STANDING COMMITTEE ON ECONOMIC AFFAIRS

REVIEW REPORT OF THE SUGAR CANE GROWERS COUNCIL 2022 ANNUAL REPORT

Appendices

ANNEX 1

WRITTEN SUBMISSION

Sugar Cane Growers Council

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11th June 2026

The Chairperson
Parliamentary Standing Committee on Economic Affairs
Parliament of the Republic of Fiji
SUVA

Dear Sir,

RE: SUGAR CANE GROWERS COUNCIL – ANNUAL REPORT 2022

On behalf of the Sugar Cane Growers Council (SCGC), I am pleased to submit the Council's written responses to the questions raised by the Parliamentary Standing Committee on Economic Affairs in relation to the SCGC Annual Report 2022.

The Council appreciates the opportunity to appear before the Committee and provide clarification on matters arising from the Annual Report. The submission outlines the Council's position on governance, financial management, grower representation, productivity, mechanization, climate resilience and other matters affecting the welfare and sustainability of cane growers throughout Fiji.

The Council remains committed to its statutory mandate of representing, protecting and advocating the interests of cane growers and looks forward to constructive engagement with the Committee.

Should the Committee require any additional information or clarification, the Council will be pleased to provide further assistance.

Yours faithfully,

Mr. Vimal Dutt
Chief Executive Officer
Sugar Cane Growers Council

PARLIAMENTARY STANDING COMMITTEE ON ECONOMIC AFFAIRS

SUGAR CANE GROWERS COUNCIL

RESPONSES TO QUESTIONS ON THE ANNUAL REPORT 2022

QUESTION 1

The CEO's report states that hilly terrain grower portfolios will probably further decline unless a technological intervention of mechanised solutions for hilly farms is introduced.' What has SCGC initiated toward hilly terrain mechanisation to protect its members?

RESPONSE

SCGC recognises that labour shortages and the ageing grower population pose significant challenges to the sustainability of hilly cane farms. The Council has advocated for the introduction of specialised harvesting equipment suitable for sloping terrain and has explored successful models from countries such as Mauritius and Reunion Island. Mechanisation remains a key strategic priority to improve productivity and reduce dependence on manual labour. The Council continues to engage with Government, development partners or industry financial model and equipment suppliers on pilot projects and financing options suitable for Fiji's terrain.

In addition, last season Ministry has invested on the hilly harvester from Japan. The unit is currently on trial phase with Sugar Research Institute of Fiji (SRIF).

QUESTION 2

The Lautoka Cane Producers Association seats have been vacant since 2020, for three consecutive Annual Reports. The 2022 report again lists these positions as 'vacant.' Can SCGC explain: what specific steps were taken in 2022 to reconstitute Lautoka CPA representation? Why has this not been resolved in three years? What interim representation arrangements exist for Lautoka's 5,517 registered growers?

RESPONSE

The vacancies arose following the decertification of the Lautoka Cane Producers Association due to non-compliance with Fairtrade certification requirements. During this period, growers continued to receive representation and services through the Council's Lautoka District Office, management and existing governance structures. The Lautoka Cane Producers Association has since regained certification and representation within the Council has now been regularised.

QUESTION 3

The financial statements for FY2021/22 were authorised on 27 June 2023 but not tabled in Parliament until 19 September 2024,15 months after audit completion. Why was it delayed? Why was it not tabled earlier? Also, what is the status of annual reports from 2022 onwards?

RESPONSE

The Annual Report was completed and audited within the required process. Following audit completion, the report is subject to Board approval. It was purely administrative delays.
2023 annual report is in final stages of printing, 2024 - audit is progressing, 2025 – audit is schedule this year December 2026.

QUESTION 4

The 2022 detailed income statement shows 'Management fees' of FJD 57,401 a new income line not present in 2021. Note 2.2 lists this without explanation. What services does this management fee relate to? Who paid it?

RESPONSE

The management fee relates to administrative and management services provided to SCGC under specific operational arrangements with Insurance provider in relation to welfare cover for all cane growers.

QUESTION 5

The amounts paid to South Pacific Fertilisers Limited grew from FJD 1,847,827 to FJD 2,466,841 a 33% increase in one year. SCGC's gross margin on weedicide is essentially zero (0.8% in 2022, a loss in 2021). What credit terms govern this payable? Is SCGC carrying financial risk on behalf of the growers in this distribution model?

RESPONSE

The increase reflects the higher uptake of weedicide by growers. The credit terms align with master award, reflecting statutory advances and recovery mechanisms ensuring growers have timely access to essential inputs.

QUESTION 6

Note 18 discloses SCGC is 70% beneficiary of SK Trust, which holds all properties of the dissolved Sugar Commission and has net assets of FJD 862,192 according to 2019 data. The report states, no income has been distributed to the beneficiaries.' Can SCGC explain:

RESPONSE

The SK Trust was established after dissolution of Sugar Commission of Fiji. The Property was transferred to SK Trust and Sugar Industry Tribunal is the Trustee.
The beneficiaries are FSC (30%) and SCGC (70%)

B) The SK Trust Deed Governs who controls the decisions

C) The last distribution of dividends was done in 2017 where FSC received $60,000 and SCGC received $140,000

The Funds were being held back so that the building which was purchased in 1999 could be painted and upgraded/renovated, without taking a loan, as shown. Now that the building has been renovated the parties FSC & SCGC will receive payments at the end of the financial year 2026.SCGC is also concerned on the accumulated funds and SIT is also relied on the funds for their operations.

QUESTION 7

The grower levy receivable of FJD 692,844 from FSC has been fully provisioned for as doubtful. Has SCGC taken any legal action to recover this debt from FSC? If not, why not? Has the Government been notified that FSC owes this debt to SCGC?

RESPONSE

Growers do not pay levy under the current circumstances. Such amount is legacy matter, thus the council in the process to write off this sum.

QUESTION 8

In 2021, the forecast price was FJD $54.36 below the cost of harvesting for many growers. Has SCGC made formal submissions to the Sugar Industry Tribunal or the Ministry arguing that the Master Award price formula produces prices below the cost of production? If so, can the Committee see these submissions?

RESPONSE

SCGC has consistently raised concerns regarding grower profitability, rising production costs and the adequacy of cane prices. The Council has made numerous submissions to the Sugar Industry Tribunal, Government and industry stakeholders on matters affecting grower viability, including harvesting costs, transportation costs, labour shortages and cane pricing. The Council continues to advocate for measures that improve grower returns and industry sustainability.
For the year 2021 season, the forecast was $54.36, delivery payment was reviewed through negotiations with FSC and SIT. The price was increased to $38.50 from $32.62. Likewise, for season 2026 copies of letter provided as appendix.

QUESTION 9

The report acknowledges 'high lease premiums in some districts' and states that 'progress has been hindered by various factors' in the iTLTB renewal process. Can SCGC provide the Committee with: (a) the number of active grower leases due for renewal in the next five years by district; (b) the number renewed in FY2021/22; (c) the number lost; and (d) the range of premium rates being imposed?

RESPONSE
Insert table. 2025 – 2031

SCGC recognises lease renewal as a critical issue affecting long-term investment and grower confidence. The Council works closely with growers, iTLTB and Government agencies to support lease renewal efforts and advocates for practical and affordable

arrangements. Lease administration records are primarily maintained by the relevant authorities. However, SCGC continues to support growers through consultations, advocacy and engagement on lease-related matters.

Lease Expiry 2025 - 2031					
Lautoka to Rakiraki					
Area	**Partly Renwed**	**Wholly Renewed**	**Not Renewed**	**Pending consultation**	**Total**
Vitigo	16	7	2	0	25
Vuda	8	1	1	0	10
Ba East	0	2	12	3	17
Ba West	0	12	10	10	32
Rakiraki	0	3	1	8	12
Total	**24**	**25**	**26**	**21**	**96**
Nadi to Sigatoka					
	Partly Renwed	**Wholly Renewed**	**Not Renewed**	**Pending consultation**	**Total**
Cuvu		20	0		20
Legalega		33	2		35
Lomawai		86	0		86
Malolo		28	1		29
Meigunyah		69	1		70
Natova		43	13		56
Nawaicoba		23	0		23
Olosara		21	0		21
Qeleloa		33	5		38
Saweni		9	2		11
Yako		29	10		39
Total		**394**	**34**		**428**
Labasa and Seaqaqa					
	Partly Renwed	**Wholly Renewed**	**Not Renewed**	**Pending consultation**	**Total**
Labasa	5	13	3		21
Seaqaqa	0	57	2		59
Total	5	70	5		**80**

QUESTION 10

Many growers already have existing loans and cannot secure additional credit for lease renewal premiums. What alternative SCGC solutions exist for growers who cannot afford to renew?

Has SCGC advocated for a Government lease renewal subsidy programme similar to the New Farmers Assistance Programme?
RESPONSE

SCGC supports concessional financing arrangements, growers are directed to Sugar Cane Growers Fund (SCGF)
SCGF is the custodian of cane growers monies, offering affordable loans to cane growers for cane farming related activities.
Since 2023 government support drive of 30% or $7500 (whichever is higher) allocation subsidy initiative. The Council has consistently advocated for targeted support programmes aimed at ensuring productive cane farms remain in operation following lease renewal.

QUESTION 11

The 2022 report states that 36.1% of the crop was mechanically harvested using 98 machines. Given that flat terrain mechanisation is now established, what specific plan does SCGC have for the remaining 63.9% of crop that is still manually harvested particularly in hilly areas where labour scarcity is driving grower exit?

RESPONSE

The Council's strategy includes specialised machinery for difficult terrain, cooperative farming arrangements, migrant labour initiatives, mechanisation support and pilot projects aimed at increasing harvesting efficiency. The objective is to gradually reduce dependence on manual harvesting while ensuring growers in hilly areas are not disadvantaged.

QUESTION 12

The Micro Bundled Insurance saw 263 families claim, 96% for death-related events (term life and funeral). This suggests a significant number of active growers died during the year. Can SCGC confirm: how many active growers died in FY2021/22? Is the Council tracking the demographic profile of active growers, including age distribution and mortality rates, as part of its succession planning?

RESPONSE

Total of 244 growers deceased in the year 2022. Data is collected per district and respective sectors.
Next of kin of the grower automatically takes over the farm cultivation and eventually ownership through legal process. SCGC provides legal governance service to cane growers at disbursement cost. The scheme is its 10year anniversary in 2026.

QUESTION 13

Only 202 growers registered for the Parametric Microinsurance, of whom only 22 (10.9%) are women. The report commits to SDG 5 (Gender Equality). What specific outreach was done to women farmers? What barriers exist for women's uptake of the parametric product? What is

SCGC's target for female participation?

RESPONSE

Participation in insurance programmes is voluntary and open to all growers. SCGC undertook awareness programmes through consultations, grower meetings and district engagement activities. The Council remains committed to increasing female participation and continues to encourage greater involvement of women in industry programmes and decision-making processes.
Subsequently, specific subsidy has reached the women growers. (the subsidy allocation was sourced through RBF under the InsuResilience Solution Fund (ISF).

QUESTION 14

The report states that most active growers are over 50 years old, and the younger generation is not entering the industry. The report has no youth data. Can SCGC provide:

(a) the number of active growers under 40 years of age;
(b) the number of new growers under 40 who entered the industry through the New Farmers Assistance Programme in FY2021/22;
(c) what proportion New Farmers are still active? and
(d) what percentage of farmers are producing cane which is below 100 tonnes?

RESPONSE

(a) The number of active growers under 40 years of age;
496 growers (5.4 %) of the portfolio
(b) The number of new growers under 40 who entered the industry through the New Farmers Assistance Programme in FY2021/22;
Total growers assisted with NFA 239
(c) what proportion New Farmers are still active? and
76% (182 Growers)
(d) what percentage of farmers are producing cane which is below 100 tonnes?
41.6% (3796 Growers)

QUESTION 15

What is the total government funding received by SCGC in FY2021/22, including the reported $2 million grant, and how was this funding specifically allocated across programmes?

RESPONSE

In fact, SCGC received $600K in the said period.
The amount referred as $2.0m relates to cane access grant through Government, which SCGC does the monitoring of roads specifically. Not for operational expenses.

Government funding received by SCGC was utilised to support its statutory functions, including grower representation, district office operations, advisory services,

consultations, governance activities and grower support programmes. Details of expenditure are reflected in the audited financial statements.

QUESTION 16

The report notes a decline in cane production targets. Can SCGC provide a breakdown of the key contributing factors (e.g, labour shortages, climate, land issues), and quantify their relative impact?

RESPONSE

The major reason was impact of cyclone TC Yasa affecting the northern division. Approximately 300,000 tons declined.

In addition, the decline in cane production is attributable to several factors, including labour shortages, ageing growers, lease uncertainty, rising production and harvesting/delivery costs, climate-related events, declining profitability and reduced reinvestment in farms. These challenges collectively affect productivity and grower retention. Declining grower morale, increasing borrowing cost and incapability to repay the loan is a new trend, compelling growers to dispose farms through sale or mortgagee sale. Growers temptation to borrow debt and later regret with challenges surrounding cane price and operational incapability.

QUESTION 17

What long-term strategy does SCGC have to improve grower productivity and yield per hectare across all cane sectors?

RESPONSE

SCGC advocates for improved farm management practices (soil health), mechanisation, affordable access to farm inputs, research and innovation, grower training, climate resilience initiatives, cooperative development and succession planning. These measures form part of the Council's long term vision for improving industry productivity and sustainability.
Growers retention strategy such as dedicated superannuation scheme for all cane growers. graduation from voluntary to dedicated platform.

QUESTION 18

How is SCGC supporting growers in transitioning to climate-resilient farming practices, including adaptation to extreme weather events?

RESPONSE

The Council supports climate resilience through exploring crop insurance opportunities parametric insurance initiatives in existence, awareness programmes, governance and financial literacy program for grower's/cooperatives officials and the promotion of resilient farming practices. SCGC continues to work with Sugar Research Institute of Fiji

(SRIF) Government programs and development partners to strengthen industry resilience.
Strong association with United Nations Capital Development UNCDF, Reserve Bank of Fiji,
Supporting Sustainable and Adaptive Financing for Entrepreneurial Resilience in the Pacific (SAFER Pacific).

QUESTION 19

Can SCGC outline its role in improving access to affordable fertiliser, including any partnerships, subsidies, or bulk procurement strategies?

RESPONSE

A grower rep through SCGC make up the board of directors of South Pacific Fertlizers Limited (SPFL)
SCGC has 9.4 % shares in SPFL while SCGF has 90.4 % shares.
SCGC's initial investment of 40%, which was later revised through a cabinet decision in 2009 whereby debt owed to SCGF by SPFL was converted to equity.
The sharing preposition changed thereafter,
The SCGC continues to facilitate access to fertilisers and agricultural inputs through partnerships, distribution services and advocacy for affordability and timely availability. The Council also supports initiatives aimed at reducing input costs for growers.

QUESTION 20

What communication systems or platforms has SCGC implemented to ensure timely information sharing and support for growers, particularly in remote areas? How many consultation meetings have been held in Northern Division?

RESPONSE

SCGC communicates through district offices, grower meetings, consultations, circulars, social media platforms, field visits and stakeholder engagement activities. Regular consultations are conducted throughout both the Northern and Western Divisions to ensure growers remain informed and engaged.

QUESTION 21

Can SCGC provide five-year trend data on the number of active cane farmers, including annual increases/decreases and key drivers of these trends?

RESPONSE

The number of active growers has generally declined over time due to ageing demographics, labour shortages, lease-related challenges and urban migration. SCGC continues to advocate for initiatives aimed at stabilising and increasing grower participation within the industry.

Active Grower Count											
Year	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024	2025
Active Growers	12405	11676	11871	11412	11638	11622	11398	10872	10563	10231	9127

QUESTION 22

What are SCGC's specific targets for farmer retention and recruitment, particularly for younger farmers entering the industry?

RESPONSE

SCGC supports initiatives aimed at retaining existing growers, encouraging succession planning, supporting new entrants and promoting youth, youth participation. The Council continues to work with Government and stakeholders on measures that strengthen grower confidence and industry participation.

QUESTION 23

What initiatives are being implemented to promote innovation and adoption of modern farming technologies among growers?

RESPONSE

SCGC promotes mechanisation, training, technology transfer, exposure visits, research collaboration and modern farming practices. Technology adoption remains critical to improving productivity and addressing labour shortages. Through SRIF

QUESTION 24

What measures is SCGC taking to strengthen institutional governance and stakeholder engagement, particularly with FSC, Government, and grower associations?

RESPONSE

SCGC maintains regular engagement with FSC, Government Ministries, the Sugar Industry Tribunal, grower organisations, cooperatives, development partners and other stakeholders. The Council actively participates in consultations, policy discussions and industry forums to ensure growers' interests are effectively represented.

QUESTION 25

How often do you undertake survey with farmers to gauge the performance of SCGC?

RESPONSE

SCGC obtains feedback through consultations, grower meetings, cooperative engagement sessions, district office interactions, field visits and periodic surveys. Continuous engagement with growers remains the Council's primary mechanism for assessing concerns, priorities and service delivery needs.

CONCLUSION

The Sugar Cane Growers Council remains committed to protecting and advancing the interests of cane growers throughout Fiji. While the industry continues to face significant challenges, the Council firmly believes that sustainable solutions can be achieved through collaboration, innovation and a continued focus on grower welfare and industry sustainability.

The sustainability of the sugar industry begins with the sustainability of the cane grower.

END

ANNEX 2

RESERACH BRIEF

Information Brief Standing Committee

Standing Committee on Economic Affairs

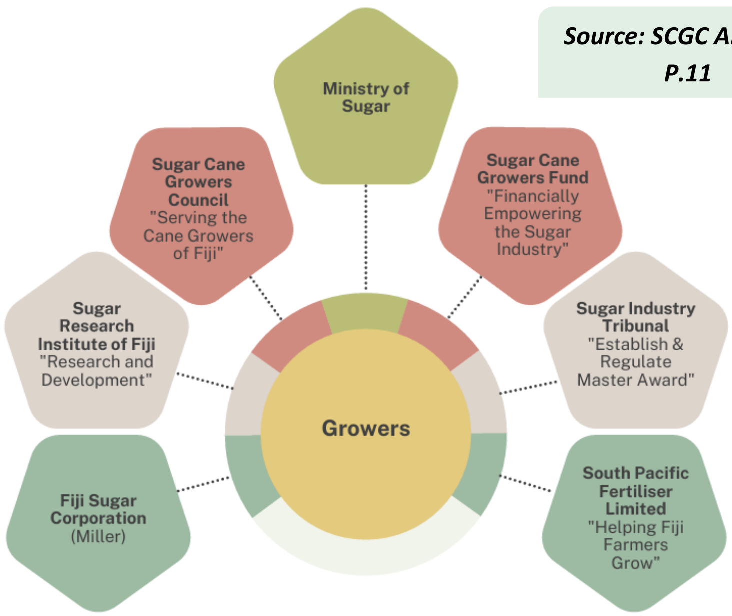
Information Brief on Sugar Cane Growers Council Annual Report 2022

1.0. Overview

This brief is provided to the Standing Committee on Economic Affairs ***(“SC-EA” or “Committee”)*** as requested through its secretariat. This analysis is a summary of some of the key issues in the **Sugar Cane Growers Council *(“SCGC”)*** Annual Report ***(“AR”)*** for financial year **2022**[1]. The summary is designed to assist Honourable Members of Committee undertake their comparisons and related analysis of the organisation’s performance as discussed in the ARs. The narrative provided here is only intended to assist the Committee with its appraisal of the reports and does not aim to provide in-depth oversight on the FCGC.

2.0. Introduction	
The Sugar Cane Growers Council (SCGC) is the primary representative organization for cane growers in Fiji, established under the Sugar Industry Act of 1984. Its mission is to ensure the long-term viability of growers through effective service delivery and leadership. The SCGC aims to protect and promote the interests of registered cane growers, focusing on grower welfare, addressing grievances, enhancing farm yields, subsidizing production costs, and providing education and advocacy. Its vision is to be a proactive organization dedicated to serving the interests of cane growers in Fiji.	
2.1. Mission	The SCGC is committed to providing effective representation, leadership, and services to the cane growers in order to secure long term viability for them in the industry. ***(Ref: SCGC AR 2022, p5)***
2.2. Vision	To be the pro-active grower representative organization, that strives to serve the interests of the cane growers of Fiji. ***(Ref: SCGC AR 2022, p5)***
2.3. Objectives	• Represents and protects the interests of cane growers. • Promotes a sustainable and viable sugar industry. • Provides services to support farming activities and improve productivity. • Encourages cost reduction and adoption of best practices. • Conducts research and collects industry data. • Educates growers and the community on industry issues. • Invests on behalf of growers in cane growing and sugar production. • Advocates for growers and ensures their grievances are addressed. ***(Ref: SCGC AR 2022, p5-6)***
2.4. Functions of the Council	• Supports and promotes cooperation among registered growers. • Addresses and resolves growers’ grievances. • Provides goods and services for cane-growing and diversification. • Establishes and manages funds for the benefit of growers. • Promotes research and education to improve productivity and

[1] Sugar Cane Growers Council 2022 Annual Report. [Accessed on 10/06/2026]; 2022 Annual Report Final

<table>
<tr><td></td><td>efficiency.
• Carries out additional duties assigned under relevant laws.
(Ref: SCGC AR 2022, p.6)</td></tr>
<tr><td>2.5. Summary of registered growers and harvesting gangs across respective mills.</td><td>
<table>
<tr><th>Mill</th><th>Lautoka</th><th>Rarawai</th><th>Labasa</th><th>Total</th></tr>
<tr><td>No. of Registered Growers</td><td>5,517</td><td>7,194</td><td>4,198</td><td>16,909</td></tr>
<tr><td>No. of Harvesting Gangs</td><td>478</td><td>650</td><td>528</td><td>1,656</td></tr>
</table>
Source: SCGC AR 2022, P.11</td></tr>
<tr><td>2.6. Regulatory Framework</td><td>• Operates under the Sugar Industry Act of 1984, which regulates structure and governance.
• The Master Award defines roles and responsibilities of millers and growers.
• In 2022, there were 16,909 registered growers and 1,656 harvesting gangs.
• Growers contribute to funding the Sugar Research Institute of Fiji (“SRIF”).
• Industry faces ageing farmers, rural-urban migration, and labour shortages.
• Mechanization is encouraged but limited by small farm sizes and difficult terrain.
• Financial support is available through the Sugar Cane Growers Fund (“SCGF”).
• Farmer cooperatives help invest in machinery and improve efficiency (48 cooperatives, 1,436 members).
(Ref: SCGC AR 2022, p.10)</td></tr>
<tr><td>2.7. Sugar Industry</td><td>Source: SCGC AR 2022, P.11

</td></tr>
<tr><td>2.8. Crop achieved against forecast</td><td>• Initial 2022 crop forecast was 1.9 million tonnes, revised to 1.8</td></tr>
</table>

	million after Tropical Cyclone Cody. • Cyclone caused crop lodging and waterlogging. • Lodging reduces productivity, damages stalks, and increases harvest losses. • It also makes weed control more difficult, especially with creeping weeds. • Waterlogging reduces growth, survival, and overall cane yield. • It affects leaf and stem growth, tillering, and shoot development. • Waterlogged fields are harder to cultivate and manage weeds. • Nutrient loss occurs due to erosion and leaching.

2021 CROP ACHIEVED AGAINST FORECAST

Mill	2021 Pre-Crush Estimate (Tonnes)	2021 Season Actual Harvest (Tonnes)
Lautoka	439,900	442,811
Rarawai	552,400	612,219
Labasa	415,600	362,237
Total	**1,407,900**	**1,417,267**

Source: SCGC AR 2022, P.13

The table below shows the cane planted in respective mill areas for the 2022 harvest season:

Mill	Area Planted (Ha)
Lautoka	567
Rarawai	903
Labasa	1,673
Total	**3,143**

Source: SCGC AR 2022, P.14

2.9. Harvesting Stats

2021 SEASON CANE AND SUGAR PRODUCTION IN COMPARISION TO LAST FIVE YEARS

TONS	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021
Cane	1,631,301	1,697,370	1,806,379	1,729,181	1,417,267
Sugar	180,388	160,206	168,702	151,590	133,209

FIVE YEARS CROP PRODUCTION

Mill	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021
Lautoka	429,569	457,481	474,914	418,149	442,811
Rarawai	526,111	619,570	669,729	639,816	612,219
Labasa	675,741	620,335	661,929	671,316	362,237
Total	**1,631,421**	**1,697,386**	**1,806,572**	**1,729,281**	**1,417,267**

Source: SCGC AR 2022, P.16

2.10. Standover crop	**STANDOVER CROP IN 2021 SEASON** The total standover crop for the 2021 season was 6,035 tonnes. The table below shows the stand-over figures for respective mills in the past four seasons:

Mill	2018 Season	2019 Season	2020 Season	2021 Season
Lautoka	11,046	8,267	3,225	1,265
Rarawai	140	2,910	4,555	2,625
Labasa	8,330	5,055	6,400	2,145
Total	19,516	16,232	14,180	6,035

Source: SCGC AR 2022, P.19

Reasons for Standover Crop

Farms had standover crop in the 2021 season primarily due to the following factors:

- **Unavailability of cane cutters.**
- **Lack of interest** among growers.
- **Absentee growers.**
- **Poor rail transport performance.**
- **Adverse weather conditions** that affected field operations during the final stages of the season in some cases.

Ref: SCGC AR 2022, P.18

2.11. Mechanical Harvesting

The table below provides figures for mechanicary harvested cane in five years for each mill.

Mill	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021
Lautoka	110,965	150,934	202,871	180,577	185,075
Rarawai	88,877	159,386	184,105	192,116	197,627
Labasa	107,171	176,718	242,786	241,281	128,626
Total	307,013	487,038	529,762	613,974	511,331

Source: SCGC AR 2022, P.19

- In 2021, ***36.1% (511,331 tonnes)*** of cane was harvested mechanically.
- Number of harvesters increased to **98 units** (up from **95 units** in 2020).
- Despite this, billet cane harvest dropped by about **102,000** tonnes.
- Decline was mainly due to smaller crop, especially in Vanua Levu after Cyclone Yasa.
- COVID-19 restrictions delayed spare parts and arrival of overseas technicians.
- Local technicians and workers were trained to service and operate harvesters.
- Most machines performed well and helped reduce labour shortages.
- Some harvesters faced challenges due to delays in parts and technical support.

Ref: SCGC AR 2022, P.18

2.12. Cane Access Road ("CAR"	(table below)

Allocation			
Mill	**No. of Roads**	**KM**	**Cost**
Lautoka	943	1,200	$720,000
Rarawai	1,331	1,383.4	$900,000
Labasa	1,070	865.7	$510,000
Total	**3,344**	**3,449.1**	**$2,130,000**

The table above shows the grant allocation for repair of CAR in preparation for the 2022 crushing season. ***Source: SCGC AR 2022, P.20***

- CAR maintenance works were successfully completed in all mill areas in 2021.
- The CAR National Steering Committee provided policy guidance on government grant use.
- FSC led planning, monitoring, and assessment with support from relevant authorities.
- Government grants covered costs for road maintenance, crossings, and culverts.
- Roads are often temporary and easily damaged, especially during rainy seasons.
- Regular maintenance is needed before each harvesting season.
- In 2022, government funded maintenance of over 3,400 km of cane access roads.
  Ref: SCGC AR 2022, P.19

2.13. Cane Price & Payments

Season	Forecast	Delivery	Second	Special	Third	Fourth	Final	Total
2008	**$46.26**	$27.76	$9.25	$4.00	$4.02	$12.44	$2.33	**$59.70**
2009	**$61.17**	$36.70	$12.23	-	$5.03	$2.26	$0.37	**$56.59**
2010	**$45.67**	$27.40	$9.13	-	$3.50	$6.54	$2.59	**$49.16**
2011	**$52.20**	$31.32	$10.44	-	$10.18	$11.39	$2.34	**$65.67**
2012	**$53.55**	$32.13	$10.70	$4.00	$11.50	$20.40	$3.09	**$81.82**
2013	**$62.58**	$37.55	$12.52	$5.00	$12.00	$15.05	$6.37	**$88.49**
2014	**$62.70**	$37.62	$12.54	-	$15.13	$15.00	$0.71	**$81.00**
2015	**$62.70**	$37.62	$11.14	$4.80	$9.88	$11.12	$2.10	**$76.66**
2016	**$65.69**	$39.42	$13.14	$3.05	$9.28	$10.57	$6.54	**$82.22**
2017	**$65.63**	$39.38	$13.13	-	$13.45	$15.14	$3.90	**$85.00**
2018	**$66.08**	$39.65	$13.22	-	$8.15	$12.50	$11.48	**$85.00**
2019	**$63.17**	$37.90	$12.63	-	$11.00	$13.73	$7.62	**$82.88**
2020	**$64.17**	$38.50	$12.83	-	$8.37	$10.31	$12.05	**$82.06**
2021	**$54.36**	$38.5	$12.83	-	$11.00	$15.15	$4.45	**$81.93**
2022	**$66.92**	$40.15	$13.38	-	$24.62	$7.11	$6.12	**$91.38**

The table above shows the cane price for the past fifteen (15) year's list. ***Source: SCGC AR 2022, P.21***

- Growers received a total of ***$91.38 per tonne in 2022***, higher than

	the forecast price of **$66.92**. • **60% ($40.15)** was paid as the initial delivery payment. • A second payment of **20% ($13.38)** was made five weeks after crushing ended. • Additional third and fourth payments of **$24.62 and $7.11** were later issued. • A final payment of **$6.12** completed the total cane price for **2022**. ***Ref: SCGC AR 2022, P.20***
2.14. Services provided to growers	**2.14.1. Weedicides** SCGC facilitates the distribution of weedicides to growers through its eight district offices across the sugar cane belt. **Key details of the distribution program include:** • **Subsidies:** The government provides a **20%** subsidy for three specific ***weedicides:*** *Amine, Diuron, and Valpar King.* • Growers are responsible for paying the remaining **80%** of the cost for these products. • **Non-Subsidized Products:** Other weedicides, such as Glufosinate, receive no government subsidy and are paid for in full by the growers. • **Process:** The Fiji Sugar Corporation **("FSC")** issues orders under its farm input advance platform, while the SCGC handles the actual delivery to the growers. • **Performance:** For the reporting period, total weedicide sales reached **$3,633,925** with the highest sales volume occurring in the Ba district. ***Ref: SCGC AR 2022, P.22*** **2.14.2. Cane knife sales** • The Council supports growers by selling cane knife sets at affordable prices. • Each set (knife, file, gloves) was **initially sold for $18**. • **Price increased to $20** from June 2022 due to higher costs. • A total of **1,700 knife** sets were **sold** to growers. ***Ref: SCGC AR 2022, P.23*** **2.14.3. Legal Services** • SCGC provides a wide range of legal services to registered growers at affordable rates. • Services include wills, probates, powers of attorney, farm agreements, lease transfers, and legal advice. • Also assists with industry compliance such as cane registration and tenancy agreements. • In 2022, **1,021 growers** received legal services. • Most common services were legal advice, powers of attorney, and farm/lease transfers. • Service delivery declined due to the COVID-19 pandemic. • Actively supports growers with lease renewals and negotiations with land authorities.

	• Helps growers access loans for lease renewal costs. • Provides mediation to resolve disputes and maintain smooth field operations. • Services are available through eight district offices and the Lautoka Head Office. ***Ref: SCGC AR 2022, P.24*** **2.14.4. Land Issues** • SCGC advocates for growers on land tenure and lease issues. • Works closely with TLTB and the Department of Lands to resolve land matters. • Focuses on reducing high lease premiums and speeding up lease renewals. • **Major challenges** include **expiring leases** and **rising premium costs**. • Many growers struggle to secure loans due to existing debts. • Council follows up with authorities and keeps growers informed on progress. • Addresses land issues through consultations and collaboration with institutions. • Land tenure problems contribute to declining sugarcane production. • Small farm sizes (around 4 hectares) continue to affect long-term industry sustainability. ***Ref: SCGC AR 2022, P.25***
2.15. Growers Consultation and Community Collaboration	• SCGC conducts regular consultation meetings with growers across all mill areas. • Discussions focus on planting grants, crop development, harvesting, transport, and cooperatives. • Educates growers on government support programs and welfare initiatives. • Promotes financial literacy through training on budgeting, savings, and loans. • Helps address grievances and governance issues through frequent engagement. • Collaborates with industry stakeholders to support growers' interests. • Holds targeted meetings (e.g., Gang Sirdar and district sessions) to improve operations. • Encourages community cooperation and resilience to climate and industry challenges. • Partners with institutions to provide training and disaster risk support programs. ***Ref: SCGC AR 2022, P.26-27***
2.16. Growers Consultation and Collaboration	**Growers Consultation** • The Council conducts ongoing consultation and grower meetings across all mill areas to address specific issues raised by the farming community. • Key Topics Addressed: Discussions often focus on cane planting

	grants, crop development, harvesting and transportation challenges, and the formation of grower cooperatives. • Welfare and Support: These meetings serve as a platform to educate growers on government support programs, advocate for welfare initiatives like Microbundled and Parametric Insurance, and provide guidance on securing loans for farm mechanization. • Financial Literacy: In partnership with the Reserve Bank of Fiji and UNCDF, the Council organizes financial literacy training to teach growers about budgeting, savings plans, and borrowing principles. • Grievance Resolution: Enhanced visibility and frequent meetings allow the Council to promptly address grower grievances and governance issues. ***Ref: SCGC AR 2022, P.26-27*** **Community Collaboration** • The SCGC emphasizes collaboration with industry stakeholders and institutions to ensure a unified approach to grower support. • Stakeholder Engagement: The Council works closely with other sugar industry bodies to resolve operational challenges and advocate for the collective interests of growers. • Targeted Meetings: Collaboration includes specialized sessions such as Gang Sirdar's meetings and district-level grower gatherings to streamline field operations. • Resilience Building: The Council encourages community-based adaptation, where growers share knowledge and resources to build collective resilience against climate change and other industry stressors. • Institutional Partnerships: By collaborating with international and national organizations, the Council facilitates specialized programs like disaster risk financing and technical training. ***Ref: SCGC AR 2022, P.26-27***
2.17. Growers Welfare	SCGC manages two main insurance schemes to support growers. **Micro Bundled Insurance:** • Costs $52 per year (deducted from cane payments). • Provides $10,000 total coverage (life, funeral, fire, accident). • In 2022, $602,500 paid to 263 families. **Parametric Microinsurance:** • Covers climate-related losses using weather-based triggers. • Offers coverage of $1,000 or $2,000. • 202 growers registered, but no payouts were made in 2021/2022. The Council promotes these schemes to improve financial security and climate resilience. Special focus on empowering women farmers through financial protection and inclusion. ***Ref: SCGC AR 2022, P29-31***
2.18.	Climate change poses a major threat to Fiji's sugarcane industry.

Key Impacts:

- Increased cyclones and floods damage crops, property, and income.
- Some losses are irreversible, affecting long-term sustainability.
- Creates uncertainty for farmers about staying in the industry.

Adaptive Strategies:

- Promotes crop diversification to reduce reliance on sugarcane.
- Develops climate-resilient cane varieties.
- Improves water and soil management (e.g., irrigation, cover cropping).
- Uses early warning systems for disasters.
- Encourages community support, access to credit, and insurance.

Ref: SCGC AR 2022, P33-34

2.19. SCGC) alignment to Sustainable Development Goals ("SDGs"),

- **SDG 1: No Poverty:** Ensuring fair compensation through high cane payments ($91.38/tonne).
- **SDG 2: Zero Hunger:** Promote sustainable agricultural practices that increase yields while maintaining soil health and minimizing environmental impact.
- **SDG 5: Gender Equality:** Empowering women farmers through inclusive participation and financial protection via microinsurance products.
- **SDG 6: Clean Water:** Focusing on efficient water management and innovation in irrigation practices.
- **SDG 8: Decent Work:** Creating safe, fair, and rewarding work environments while contributing to Fiji's economic resilience.
- **SDG 13: Climate Action:** Adopting climate-resilient farming techniques and rolling out parametric disaster insurance.
- **SDG 15: Life on Land:** Advocating for responsible land use to prevent degradation and promote biodiversity.

  Ref: SCGC AR 2022, P35-36

2.20. Finance

SUGAR CANE GROWERS COUNCIL
DETAILED INCOME STATEMENT
FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 JULY 2022

	2022	2021
Income	$	$
Sales	3,318,269	2,360,346
Cost of sales	(3,291,218)	(2,386,957)
Gross loss	27,051	(26,611)
Government grant	595,046	595,046
European Union grant	4,309	6,442
Dividend income	66,458	84,377
Gain on investments carried at fair value	22,587	3,146
Interest income	38,032	43,040
Rental income	119,976	120,753
Legal income	99,046	59,198
Knife sales	31,055	96,599
Directors fees, hall hire and sundry income	28,722	11,901
Management fees	57,401	-
Weedicide admin fee	9,193	98,477
UNCDP grant	11,321	-
Small Grant Scheme	4,167	-
Total Income	1,114,364	1,092,368

Ref: SCGC AR 2022, P57

2.21. Budget Allocation and Government Support

The Ministry of Sugar Industry provided significant capital grants for the 2022/2023 financial year.

Program	Allocation	Reason/Impact
Minimum Guaranteed Price	**$46.9 Million**	Ensures growers receive **$85.00/ton** to maintain income stability.
Fertilizer Subsidy	**$15.6 Million**	Maintains the grower price at **$20.00/bag**.
Cane Access Roads	**$2.0 Million**	Full government responsibility for repair of over 3,400km of roads.
Weedicide Subsidy	**$500,000**	Government pays **20%** of the price for Amine, Diuron, and Valpar. *Note: Allocation decreased, increasing costs for some products.*
Cane Cartage Subsidy	**$3.7 Million**	Covers transfer costs from Penang mill yard to Rarawai mill yard at no cost to growers.
New Farmer Assistance	**$250,000**	Pays 50% (up to $5k) of lease offer costs for new entrants.
Replanting Grant	**$0.5 Million**	Provides **$600 per acre** for new planting and replanting.

Ref: SCGC AR 2022, P35

Suggestive Questions

- How does SCGC ensure that sugar cane growers receive **fair and reasonable pricing** for their produce, and what mechanisms are in place to guarantee transparency and equity in the price determination process?
- What specific **initiatives, programs, and policy measures** has SCGC implemented to **attract, engage, and retain youth participation** in the sugar industry, and how is their effectiveness being assessed?
- Has SCGC, either directly or through the relevant Ministry or Corporation, undertaken any **formal legal measures, policy interventions, or advocacy efforts** to secure **long-term land tenure arrangements** for sustainable sugar production?
- What is the process for the **selection and appointment of the insurance provider**, and what **criteria, due diligence, or procurement standards** are applied in this selection?
- To what extent are growers **consulted or involved in the selection of insurance providers**, and are there any formal mechanisms that allow them to **participate, provide input, or exercise choice** in determining their insurer?
- As stated in **SCGC Annual Report 2022 (pp. 30–31)**, pay-outs are based on **clear parametric triggers (e.g., 300mm rainfall over 5 days) rather than the occurrence of a cyclone**, so how exactly does SCGC define and measure a "catastrophic event" when assessing whether the threshold has been met?
- If the policy explicitly promises a pay-out once the **stated rainfall or wind thresholds are reached**, could SCGC explain why **recorded January 2022 rainfall events that appear to meet or exceed these thresholds** still resulted in **no pay-out**, despite the parameters outlined in the same report?

- Given that the policy is presented as a **transparent, trigger-based product (SCGC AR 2022, pp. 30–31)**, how does SCGC reconcile the **difference between what is promised (automatic pay-out upon trigger)** and what was delivered (**no pay-out despite significant recorded events)**, and what methodology was used to justify this outcome?

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ANNEX 3

VERBATIM REPORT

[VERBATIM REPORT]

STANDING COMMITTEE ON ECONOMIC AFFAIRS

Annual Report

Sugar Cane Growers Council 2022 Annual Report

SUBMITTEE: **Sugar Cane Growers Council**

VENUE: **Big Committee Room, Parliament**

DATE: **Friday, 12th June, 2026**

VERBATIM NOTES OF THE MEETING OF THE STANDING COMMITTEE ON ECONOMIC AFFAIRS HELD AT THE COMMITTEE ROOM (EAST/WEST WING), PARLIAMENT PRECINCTS, GOVERNMENT BUILDINGS ON FRIDAY, 12TH JUNE, 2026 AT 9.28 A.M.

Present:

(1)	Hon. S. Tubuna	Chairman
(2)	Hon. P.D. Kumar	Deputy Chairperson
(3)	Hon. S.T. Koroilavesau	Member
(4)	Hon. K.V. Ravu	Member

Interviewee/Submittee: **Sugar Cane Growers Council**

In Attendance:

(1)	Mr. Vimal Dutt	Chief Executive Officer
(2)	Mr. Sunil Chaudhary	General Manager Operations
(3)	Ms. Raksha Prasad	In- house Legal Counsel
(4)	Mr. Deepak Singh	Accountant

MR. CHAIRMAN.- Let us call this meeting to order. I would like to welcome our colleagues from Sugar Cane Growers Council (SCGC) to this public submission meeting. Honourable Members, members of the media and the public, secretariat, ladies and gentlemen, a very good morning to you all and it is a pleasure to welcome everyone to this public hearing session.

At the outset, for information purposes, pursuant to Standing Orders 111 of the Standing Orders of Parliament, all Committee meetings are to be open to the public. Therefore, this submission meeting is open to the public and the media and will be aired live on Parliament's *Walesi* platform and live-streamed on the Parliament's *Facebook* page. For any sensitive information concerning the submission that cannot be disclosed in public, this can be provided to the Committee either in private or in writing.

Do note that this will be only allowed in a few specific circumstances which include national security matters, third-party confidential information, personnel or human resource matters, and meetings whereby the government deliberates on all issues before it and develops its recommendations and reports.

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

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

In terms of other protocols of this Committee, please be adviced that whilst the meeting is in progress, movement within the meeting room will be restricted, there should be minimum usage of mobile phones whereby answering of mobile phones should be done outside this room and all mobile phones are to be on silent mode.

(*Introduction of Committee Members*)

MR. CHAIRMAN.- It is important for the Committee to invite the Sugar Cane Growers Council to provide us with some of the questions that we had sent. With us this morning are the representatives of the Sugar Cane Growers Council which the Committee has invited to provide us their submission on the 2022 Annual Report.

The Committee has requested to answers some of the questions that we have raised in the Annual Report including its operational performance governance and how it addresses the challenges before them, enabling more informed oversight and accountability of Parliament. Hearing directly from the Sugar Cane Growers Council allows our Members to verify information, assess impacts on stakeholders and better understand the organisation's strategic direction. This engagement is further strengthened by the Committees' prior visit to SCGC headquarters this week which give us some insights into the activities that they are undertaking.

With this brief introduction, I will now take this time to invite our guests from Sugar Cane Growers Council to introduce themselves, following that we will ask to just make a brief presentation of their role and after that, there will be questions from the honourable Members.

(*Introduction of Sugar Cane Growers Council officials*)

MR. CHAIRMAN.- We had send you some questions. We might not go through all the questions but perhaps we will just give this time for you just to go over some of the main features of your operations and what are some of the key activities that you have undertaken in the year that we are currently scrutinising.

MR. V. DUTT.- Mr. Chairman, once again thank you for the opportunity to appear before the Standing Committee on Economic Affairs to discuss the Sugar Cane Growers Council Annual Report 2022.

The Sugar Cane Growers Council is a statutory organisation. It represents all registered cane growers of Fiji. Currently we have approximately 10,200 active cane growers. We have about 12,000 registered cane growers. When we say active cane growers, we mean these growers are producing cane. The Registrar of the Tribunal maintains the growers register and all the cane growers are represented by the SCGC. It does not work through the membership approach - it is an automatic mandatory understanding arrangement.

The 2022 Report basically reflected on the challenging environment for the sugar industry. We all know that the sector continues to face issues such as declining grower numbers, labour shortages, rising production costs, lease renewal challenges, climate-related impacts, and an increasing need of mechanization and technological advancement.

Despite these challenges, Mr. Chairman and honourable Members, the Council has remained focused on its core responsibility of grower representation, advocacy and service delivery. We continue to work with the Government of the day, the Fiji Sugar Corporation

(FSC) - the miller, the Sugar Industry Tribunal, development partners, the industry stakeholders and growers themselves.

The Council family believed that the future of the sugar industry depends on maintaining viability, productive and confident grower base. Every major industry decision, ultimately, affects the cane grower and, therefore, growers must remain in the centre of the industry policy and reform.

Mr. Chairman and honourable Members, the sugar industry is not merely an economic sector - it remains a way of life for thousands of farming families and rural communities. The SCGC remains steadfast in its commitment to ensure that the voice of the cane growers continue to be heard.

Mr. Chairman and honourable Members, the sustainability of the grower industry begins with the sustainability of the cane grower. Having said that, the Council has, in the past, used to have a democratic process which is the elections. The growers had the opportunity to elect their own representatives, which we do not have now. The provision was removed in 2015, and we are very thankful that that has been reinstated in 2024. Now, the matter is before the Sugar Industry Tribunal in terms of the elections, and then the growers will have an opportunity to elect their own representatives, and they can be represented through the Board of Directors of SCGC.

We, the Council, and I, as an Administrator, strongly feel, that there has been a big lapse and a damage to the industry in terms of its prosperity and attainability, and when we look at where we are in terms of production and the governance, there is a big gap. The industry used to be in its peak years and, hence, the grower morale is a question, and it has been declining drastically over a period of time and, today, again, we are in the same situation.

For the Council, it is an entire challenge for us to bring that into momentum or perspective, and it is a difficult task. The councillors used to play a very vital and pivotal role in motivating the growers, encouraging them, and sorting out issues there and then at the ground level, which I think the Council is having one of the weaknesses because we do not have sufficient resources on the ground - the councillors, such as the advisory councillors, which is almost the same. So, that is one of the weaknesses and that has greatly impacted and suppressed the industry, and we can see the results today.

Once again, we are thankful that the provisions have been reinstated, and we look forward for the democracy to be back into action, and then we, as a Council, will be able to deliver and act in the outmost best of the industry.

MR. CHAIRMAN.- Thank you very much, Mr. Dutt, for the presentation that you have made on the key features of the Council. While we were in Seaqaqa last week, one of the things the farmers raised, they have not experienced the services provided by the councillor to them. I am not sure of what happened however, those are the questions that are coming out from the farmers that are paying levies to the organisation. They have also raised that they are not aware of some of the benefits that are to reach them, they are not aware of those reaching them, the services provided by the Council. Those are my initial comments. I will ask the honourable Members if they have any comments.

HON. P.D. KUMAR.- Mr. Chairman, let us start with the last comment which was made by the CEO. There are so many sugar-producing countries around the world and the structure that we have at the moment is really the Colonial structure, and it has been carried forward over the years. It is not seen as a commercial business. We have the Sugar Cane Growers Council, the levy is paid by the Government, and you as the CEO as a public officer, which is an apolitical person representing the growers, that is what I understand. So in that situation, if you can throw some light, if other countries do not have this political angle into sugarcane, where it is simply the growers and the millers, let them do their business, and it should be all based on commercial principle, because that will only give maximum return to the farmers. However, from your presentation it appears that just by having an election and having councillors on the ground will improve, not only the morale, but also the production.

The statement you have made today will be assessed later by someone else, whether what you are saying is correct or not. My question to you is more on how other countries have evolved in the sugar sector, and looking at Sugar Cane Growers Council, how you can evolve so that you can give maximum return to the farmers. Maximum return meaning not necessarily because you are not giving any money to the farmers, because you are dependent on other institutions to fund as you are not a money-making organisation. That is a fact, and you should not be.

So how are you really helping the farmers on the ground, besides the distribution of the Government assistance, which you are doing very well, besides selling of cane knives, et cetera, which is excellent because it is good, whatever you are selling is of appropriate quality and value to the farmers. I have noted that there are other aspects where your assistance is given, like, for example, legal service. My question is, how has such an organisation evolved in other countries, and what would you do to make your organisation more effective?

MR. V. DUTT.- Yes, the levy is no longer being paid by the cane growers, it is being paid by the Government on behalf of the cane growers since 2016. The Sugar Cane Growers Council is a member of World Association Beet and Cane Growers and when we look at the global setup, the other cane-producing countries, almost all countries have a grower representative organisation.

Our neighbour, Australia, they have the Australian Cane Grower Council as well. I have been to other cane producing countries, almost all the countries have a grower representative, even Brazil has it. One of the core roles of the organisation, similar to the Council, is to protect and promote the grower interest and it is very critical. Yes, indeed, the councillors were very important then because they provided the support in terms of the motivation and morale enhancement.

Mr. Chairman, the constraint that the Council currently goes through is budgetary allocation. We are very thankful of the Government's gesture here and the budget, if it is increased because our request is always higher than what we get or receive, we would be able to bring in more expertise or engage more of our resource and substitute the councillors. Currently we have one officer who is on a mobile setup in each mill area. So, we have one in Labasa, one in Rarawai and one in Lautoka. When we look at the coverage and demand, it is very significant, and we are on a lower side in terms of our resource. We literally see a huge gap in that area. That is where the councillors used to come in and fill in the gaps then. So, should we have sufficient budget, honourable Members, we would be able to employ more people and reach out more to the growers with their demands. When we look at the history of the Sugar Cane Growers Council ….

HON. P.D. KUMAR.- You are saying that if you have more budget, who should be giving you the money?

MR. V. DUTT.- The government.

HON. P.D. KUMAR.- So, when you say that the government should assist and the government is assisting various organisations, even they are assisting almost all statutory organisations. So, when government assistance comes in, it is taxpayers money and that is where the Government Financial Management Rules apply. When a growers' organisation is independent, when you want independence, it means that you have to raise your own money, and everything should be funded by the growers. Then you are totally independent, you can say what you like. But if you are government-funded, your operations and everything else needs to be in line with the government policy, and I hope you understand the difference between government-funded institution which is accountable to the taxpayers of this country, as compared to being totally independent which means that your organisation is funded by the growers, you are raising revenue on your own and therefore, you can do whatever you like; that is the difference.

This is the reason why with Sugar Cane Growers Council and any other institution for that matter, we normally call them in the meetings such as this to probe and scrutinize their performance. What I am trying to indicate here is that you cannot be wanting total independence when you are dependent on the government grant. If you want total independence, it simply means that you have to raise your funds, and you should be employed by the growers and that is how it should be.

MR. V. DUTT.- Mr. Chairman, that was the precedence from 1984 to 2015, I would rather say. The growers used to fund the Sugar Cane Growers Council by way of levy, and we still have those provisions in the Sugar Industry Act. The budgetary allocation is the money that the Council is receiving. Honourable Member is very precise that the independence was there until 2015, I would rather say. So, from 2016, the Council has been receiving a budgetary allocation.

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On the same note, yes, with the independence that was prevalent in those days, the growers were able to invest and one of the investments is the iconic building that the Council has - the Sugar Cane Growers Council Building. That is a proven setup, the growers had the capacity and the ability to invest.

Once we go back to the election of the SCGC, maybe, the councillors, in time to come might want to go back to levy deduction which is precisely on the board of directors to decide on. There is no law, it is just a gesture from the government through a budgetary allocation.

HON. P.D. KUMAR.- So, Mr. Chairman, if you recall when we were in Labasa, Seaqaqa and other places, the growers rejected the idea of them paying the levy. After the election of the councillors, I think it is a good idea that if you are able to get the levy from the growers and run the organisation independent of government funding, that would be a great one - totally independent, because government also has to save some money for other things rather than paying for institutions. As much as we can talk to the growers, convince them and

I am sure your councillors will be able to do that, that would be a great opportunity for the growers to be independent. Whatever we are saying today is recorded. I am sure once you are gone, I am gone and the Committee is gone, someone else will pick it up from there and will be questioning the Growers Council.

HON. S.T. KOROILAVESAU.- Mr. Chairman, the Report that has been scrutinised has great implications on what is happening within the sugar industry today. I would bring our attention to what is now happening on the ground and the huge challenge faced by the sugar industry in itself.

I can see that the SCGC is playing a pivotal role in the relationship between the farmers and the millers, to ensure that there is consistent supply of cane. Then you have the National Farmers Union. To me, it seems that there is a double representation being carried out on the field, what is the relationship between SCGC and the National Farmers Union and what can you play to make sure that farmers harvest and ensure that cane production and supply to the mills are done at the proper time? In any case, if all of this falls apart, it is not only the growers but the country as a whole that will be affected.

MR. V. DUTT.- Through you, Mr. Chairman, firstly, we are not affiliated with the National Farmers Union. The SCGC is a legitimate representation by virtue of the Sugar Industry (Amendment) Act 2025. We are mandated and we are the only legal representative of the cane growers. There is no other institution in Fiji that represents sugar cane growers by virtue or through the Sugar Industry Act.

I would not want to talk more about the National Farmers Union but that is an institution that is on its own. I am not sure how it operates in terms of membership, fees, et cetera. The role of SCGC is very precise and we are into the day-to-day affairs of the cane growers. In relation to the current matter, which is the harvesting, our team is on the ground talking to growers. We assist growers in filling up the Memorandum of Gain Understanding (MOGA). This is one of the statutory requirements. The gang to fill in and it is a signature that shows that they are in readiness to harvest and deliver cane. Our utmost duty here is to encourage, enhance and empower growers to harvest cane, not only harvesting but in all affairs, that is, cultivation, disputes, grievances, et cetera.

We have the Sugar Industry Tribunal where we refer the grower matters and we work in close collaboration with Fiji Sugar Corporation, the miller, and other stakeholders in this regard. I am not sure whether I have answered your question, honourable Member, but in particular, I think with NFU, I am well-articulated on that matter and the role of Sugar Cane Growers Council in their day-to-day affairs of the growers.

HON. S.T. KOROILAVESAU.- Mr. Chairman, through you, I just wanted to follow up with a supplementary questions to that. I understand that you are the legal entity that represents farmers and coordinates the activities between the cane farmers and FSC Has there been any discussion, you said that the farmers have signed MOGA, I do not have the figures of how many in percentage have signed MOGA forms. Is there any possibility that that you can encourage farmers to harvest under the conditions that has been presented by government, to make sure that farmers understand their responsibilities under the present terms and that responsibility to the whole sugar industry in the country? Have you made any effort to coordinate that or at least give some comfort to the cane farmers so that this business of harvesting and production is being dealt with?

MR. V. DUTT.- Mr. Chairman, through you, yes, definitely. The situation is, it is slightly not in favour of growers when we look at the forecast price that was announced. The reason being is the global price, so it is determined by the global price. We all know that the global price is not very encouraging. We have been out on the ground, listening to growers and we understand the delivery payment, which is an important payment which allows growers to harvest and deliver cane.

So looking at inflation and other aspects affecting the prices, that has not been very encouraging. We have met the government, Ministry, the line Minister and other stakeholders and proposed to increase the delivery payment. Just yesterday, the delivery payment has been increased by another $5 from $42 to $47. There are some internal arrangements made, and it is public now.

We are very optimistic that harvesting will start because we feel that $47 is a figure or rate that farmers can work, which is harvesting and delivery. Harvesting reflects both manual and mechanically harvested cane. The mechanically harvested cane is operated through diesel, and we all know the fuel crisis. On the flip side, manually harvested cane has to do with cutters. There is a scarcity of labourers who also demand an increase due to inflation and cost of living. It is all justified, and we have sought growers' patience in this regard, and we have been guiding them. We understand the critics on the ground, however, that is not affecting the Sugar Cane Growers Council to pursue the matter. I am very thankful to the honourable Minister, a practical person with a clear understanding, he has been listening, and he is doing all his best to guide us along. We have been advising him along those lines. The delivery payment needs to be increased. On the same note, the guaranteed cane price which is $85, we also feel that the figure should increase. Even $85 is a rate which is a nine-year old rate, looking at the inflation, we have also written in that regard. That could be considered at a later stage.

HON. K.V. RAVU.- Mr. Chairman, through you, in regards to the budget, Sugar Cane Growers Council receives a budget from the government, is that correct? I will go into details on that. If so, could the Sugar Cane Growers Council provide details on the amount allocated?

MR. V. DUTT.- Mr. Chairman, the Sugar Cane Growers Council receives money on behalf of cane growers and in that particular year 2022, the Council received $600,000; now we are receiving $800,000 annually.

HON. K.V. RATU.- Supplementary question, could Sugar Cane Growers Council specify the exact amount of grant funding allocated to them from the state and provide clear breakdown on how these funds have been utilised.

MR. V. DUTT.- Mr. Chairman, through you, as I said earlier, the funds that we receive is not enough, now we receive about $800,000 annually and this absorbed into the operations which is the salaries, wages and the outreach programme that we adhere for our growers. The balance, there could be a subsequent question as to how we are maintaining or how we are sustaining ourselves. We are very thankful to the growers who have established or made an effort to establish the Cane Growers Building and that is giving us some revenue. We have a hall that is hired out. We have other tenants in the building. This year there has been some constraints because a major tenant which was the Sugar Cane Growers Fund have vacated the office from 1st January this year and that has given us some dent in terms of our income because they used to be our major tenant since the building was established.

Mr. Chairman, when we look at the market, we are unable to secure tenants at this point in time. We still have two offices vacant, and the hall is being hired out. So, that is the revenue that we are getting. There are some constraints with SK Trust, we are not receiving the dividends. We are the minority shareholder with South Pacific Fertilizers Limited (SPFL), 9.4 percent which is very insignificant. It used to be 40 percent during the days when SPFL was established. There is some compromise in terms of the revenue, the amount that the growers invested then and what we are getting. I am just trying to give an overview in terms of the income that we are getting. We are getting a small amount of dividend from South Pacific Fertilizers and we hire all our offices out in the district except for Seaqaqa. We have an office on our own and there are some plans to establish a commercial center in Seaqaqa just to help the township and create some tenancy or income through that. So, that is a long-term plan for the Council.

MR. CHAIMAN.- Just a follow up question on that. When you have $800,000 being given by the government to 10,000 farmers who are actively participating in the industry. The cost per farmer is around FJD$80, which is about USD$40. By international standard, it is still a bit high when you look at the cost per farmer.

HON. P.D. KUMAR.- I have a few questions, Mr. Chairman. One is definitely on the cost. How much more money do you need? I understand the Government is giving you $800,000. You are raising more than $100,000 as hall hire fees. Then you have management fees, cane knife sales, et cetera. How much more money do you need to run your operation the way you want?

MR. D. SINGH.- Honourable Member, we submit our budget based on the expenses that we incurred during the year. On the forecast, the amounts are different in different years, so we have been submitting our budget to the Ministry for allocation of grants.

HON. P.D. KUMAR.- I am asking, you must have made your submission this year, how much are you asking?

MR. CHAIRMAN.- We had requested for $2 million.

HON. P.D. KUMAR.- You have requested $2 million, but what is the rate of return for the Government? When the cane production is low, the farmers are exiting the farms, we have got aged farmers, and your request is $2 million. Do you think it is a right investment the government should be making in your institution?

MR. V. DUTT.- Mr. Chairman, through you, we request $2 million but we got less than $1 million, so there is a gap and, of course, we will not be able to achieve what we intend to achieve. When the institution such as SCGC which is the legal representative is not able to achieve what it intends to achieve then, of course, the national achievement will not be achieved.

HON. P.D. KUMAR.- Let me just do one correction. The unions that are operating in Fiji are also legal because when they form a union, they have to follow the law. It is not that you are the only legal entity. You are the legal entity under the Sugar Industry (Amendment)

Act 2025, but there are other legal entities as well under other legislations. I just wanted to do that correction.

My question now is on the management fee. If you can throw some light on what is this management fee of $57,401 and then on the other page, we have key management compensation, short-term benefit and FNPF. If you can tell us what are these all about?

MR. V. DUTT.- Through you, Mr. Chairman, I would like to give some background on the management fee. The welfare programme that the SCGC has for the entire active cane growers has been in the system for nine years, this is the tenth year - the micro bundle insurance that is being offered to all cane growers at a premium of $60. It used to be $52. It is offered through an insurance provider - FijiCare Insurance.

The management fee is basically the fee that we receive from the insurance provider because we do not charge any levy or fees to the growers while we provide these services. We are very proud to share the achievement, and the beauty about this product and it has got a cover for funeral, term life, house fire and permanent disability.

Farmers do not register for this initiative; they are automatically covered under this through the Sugar Industry (Amendment) Act 2025 and through the Sugar Industry Tribunal. The premium is deducted from their proceeds - source deduction, and it is remitted to SCGC and then we remit it to the insurance provider. The provider comes up with a management fee to SCGC and that is the management fee that we receive from the insurance provider.

HON. P.D. KUMAR.- I am just surprised that the insurance company is calling it a "management fee". There is a terminology in the insurance sector, and I am surprised why they are hiding it under management fee. It should be clearly stated what that fee is all about, rather than calling it management fee. There is no such thing as management fee in the insurance sector. We would like to see more transparency in that area when you are reporting.

The other one is key management compensation. What is that amount - $122,370.

MR. V. DUTT.- Mr. Chairman, and Members, the key management compensation is basically the salaries paid to the management team which includes the CEO, General Manager Operations, in-house Legal Counsel, and of course the Accountant. That is the compensation that has been terminologised – the salaries and wages that the management receives.

HON. P.D. KUMAR.- It is hard to believe that that is the salaries and wages because you are saying short-term benefit. If it is salaries and wages, it should be reported under salaries and wages, not as a short-term benefit. Can you explain what is the short-term benefit?

MR. D. SINGH.- These are actually differentiated by the auditing firms. These form part of salaries and wages but since is paid to management, it has been categorised as key management benefits.

HON. P.D. KUMAR.- You are not answering my question, you need to be very clear what is that benefit.

MR. D. SINGH.- We can get back to you in detail on what these actually are.

HON. P.D. KUMAR.- The issue that I find with your accounts, and I think you need to talk to your auditors, you need to re-do a chart of accounts to bring about more transparency in your reporting.

You cannot put things like management fee, management key, management compensation, et cetera. If it is salary plus the benefits, it should be together, but different items. I suggest that you go back to your accountant, and try and work out a much clearer chart of accounts, so that the reporting is transparent, and we can hold you accountable on the way you report. At the moment, it is all wishy-washy, which we cannot go deeper into our questioning, for example, right now, even though you are an accountant, you are not able to tell us what these benefits are. So I am surprised.

MR. D. SINGH.- To my knowledge, it is the key management personnel who are receiving salaries, wages, FNPF and all benefits.

HON. P.D. KUMAR.- In other words, that is the total amount. So is that not part of your salaries and wages, like all other....

MR. D. SINGH.- Honourable Member, that is how they are putting it in the notes. However, if the request is coming from you, we can always put it up with the auditors

HON. P.D. KUMAR.- Thank you for that. The other question I have is on SK Trust, which the CEO mentioned. I do understand that the Sugar Cane Growers Council has 70 percent shares in this SK Trust. As a major shareholder, what action have you taken against SK Trust or, you can say, against the Tribunal, regarding the transparency of this Trust? You cannot say that you do not have that kind of information because you are the shareholder, you should have all this information. Can you as the head of the organisation engage an auditor to get that account audited because you are the shareholder.

MR. V. DUTT.- Mr. Chairman, through you, I will just give a brief background on SK Trust. SK Trust is the Sugar House that we have in Lautoka. After the dissolution of Sugar Commission of Fiji, the assets of Sugar Commission were transferred to SK Trust. SK Trust is just a name, and the trustee is the tribunal. It is something that is of precarious for Sugar Cane Growers Council and the growers. Though we have 70 percent shares in the building, the Council has not been receiving dividends constantly. The building has undergone a major renovation last year. There is a deed in place and as per the deed there are some limitations. When we look at the tribunal, the tribunal is a structure that the industry has and we need to see how we can handle that matter because under the Sugar Industry Act, there are provisions that the decision of the tribunal cannot be challenged. This is the decision of the tribunal in terms of usage of SK Trust Fund for the operations of sugar industry tribunal. Ethically and morally, it does not sound in favor of the shareholders and we are pursuing the matter with the tribunal, we have sort some clarity on the utilisation of funds. The additional information, the SK Trust the account is audited and we feel that there are some lapse in that area as well, to be honest.

The whole intention for the Sugar Cane Growers Council is to get full ownership of that building. There is a 22-year arrangement and there are more years to go. One of the strategic plans that we have is to utilize the revenue from SK Trust for our cane growers in terms of the senior citizens, the growers who are set out for….

HON. P.D. KUMAR.- Let us stick to the SK Trust for the time being. I recall when we were doing the inquiry on the tribunal itself. We had made some recommendations in that area but since you are the 70 percent shareholder, have you taken any legal opinion? Have you decided to get the accounts audited? They can audit and show you, but what is stopping you from pursuing that further?

MR. V. DUTT.- Mr. Chairman, through you, the Council is intending to seek a legal opinion on that matter in terms of the usage of funds and also an independent audit that needs to be done to ascertain the discrepancies.

HON. P.D. KUMAR.- But you were not waiting for the Committee to tell you that. As the head of the organisation, this should have been done way back; it is important. It is about the growers. If you are representing the growers, their representation matters. If SK Trust is not giving you any revenue, it is questionable. We would like to then ask you that once you have done all that, if you can inform the secretariat that that particular work has been completed. There are two things – one is the accounts being audited and the legal opinion. Those two important things need to be communicated.

Now let us come to the Annual Reports. Now, we are in 2026 and we are talking about 2022 Annual Report. Why the Annual Reports are not submitted in a timely manner particularly when government funding is involved? If it was funded by the growers, it was not a matter for the government. But because the taxpayers' money is going in, if you can explain why the timely reports were not submitted to Parliament?

MR. V. DUTT.- Through you, Mr. Chairman, we have provided an update in terms of the reports that are pending. In the case of year 2024, the dates are scheduled for the audit to convene, which is the end of this year. For 2023, the audit work is pursuing at this point in time. For 2023, the report is in the last stages of printing. For 2024, the audit work is in progress at this point in time.

We take note that the 2022 report was slightly delayed due to some administrative challenges and one of the challenges was the accounting aspect in our institution which was the position of the accountant. There were some challenges in recruitment and even when recruitment was done, the incumbent decided to leave. There were some challenges and, fortunately, we got Deepak as our accountant, so things have progressed since.

HON. P.D. KUMAR.- Thank you for the update, but we would like to see that you submit timely annual reports. It is very crucial that we scrutinise your report as soon as you finish your financial year, when we go into the next financial year, we are able to reflect and do the scrutiny. You cannot be submitting reports that late, and that should be the key responsibility of the CEO - to produce timely reports because that will give an insight into how funds are used and whether we are getting value for money or not. That is the point that I wanted to raise with you.

Mr. Chairman, my last question is on land lease expiry, plus the way the annual report is structured. If you pick up annual reports, it is too much about the work that FSC has done or someone else has done. I would like to see that your annual report is talking about the work that you have done for the farmers, precisely the work you have done.

Your report is talking about the land lease expiry, which is very important from the grower perspective and that needs to be captured in detail in your annual report. You cannot say that in the next five years, leases will expire. Would you like to tell us how many leases will expire and in which year? If you are talking about the premiums, you are not even stating about the kind of premiums the farmers are paying and how are they paying? Are they taking loans and where are the loans from. So that kind of information is very important. It is equally important in terms of advocacy and how you liaise with iTLTB for lease renewal, et cetera. That should the major component of your report, that is very, very crucial that you give more details on that particular aspect.

You have mentioned SDGs in your Report. We would like to see a breakdown on youth as well – how many young farmers are coming on board, because if our problem is aged farmers, then we would like to see more youth farmers coming on board, so if such data can be provided in detail.

MR. CHAIRMAN.- Mr. Dutt, do you have any comments on the issue raised by honourable Kumar?

MR. V. DUTT.- Yes, we take note of the comments made by honourable Kumar.

MR. CHAIRMAN.- I would like to add on what honourable Kumar has raised with regards to government assistance. There is a lot of government assistance provided to the industry. What sort of impact has this assistance made? When we were going around the country talking to farmers, we noted the high expectation from government for production to increase, unfortunately things have not increased to the expectation of the taxpayers' who are putting the money to run the industry. As a farm organisation, how do you ensure that farmers are adequately responding to the support now provided by government? The Ministry of Sugar provides substantial amount of funds to the farmers to boost their production, unfortunately, we have not had a good response.

MR. V. DUTT.- Mr. Chairman, thank you for the observation and comments. We have provided some level of feedback and the details of government programmes provided to our farmers. We will try to improve on the reporting structure and the details as alluded to by the honourable Member and you as well, Mr. Chairman.

The feedback from the growers is very critical in terms of the government support programmes reaching them. We understand there are challenges and what we would want to foster is the shared responsibility approach. We want to ensure that the growers are equally accountable for the programmes or handouts that they receive. The bottom line is to move away from this culture of handouts because that has greatly weakened the stamina and the appetite of the growers in terms of the ability to do more and better.

We are also challenged with the weather constraints and climate catastrophes that we encounter. Those are some of the limitations that pulls the industry down because we are more based on rainfed. The industry does not have a dedicated irrigation setup. In regard to the climatic issues, the Council have introduced the parametric insurance which provides some sort of relief. It is very nominal, but it is something that can be looked into greater prospects in time to come. There are some discussions along those lines. We are trying to bundle up the welfare programme and the parametric insurance into a very comprehensive crop insurance package of that nature so that growers are covered in all aspects in any of the hardship that they may encounter.

As I mentioned in my earlier comment, the morale issue is something that is bringing them down, along with age and the support end of the growers are very vulnerable, I would rather say. The Council will want to emphasise more in that area in time to come so that we would be able to uplift the growers.

The other area that the Council is contemplating is the labour migrant. There are some regulatory requirements which is the welfare of those labourers out in the field, in the case of uncertainties or any unforeseen circumstances.

The Council is pursuing the matter with the Ministry of Labour and Immigration because there is a demand and a need for expertise in terms of consistent labour. So the mindset of the farmers when we have a full-time engaged migrant worker is the full-time wages for 12 months, continuously three years. We want to set up a model which is the diversification in a mixed farming approach so that farmers have a continuous income for 12 months. That would be the appetite for the farmers to cater the living expenses of having a full-time labourer.

MR. CHAIRMAN.- Talking about the morale of the farmers, I had some experience when I visited some farmers a few weeks back in Ba. The farmers are quite keen to go on with their life if someone is introducing them another crop that will enhance their livelihood. We were going around the Ba and Nadi areas introducing cowpeas to farmers, 100 farmers in Ba, 100 farmers in Nadi and in Sigatoka and I have seen that farmers are quite keen to get on. When telling them, "in a quarter acre of cowpeas, you will get $10,000 and with a market already being established." Farmers are quite keen get on with those. There was one farmer in Ba, he was ploughing five acres. He wanted to get into cowpeas in a big way. We were in Seaqaqa, the same thing was coming out. They were looking at other crops and farmers were saying, "FSC came to us, they told us to plant watermelon and other crops, but they were not providing the markets." When we come to support farmers, we should be providing them with a whole package, the market, the assistance in terms of ploughing the field, fertilizers, et cetera. So, I am sure that farmers out are ready for someone to come in with new crops and assist them enhance their livelihood and opportunities.

MR. V. DUTT.- Mr. Chairman, that is one of the plans that we have after the harvesting of 2026 season. They want to introduce the cowpeas for farmers. We understand that that is going out very aggressively and that is a way of intercropping approach and other subsidiary crops as well.

MR. CHAIRMAN.- Honourable Members, we have come to the end of another session. On behalf of the Economic Affairs Committee, we would like to sincerely thank you, Mr. Dutt and your team for your time and availability this morning to meet up with the team. If we have any further queries, we will be contacting you.

The Committee adjourned at 10.32 a.m.

ANNEX 4

SITE VISITS/MEETINGS – NORTHERN & WESTERN

EAC Programme – Northern Division (3–5 June 2026)

Date	Time	Activity	Location
Wednesday, 3 June 2026	8:50 AM	Pick-up from Labasa Airport and travel to Savusavu	Labasa Airport
Wednesday, 3 June 2026	10.30AM	Meeting with the Sugar Cane Farmers/Growers	Seqaqa, Dos Office
Wednesday, 3 June 2026	1:00 PM	Meeting with Hoteliers / Savusavu Tourism Association	Grand Epic Hotel Conference Room
Wednesday, 3 June 2026	2:30 PM	Meeting with Na-Vualiku Programme	Level 3, JKS Building, Main Street
Wednesday, 3 June 2026	3:45 PM	Assembly for shuttle transfer to Nawi Island	Waitui Marina
Wednesday, 3 June 2026	4:00 PM	Site visit meeting	Nawi Island
Thursday, 4 June 2026	8:30 AM	Meeting with Savusavu Chamber of Commerce	Savusavu Chamber Office
Thursday, 4 June 2026	12:30 PM	Meeting with Labasa Chamber of Commerce & Macuata Tourism Association	Hotel North Pole Boardroom

Friday, 5 June 2026	10:00 AM	Meeting with FSC Officials	Fiji Sugar Corporation Boardroom
Friday, 5 June 2026	11:30 AM	Meeting with NDP	Commissioner's Boardroom
Friday, 5 June 2026	12.30PM	Meeting with the Sugar Cane Farmers/Growers	FSC Boardroom
Friday, 5 June 2026	4:35 PM	Drop-off for return flight to Suva	Labasa Airport

EAC Programme – Western Division (7 - 11 June 2026)

Sunday, 7 June 2026

Time	Activity	Venue	Location	Notes
2:30 pm	Pick-up begins	Nausori	Nausori	Travel preparation
3:30 pm	Departure to Rakiraki	—	Nausori to Rakiraki	Road travel
Evening	Check-in	Tanoa Rakiraki Hotel	Vaileka, Rakiraki, Ra, Fiji	Accommodation
7:00 pm	Meeting with Tourism Stakeholders	Nanumi Au Eco Tourism	Rakiraki, Ra, Fiji	Tourism Fiji Annual Report

Monday, 8 June 2026

Time	Activity	Venue	Location	Notes
10:30 am	Site visit/meeting	Dream View Villas	Volivoli Road, Rakiraki, Ra, Fiji	Tourism Fiji Annual Report
11:45 am	Site visit/meeting	Duadua Beach Resort **AND** Site Tours to Air BnBs around.	Volivoli Area, Rakiraki, Ra, Fiji	Tourism Fiji Annual Report
4:30 pm	Stakeholder Meeting	Smart Apparel Board Room	Vaileka, Rakiraki, Ra, Fiji	RA Chamber of Commerce, Business Houses, RA Tourism Association

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Tuesday, 9 June 2026

Time	Activity	Venue	Location	Notes
10:30 am	Site meeting	Fiji Sugar Corporation (FSC) HQ	Rarawai, Ba, Fiji	FSC 2024–2025 Annual Report

11:30 am	Site meeting	Sugar Cane Growers Council HQ	Rarawai, Ba, Fiji	SCGC 2022 Annual Report
1:00 pm	Site meeting	South Pacific Fertilizer Office	Lautoka, Fiji	FSC & SCGC Reports
3:00 pm	Site meeting	First Landing Beach Resort & Villas	Vuda Point, Lautoka, Fiji	Tourism Fiji Annual Report (with First Landing & Vuda Marina stakeholders)

Wednesday, 10 June 2026

Time	Activity	Venue	Location	Notes
8.30 am	Site Meeting	Fiji Airways	Fiji Airways	Tourism Fiji Annual Report
9:30 am	Site meeting	Denarau Marina Conference Room Marinas, Commercial Boat Operators and Yacht Agents.	Denarau Island, Nadi, Fiji	Tourism Fiji Annual Report

12:00 pm	Site meeting	Sheraton Fiji Golf & Beach Resort (Conference Room)	Denarau Island, Nadi, Fiji	Meeting with Marriott Hotel Group – Tourism Fiji Annual Report
2:40 pm	Site meeting	Tourism Fiji Boardroom	Nadi, Fiji	Tourism Fiji Annual Report

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Thursday, 11 June 2026

Time	**Activity**	**Venue**	**Location**	**Notes**
10:30 am	Site meeting	Shangri-La Yanuca Island Resort	Yanuca Island, Coral Coast, Fiji	Tourism Fiji Annual Report
12:00 pm	Site meeting	Hideaway Beach Resort	Korolevu, Coral Coast, Fiji	Tourism Fiji Annual Report
1:15 pm	Site meeting	Tambua Sands Beach Resort – Coral Coast Initiatives	Korolevu, Coral Coast, Fiji	Tourism Fiji Annual Report

Seaqaqa – Meeting with Cane Growers (3 June 2026)

The Committee, during its site visit to the Seaqaqa area, met with cane growers and noted the following concerns and recommendations:

- The Committee noted concerns regarding ineffective representation by the Sugar Cane Growers Council (SCGC), with growers indicating that the Council is not adequately advocating for their interests and lacks sufficient consultation with farmers.

- Growers raised complaints regarding bulk purchasing practices, including concerns about inflated prices of agricultural supplies.

- The Committee noted concerns about the poor quality of supplied goods, including staple items such as rice.

- It was noted that fertilizer distribution systems were generally satisfactory and functioning adequately.

- The Committee noted delays in the announcement of forecast cane prices, which adversely affect growers' planning and financial decision-making.

- Growers highlighted a steady decline in cane production and the broader deterioration of the sugar industry.

- Concerns were raised regarding declining sugar prices and the lack of transparency within the sugar market.

- The Committee noted requests from growers for the introduction of fuel rebates to assist with transportation and harvesting operations.

- Labour shortages and high fuel costs were identified as major challenges impacting productivity and profitability.

- The Committee noted concerns regarding delays in cane payments, contributing to financial strain on farmers.

- Issues were raised concerning the lack of mechanisation support and the absence of subsidies for harvesters.

- Growers expressed dissatisfaction with the lack of consultation and communication from SCGC and other relevant institutions.

- The Committee noted concerns regarding outdated operational methodologies within the sugar industry.

- Overall, the Committee noted that cane price instability and high fuel costs remain the primary issues affecting cane growers in the area.

Labasa – Cane Growers Meeting at FSC (4 June 2026)

The Committee, during its site visit to the Labasa area, met with cane growers and noted the following concerns and recommendations:

- The Committee noted concerns regarding delayed cane payments and lack of transparency in pricing mechanisms, which continue to affect farmers' financial stability.

- Concerns were raised regarding the performance of the Sugar Cane Growers Council (SCGC), particularly its limited consultation and engagement with farmers.

- Growers highlighted challenges relating to rising fuel costs, an ageing farmer population, and operational inefficiencies within the sector.

- The Committee noted concerns regarding poor communication and ineffective support programmes provided to growers by relevant institutions.

- The Committee noted that improved governance structures, enhanced transparency, and strengthened farmer support systems are critical to addressing the issues faced by cane growers.

Sugar Cane Growers Council (SCGC) – Tuesday, 9th June 2026

The Committee, during its consultation with the Sugar Cane Growers Council (SCGC), noted the following concerns and recommendations:

- The Committee noted a decline in farmer morale and participation, with a reduction in the number of active cane growers, reflecting broader structural challenges within the industry.

- Concerns were raised regarding increasing production costs, reduced profitability, and uncertainty, which continue to discourage farmer engagement in the sugar industry.

- The Committee noted concerns regarding transportation challenges, particularly the proposed closure of railway lines and the shift to road transport, resulting in higher costs for farmers.

- It was noted that existing transport support mechanisms, such as conversion allowances, are outdated and insufficient to address rising operational costs.

- The Committee noted proposals to improve transport efficiency, including increased utilisation of rail systems through alternative methods such as cane bins.

- Concerns were raised regarding communication gaps between the Council, industry institutions, and farmers, particularly on matters such as pricing, deductions, and policy changes.

- The Committee noted that limited information sharing has contributed to reduced transparency and understanding among growers.

- Concerns were raised regarding institutional inefficiencies and duplication of roles between key industry bodies, resulting in increased overhead costs and reduced effectiveness.

- The Committee noted concerns regarding financial challenges faced by farmers, including debt burdens and limited access to suitable financial support structures.

- The Committee noted that current sugar pricing remains insufficient to sustain farmers, with concerns regarding global market conditions and low returns.

- It was noted that stakeholders are advocating for improved pricing mechanisms, increased guaranteed prices, and targeted government support such as fuel subsidies.

- The Committee noted the need for policy and legislative reforms to address outdated frameworks governing the sugar industry.

- Concerns were raised regarding fragmentation of industry coordination following the removal of key institutions, resulting in reduced transparency and alignment across the sector.

- The Committee noted recommendations to strengthen coordination mechanisms, including the establishment of a multi-stakeholder marketing framework to improve information sharing and decision-making.

- Overall, the Committee noted that the sugar industry requires urgent and comprehensive reforms, including improved governance, enhanced communication, and targeted policy interventions to restore sustainability and farmer confidence.

South Pacific Fertilizers (SPF) – Tuesday, 9th June 2026

The Committee, during its consultation with South Pacific Fertilizers Ltd, noted the following concerns and observations:

- The Committee noted that South Pacific Fertilizers Ltd plays a critical role in the sugar industry through fertilizer blending and distribution, with the majority of its operations supporting sugarcane farmers.

- It was noted that the company remains heavily dependent on the sugar industry for revenue, with limited diversification into non-sugar sectors.

- The Committee noted that the company faces significant challenges due to its reliance on imported raw materials, making it highly vulnerable to global supply chain disruptions and increasing international costs.

- Concerns were raised regarding rising global fuel prices, which have significantly increased shipping, logistics, and overall input costs.

- The Committee noted additional constraints arising from international export restrictions on key fertilizer inputs, requiring the company to source from alternative markets at higher costs.

- Concerns were raised regarding increasing domestic fuel prices, which have substantially raised fertilizer distribution costs and affected delivery operations.

- The Committee noted challenges with third-party cartage services, including reduced availability of contractors and increasing demands for higher delivery rates.

- It was noted that the current supply chain model, where fertilizer orders are processed through FSC and payments are recovered over an extended period, creates cash flow pressures for the company.

- The Committee noted that delayed cost recovery for fertilizers and weedicides impacts the company's liquidity and its ability to sustain continuous supply.

- Concerns were raised regarding the company's reliance on government subsidies to maintain affordable fertilizer prices for farmers.

- It was noted that without continued government support, fertilizer prices would increase significantly, placing additional financial burden on growers.

- The Committee noted that diversification into other products such as weedicides and rice has provided limited financial relief and is insufficient to offset subsidy dependence.

- The Committee noted measures being implemented by the company, including diversifying supply sources, maintaining stock availability, and reviewing logistics arrangements to sustain operations.

- It was noted that global market volatility and geopolitical factors continue to create uncertainty in fertilizer supply and pricing.

- Overall, the Committee noted that while South Pacific Fertilizers Ltd continues to play a vital role in supporting the agricultural sector, addressing supply chain vulnerabilities, cost pressures, and financial sustainability will be critical to ensuring continued support for sugarcane farmers.