



STANDING COMMITTEE ON ECONOMIC AFFAIRS

Review Report of the Sugar Cane Growers Council Annual Report 2022



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Table of Acronyms

CEO	Chief Executive Officer
FJD	Fijian dollar
iTLTB	iTaukei Land Trust Board
KPIs	Key Performance Indicators
SCGC	Sugar Cane Growers Council
SDG	Sustainable Development Goals
UNCDF	United Nation Capital Development Fund

Chairperson's Foreword

On behalf of the Standing Committee on Economic Affairs, I am pleased to present this Review Report on the Sugar Cane Growers Council (SCGC) Annual Report 2022. This report reflects the Committee's assessment of the Council's performance, governance, accountability, and service delivery, based on a review of the Annual Report, written submissions, oral evidence, and consultations undertaken during the inquiry.

The Committee's review was undertaken in recognition of the important role that the SCGC plays as a statutory body representing sugarcane growers. Given the significance of the sugar industry to Fiji's rural economy and the public resources entrusted to the Council, it is essential that the SCGC demonstrates strong governance, transparency, and accountability in carrying out its statutory functions.

While the Annual Report outlines a range of activities and industry developments during 2022, the Committee identified a number of areas where reporting and accountability mechanisms require improvement. Most notably, the Committee found that the Annual Report was tabled significantly later than required under the Sugar Industry Act, limiting timely Parliamentary scrutiny and oversight. The Committee also noted shortcomings in performance reporting, with insufficient information provided on the Council's achievements against its own Key Performance Indicators and limited evidence demonstrating the outcomes of its activities.

The Committee further observed gaps in reporting on matters that are critical to the sustainability of the sugar industry. These include the absence of comprehensive data on lease renewal outcomes, demographic trends within the grower community, youth participation, succession planning, and the involvement of farming cooperatives. Such information is necessary to support effective policy development and informed decision-making for the future of the sector.

The Committee also raised concerns regarding the lack of transparency surrounding the SK Trust, particularly the absence of information on its financial performance, governance arrangements, and income distributions despite SCGC's substantial beneficial interest. In addition, concerns expressed by growers regarding service delivery, consultation, and responsiveness highlight the need for the Council to strengthen its engagement with the people it is mandated to represent.

In response to these findings, the Committee has made a series of recommendations aimed at strengthening governance, improving financial transparency, enhancing performance reporting, and increasing accountability to both Parliament and growers. These recommendations include enforcing compliance with statutory reporting timelines, undertaking an independent audit of the SK Trust, improving financial disclosures, reporting on lease outcomes and grower demographics, and commissioning an independent grower satisfaction survey.

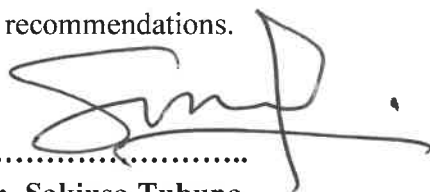
The Committee believes that the implementation of these recommendations will contribute to more effective oversight, better-informed decision-making, and improved service delivery within the

sugar sector. Greater transparency and accountability are essential to ensuring that public resources are used efficiently and that the interests of sugarcane growers remain at the centre of the Council's work.

I extend my appreciation to the representatives of the Sugar Cane Growers Council for their cooperation and openness during the review process.

I also acknowledge the valuable contributions of my fellow Committee Members - Hon. Premila Kumar, Hon. Semi Koroilavesau, Hon. Alipate Tuicolo, Hon. Kalaveti Ravu and secretariat for their support in producing this report.

On behalf of the Standing Committee on Economic Affairs, I commend this Review Report to Parliament and respectfully urge all Hon. Members of this august House to take note of its findings and recommendations.


.....
Hon. Sakiusa Tubuna
Chairperson

1.0 Committee Membership

Pursuant to Standing Order 109(2)(a) the Standing Committee on Economic Affairs is mandated to look into matters related to economic development, finance, banking and taxation. The members of the Standing Committee on Economic Affairs and are as follows:



Hon. Sakiusa Tubuna
Chairperson



Hon. Premila Kumar
Deputy Chairperson



Hon. Semi Koroilavesau
Member



Hon. Alipate Tuicolo
Member



Hon. Kalaveti Ravu
Member

1.1 Committee Secretariat

The Committee is supported by a team of Parliament Officers serving as the Committee Secretariat. These officers are appointed and delegated by the Secretary-General to Parliament under Standing Order 15(3)(i). The Secretariat team consists of the following Parliament officers:

- Ms. Marica Tuisoso – Senior Committee Clerk
- Ms. Awantika Raj – Deputy Committee Clerk

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2.0 Introduction

The Standing Committee on Economic Affairs ('the Committee'), was referred the Sugar Cane Growers Council Annual Report 2022 on 28th April 2025, pursuant to Standing Order 38(2) of the Standing Orders of the Parliament of Fiji. The Committee was mandated to review these Annual Reports and table its findings to Parliament.

In line with its mandate, the Committee undertook a detailed examination of the report and now presents its findings and observations to Parliament.

2.1 Procedure and Programme

- 2.1.1 The Committee began its review of the Annual Report in May 2026. The review process was agreed upon by consensus among the Committee Members and involved a comprehensive and systematic examination of the reports.
- 2.1.2 Before the formal meetings, the Members of the Committee read and reviewed the 2022 Annual Report. During the Committee deliberations, Members analysed the content of the report, identified key issues, and engaged in in-depth discussions to evaluate the findings. These discussions led to the formulation of the key questions and identification of issues requiring further clarification.
- 2.1.3 The Committee undertook site visits to selected operational sites of the Council in the Western Division to gain first-hand insight into its operations and service delivery.

2.2 Oral Evidence Received

- 2.2.1 The Committee received a briefing and public submission from the Sugar Cane Growers Council on 12 June 2026.

2.3 Written Evidence Received

- 2.3.1 A written submission was received from SCGC in response to the questions issued by the Committee.

3.0 Committee Deliberations and Analysis

3.1 Background

The Sugar Cane Growers Council is a statutory body established to represent and safeguard the interests of sugarcane growers. It plays a central role in advocating for farmers' welfare, promoting sustainable cane production, and facilitating communication between growers, industry stakeholders, and government. The Council is responsible for policy engagement, provision of advisory support, and ensuring that growers' concerns are addressed within the broader framework of the sugar industry. Through its representative structure and operational functions, SCGC contributes to the development, stability, and long-term viability of the sugar sector.

3.2 Table 1: Summary of SCGC Annual Report 2022 Performance and Achievements

Area	Key Performance and Achievements	Committee Observation
Cane Price Achievement	Growers received a final cane price of \$91.38 per tonne , exceeding the forecast price of \$66.92 per tonne . Payments were made through a structured system consisting of initial, second, third, fourth and final payments.	The Committee noted that the higher-than-expected cane price provided much-needed financial support to growers during a period of rising costs and climate-related challenges.
Mechanisation Progress	Mechanical harvesting accounted for 36.1% of total cane harvested, equivalent to 511,331 tonnes . The harvester fleet increased to 98 machines across the industry.	The Committee noted that mechanisation continued to play an important role in addressing labour shortages and improving harvesting efficiency in accessible flat cane-growing areas.
Grower Support Services	SCGC facilitated weedicide distribution valued at approximately \$3.63 million , supplied around 1,700 cane knife sets , and provided legal services to 1,021 growers covering lease renewals, farm	The Committee noted that SCGC continued to provide essential operational, legal and farm support services that assisted growers in

	agreements, land transfers, powers of attorney and general legal advice.	managing both agricultural and land tenure matters.
Cane Access Roads Support	Government-funded maintenance covered more than 3,400 kilometres of cane access roads, with SCGC monitoring works and advocating for road improvements.	The Committee noted that improvements to cane access roads enhanced transportation efficiency and reduced disruptions during harvesting and cane delivery operations.
Grower Welfare and Insurance Programmes	Through the Micro Bundled Insurance Scheme, 263 families received payouts amounting to \$602,500 . In addition, 202 growers enrolled in the Parametric Insurance Programme.	The Committee noted that insurance initiatives strengthened financial protection for growers and contributed to greater resilience against climate and livelihood risks.
Land Tenure and Lease Advocacy	SCGC engaged with the iTaukei Land Trust Board (iTLTB), Government agencies and other stakeholders on lease renewals, lease premium costs and land tenure security matters.	The Committee noted the importance of SCGC's advocacy role. SCGC must report on lease renewal and expiry of leases in the Annual Report.
Grower Consultation and Community Engagement	SCGC conducted consultations with the growers in all farming areas. The consultation was on planting programmes, crop development, harvesting and transportation challenges, cooperative development and Government assistance programmes. Financial literacy and loan management awareness programmes were also delivered in partnership with the Reserve Bank of Fiji and United Nation Capital Development Fund (UNCDF).	The Committee noted that the report did not disclose the number of meetings conducted, number of growers participated and the outcome of the meetings.

4.0 Committee Findings

The Committee conducted a thorough review of SCGC 2022 Annual Report and public submission from SCGC. The following findings are presented for the attention of Parliament:

4.1 Delay in Tabling of Annual Report

The financial year ended on 31 July 2022, with the audit completed on 27 June 2023. However, the report was not presented to Parliament until 19 September 2024, twenty-six (26) months after the end of the financial year and 15 months after audit completion. The transmittal letter does not provide any justification for this delay. This is inconsistent with Section 54(3) of the Sugar Industry Act, which requires timely submission of annual reports, and has undermined the Committee's ability to effectively scrutinise an entity responsible for managing public funds and delivering services to over 10,000 growers and other stakeholders.

4.2 Limited Reporting on SCGC's Achievements

SCGC has been reporting the work undertaken by other stakeholders in the sugar industry but fail to report on their achievement against the KPIs.

4.3 Limited Reporting on Lease Renewal Outcomes

The 2022 report highlights lease premium costs and challenges faced by growers in securing finance for lease renewal and acknowledges engagement with the iTaukei Land Trust Board (iTLTB). However, it does not provide outcome data such as the number of leases renewed, lost, premium rates applied, or the impact on affected growers. This limits accountability and reduces the value of SCGC's advocacy role.

4.4 Lack of Data on Demographics and Succession Planning

While the report notes that most farmers are over 50 years old and that younger people are leaving rural areas, it does not provide supporting data such as age profiles, youth participation, or succession planning outcomes. SCGC should also report on the number of cooperatives operating and their involvement in formation of new cooperatives. Similarly, although women farmers are referenced in the report, there is no gender-disaggregated data on participation, with low representation evident in insurance uptake (10.9% of parametric registrants).

4.5 Lack of Clarity on SK Trust Income and Debt Recovery

SCGC is a 70% beneficiary of the SK Trust, which holds assets of the dissolved Sugar Commission with net assets of FJD 862,192 (2019 data). However, no income has been distributed since 2019, and there is no disclosure of the Trust's financial performance, governance arrangements, or distribution decisions.

4.6 Grower Concerns on SCGC Service Delivery

Consultations with growers in the Northern Division indicate dissatisfaction with SCGC regarding service delivery, consultation frequency, and responsiveness to grower issues.

5.0 Committee Recommendations

The Committee makes the following recommendations to enhance SCGC's performance, transparency, and accountability to Parliament and to the people of Fiji:

5.1 Compliance with Timely Reporting

The Ministry should enforce Section 54(3) of the Sugar Industry Act to ensure annual reports are tabled within six months after the end of the financial year. A 15-month post-audit delay, despite audit completion on 27 June 2023, is unacceptable.

5.2 Report on the Achievements against the KPIs

SCGC need to focus on reporting on their achievements against the KPIs rather than reporting on the work undertaken by other sugar stakeholders.

5.3 Independent Audit of SK Trust

SCGC should commission an independent audit of the SK Trust, given its public significance, SCGC's 70% beneficial interest, and net assets of FJD \$862,862 (2019 data). The governance and administration of the Trust should also be reviewed for transparency and potential conflicts of interest.

5.4 Improved Financial Transparency

SCGC should introduce a detailed chart of accounts that disaggregates expenditure by function, including district operations, legal services, input distribution, grower consultations, advocacy, and administration, to ensure clearer accountability of public funds. The current consolidated presentation obscures whether the Government's FJD \$600,000 grant is being used efficiently for frontline service delivery or administrative overhead

5.5 Mandatory Lease Outcome Reporting

Future reports must include comprehensive lease data, including total active leases, renewals, losses, upcoming expiries (1, 3, and 5 years), and average premium rates by district to properly assess outcomes of SCGC's engagement with iTLTB.

5.6 Mandatory Demographic Reporting

All future SCGC Annual Reports must include:

- 5.6.1 age profile data for active growers (under 30, 30-40, 40-50, 50-60, 60+);
- 5.6.2 number of new growers entering the industry during the year by age group;
- 5.6.3 number of growers who exited during the year by reason (death, retirement, lease loss, disengagement); and
- 5.6.5 specific youth programme outcomes to support effective planning and policy response.

5.7 Strengthening Microinsurance Uptake

SCGC should implement targeted outreach to increase parametric microinsurance uptake in high-risk districts such as Labasa and Seaqaqa, with a minimum target of 200 registrations per district within two years. Product design should also be reviewed with relevant partners to improve disaster response effectiveness.

5.8 Independent Grower Satisfaction Survey

SCGC should commission an independent survey to assess grower satisfaction and service delivery performance, with findings used to improve responsiveness, consultation, and overall effective service delivery.

6.0 Sustainable Development Goals

The Committee noted that, unlike the previous review period where no Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) were captured, the SCGC Annual Report 2022 demonstrates alignment with several SDGs through its programs and activities.

- 6.1 **SDG 1: No Poverty** by ensuring fair and stable income for cane growers through improved cane prices, financial assistance, and insurance schemes aimed at protecting farmers from economic shocks.
- 6.2 **SDG 2: Zero Hunger**, as SCGC promotes sustainable agricultural practices, improved productivity, and access to farming inputs to enhance crop yields and long-term food security.
- 6.3 **SDG 5: Gender Equality**, the Council supports inclusive participation and empowerment of women farmers, particularly through financial protection initiatives such as microinsurance schemes.
- 6.4 **SDG 6: Clean Water and Sanitation** by encouraging efficient water use and improved irrigation and soil management practices within the sugarcane farming sector.
- 6.5 **SDG 8: Decent Work and Economic Growth** by promoting fair working conditions, providing training and financial literacy programs, and contributing to economic resilience within the rural agricultural sector.
- 6.6 **SDG 13: Climate Action**, including the adoption of climate-resilient farming techniques, promotion of crop diversification, and implementation of parametric insurance schemes to mitigate disaster risks.
- 6.7 **SDG 15: Life on Land** through advocating for responsible land use, improving soil health, and addressing land tenure issues to ensure sustainable agricultural practices and environmental protection.

7.0 Conclusion

The Committee's review of the Sugar Cane Growers Council Annual Report 2022 highlighted key governance, transparency, and service delivery issues that require urgent attention. While acknowledging the Council's continued role in supporting growers under challenging conditions, the Committee identified significant concerns relating to delayed reporting, limited financial disclosure, inadequate data reporting, and weak oversight of associated entities.

Through its review process, the Committee has emphasised the need for strengthened accountability, improved reporting standards, and more responsive engagement with growers. The recommendations put forward are intended to address these gaps, enhance operational effectiveness, and ensure that the Council delivers meaningful and transparent outcomes for the benefit of Fiji's sugarcane growers and the wider public.

8.0 Committee Members' Signatures

We, the undersigned Members of the Standing Committee on Economic Affairs, agree with the contents of this report.

.....
 H. Satrio Tjahjono

Hon. Sakiusa Tubuna
Chairperson

[Handwritten signature]

Hon. Premila Kumar
Deputy Chairperson


Hon. Semi Koroilayesau
Member

Hon. Semi Koroilayesau
Member



Hon. Alipate Tuicolo
Member

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Hon. Kalaveti Ravu
Member

15/7/2026

9.0 Annexure

Published evidence

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

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