraud and people smuggling activities.

One of the main challenges is **limited resources and manpower**. With increasing volumes of travel and complex cases, there are not always enough officers, tools, or technical capacity to thoroughly monitor, investigate, and respond to all potential offences.

Another challenge is **outdated legislation and policies**. Some existing laws do not fully address the evolving nature of immigration fraud and transnational smuggling networks. This can limit the Department's ability to take timely and effective enforcement action.

Additionally, there is an **absence of infringement notices and administrative penalties**. Without these, the Department has fewer flexible enforcement options and must rely on more lengthy legal processes, which can delay action and reduce overall effectiveness.

In simple terms, limited capacity, gaps in legal frameworks, and restricted enforcement tools all make it more difficult to detect, investigate, and respond quickly to immigration-related crimes.

BORDER SECURITY AND BORDER CONTROL

14. What measures are currently in place to safeguard Fiji's borders from illegal entry, transnational crime, trafficking in persons, and other security threats?

During the reporting period 2020–2023, the Department implemented a strengthened, multi-layered border management approach to safeguard Fiji's borders from illegal entry, transnational crime, trafficking in persons, and other security threats.

Key measures included:

- Introduction and strengthening of the e-Passport system with biometric verification, improving identity integrity and reducing document fraud.
- Enhanced document verification and fraud detection processes, including improved examination of travel documents at border control points.
- Strict maritime border controls, including monitoring and refusal of entry for non-compliant vessels such as yachts that fail to meet entry requirements.
- Strong inter-agency collaboration with Fiji Police Force, Fiji Revenue and Customs Service, Biosecurity Authority of Fiji, Maritime Safety Authority of Fiji, Fisheries, and the Transnational Crime Unit (TCU), supported by regional and international partners such as INTERPOL and PIDC, for intelligence sharing and coordinated operations.
- Increased use of risk profiling, watchlists, and intelligence-led targeting to identify and manage high-risk travellers and movements.
- Enforcement actions including the removal and deportation of overstayers and individuals in breach of permit conditions.
- Continuous capacity development and training of border officers, improving skills in detection of fraud, trafficking indicators, and emerging security threats.

A key strength during this period has been strong collaboration with internal and external partners:

- Internal partners: Fiji Police Force, Fiji Revenue and Customs Service (FRCS), Ministry of Employment, Biosecurity Authority of Fiji, Maritime Safety Authority of Fiji (MSAF), Fisheries, and the Transnational Crime Unit (TCU).
- External partners: INTERPOL, Pacific Immigration Development Community (PIDC), Australian Border Force (ABF), Immigration New Zealand, UNODC, and other regional and international law enforcement partners.

These partnerships enable real-time intelligence sharing, joint operations, coordinated enforcement actions, and capacity building support, significantly strengthening border security outcomes.

- Enforcement actions including the removal and deportation of overstayers and individuals in breach of permit conditions.
- Continuous capacity development and training of border officers to improve detection of fraud, trafficking indicators, and emerging threats.

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15. How does the Department assess and manage immigration-related risks at Fiji's air and maritime ports of entry?

The Department assesses and manages immigration-related risks at Fiji's air and maritime ports of entry through a coordinated, intelligence-led, and technology-driven approach in close collaboration with the Fiji Revenue and Customs Service (FRCS) and other border agencies.

A key component of this system is advance pre-screening and intelligence-led profiling, which enables officers to assess passengers, crew, and vessels before arrival. This supports early identification of potential risks and allows for targeted intervention at the border.

For air travel, the Department receives passenger manifests prior to arrival. These records are screened against national and international watchlists, immigration databases, and intelligence holdings. This process allows officers to identify persons of concern early, conduct risk assessments, and prepare for appropriate action upon arrival, including secondary inspection or refusal of entry where necessary - Border clearance is then carried out at the point of entry.

For maritime arrivals, particularly yachts and vessels, the Department receives advance Crew-to-Clearance (C2C) information, which is used to conduct watchlist and security checks. Daily Morning Referral Report from other borders are also used to track vessel movements and identify any vessels of interest or concern. Officers further verify the last port of clearance to ensure compliance with outward clearance procedures and detect irregular travel routes.

The Department also works closely with marinas, shipping agents, airlines, and other border stakeholders to obtain passenger and crew data prior to arrival, enabling early screening and risk

assessment. This is strengthened through continuous intelligence sharing between partner agencies.

In addition, several risk mitigation measures are applied at the border, including:

- Secondary inspections and referrals for high-risk passengers, crew, or vessels
- Use of national and international watchlists, including INTERPOL alerts
- Joint inspections with agencies such as FRCS, Biosecurity Authority of Fiji (BAF), and Police
- Random and targeted checks to deter and detect concealed risks.
- Enhanced document integrity checks using forensic tools and trained officers.
- Post-arrival monitoring of high-risk visitors and crew
- Employer and sponsor compliance inspections to prevent exploitation and breaches of permit conditions.
- Strengthened reporting mechanisms through agents and stakeholders; and
- A continuous intelligence feedback loop to improve future risk profiling and screening accuracy.

Further strengthening this system is the Department's ongoing focus on training and capacity development, ensuring officers are equipped with the skills and knowledge to identify emerging threats and apply modern risk assessment techniques.

Overall, this integrated approach ensures that risks are identified early, managed effectively, and continuously improved across Fiji's air and maritime ports of entry.

16. Have there been any significant border security incidents during the reporting period? If so, how were these addressed?

During the reporting period, there were no significant or major border security incidents recorded.

However, where minor irregularities or potential breaches were identified, these cases were promptly managed through established procedures. All such matters were referred to the Department's Compliance Unit for further investigation and appropriate action.

The Compliance Unit then undertook necessary follow-up, which may include verification of information, interviews, document checks, and enforcement actions where required, in line with existing policies and legislation.

Overall, while no serious incidents occurred, the Department maintained continuous monitoring and ensured that all identified cases were properly addressed through compliance processes.

17. What investments have been made in border surveillance technology, intelligence systems, and officer training to strengthen border management?

The Department has made targeted investments in border surveillance technology, intelligence systems, and officer training to strengthen overall border management and security.

On the intelligence and enforcement side, the Department has strengthened its systems through improved watchlists, border alerts, and enhanced information-sharing with partner agencies. This improves the identification of persons of interest and supports risk-based border decisions.

On the training and capacity development side, there has been continuous investment in officer capability. Numerous inter-agency training programmes have been delivered at the border, including:

- Immigration Induction Training Programme
- Trafficking in Persons (TIP) training (UNODC)
- UNHCR on Refugee Status Determination (Asylum seekers)
- International Organization for Migration (IOM) supported training.
- Australian Border Force (ABF) / Department of Foreign Affairs
- Immigration Core Elements (ICE), Immigration NZ

These trainings include participation from multiple agencies such as FRCS, Australian Border Force, Immigration New Zealand (INZ), Biosecurity of Fiji, Fisheries, MSAF, Fiji Navy, Ministry of Employment, Productivity and Workplace Relations, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Bureau of Statistics, Office of the Director of Prosecution, Office of the Solicitor General, Fiji Police Force (Transnational Crime Unit (TCU)), and other border partners.

Overall, these investments in intelligence capability, and inter-agency training have significantly strengthened Fiji's border security framework, improved risk detection, and enhanced operational effectiveness at both air and maritime borders.

18. How does the Department monitor arrivals and departures to ensure compliance with immigration laws?

The Department monitors arrivals and departures through a strict, multi-layered system guided by the Immigration Act 2003 and its Regulations supported by the Integrated Border Management System (IBMS).

This system ensures that all travellers enter Fiji legally, comply with the conditions of their permits, and depart before their authorised stay expires whereas the Passport system.

At the border, travellers are screened using arrival and departure records, supported by the system. This is strengthened through arrival cards and passenger declarations, which provide essential information on purpose of travel and intended length of stay.

Officers also conduct passenger interviews where necessary to verify the purpose of visit and assess any inconsistencies in information provided. In addition, random inspections and targeted checks are carried out at ports based on risk profiling and intelligence-led assessments.

The Department also relies on Request for Information (RFI) processes with other agencies to verify traveller details and strengthen compliance monitoring. Key immigration records such as permits, visas, passports, and citizenship information are continuously updated to ensure accurate tracking of individuals.

To support enforcement, Controversial Lists and Border Alerts are regularly updated to identify persons of concern at entry and exit points.

Operational monitoring is further strengthened through structured reporting, including daily morning referral reports, and monthly reports, which capture arrival and departure trends as well as issues identified at the border.

All of these activities are guided by established Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs), ensuring consistency, accountability, and effective compliance monitoring across all ports of entry and exit.

PASSPORT

19. **Please provide statistics on the number of passports issued, renewed, replaced and denied during the reporting period.**

The total number of passport application received, and passport printed in the period 2019 2023 is shown in the table, below. There is a drastic increase in the applications received and issued in year 2022 and 2023. This was after the re-opening of the borders which led to increase in demand for passports.

According to the Passport Act, passport is only issued to bona fide Fiji citizens eligible for passports.

The Department do not deny passport applications outright instead, when an applicant does not meet the eligibility criteria, such as those who have acquired foreign citizenship, we guide them through the Citizenship pathway. In addition, The Department can cancel or revoke a passport if it was obtained by fraud or loss of citizenship).

Passport Report, 2019 - 2023		
Year	Total Application Received	Total Passport Issued
2019	20,737	19,459
2020	18,573	18,846,
2021	18,852	18,546
2022	64,841	63,720,

2023	68,946	67,752
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Table 4: Total Number of Passports Issued (2019-2023)

Overall, the data shows a stable passport system before 2022, followed by a sharp increase in demand after the COVID-19 pandemic as borders reopened and travel resumed.

The surge from 2022 onwards was also influenced by labour mobility schemes, increasing the need for passport issuance.

Despite the significant rise in applications, the Department has maintained strong processing capacity and high issuance levels, effectively managed increased workload and sustaining service delivery.

20. **The Department previously noted the introduction of the epassport system and plans to procure additional enrolment kits and printers. What progress has been made in improving passport processing times and reduce service delays?**

The Department has procured an additional 20 enrolment kits and passport printer to support our upcoming system upgrade which is scheduled to be implemented soon. With the upcoming upgrade, the Department will be able to significantly streamline the passport application process such as the pre-enrolment, where it be partially done in the office. The upgrade will modernise our passport issuance with international best practices in identity theft management.

To meet the growing demand, the Department has increased its annual passport procurement from 40k to 100 k effective from 2024. From this financial year, it has been increased to 200k booklets which reflects our commitment to ensuring uninterrupted passport issuance and eliminating delays caused by supply constraints.

The expanded procurement capacity also accounts for the anticipated surge in applications following the opening of our two new offices in Nakasi and Rakiraki. These offices will reduce travel time for applicants in rural and semi urban areas, distribute application load across locations, shorten waiting time and improve service delivery.

21. **What safeguards are in place to prevent passport fraud, identity theft, and misuse Of Fijian Travel Documents?**

The Department has a number of strong safeguards in place to prevent passport fraud, identity theft, and misuse of Fijian travel documents, particularly through the ICAO e-passport best practices and standards.

Firstly, biometric enrolment is conducted for all applicants, including fingerprints. This ensures that only the genuine applicant can be issued a passport, preventing identity substitution.

Secondly, the system uses digital cross-referencing, where applicant information is verified against national databases such as birth certificates, citizenship records, and previous passport history to confirm identity consistency.

Thirdly, there is inter-agency verification through MOUs with relevant stakeholders, and ongoing efforts to integrate BDM (Births, Deaths and Marriages) records, strengthening the verification of key identity documents such as birth, marriage, and death certificates.

In addition, the e-passport is ICAO compliant and contains a secure electronic chip that stores biometric data and digital signatures, making it highly secure and extremely difficult to forge or duplicate.

The Department also applies strict application vetting, secure printing and issuance controls, and system audit checks, supported by restricted access to passport production systems, audit trails, and monitoring of suspicious or duplicate applications.

Furthermore, in cases of lost or stolen passports, these are recorded in both the national system and INTERPOL database, preventing misuse and supporting international tracking.

There is also a strong focus on capacity development and continuous training of officers, ensuring staff are equipped with the skills to detect fraud, identify forged documents, and respond to emerging identity-related threats.

The Department further collaborates with international partners and border agencies, including participation in global information-sharing frameworks, to verify documents and share intelligence on fraudulent travel and identity risks.

Overall, these layered measures, aligned with ICAO standards and international best practices, strengthen the integrity, security, and global credibility of Fiji's passport system.

CITIZENSHIP

22. How many applications for citizenship were received, approved, rejected, or remain pending during the reporting period?

CT APPLICATION S [RECEIVED]	20 19	20 20	20 21	20 22	20 23	TOT AL
SEARCH	32 5	26 6	25 6	83 7	32 5	
MINOR	43 1	38 8	30 5	44 2	42 8	
LATE REGISTRATIO N	11	24	11	23	12	

SPOUSE	11 5	21 8			14	
FORMER	27 0	10 2	17 9	28 4	25 1	
NATURALISAT ION	96	16 3			19	
TOTAL	12 48	11 61	75 1	15 86	10 49	5795
CT APPLICATION S [PROCESSED]	20 19	20 20	20 21	20 22	20 23	
SEARCH	28 0	22 7	21 1	78 3	28 9	
MINOR	43 1	34 1	28 4	38 6	40 5	
LATE REGISTRATIO N	9	20	9	20	9	
SPOUSE	11 5	26 1	1	2	11	
FORMER	25 4	17 3	16 3	22 7	22 5	
NATURALISAT ION	96	13 4	1	3	15	
TOTAL	11 85	11 56	66 9	14 21	95 4	5385
PENDING CITIZENSHIP APPLICATION S	63	5	82	16 5	95	410
DECLINED CITIZENSHIP APPLICATION	0	6	7	8	2	23

Table 5: Total Number of Citizenship Applications Received, Approved, Declined and Pending (2019-2023)

Summary of Citizenship (CT) Applications (2019–2023)

Between 2019 and 2023, a total of 5,795 citizenship applications were received, while 5,385 were processed, leaving 410 applications pending and 23 declined.

Key Highlights:

- **Total Received:** 5,795 applications.
- **Total Processed:** 5,385 applications
- **Pending Applications:** 410
- **Declined Applications:** 23

Application Breakdown (Received vs Processed Trends):

- **Search applications** were the highest category overall, with strong consistency across years and peaking in 2022 (837 received, 783 processed).
- **Minor applications** remained consistently high, showing strong demand each year.
- **Former citizenship applications** also formed a significant portion, with steady processing performance across all years.
- **Spouse and Naturalisation applications** showed fluctuations, with notably lower numbers in 2021–2022 compared to earlier years.
- **Late registration applications** remained relatively low and stable across the period.

Overall Trend:

- Application volumes fluctuated across the five-year period, with a peak in **2022 (1,586 received)**.
- Processing levels closely followed receipt trends, with strong overall processing efficiency (over 90% of total received applications processed).
- Pending cases remain relatively low compared to total workload, though there was a noticeable increase in 2022–2023.

23. What is the average processing time for citizenship applications, and what factors contribute to delays?

Globally, the average processing time for citizenship applications generally ranges from 6 to 12 months across major immigration systems. However, this timeline varies by country, regional offices, and the specific complexity of each case.

The Department observes a baseline standard of 60 days for Minor, Late Registration and Former Category.

Naturalisation and Spousal Category involve a processing time of 3-6 months due to extensive background verifications, residency calculations, and multi-department clearances such as Police Report, medical report, and compliance investigation.

While these are the targeted timeframes, applications can stall beyond 6 months due to travel commitments as English Interviews are placed on hold. Secondly, is updating of legal status (e.g., Work Permit, Investor Permit, or Exemption Status) must remain valid and seamless right up to the day citizenship is approved.

Additionally, Case officers frequently request additional details, clarifications on travel history, or signatures. The Department places the file in an inactive queue if the applicant fails to respond to emails or phone calls promptly. The processing clock stops entirely until the applicant makes contact, which can add months to the timeline.

Lastly, documents like police clearances, medical reports, and foreign passports have strict expiration dates. For instance, if a police clearance from their home country expires during the 1-year window from the date of lodgment, applicants will be required to get a new one. Waiting for international police clearances or certified copies of birth certificates from abroad completely halts the evaluation process.

DIGITAL TRANSFORMATION AND SERVICE DELIVERY

24. The Department previously reported the introduction of online permit lodgement and payment systems. What progress has been made towards a fully automated immigration management system?

The Department has continued to advance its digital transformation agenda between 2019 and 2023, building on earlier reforms that introduced online permit lodgement and electronic payment systems. A key development during this period has been the increased use of **JotForm as a digital intake platform**, supporting more streamlined application submission and data collection.

Digital Application Intake via JotForm

The introduction and expanded use of **JotForm online application forms** has improved service accessibility and standardisation of submissions. Applicants are now able to:

- Submit permit and visa applications online,
- Upload supporting documents electronically,
- Receive automated form responses and acknowledgements.

This has significantly reduced reliance on manual paper-based lodgement.

Mandatory fields and validation features within JotForm have helped reduce incomplete applications at the point of submission, improving first-stage screening efficiency and reducing administrative back-and-forth with applicants.

The use of digital forms has contributed to:

- Reduced physical file movement,
- Faster initial assessment where documentation is complete,

- Improved turnaround times in straightforward cases.

Despite these improvements, the immigration management system remains **partially automated rather than fully integrated**. While JotForm has improved front-end digital lodgement, several back-end processes remain manual or semi-manual, including:

- Detailed eligibility assessments,
- Inter-agency clearance and compliance checks,
- Final decision-making workflows,
- Integration across legacy systems.

From 2019 to 2023, the Department has made significant progress in digital transformation through the adoption of **JotForm-based online application systems**, improving accessibility, efficiency, and data quality. However, the system remains in a **hybrid stage of digital maturity**, and further integration is required to achieve a fully automated immigration management system.

25. What improvements in service delivery have resulted from digitalization initiatives?

From 2019 to 2023, the Department's digital transformation initiatives, particularly the adoption of **JotForm-based online application systems**, have significantly improved service delivery.

Key improvements include enhanced accessibility for applicants through online lodgement, reduced need for physical submissions, and faster application intake and triaging. The structured digital forms have also improved data accuracy by reducing incomplete and incorrect applications.

In addition, digital workflows have improved processing efficiency by reducing manual handling and enabling quicker internal routing of applications. This has contributed to improved turnaround times for complete applications.

Overall, service delivery has become more efficient, accessible, and transparent. However, the system remains in a hybrid stage, with further integration required to achieve full end-to-end automation.

26. What cybersecurity measures are in place to protect sensitive immigration and passport data?

From 2019 to 2023, the Department has strengthened data protection through the **GovNet secure government network** and related ICT controls.

Key measures include role-based access for authorised officers, data encryption, audit trails, and secure authentication protocols. Systems operating on GovNet are monitored and regularly updated to address security risks. High-risk cases are also escalated to Compliance and Investigation Units.

Only authorised staff are given access to the Immigration system database, the movement module at the border, watchlists, and border alerts. The BMS is fully managed, operated and owned by Fiji Immigration with administration guardrails to protect sensitive immigration and passport information.

27. What contingency plans exist to ensure continuity of immigration services during system outages or cyber incidents?

From 2019 to 2023, the Department has put in place contingency measures to ensure continuity of immigration services during system outages or cyber incidents affecting platforms such as JotForm and GovNet systems.

These include manual processing using paper-based forms, system backup and recovery procedures, and incident response protocols through ICT and Compliance teams. Critical services at ports of entry are prioritised to ensure border operations continue with minimal disruption.

System down time is always a subject of business continuity risk management based on past experiences and vulnerability surrounding power supply, and system failures. Immigration has contingencies in place to maintain border security, protection of immigration data and eliminate any element of breach. In such event, all border security agencies were on site provide support and assistance on traveller's clearance.

Immigration is currently working on a full redundant system to be in place on any system outage and cyber related incidents.

Overall, these measures ensure service continuity while system resilience and recovery capabilities continue to be strengthened.

HUMAN RESOURCES AND CAPACITY

28. What is the Department's current staffing establishment compared with filled positions, and are there any critical vacancies affecting service delivery?

The Department has an approved staff establishment of 200 in which 171 positions have been filled.

Due to the increase in number of flights and passengers recently received per day post COVID, there is a need to increase our Border Control Officers across our Borders to meet the demand and enhance the service delivery. We had requested funds for creation of these positions in our budget proposals, however our request was not considered.

29. What specialized training is provided to immigration officers in areas such as investigations, border security, document examination, and human trafficking?

The Department provides specialized and continuous training to immigration officers to strengthen capabilities in investigations, border security, document examination, and human trafficking.

A key strength is the strong support from development partners, particularly the Australian Border Force (ABF), Immigration New Zealand, and the International Organization for Migration (IOM), who continue to provide technical expertise and capacity building to officers in key migration and border management areas.

In addition, officers receive specialised technical training, including:

- Travel document examination training delivered by the Australian Border Force, focusing on detecting fraudulent and altered documents.
- Human trafficking training and workshops conducted with support from the UNODC and IOM, strengthening identification, referral, and victim protection skills.
- The Immigration Core Elements (ICE) Toolkit developed by Immigration New Zealand, which provides structured learning on immigration systems, risk assessment, compliance, and operational best practices.

Overall, this training framework ensures officers are continuously upskilled, operationally ready, and aligned with international best practices in border security and migration management.

30. What measures are in place to improve staff retention, succession planning, and institutional capacity?

The Department continues to face staff retention and capacity challenges, largely due to salary disparities compared to agencies such as FRCS, foreign missions, and the private sector. This has contributed to ongoing staff turnover, which remains a key concern for long-term institutional stability, including migration of skilled officers to better-paying opportunities locally and overseas.

The last job evaluation exercise was conducted in 2017, and the current salary structure has not kept pace with the increasing demands and complexity of immigration work. As a result, retaining experienced officers remains difficult.

Despite these challenges, the Department is taking steps to strengthen succession planning and institutional capacity, including structured training, mentorship, and internal development programmes to build a pipeline of capable officers.

There is also a focus on career progression pathways, allowing officers to gain experience across different operational areas to build leadership readiness.

However, sustainable improvement in retention will require review of remuneration structures and stronger government support, to ensure the Department remains competitive and able to retain skilled and experienced staff.

Overall, while internal measures are in place to build capacity and succession, long-term retention remains heavily dependent on salary reform and structural review, as well as addressing ongoing migration of skilled personnel to other opportunities.

FINANCIAL MANAGEMENT

31. Please provide a breakdown of revenue collected from permits, visas, passports, Citizenship applications, and other immigration services during the reporting period.

Financial Year 2019-2020

MONTHS	PASSPORT	PERMIT	VISA	SEARCH FEES	C
Aug-19	\$329,919.00	\$573,940.00	\$12,793.00	\$7,980.00	\$
SEPT, 19	\$537,785.00	\$481,081.00	\$19,252.00	\$12,252.00	\$
OCT, 19	\$597,579.00	\$512,157.00	\$26,769.00	\$7,344.00	\$
NOV, 19	\$632,465.00	\$461,906.00	\$31,066.00	\$5,796.00	\$
DEC, 19	\$547,719.00	\$442,444.00	\$28,934.00	\$5,868.00	\$
JAN, 20	\$694,025.00	\$494,108.00	\$38,519.41	\$5,664.00	\$
FEB ,20	\$673,274.00	\$580,286.00	\$40,396.58	\$4,356.00	\$
MAR,20	\$415,938.00	\$452,961.00	\$14,597.00	\$4,584.00	\$
APR, 20	\$77,379.00	\$329,911.00	\$6,301.35	\$744.00	\$
May-20	\$141,203.00	\$407,964.00	\$5,357.00	\$2,064.00	\$
Jun-20	\$179,135.00	\$373,621.00	\$180.00	\$1,488.00	\$
Jul-20	\$129,883.00	\$480,203.00	\$4,449.00	\$1,692.00	\$
TOTAL	\$4,956,304.00	\$5,590,582.00	\$228,614.34	\$59,832.00	\$

Table 6: Breakdown of Revenues, 2019-2020

Financial Year 2020-2021

MONTHS	PASSPORT	PERMIT	VISA	SEARCH FEES	CITIZENSHIP
AUG 20	\$ 142,090.19	\$ 374,367.00	\$ 3,084.00	\$ 1,703.99	\$ 15,000.00
SEPT, 20	\$ 170,253.70	\$ 329,397.00	\$ 3,911.00	\$ 1,287.35	\$ 8,000.00
OCT, 20	\$ 239,472.11	\$ 282,923.74	\$ 3,062.00	\$ 1,233.29	\$ 3,000.00
NOV, 20	\$ 232,673.10	\$ 319,004.83	\$ 7,074.00	\$ 670.93	\$ 4,000.00
DEC, 20	\$ 193,649.27	\$ 392,518.15	\$ 1,001.00	\$ 1,279.76	\$ 4,000.00
JAN, 21	\$ 298,135.58	\$ 305,452.93	\$ 6,681.85	\$ 756.00	\$ 7,000.00
FEB, 21	\$ 312,304.00	\$ 420,106.00	\$ 6,708.00	\$ 984.00	\$ 2,000.00
MAR, 21	\$ 307,486.00	\$ 385,656.20	\$ 3,632.00	\$ 1,860.00	\$ 4,000.00
APR, 21	\$ 107,233.00	\$ 304,637.00	\$ 5,950.00	\$ 1,032.00	\$ 1,000.00
MAY, 21	\$ 119,533.83	\$ 145,987.28	\$ 2,348.00	\$ 780.00	\$ 6,000.00
JUNE, 21	\$ 169,189.27	\$ 244,244.00	\$ 3,523.00	\$ 1,056.00	\$ 2,000.00
JULY, 21	\$ 446,087.18	\$ 178,513.00	\$ 811.00	\$ 1,248.91	\$ 6,000.00
TOTAL	\$ 2,738,107.23	\$ 3,682,807.13	\$ 47,785.85	\$ 13,892.23	\$ 68,000.00

Table 7: Breakdown of Revenues, 2020-2021

Financial Year 2021-2022

PERIOD	PASSPORT	PERMIT	VISA	SEARCH	CITIZENSHIP
AUGUST	193,801.31	291,768.30	5,007.34	1,344.37	15,700.00
SEPTEMBER	397,378.68	335,776.19	2,322.03	1,963.32	22,900.00

OCTOBER	578,188.55	305,036.81	2,644.09	1,585.49	25,6
NOVEMBER	591,347.52	305,840.76	9,296.74	1,511.98	46,2
DECEMBER	478,042.15	368,276.86	3,654.99	2,711.96	50,2
JANUARY	484,166.30	223,961.28	3,365.00	1,464.00	23,5
FEBRUARY	832,196.71	502,967.13	17,202.03	3,587.95	53,2
MARCH	1,183,334.88	551,758.20	18,383.95	3,791.95	88,8
APRIL	977,070.74	339,730.95	16,046.91	4,259.96	50,7
MAY	1,324,764.46	404,724.49	11,633.28	4,247.98	117,8
JUNE	1,231,436.99	376,350.98	23,488.30	5,689.52	63,3
JULY	1,489,021.47	414,465.76	36,532.80	7,053.48	196,
TOTAL	\$ 9,760,749.77	\$ 4,420,657.69	\$ 149,577.46	\$ 39,211.97	\$ 755,

Table 8: Breakdown of Revenues, 2021-22

Financial Year 2022-2023

MONTH	PASSPORT	PERMIT	VISA	SEARCH	CITIZ
AUGUST	1,502,532.32	475,837.46	17,035.59	8,077.68	13
SEPTEMBER	1,500,077.65	408,970.19	22,641.66	7,004.47	8
OCTOBER	1,142,886.01	329,068.52	29,657.40	5,529.53	6
NOVEMBER	1,565,583.38	461,553.17	32,094.30	5,925.10	8
DECEMBER	905,056.54	352,092.02	14,756.38	4,896.00	9
JANUARY	1,475,294.43	309,923.76	44,220.38	4,128.00	9
FEBRUARY	1,299,324.09	406,339.60	21,523.55	4,488.00	6
MARCH	1,546,150.70	522,962.36	50,120.47	6,144.00	9
APRIL	1,175,364.34	348,922.15	38,465.26	4,680.00	9
MAY	1,445,512.73	543,511.71	17,373.65	5,448.00	5
JUNE	1,647,008.58	379,592.10	28,318.40	9,916.69	11
JULY	1,663,607.96	473,872.95	13,490.32	6,338.00	125,6
TOTAL	\$ 16,868,398.72	\$ 5,012,645.98	\$ 329,697.36	\$ 72,575.47	\$ 1,095,

Table 7: Breakdown of Revenues, 2021-22

Summary of Revenue Performance (FY 2019–2023)

Between FY 2019–2020 and FY 2022–2023, the Department recorded steady and significant growth in total revenue from immigration services, driven primarily by **passport and permit services**.

Key Highlights:

- **FY 2019–2020:**
Total revenue: **\$12.36M**
Strong pre-pandemic performance, with permits and passports as the main contributors.
- **FY 2020–2021:**
Total revenue dropped to **\$7.17M**
Significant decline due to COVID-19 impacts on travel and immigration services.
- **FY 2021–2022:**
Strong recovery to **\$15.13M**
Marked increase across all categories as border restrictions eased, with passports showing major growth.
- **FY 2022–2023:**
Peak performance at **\$23.38M**
Highest revenue recorded across the period, driven by strong demand for passports, permits, and visas.

Overall Trends:

- **Passport revenue** consistently remained the largest contributor and showed the strongest growth post-COVID.
- **Permit revenue** remained stable but grew steadily during recovery years.
- **Visa, search fees, and citizenship revenue** contributed smaller but consistent shares.
- A clear **COVID-19 dip in FY 2020–2021** followed by a strong rebound and expansion phase.

Overall, the Department experienced a **sharp decline during the pandemic period followed by strong post-pandemic recovery and record-high revenue in FY 2022–2023**, reflecting increased mobility, demand for travel documents, and improved service delivery efficiency.

32. How does the Department ensure that revenue collection systems are secure, transparent, and properly audited?

The Department ensures that revenue collection systems are secure, transparent, and properly audited through strong financial controls, standardised procedures, digital systems, and oversight mechanisms.

All revenue transactions are managed through the Government's Ministry of Finance system, which has built-in security features such as role-based access controls, ensuring only authorised officers can process or approve transactions.

The system also provides full digital audit trails, allowing every transaction to be tracked, verified, and reviewed. This strengthens transparency and reduces the risk of manipulation or error.

In addition, Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs) are in place for every stage of the revenue process, ensuring consistency, accountability, and clear guidance for officers in handling collections, reconciliations, and reporting.

Regular reconciliations are conducted to match revenue collected against records, ensuring accuracy and early detection of any discrepancies.

The Department also operates under strict financial governance and reporting requirements, with periodic internal checks and independent audits carried out in line with public finance regulations.

Overall, the combination of secure digital systems, controlled access, SOP-driven processes, transparent transaction tracking, and regular audits ensures that revenue collection is properly managed, secure, and fully accountable.

Summary of Financial Performance (FY 2019–2023)

Overall, the data shows a **strong upward trend in total revenue collection**, increasing significantly over the five-year period, with a major surge from **2021–2022 onwards**.

1. Overall Growth Trend

- **FY 2019–2020:** \$12.36M
- **FY 2020–2021:** \$7.17M (decline due to COVID-19 restrictions)
- **FY 2021–2022:** \$15.13M (strong recovery begins)
- **FY 2022–2023:** \$23.38M (peak performance period)

This shows a clear recovery and strong post-pandemic growth trajectory, more than doubling revenue from FY 2021–2022 to FY 2022–2023.

2. Key Revenue Drivers

Across all years, the main contributors remain consistent:

- Passports – largest revenue source throughout, showing very strong growth from FY 2021 onwards.

- Permits – steady and significant contributor.
- Citizenship applications – notable increase in later years
- Visas and search fees – smaller but steadily growing components

3. Key Trends

- COVID-19 impact (2020–2021): Sharp decline in revenue due to travel restrictions and reduced applications.
- Post-COVID recovery (2021–2022): Strong rebound across all revenue categories.
- Rapid expansion (2022–2023): Highest recorded revenue, driven by increased travel demand, labour mobility, and restoration of international movement.
- Passport revenue dominates, indicating high demand for international travel documentation.

4. Key Observations

- The Department shows strong financial recovery and growth resilience after COVID-19 disruption.
- Revenue collection systems remained stable and responsive despite fluctuations in demand.
- Growth reflects increased mobility, labour schemes, and migration demand, especially in later years.

In conclusion, overall, the financial data reflects a temporary COVID-19 downturn followed by strong and sustained revenue growth, with FY 2022–2023 representing the highest-performing year driven by increased passport demand and mobility activities.

33. What were the major expenditure drivers during the reporting period, and how have these contributed to improved service delivery?

The major expenditure drivers during the reporting period included personnel costs, operational expenses, infrastructure and asset maintenance, information technology enhancements, and the delivery of key programs and services. These expenditures were directed toward strengthening the Department's operational capacity, improving service accessibility, and ensuring the efficient service delivery.

Personnel investments enabled the Department to maintain adequate staffing levels, reduce service backlogs, and improve response times.

Operational expenditures supported the uninterrupted delivery of essential services and enhanced day-to-day efficiency.

Infrastructure and asset maintenance improved the reliability, safety, and accessibility of facilities and equipment used in service delivery.

Technology investments strengthened digital systems, improved data management, enhanced security, and enabled more efficient service channels.

Program and project funding expanded service coverage, improved outcomes for beneficiaries, and supported the achievement of strategic objectives. As a result, these expenditures contributed to improved service quality, greater operational efficiency, enhanced stakeholder satisfaction, and better overall achievement of the Department's service delivery targets.

35. What lessons have been learned from the Department's management of border restrictions and immigration services during and after the COVID-19 pandemic?

The Department's experience during and after the COVID-19 pandemic provided several important lessons in managing border restrictions and immigration services.

Firstly, it highlighted the importance of system flexibility and adaptability. The sudden closure and reopening of borders required the Department to quickly adjust policies, procedures, and service delivery models to respond to changing public health and travel conditions.

Secondly, the pandemic reinforced the need for strong digital systems and automation. Online applications, electronic processing, and digital verification became essential in maintaining continuity of services when physical access to offices was restricted.

Thirdly, it demonstrated the importance of inter-agency coordination, particularly with health authorities, border agencies, and international partners, to ensure consistent border control measures and accurate information sharing.

Another key lesson was the need for clear communication with the public, ensuring that travellers, employers, and stakeholders understood changing requirements, travel restrictions, and entry conditions.

The experience also highlighted the importance of workforce resilience and capacity building, ensuring officers were trained and equipped to manage crisis situations while maintaining essential border functions.

Finally, the pandemic underscored the value of data-driven decision-making, using real-time information to guide border policies, manage risk, and support safe reopening strategies.

Overall, the Department learned that a modern, digital, coordinated, and flexible immigration system is essential to effectively manage future crises while maintaining border security and service continuity.

36. What are the Department's priorities over the next three to five years to strengthen immigration management, border security, and customer service delivery?

Aligned with the Department's vision of "**Securing migration and economic development through innovative transformation,**" the priorities over the next three to five years focus on building a modern, secure, and accessible immigration system.

A key priority is to invest more in technology, particularly in enhancing the e-passport system, visa, and permit platforms, to improve security, efficiency, and service delivery. This includes

expanding digital services so customers can lodge applications from the comfort of their homes, reducing the need for physical visits and improving turnaround times.

The Department will also prioritise amendments to immigration legislation to ensure policies remain current, responsive, and supportive of both secure migration and economic growth.

Strengthening border security and risk management remains critical, with continued investment in intelligence systems, biometric verification, and enhanced monitoring at air and maritime borders.

There will be ongoing focus on capacity development, equipping officers with the skills needed in investigations, document examination, and modern border management.

Improving and extending service delivery is another key area, aimed at providing faster, more efficient, and user-friendly services to the public and businesses.

To support institutional sustainability, the Department will undertake a job evaluation review to improve staff retention and build a strong, capable workforce.

Overall, these priorities support the vision by leveraging innovation and technology to deliver secure, efficient, and customer-focused immigration services that contribute to national development.

ADDITIONAL ANALYTICAL QUESTIONS

37. Given Fiji's increasing reliance on foreign labour in certain sectors, how does the Department balance labour market needs with the protection of employment opportunities for Fijian citizens?

The Department adopts a balanced and strategic approach to managing Fiji's growing reliance on foreign labour, while safeguarding employment opportunities for Fijian citizens.

Firstly, labour market needs are guided by close collaboration with key stakeholders, including government agencies, industry bodies, and employers. This ensures that foreign workers are only engaged in sectors where there are genuine skill shortages and where local capacity is limited.

At the same time, the Department enforces robust labour market testing requirements. Employers are required to demonstrate that efforts have been made to recruit suitably qualified Fijians before approval is granted to engage foreign workers. This helps prioritise local employment and prevents unnecessary displacement of Fijian workers.

To further protect national interests, clear policies and Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs) are in place to guide the issuance of work permits. These processes ensure transparency, consistency, and accountability in decision-making, while maintaining the integrity of the immigration system.

The Department also works closely with relevant authorities such as the Ministry of to strengthen monitoring and compliance. Regular inspections and enforcement measures are undertaken to ensure that employers adhere to permit conditions, including fair treatment of both local and foreign workers.

Importantly, there is a strong focus on capacity development and skills transfer. Employers engaging foreign workers are encouraged—and in some cases required—to implement training and succession plans that support the upskilling of Fijians, enabling them to eventually fill these roles.

Looking ahead, ongoing legislative reviews and policy reforms will further strengthen this balance. By aligning immigration policies with national development priorities, the Department aims to support economic growth while ensuring that Fijians remain at the centre of employment opportunities.

In essence, the approach is one of balance—facilitating economic development through targeted foreign labour, while protecting, prioritising, and empowering the Fijian workforce.

38. What measures are in place to identify and address potential cases of labour exploitation, human trafficking, and abuse involving foreign workers?

The Department has strengthened its approach to addressing labour exploitation, human trafficking, and abuse through both operational measures and national coordination frameworks.

A key mechanism is the establishment of the **Technical Working Group**, which brings together relevant government agencies and stakeholders to coordinate efforts, share intelligence, and ensure a unified response to trafficking and exploitation cases. This whole-of-government approach strengthens detection, protection, and prosecution efforts.

In addition, the implementation of the **National Plan of Action (NAP)** provides a structured and strategic framework to combat human trafficking. The NAP outlines clear priorities across prevention, protection, prosecution, and partnership, ensuring that all actions are aligned and targeted.

At the operational level, immigration officers are trained to identify indicators of trafficking and exploitation at the border and during compliance inspections. Clear Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs) and referral pathways are in place to ensure that suspected victims are handled sensitively and referred to appropriate protection and support services.

Regular workplace inspections and monitoring are conducted in collaboration with labour and law enforcement authorities to detect non-compliance, abusive practices, and exploitation of foreign workers.

The Department also applies risk profiling and intelligence-led approaches to identify suspicious recruitment patterns, fraudulent documentation, and potential trafficking networks.

Ongoing legislative reviews and policy enhancements further support these efforts, ensuring Fiji's legal framework remains responsive and aligned with international standards.

Overall, through the Technical Working Group, the National Plan of Action, and strengthened operational measures, the Department continues to take a coordinated, proactive, and victim-centred approach to safeguarding foreign workers and combating human trafficking.

39. How does the Department monitor compliance by employers sponsoring foreign workers under work permit arrangements?

The Department monitors compliance by employers sponsoring foreign workers through a combination of permit conditions, inspections, information sharing, and enforcement mechanisms.

Firstly, all employers sponsoring foreign workers are required to comply with work permit conditions, which outline approved job roles, workplace location, salary levels, and other employment terms. Any variation from these conditions must be formally approved by the Department.

Compliance is actively monitored through workplace inspections and site visits, where immigration officers verify that foreign workers are engaged in the approved roles and that employment conditions are being met. These inspections also help identify any cases of underpayment, contract substitution, or unauthorised employment.

The Department also relies on inter-agency collaboration and information sharing with agencies such as the Ministry of Employment, Fiji Revenue and Customs Service (FRCS), Fiji National Provident Fund (FNPF), and other relevant authorities. This allows cross-checking of employment records, tax compliance, and social security contributions to verify legitimacy.

Where breaches are identified, the Department may take enforcement action, including warnings, cancellation of permits, suspension of sponsorship privileges, or removal of workers where necessary.

Overall, this multi-layered approach ensures that employers are held accountable, foreign workers are protected, and the integrity of the work permit system is maintained.

40. Has the Department conducted any assessment of emerging migration trends and their implications for Fiji's national security, labour market, and economic development? If so, what were the key findings?

The Department has undertaken ongoing assessment and monitoring of emerging migration trends and their implications for Fiji's national security, labour market, and economic development, as reflected in the report *"Migration in the Republic of Fiji: A Country Profile 2020."*

Overall, the key findings indicate that Fiji is experiencing a significant increase in labour mobility and mixed migration flows, driven by regional labour demands and global workforce

shortages. This has led to a greater reliance on foreign labour in key sectors such as construction, hospitality, agriculture, and maritime industries.

From a national security perspective, the report highlights increased risks associated with document fraud, irregular migration, and potential exploitation networks, particularly where recruitment processes are not well regulated. This reinforces the need for stronger screening, intelligence sharing, and inter-agency coordination.

In relation to the labour market, the findings show a continuing gap between local labour supply and demand in certain skilled and semi-skilled occupations. While foreign labour helps fill critical shortages, there is a clear need for stronger labour market testing, skills transfer, and upskilling of Fijian workers to reduce long-term dependency.

From an economic development perspective, migration continues to contribute positively by supporting business continuity, infrastructure development, and service delivery. However, it must be carefully managed to ensure that economic benefits are balanced with the protection of local employment opportunities and fair labour practices.

The report also highlights the growing importance of digital transformation and data-driven migration management, including enhanced border systems, biometrics, and advance passenger information to improve risk management and decision-making.

Overall, the key finding is that migration presents both opportunities and risks, requiring a balanced approach that supports economic growth while safeguarding national security and protecting the local workforce through strengthened policy, legislation, and coordinated governance.

--- The End ---