

CELEBRATING WOMEN IN PARLIAMENT

1966 – 2026



PARLIAMENT OF THE
REPUBLIC OF FIJI



CWP

COMMONWEALTH
WOMEN
PARLIAMENTARIANS

A network of the Commonwealth Parliamentary Association



A PROJECT BY THE COMMONWEALTH WOMEN
PARLIAMENTARIANS (CWP) FIJI GROUP

FOREWORD: SPEAKER OF FIJI PARLIAMENT – HON. FILIMONE JITOKO



I am honoured to present to you the first-ever booklet highlighting women's participation and leadership in parliament from 1966 to the present day. This booklet contains profiles of all women members of parliament (MPs), including members of the former Senate.

This initiative is undertaken by the Commonwealth Women Parliamentarians (CWP) Fiji Group and aims to support the mission of the Commonwealth Parliamentary Association's (CPA) CWP network.

Women's equal participation and leadership in political and public life are vital to achieving the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). The CWP network works to encourage more women to enter politics, as women are still underrepresented in parliaments around the world. The current global average proportion of women in parliament is around 27.5 percent, with shares in the Pacific Region at 24.7 percent and in Fiji at a low 9.1 percent.

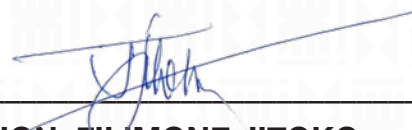
The Parliament of Fiji and the CWP Fiji Group support and advocate for SDG 5 ("Achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls"). One of the key aims of SDG 5 is target 5.5: "Ensure women's full and effective participation and equal opportunities for leadership at all levels of decision-making".

The CWP Fiji Group supports measures to increase women's representation in parliament by 30 percent following the 2026 general election, and the Group continues to empower women across the country at all levels.

Women have the ability to bring change into the political discourse and to introduce diverse ideas, priorities, knowledge and expertise into current political paradigms.

To ensure that women's voices are heard, and that their issues are fairly recognised, it is essential to have women legislators, who are more likely to address women's interests.

This booklet shares the achievements of all women leaders and politicians from the past to the present day. The hope is that it will inspire and empower more women to participate in political and parliamentary leadership at all levels.



HON. FILIMONE JITOKO

Speaker of the Parliament of the Republic of Fiji

MESSAGE FROM THE CHAIRPERSON OF THE CWP – FIJI GROUP : HON. LENORA QEREQERETABUA



officially established under the CPA Constitution in 2004. The CWP chairperson also became a member of the CPA Executive Committee.

The CWP represents over 3,000 women parliamentarians in over 180 Commonwealth national and sub-national parliaments across the nine Regions of the CPA.

As a network of women members of CPA parliaments and legislatures, the CWP's mission is to promote the representation of women in CPA branches and women's full and equal participation in political and parliamentary leadership at all levels.

The CWP network was established as an informal group in 1989 by women delegates during the annual Commonwealth Parliamentary Association (CPA) conference. The CWP was formally recognised by the CPA in 1996 and

The CWP helps women in parliament to be more effective, advocates for a gender perspective in parliamentary processes, encourages women to enter parliament, and supports the development of more gender-sensitive parliaments. The CWP





Fiji Group was established in May 2019 as an informal group of women parliamentarians in Fiji. As of 1 January 2026, there are five women MPs in the Parliament of Fiji, with women's representation equating to 9.1 percent of seats.

The CWP Fiji Group aims to encourage and advocate for more women's representation in the Parliament of Fiji, with a view to increasing the proportion of women MPs to 30 percent following the 2026 general election. We work to inspire women from all walks of life to take the opportunity to be parliamentarians and political leaders. We also advocate for gender-sensitive training for all parliamentarians, for gender mainstreaming in parliament, and for making parliament a safe space for aspiring women politicians.

The Group also raises awareness on health issues affecting women, such as breast and cervical cancer, and collaborates with women parliamentarians from the Pacific on gender equality and political participation.

This booklet provides a brief overview of the profiles and achievements of Fiji's women parliamentarians, including members of the former Senate, who have made the courageous step to be part of Fiji's legislatures from 1966 to the present day.

We hope that these pioneering women, some of whom are no longer with us, will serve as an enduring source of inspiration and a guiding light for all women to aspire to political leadership and parliamentary participation.

On behalf of the CWP Fiji Group, I wish to express my sincere appreciation to the CWP network, the CPA, the Hon. Speaker of the Parliament of Fiji, the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) Pacific Office, development partners and others for their support towards our goals and mission.



Hon. Lenora Salusalu Qereqeretabua

Deputy Speaker of Fiji Parliament, CWP Pacific Regional Representative & Chairperson of the CWP Fiji Group and Assistant Minister for Foreign Affairs and External Trade.





INTRODUCTION

Since 1966, women have played a vital and transformative role in the Parliament of the Republic of Fiji. From the first women appointed and elected to the Legislative Council to today's women MPs, their leadership, resilience and service have helped shape Fiji's political social, and legislative landscape.

Over nearly six decades, there have been 49 women who have served in Fiji's legislatures: either in the former Legislative Council, Senate or House of Representatives, or in the current unicameral Parliament. During this period, women have held some of the highest offices in the land, including Cabinet minister, Deputy Prime Minister, Leader of the Opposition, Speaker of Parliament, Deputy Speaker, Assistant Minister and Government Whip.

From 2018 to 2022, Fiji recorded its highest number of women MPs in history, with a total of 10 women serving during that parliamentary term, representing approximately 19.6 percent of members. Following the 2022 general election, women now make up approximately 9.1 percent of MPs in Fiji. While this marks important progress, women's representation in parliament remains below the current global average of approximately 27 percent and falls short of the internationally recognised 30-percent benchmark for women's participation in decision-making, established through the 1995 Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action as the minimum "critical mass" needed to influence policy and decision-making effectively.

Women's participation in political leadership is a matter not only of equality but also of democratic strength. Global evidence shows that inclusive parliaments produce more comprehensive policy outcomes, particularly in areas such as health, education, social protection, economic empowerment and community development. Increasing women's representation is therefore essential to advancing SDG 5 ("Achieving gender equality and empowering all women and girls").

This booklet honours the pioneering women who have entered parliament in Fiji from 1966 to the present day. It documents their journeys, contributions and achievements, while recognising the courage and determination required to lead in spaces where women have historically been underrepresented.

By celebrating these trailblazers, the CWP Fiji Group seeks to inspire future generations of women and girls across Fiji to pursue leadership, public service and parliamentary participation.

Their legacy reminds us that when women lead, nations progress — and that when opportunities expand, democracy is strengthened.

Fiji Women Leadership in Parliament 1966 to 2026



Adi Losalini Raravuya Uluiviti-Dovi

(Legislative Council, 1966–1970 / House of Representatives, 1970–1977)

Adi Losalini Raravuya Uluiviti-Dovi, from Nairai in Lomaiviti Province, is recognised for her significant contribution to Fiji's political landscape and for being one of the first women elected to parliament in 1966. She served in the House of Representatives until 1977.

During her tenure, she made history as the first woman to hold a ministerial position, serving as Assistant Minister for Urban Development and Social Welfare from 1975 to 1977.

In 1966, she joined the newly formed Alliance Party and briefly served as its secretary. She was later appointed to the Legislative Council as one of two representatives of the Great Council of Chiefs, becoming one of its first female members. In 1972, she was re-elected from the South-Eastern Fijian national constituency and appointed as Government Whip, a position she held until 1976. In recognition of her contributions, she was appointed as an Officer of the Order of the British Empire (OBE) in the 1978 Queen's Birthday Honours.

She was married to Dr. Ratu Jione Atonio Rabici Doviverata (Ratu J.A.R. Dovi), Fiji's first qualified iTaukei medical doctor, and they had four children. She began her career as a clerk at the Fijian Affairs Board and later served as the private secretary to Ratu Sir Lala Sukuna. She also worked for Malcolm Trustram Eve on inquiries into the sugar and coconut industries. In addition, she served as President of the Fiji National Council of Women. She passed away in September 1983.



Loloma Irene Livingston

(Legislative Council, 1966–1972)

Loloma Irene Livingston was a Fijian artist and politician elected to the Legislative Council as an Alliance Party representative, becoming one of the first three women to serve in Fiji's legislature. In the 1966 elections, she contested the Western General seat and won with a majority of over 1,000 votes. A fourth-generation European Fijian, she trained as a nurse before entering politics.

Livingston was one of Fiji's first women parliamentarians and a pioneer for women's participation in politics. In 1966, as a trained nurse, an artist and a community advocate, she helped break barriers for women in public life and paved the way for future generations of women leaders in Fiji.



Irene Jai Narayan

(Legislative Council, 1966–1970 / House of Representatives, 1972–1982, 1984–1985 / Senate, 1997–1999)

Irene Jai Narayan was first elected to the Legislative Council of Fiji, representing the Suva City Indian Communal constituency, in 1966, marking the beginning of six consecutive terms.

She was born in Kanpur, India, and moved to Suva in 1959 with her husband. Both were educators, and Narayan briefly served as Principal of DAV Girls College, Samabula, before entering politics.

Narayan achieved several significant milestones throughout her political career. She became the first female National President of a political party in Fiji, serving the National Federation Party (NFP) from 1976 to 1979. She also served as Opposition Whip from 1979 to 1984 and as Deputy Leader of the Opposition from 1984 to 1985. Her tenure as an MP spanned 21 years, making her the longest-serving woman parliamentarian in Fiji's history.

In 1985, Narayan declared herself an independent MP. She went on to join the Alliance Party in 1986. Although she was unsuccessful in the 1987 elections, she served as Minister for Indian Affairs in Ratu Sir Kamisese Mara's interim government from 1988 to 1992. She was subsequently appointed to the Senate as a presidential nominee, serving from 1997 to 1999. She passed away in July 2011.



Anaseini Qionibaravi

(Senate 1970 – 1976)

Anaseini Qionibaravi was first woman to serve in the Senate of Fiji. When the Senate was established in 1970, she was appointed for a six-year term as one of the nominees of Prime Minister Ratu Sir Kamisese Mara. She was the only woman among 21 Senators at the time.

Qionibaravi was educated at St Mary's Primary School and at Adi Cakobau School. She worked as a home economics teacher and a radio announcer before becoming the first Chairperson of the Consumer Council of Fiji in 1971.



Ro Asela Vuimacuata Logavatu

(Senate, 1972 / House of Representatives, 1973–1977)

Ro Asela Vuimacuata Logavatu, from Lomanikoro, Rewa, was appointed as a Senator in 1972. She represented the National Federation Party (NFP) in the Legislative Council, becoming one of its early female members. In 1973, she was elected as an MP, solidifying her role in Fiji's political sphere.

She also contested the 1977 House of Representatives by-election for the Rewa seat as a candidate for the NFP, running against Mosese Qionibaravi of the Alliance Party. Her candidacy reflected notable support within the Fijian community. Throughout her political career, she was a strong advocate for indigenous Fijian rights and actively promoted women's participation in politics, contributing to the movement for gender equality and political inclusivity in Fiji during the 1970s. She passed away in 2016.



Akanisi Vunitiko Dreunimisimisi

(Senate 1977 – 1982)

Akanisi Vunitiko Dreunimisimisi was from Viwa, Bau, Tailevu. She was educated at Levuka Primary School and at Adi Cakobau School, where she was the school dux in 1960. She later earned a Bachelor of Arts degree from the University of Auckland before joining the public service. During her early public service career, she served as Assistant Secretary in the Public Service Commission and, later, in the same position in the then Department of Foreign Affairs.

She also served as Second Secretary at the High Commission of Fiji in London and went on to become Fiji's first female Chief Protocol Officer.

Following Fiji's independence in 1970, Dreunimisimisi moved into politics, serving as a campaign manager for the Alliance Party in Ba Province. Her exceptional organisational skills caught the attention of party leader and Prime Minister Ratu Sir Kamisese Mara, who appointed her to the Senate, where she served from 1977 to 1982.

Dreunimisimisi later worked in the private sector. In 1984, she joined one of Fiji's pioneering tourism operators, Dan Costello, as shipping manager for Costello's "Islands in the Sun" tour company, which operated the famous schooner, Tui Tai. She later held managerial positions at the Beachcomber and Treasure Island resorts. Her 25-year career in tourism culminated in her role as general manager of Beachcomber Cruises, and in 2004, she was honoured with the Excellence in Tourism Award for her outstanding contribution to Fiji tourism.

Dreunimisimisi also served as a Justice of Peace and was a member of the boards of the Fiji Broadcasting Commission (1975–1978) and the Fiji Visitors Bureau (2005–2007).



Adi Finau Tabakaucoro

(House of Representatives, 1987–1992 / Senate, 1992)

Adi Finau Tabakaucoro is a Fijian politician and cultural advocate who served in key government roles. She served as Minister for Women, Culture and Social Welfare in the interim government from 1987 to 1992, during which time she played a significant role in drafting of the 1990 Constitution of Fiji. She was also a strong advocate for provisions addressing discrimination based on sex and religion in the Bill of Rights under the 1990 Constitution.

In 1992, she was appointed to the Senate of Fiji. Following the 2000 political upheaval, she was again appointed to the interim government as Assistant Minister in the Office of the Prime Minister, holding that role until an elected government assumed office in September 2001. She currently serves as the President of Soqosoqo Vakamarama i Viti, the largest women's civil society organisation in Fiji, which works in the country's 14 provinces on village, district and provincial matters as well as national development policies, programming, laws, regulations and services. She is one of the four co-conveners of the Fiji Women's Forum and works alongside the Fiji Women's Rights Movement.



Meraia Taufa Vakatale

(House of Representatives, 1992–1999)

Meraia Taufa Vakatale entered politics in 1992, contesting the election for the Soqosoqo ni Vakavulewa ni Taukei (SVT) party. She was elected, and was subsequently re-elected in 1994, becoming the first iTaukei woman appointed to a Cabinet ministerial position.

Vakatale served as the Minister for Education, Science and Technology from 1993 to 1995. In 1997, she was appointed as Fiji's first female Deputy Prime Minister and Minister for Education and Technology. She made history again in 1999 by becoming the first female President of the SVT.

Prior to her political career, she was the first indigenous Fijian woman to serve as a secondary school principal – a role she held at Adi Cakobau School from 1973 to 1979. Vakatale passed away in June 2023, leaving a lasting legacy as a trailblazer for women in Fijian politics.



Ro Senimili Takiveikata

(Senate 1992 – 1999)

Ro Senimili Takiveikata had a distinguished career in governance, education and community service. She served as a member of the Senate of Fiji for seven years from 1992 to 1999, contributing to national policy discussions and legislative matters. Her leadership extended to the international stage, where she participated in United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) programmes and led delegations to international women's conferences.

Before entering politics, she dedicated 40 years (1949–1989) to education, teaching at various schools across Fiji. She was actively involved in community development, holding leadership roles in organisations such as the Soqosoqo Vakamarama and parent-teacher associations. She also served on several boards, including those of the Fiji Broadcasting Commission and the Nausori Rural Local Health Authority.

In recognition of her contributions, she received a number of prestigious honours, including appointment as an Officer of the Order of the British Empire (OBE) and as an Officer of the Order of Fiji (OF).



Adi Litia Cakobau

(House of Representatives, 1987 / Senate, 2001–2006)

Adi Litia Cakobau had a distinguished political career marked by her significant contributions to Fiji's government. She was appointed to the Senate in 2001 as one of nine nominees of the Fijian government, a position she held until 2006. During her time in the Senate, she contributed to national legislative discussions and the broader political landscape.

Prior to her appointment to the Senate, she had already made her mark in Fijian politics. In 1987, she was appointed as Minister for Women and Culture, a role in which she worked on issues relating to gender equality and the empowerment of women. As a representative of Fiji, she addressed the United Nations General Assembly on 10 December 1992, articulating the challenges confronting indigenous peoples worldwide. Her intervention elevated Fiji's role in global dialogues on native rights and reinforced domestic calls for the protection of traditional institutions. Her tenure in this role formed an important part of her public service career and contributed to advancing women's issues in Fiji.

She dedicated her life to public service and passed away in October 2019. Her legacy remains an important part of Fiji's political history, particularly in relation to her contributions to government and her advocacy for women in society.



Adi Samanunu Cakobau - Talakuli

(House of Representatives, 1994–1995 / Senate, 2006)

Adi Samanunu Cakobau-Talakuli was a prominent Fijian leader who held several parliamentary and government roles. She was appointed to the Senate in June 2006 as one of nine nominees of the Fijian government and served in the Cabinet as Minister without Portfolio. Earlier in her career, she served as Minister for iTaukei Affairs in 1994 and 1995 and was considered a candidate for the Vice-Presidency in 1997.

Beyond her parliamentary roles, she had an extensive diplomatic career. In 1999, she was appointed as Fiji's High Commissioner to Malaysia and was concurrently accredited as Ambassador to Thailand and to the Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (ESCAP).

She was the eldest child of Ratu Sir George Cakobau, the Vunivalu of Bau and Governor-General of Fiji. Her contributions to government and diplomacy reflected her deep commitment to public service and leadership. She passed away in 2012.



Seruwaia Hong-Tiy

(House of Representatives, 1994–1999)

Seruwaia Hong-Tiy was a prominent Fijian politician, physiotherapist, businesswoman and advocate for women's leadership. She served in the House of Representatives from 1994 to 1999 as a member of the Soqosoqo ni Vakavulewa ni Taukei (SVT) government led by Prime Minister Sitiveni Rabuka. She represented the Nadroga–Navosa Provincial constituency and was among the few women elected to parliament during that period.

She served as Minister for Health and Social Welfare from 1994 to 1995. She was subsequently appointed Minister for Housing, Urban Development and Environment, a role she held from 1995 to 1997. In 1997, she became Minister for Information before later serving as Minister for Women and Culture until 1999.

Before entering politics, Hong-Tiy trained as a physiotherapist in New Zealand and worked in the health sector. Beyond politics, she became widely recognised in Fiji's maritime and business community through her involvement with Shipping Services (Fiji) Ltd, a family-owned shipping and logistics company she established with her late husband, Francis Hong-Tiy, in 1992.

In 2022, she received an Outstanding Lifetime Achievement award as part of Fiji's International Women in Maritime Day celebrations in recognition of her contribution to the maritime industry and to the advancement of women's leadership.



Adi Kuini Teimumu Vuikaba Speed

(House of Representatives, 1999–2000)

Adi Kuini Teimumu Vuikaba Speed was the widow of the former Prime Minister and Fiji Labour Party (FLP) founder Dr. Timoci Uluivuda Bavadra. She was a senior civil servant, a chief, and Chair of the Nadroga–Navosa Provincial Council. She was also a prominent woman leader known for her advocacy for non-racial politics, equality, and good governance.

She became the leader of the FLP following her husband's passing in 1989 but resigned in 1991 to pursue studies in international relations at The Australian National University. She returned to Fiji in 1994 and, despite battling cancer, re-entered the political arena. In 1998, she became the leader of the newly established Fijian Association Party (FAP).

Her leadership was bold and decisive, as she challenged powerful interests and advocated for accountability among Fijian chiefs. Under her guidance, the FAP won 11 seats at the 1999 general election and subsequently formed a coalition with the FLP. This led to her appointment as one of two Deputy Prime Ministers in the government led by Mahendra Chaudhry.



Lavenia Kau Wainiqolo Padarath

(House of Representatives, 1999–2000 / Senate, 2006)

Lavenia Padarath was a Fijian politician who played a significant role in the Fiji Labour Party (FLP). She served as Minister for Women, Culture and Social Welfare in the 1999–2000 Labour government and was appointed as a Senator in 2006.

Beyond her parliamentary roles, Padarath was actively involved in the leadership of the FLP. She was appointed as President of the party in 2011 following the passing of Jokapeci Koroi and later served again in the same role from 2015 to 2019.

Padarath had a long and distinguished career in the public arena. A nurse trained and registered nurse in New Zealand by profession, she served as General Secretary and President of the Fiji Nurses Association, a post she held for seven years. She maintained her link with the nursing community by playing an active role in the Retired Nurses Association. She also had a long involvement with the National Council of Women, serving as both its Secretary and its President.

Early in her career, Padarath left government service to join the United States Peace Corp (Fiji and Tuvalu) as its Associate Director of Health. When her husband, the late Adishwar Padarath, a well-known Fijian journalist, was posted to Fiji Mission to the United Nations in New York in 1988, she moved there with her family and worked as a nurse clinician at the United Nations Medical Centre.

Padarath was also one of the founding members of the FLP, contributing significantly to its growth and development. She passed away in 2019.



Adi Koila Mara Nailatikau

(House of Representatives, 1999–2000 / Senate, 2001–2006)

Adi Koila Mara Nailatikau is a Fijian lawyer, diplomat and politician. She served as the First Lady of Fiji from 2009 to 2015, as the spouse of Ratu Epeli Nailatikau. Born in 1953, she is the daughter of Ratu Sir Kamisese Mara, Fiji's first Prime Minister, and Ro Lady Lala Mara, a prominent Fijian chief. She has a Bachelor of Law degree from the London School of Economics and Political Science and a Post-Graduate Certificate in Diplomacy from University of Oxford, UK.

She entered politics in 1999, when she was elected to the House of Representatives as a member of the Christian Democratic Alliance, representing the Lau Fijian Communal constituency. She was subsequently appointed as Minister for Tourism.

In 2001, she was appointed to the Senate of Fiji, where she served as Chairperson of the Senate Privileges Committee and as a member of the Foreign Relations Committee. During her political career, she was an outspoken advocate on social issues, including as an opponent of the legalisation of prostitution and sex tourism, calling for stronger penalties against those facilitating such activities. She also proposed the establishment of a national youth service aimed at addressing unemployment and promoting discipline among young people.

Her career has been marked by her advocacy on social and community issues, particularly in relation to family values and youth development, contributing significantly to Fiji's political landscape.



Marieta Rigamoto

(House of Representatives, 1999–2006)

Marieta Rigamoto is a former Fijian civil servant, politician and Cabinet minister. She contested the 1999 Fijian general election as an independent candidate and was successfully elected to the House of Representatives, representing the Rotuman Communal constituency. Following her election, she was appointed Assistant Minister for Agriculture, Fisheries and Forests.

From 2000 to 2001, she served as Interim Assistant Minister in the same portfolio. From 2001 to 2006, she held the position of Assistant Minister in the Office of the Prime Minister.

Throughout her career, Rigamoto played an important role in both the political and civil service sectors in Fiji, contributing significantly to national development across various ministries.



Adi Ema Golea Tagicakibau

(House of Representatives, 1999–2000)

Adi Ema Golea Tagicakibau (PhD), from Somosomo, Taveuni, was a former school teacher who was actively involved in women's rights advocacy at the grassroots and national levels before entering politics. She was educated at Somosomo District School and at Adi Cakobau School and pursued her tertiary studies at The University of the South Pacific (USP). She later completed her master's degree at Monash University in Australia, and her doctorate at the University of Auckland, specialising in gender and militarisation.

She worked for the Fiji Women's Rights Movement before resigning in 1999 to enter politics after being approached by the Fijian Association Party (FAP). She was successfully elected to the House of Representatives and was appointed as Assistant Minister in the Office of the Prime Minister.

Following her political tenure, she continued her work in the non-governmental sector, serving as a disarmament campaigner with the Pacific Concerns Resource Centre (PCRC), the secretariat of the Nuclear Free and Independent Pacific Movement, in Suva, from 2002 to 2008. Her work reflected a strong commitment to disarmament advocacy and led to her active participation in regional and international peace forums.

She was a member of the International Advisory Committee for the International Action Network on Small Arms (IANSA) from 2003 to 2018. In recognition of her regional advocacy, she was appointed in 2019 by Winston Peters, New Zealand's Minister for Disarmament and Arms Control, to the Public Advisory Committee on Disarmament and Arms Control (PACDAC), a statutory body that advises the New Zealand Government on issues relating to disarmament and arms control.



Suruj Mati Nand

(House of Representatives, 1999–2000)

Suruj Mati Nand is a Fijian politician and public servant who has made notable contributions to Fiji's political landscape, particularly in the areas of social welfare and community development. She was elected to the House of Representatives in 1999, winning the Laucala Open constituency for the Fiji Labour Party (FLP).

During her tenure from 1999 to 2000, she was an active advocate for women's rights, social welfare and the upliftment of marginalised communities.

Her direct role in government was affected by the political upheaval of 2000; however, she remained actively engaged in political and social issues. She continued to advocate strongly for human rights, gender equality and social justice, emphasising the importance of inclusive policies that benefit all Fijians, particularly women and disadvantaged groups.

Although her parliamentary role was relatively brief, her contributions to Fijian politics are reflected in her continued advocacy for improving the social and economic conditions of marginalised communities and promoting a more inclusive and equitable society.



Ofakilomaloma Swann

(House of Representatives 1999 – 2006)

Ofakilomaloma Swann is a former Fijian politician who hails from Vanuabalavu in the Lau Islands. She was elected in 1999 to represent the Suva City Open Constituency in the House of Representatives as a candidate for the United General Party (now known as the United People's Party). She successfully retained her seat in the 2001 election as a candidate of the newly formed New Labour Unity Party (NLUP) and was subsequently elected Deputy Leader of the Opposition.

Swann's role in the Opposition became more prominent when Kenneth Zinck, the only other NLUP MP, defied party orders and joined the government, leaving Swann as the sole representative of the Opposition until 2006.

After the collapse of the NLUP, Swann contested the 2006 election as an independent candidate. However, she was defeated after running against several nationally known candidates.

Following her political career, Swann pursued an academic path at The University of the South Pacific (USP), where she became involved in teaching and psychological research. Her work has focused on relationships, personality, and social issues affecting Fiji and the Pacific region. In 2025, her PhD research became notable for being among the first psychological studies in Fiji to examine attraction, partner selection and the influence of personality traits in relationships.

Swann is also a leader in the psychology profession in Fiji and has served as President and Chair of the Fiji Psychological Society. In November 2024, she was appointed as a member of the USP Council.



Adi Senimili Duavokavoka Dyer

(House of Representatives, 2000–2001)

Adi Senimili Duavokavoka Dyer was a Fijian politician who served as Assistant Minister for Women and Culture in the Prime Minister's Office in the interim Cabinet formed by Laisenia Qarase following the 2000 political upheaval. She held this position until the elected government took power in 2001.

Prior to her political career, she worked as a teacher and was actively involved in the Macuata Women's Association. She was born in Naduri, the village where she was laid to rest in 2013.



Ro Teimumu Vuikaba Kepa

(Senate, 1999–2000 / House of Representatives, 2000–2006 / Parliament, 2014–2022)

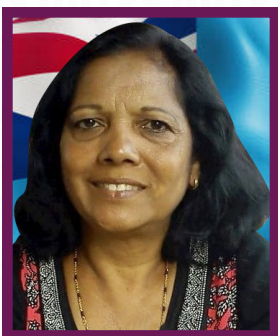
Ro Teimumu Vuikaba Kepa began her political career in 1999 when she was appointed as a Senator, serving from 1999 to 2000. She subsequently served as Minister for Women, Culture and Social Welfare from 2000 to 2001, before being appointed as Minister for Education from 2001 to 2005. She also served as Deputy Prime Minister in the Soqosoqo Duavata ni Lewenivanua (SDL) government from 2001 to 2006. In 2006, she was appointed as Minister for Education, Youth and Sports.

Before entering national politics, she dedicated many years to the education sector, serving as Principal of Corpus Christi College in Suva and later as a student coordinator at The University of the South Pacific (USP). In 2004, she succeeded her late sister, Ro Lady Lala Mara, as Roko Tui Dreketi, becoming the Paramount Chief of the Burebasaga Confederacy, one of Fiji's three traditional confederacies.

Following Fiji's return to parliamentary democracy, she was elected to the Parliament of the Republic of Fiji in 2014 as leader of the Social Democratic Liberal Party (SODELPA), becoming the first iTaukei woman to serve as a political party leader and the Leader of the Opposition. She was re-elected in 2018 and continued to serve as a member of the Opposition.

From 2019 to 2022, she was a member of the CWP Fiji Group and also served on the Standing Committee on Public Accounts, contributing to parliamentary oversight and accountability.

Since retiring from parliament, she has continued her service to the nation. In 2023, she was appointed Chairperson of the Tertiary Scholarships and Loans Service (TSLS) Board, where she continues to contribute to Fiji's education sector and national development through strategic leadership and governance.



Asha Devi Singh

(Senate 2000)

Asha Devi Singh served as a member of the Senate in the early 2000s. Her parliamentary tenure ended after just a few months following the political upheaval of May 2000. In addition to her parliamentary contributions, she had a distinguished career as a teacher, educator and lecturer, beginning in 1978. She dedicated much of her teaching career to schools across Fiji and taught in New Zealand.

Her academic journey began in 1974 at Khalsa College, Ba, where she completed the New Zealand University entrance examination. She later pursued further studies at The University of the South Pacific (USP), earning a Diploma in Education in 1977, a Bachelor of Arts degree in 1992 and a postgraduate diploma in management in 1995.

In 1997, she completed a Master of Business Administration degree at USP, and in 2006, she attained a Graduate Diploma in Early Childhood Education from the University of Auckland.



Rose Lavenia Bernadette Rounds Ganilau

(House of Representatives, 2000–2001, 2006–2008)

Rose Lavenia Bernadette Rounds Ganilau, born in 1951, is a Fijian writer, broadcaster and politician. She served as Minister for Labour, Tourism, Industrial Relations, Productivity and Environment in the interim Cabinet led by Commodore Frank Bainimarama, to which she was appointed on 9 January 2007.

She had previously held political roles including Assistant Minister for Social Welfare in the interim government of Prime Minister Laisenia Qarase (2000–2001) and later served as Deputy Leader of the Opposition in 2006 until the political upheaval in December that year, as well as chairperson of the Public Accounts Committee of the House of Representatives. At the 2006 general election, she was elected to the House of Representatives for the Suva City General Communal constituency as a candidate for the United People's Party (UPP).

In 2008, she founded the Green Party of Fiji, but the party was later dissolved owing to legal issues.

A long-time political activist, Ganilau has been a strong advocate for women's rights and human rights. She notably opposed the government's Reconciliation, Tolerance and Unity Bill in 2005, criticising it for encouraging violence rather than fostering tolerance. She also served as President of Women Entrepreneurs Fiji.

Her personal life is intertwined with Fijian leadership: she is married to Ratu Jone Antonio Rabici Rabaraba Ganilau, the youngest son of Fiji's first President, Ratu Sir Penaia Ganilau.



Kuini Naqasima

(Senate - 2000)

Kuini Naqasima was appointed as a Senator representing the Opposition in 2000 during a significant period in Fiji's political history. Her parliamentary tenure ended after just a few months following the political upheaval of May 2000. Beyond her parliamentary role, she was also involved in community and women's advocacy initiatives, particularly on issues relating to social welfare and family law reform. Her appointment reflected the growing contribution of women professionals to national leadership and public policymaking in Fiji.

Naqasima was a distinguished Fijian nursing professional, public servant and community leader who made significant contributions to healthcare and public service in Fiji. She served for many years in the health sector and held senior leadership positions within Fiji's Medical Department, including serving as Controller of Nursing Services. Through her work, she contributed to the development of nursing administration, professional standards and healthcare delivery in Fiji, while also representing the country at regional Pacific health and nursing forums.



Jokapeci Koroi

(Senate 2002 – 2006)

Jokapeci Koroi, also known as Jokapeci Talei Koroi, was a respected Fijian politician and nurse, and long-serving President of the Fiji Labour Party (FLP).

Before entering politics, Koroi had a distinguished career in healthcare and became the first local matron of the Colonial War Memorial (CWM) Hospital.

In 2002, she was appointed to the Senate as one of eight nominees of the then Leader of the Opposition, Mahendra Chaudhry. During her tenure, she not only served as a Senator but also held leadership responsibilities within the Senate, including as President and Deputy President of the Senate.

Koroi was widely recognised as a strong and outspoken political figure. She publicly opposed the controversial Reconciliation, Tolerance and Unity Bill, arguing that it undermined accountability following the 2000 political upheaval.

Within the FLP, she was regarded as a disciplined and influential leader, serving as President of the party from 1991 until her passing in 2011. She was often referred to as the “mother of the party” for her dedication and long-standing service.



Losena Tabanavau Salabula

(House of Representatives, 2001–2006)

Losena Tabanavau Salabula was a Fijian politician and Cabinet minister. She trained as a teacher and later worked for the Pacific Concerns Research Centre. She was first elected to the House of Representatives of Fiji in the Laucala Open constituency, as a candidate for the Soqosoqo Duavata ni Lewenivanua (SDL) party, at the 2001 Fijian general election.

Following her election, she was appointed as Assistant Minister for Women, Social Welfare and Poverty Alleviation, and Assistant Minister in the Office of the Prime Minister, serving from 2001 to 2006. She passed away in 2024 at the age of 74.



Adi Asenaca Coboiverata Caucau (House of Representatives, 2001–2006)

Adi Asenaca Coboiverata Caucau, served as Minister for Women, Social Welfare and Poverty Alleviation from 2001 to 2006. She was later appointed as Minister of State for Housing. She implemented the “Walking out of Poverty “ and “Walking into Prosperity “ programs which became successful in alleviating poverty during her period as Minister.

She represented the Tailevu South Lomaiviti Open constituency in the House of Representatives from 2001 until 2006, having first been elected at the 2001 general election as a member of the Soqosoqo Duavata ni Lewenivanua (SDL) party. Her term as Parliamentarian was interrupted by political upheaval in 2006.

Before becoming a Parliamentarian, she taught in various Secondary Schools in the Interior of Fiji, exposing students to new methods of learning, raising the education standards dramatically. She was involved in community development and netball for women. She also worked at USP as a Curriculum R&D Officer before joining the Fiji Trade and Investment Board (FTIB) in 1989 as a Trade and Investment Officer. She quickly rose through the ranks to Head the Trade Division and became the Manager for the Strategic Planning, Policy Development and Information Systems. Some of her major achievements while at FTIB was enticing Papua New Guinea investors to set up Credit Corp in Fiji. She was accorded special recognition by the then Prime Minister of Fiji at a special ceremony in Suva.

Her qualification includes MBA, from CQU Rockhampton, QLD Australia BA, from USP and University of Nebraska-Lincoln with double majors in History/Politics, English Language/Literature and a minor in Economics, DipEd, Gold medalist in Education from USP in 1981. She completed her secondary education at the famous Adi Cakobau School in Sawani and won a Rotary International Scholarship to Study for one year at Forest Grove Union High School in Forest Grove, Oregon, USA, where she was accorded a special Graduation ceremony upon completion of her studies on the 18 January 1973.

While being an SDL MWSW&PA, she focussed on Mainstreaming and Balancing Gender Concerns and Providing education and economic opportunities to raise the standard of living for the people of Fiji. She hosted and chaired the Commonwealth 7 Womens Affairs Ministers Meeting (WAMM) and worked hard with the Commonwealth Secretariat in London to ensure the successful launch of the Commonwealth Women’s Action Plan 2005-2015. She helped build the Qarase House to create offices for 10 NGO’s for the underprivileged. She led and coordinated the renovation of “Happy Home” with voluntary organizations to house homeless children. She also spent one year whilst at FTIB to work as a seconded expert at the Center for the Development of Industries in Brussels, Belgium.

In 2000, Adi Asenaca Caucau helped set up Central Queensland University, Fiji International Campus where she became both the Manager Academic Services and senior lecturer for the MBA program. Since 2008, she has been involved with many Nonprofit and NGO’s representing Indigenous peoples at conferences in the United Nations Assembly HQ in New York, the Amnesty International in England and the Convocation for All Nations in Jerusalem. She continues to be active in these organizations to date.



Nanise Vunisere Kasami Nagusuca **(House of Representatives, 2004–2006)**

Nanise Vunisere Kasami Nagusuca, from Nokonoko in Ra Province, is a former Fijian politician who was a member of both the Soqosoqo Duavata ni Lewenivanua (SDL) party and the Social Democratic Liberal Party (SODELPA). She was elected to the House of Representatives of Fiji in the Northeast Urban Fijian Communal constituency in a by-election held in December 2004. Following the election, she was appointed as Assistant Minister for Fijian Affairs, Culture and Heritage. She was re-elected at the 2006 general election.

Following her parliamentary career, she remained active in public service as Deputy Chair of the Ra Provincial Council and later joined SODELPA as a candidate for the 2014 general election. Throughout her career, she has been recognised for her advocacy for women's development, indigenous affairs and community leadership.



Adi Lagamu Lewaturaga Vuiyasawa **(Senate 2005 – 2006)**

Adi Lagamu Lewaturaga Vuiyasawa is a Fijian businesswoman and former politician who served in the Senate from 2005 to 2006. She was appointed to the Senate in 2005 to complete the term of her partner, Ratu Inoke Takiveikata. Zealand.

Prior to her political career, Vuiyasawa established a hairdressing business after studying at Kay International College of Hairdressing in Auckland, New Zealand.

She also served as President of the Naitasiri branch of the Soqosoqo Vakamarama (a women's organisation) and was a member of Naitasiri Provincial Council.

Hailing from Nairukuruku, a village in Naitasiri Province, Vuiyasawa is the daughter of Ratu Alipate Baledrokadroka, a former Senator and Chief of northern Naitasiri, and Adi Silafaga Kamikamica of Bau Island.



Mere Tuisalalo Samisoni **(House of Representatives, 2006 / Parliament, 2018, 2022)**

Adi Mere Tuisalalo Samisoni (PhD) was a distinguished Fijian businesswoman and politician. She founded the Hot Bread Kitchen chain, significantly influencing Fiji's baking industry.

Her political career included serving as the Mayor of Lami and representing the Lami Open constituency in the House of Representatives for the Soqosoqo Duavata ni Lewenivanua (SDL) party following her victory in the May 2006 elections.

In March 2018, she returned to parliament as an Opposition MP representing the Social Democratic Liberal Party (SODELPA), succeeding the late Ratu Sela Nanovo. In May 2022, she again entered parliament as an Opposition MP representing SODELPA, succeeding Niko Nawaikula. Before her political and entrepreneurial career, Samisoni broke barriers as the first Fijian to be admitted to the Royal College of Nursing in Australia. She later earned both master's and doctorate degrees in business administration. She passed away in 2023 at the age of 85.



Adi Sivia Tora Qoro (House of Representatives, 2006)

Adi Sivia Tora Qoro was a distinguished Fijian businesswoman and politician with a notable career in both public service and the private sector. In 2006, she briefly served as a member of the House of Representatives, representing the Yasawa Nawaka constituency for the Fiji Labour Party (FLP). During this period, she held ministerial portfolios including Minister for Commerce and Minister for Industry in the multiparty Cabinet under Prime Minister Laisenia Qarase.

She hailed from Viwa in the Yasawa Islands, Ba Province, and held a master's degree in foreign affairs and trade from Monash University in Australia. Beyond politics, she was actively involved in community development. She served as the head of the Pacific Women's Bureau at the Pacific Community (SPC) in Nouméa, overseeing initiatives across 22 countries, and as First Secretary at the Fiji High Commission in Canberra.

She was also the President of Rise Beyond the Reef, an organisation dedicated to improving livelihoods in remote communities, and Vice-President of Homes of Hope, a charity supporting survivors of sexual abuse and exploitation. She passed away in May 2026 at the age of 70.



Monica Nalini Raghwan (House of Representatives, 2006)

Monica Raghwan is a Suva-based businesswoman and politician who served as a member of the House of Representatives in 2006. She won the Samabula Tamavua Open constituency for the Fiji Labour Party (FLP) in that year's general election. She was the only woman contesting the seat, defeating six seasoned male candidates including prominent politicians such as Dr. Tupeni Baba and Filipe Bole.

Prior to entering parliament, she unsuccessfully contested the Muanikau ward in the local government elections for the Suva municipality in 2005.

Her parliamentary tenure ended after approximately seven months following the political upheaval of December 2006. During her time in parliament, Raghwan served on the Standing Committee on Economic Affairs.

Raghwan continued her political career by contesting the 2014, 2018 and 2022 general elections for the FLP, although without success. Despite this, she remains an active member of the party's Management Board and participates in workshops and seminars focused on strengthening women's political participation.

Raghwan has a strong academic background in environmental and agricultural sciences. She holds a Bachelor of Science degree in botany and a postgraduate diploma in biology, with a specialisation in plant breeding. She previously worked as an agronomist on a European Union-funded project and later joined her family's construction business.



Adi Laufitu Malani *(Senate 2006)*

Adi Laufitu Malani was a distinguished Fijian chief, medical professional and political leader. In 2006, she was appointed as a Senator. Subsequently, in 2007, she was appointed as Minister for Social Welfare and Women in the interim Cabinet led by Commodore Frank Bainimarama, a position she held until 2008. She was the daughter of Ratu Meli Salabogi Malani, the Paramount Chief of Nakorotubu in Ra Province and a former Senator.

She began her career as a medical assistant and later became the inaugural Director of the UNIFEM (now UN Women) Pacific Office, where she played a key role in designing gender awareness programmes and advocating for women's political empowerment across the Pacific. As a medical assistant, she worked in rural health centres, including in Vunidawa and Korolevu. Later, she was awarded a Fullbright Scholarship and obtained a Master of Arts degree in public health in the United States.

In 2014, she served as political adviser to the Leader of the Opposition, Ro Teimumu Kepa, of the Social Democratic Liberal Party (SODELPA), a role she maintained until her passing in 2017.



Dr. Jiko Fatafehi Luveni *(Parliament, 2014 – 2018)*

Jiko Fatafehi Luveni was a prominent Fijian politician, medical professional and public servant who played a significant leadership role in Fiji's post-2006 political landscape.

Born in Nukuni, a village on Ono-i-Lau in the Lau Islands, she was educated at Lautoka Fijian School, at Nabua Secondary School and at Adi Cakobau School before graduating from the Fiji School of Dentistry in 1967 as the first indigenous Fijian woman dentist.

In January 2008, she was appointed as Minister for Health in the interim government led by Voreqe Bainimarama. She later served as Minister for Social Welfare, Women and Poverty Alleviation. During this period, she also co-chaired a government task force responsible for making recommendations on “social-cultural identity and nation building” for the proposed People's Charter for Change, Peace and Progress.

In 2013, Luveni confirmed her intention to contest the general election for Bainimarama's newly formed political party, FijiFirst. In April 2014, she was elected Chairperson of the Lau Provincial Council, succeeding Filipe Bole. However, she resigned from this role after only three months upon being announced as a FijiFirst parliamentary candidate in July 2014. She was succeeded by Ilisoni Taoba.

Following the election, Luveni resigned from her parliamentary seat to assume the role of Speaker of Parliament, on 6 October 2014, becoming the first Fijian woman to hold this position. She served with distinction in this role until her passing in 2018.



Mereseini Rakuita

(Parliament, 2014 – 2021)

Mereseini Rakuita was elected to parliament in 2014 and was appointed as the first female Minister for Lands and Mineral Resources (2014–2016). In 2016, her portfolio changed to Minister for Women, Children and Poverty Alleviation, a position she held until her resignation in 2021. A qualified legal practitioner, she made history as Fiji’s first female State Solicitor. She was also a member of the CWP Fiji Group from 2019 to 2021.

Prior to entering politics, she held several senior positions in government, including Acting Permanent Secretary for Justice and Anti-corruption, and State Solicitor. She also served as chairperson of the Telecommunications Authority of Fiji (TAF), becoming the first woman to chair the authority.

As Minister for Women, Children and Poverty Alleviation, Rakuita introduced several inclusive and gender-sensitive policies and legal reforms. These included consultations for Fiji’s National Action Plan to Prevent Violence Against All Women and Girls, as well as gender-responsive budgeting and investments in gender statistics.

She resigned from the FijiFirst party in 2021 and later joined the international non-governmental organisation Family Planning 2030 (FP2030), which focuses on family planning within the global health, development and gender equality agendas. She currently serves as Global Chair of the FP2030 Governing Board. In 2022, she was appointed Strategic Lead – Pacific Women for the Pacific Community (SPC), overseeing gender programming across 22 Pacific island countries and territories.

Rakuita holds a postgraduate diploma in legal practice from The Australian National University and a Bachelor of Laws degree from the University of Tasmania. She was admitted as a barrister and solicitor of the Supreme Court of the Australian Capital Territory in 1997, and of the High Court of Fiji in 1998.



Rosy Sofia Akbar

(Parliament, 2014 – 2023)

Rosy Akbar was first elected to parliament at the 2014 general election and served as Minister for Women, Children and Poverty Alleviation. Following a Cabinet reshuffle in September 2016, she was appointed as Minister for Health and Medical Services, a position she held until 2018.

She was re-elected in 2018 and served as Minister for Education, Heritage and Arts. She was again re-elected in 2022 and served as a member of the FijiFirst Opposition. However, she resigned from parliament for health reasons in early 2023.

Prior to entering politics, she had a long and distinguished career in the education sector. She is originally from Ba and previously served as the Vice-Principal of A.D. Patel College.

Akbar received her early education in Fiji and later pursued higher education in the field of education and leadership. She holds undergraduate and postgraduate qualifications in secondary education and educational leadership from The University of the South Pacific (USP) and Fiji National University (FNU). These academic qualifications provided the foundation for her long career as an educator and school administrator before entering national politics. She was an active member of the CWP Fiji Group from 2019 to 2023.



Lorna Eden

(Parliament, 2014 – 2018)

Lorna Eden was elected to parliament at the 2014 general election. She was appointed as Assistant Minister for Finance, Public Service, Public Enterprise and Trade and Tourism, serving from 2014 to 2015. She was then transferred to the Ministry of Local Government, Housing and Environment, where she served as Assistant Minister from 2015 to 2018.

During her parliamentary tenure, she served as Chairperson of the Standing Committee on Economic Affairs.

Her professional background prior to entering politics was primarily in Fiji's tourism sector. She served as a Board Member of the Fiji Hotel and Tourism Association, as President of Savusavu Tourism Association, as a founding member of Savusavu Rotary Club and as a member of the Savusavu Hospital Board of Visitors. She and her husband were also owner-operators of Savusavu Hot Springs Hotel from 1996.



Veena Kumar Bhatnagar

(Parliament, 2014 – 2022)

Veena Bhatnagar was elected to parliament in 2014 as a member of the FijiFirst party and was appointed as Assistant Minister for Women, Children and Poverty Alleviation, serving from 2014 to 2015. From 2016 to 2018, she served as Assistant Minister for Local Government, Housing and Environment. She was re-elected in 2018 and was subsequently elected as the Deputy Speaker of the Parliament of Fiji for four years.

Prior to entering politics, she had a long and distinguished career in broadcasting and media. She worked as a radio personality and programme director for Radio Fiji Two under the Fiji Broadcasting Corporation, and was also widely associated with Navtarang, one of Fiji's most popular Hindi-language radio stations.

She also served as Chairperson of the CWP Fiji Group from 2019 to 2022, where she championed women's political participation, leadership development and gender equality initiatives in Fiji.

During her years in broadcasting, she became a well-known media personality, recognised for her engaging presentation style, community outreach and ability to connect with listeners across Fiji. Her work at Navtarang and Radio Fiji Two contributed significantly to the development of Hindi-language broadcasting in Fiji and helped strengthen communication and engagement within Indo-Fijian communities.



Salote Vuibureta Radrodoro

(Parliament, 2014 – 2022)

Salote Radrodoro was first elected to parliament as a Social Democratic Liberal Party (SODELPA) candidate following the 2014 general election. As one of eight women elected to the 50-member parliament, she served as the Opposition Whip in 2017 and was re-elected at the 2018 general election.

She holds a Bachelor of Arts degree in management and public administration and a master's degree in governance from The University of the South Pacific (USP). She served for 36 years in the public service, working across the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the Public Service Commission, the Ministry of Health and the Ministry of Women, Social Welfare and Poverty Alleviation, from which she retired in 2012. She was also an active member of the CWP Fiji Group from 2019 to 2022.



Tupou Takaiwai Draunidalo **(Parliament, 2014 – 2017)**

Roko Tupou Takaiwai Senirewa Draunidalo is a lawyer and graduate of The Australian National University. She emerged as a strong advocate for democracy, human rights, the rule of law and governance following the 2006 military coup. She opposed the coup and served as defence counsel for ousted Prime Minister Laisenia Qarase in the aftermath of the event.

Draunidalo became President of the National Federation Party (NFP) in 2014 and was one of three NFP candidates successfully elected to parliament in that year. She resigned from the NFP in January 2017 and consequently lost her parliamentary seat.

She continued her political engagement and co-founded the HOPE (Humanity, Opportunity, Prosperity and Equality) Party. The party was unsuccessful at the 2018 elections and was deregistered in 2022.

In 2023, Draunidalo was appointed to the Constitutional Offices Commission as a nominee of the then Leader of the Opposition, Josaia Voreqe Bainimarama.

Draunidalo comes from a family of prominent leaders. Her mother, Adi Kuini Teimumu Vuikaba Speed, was a chief, an MP in 1999, and Deputy Prime Minister. Her father, Colonel Ratu Savenaca Draunidalo, was a Cabinet minister from 2001 to 2006.



Jilila Nalibu Kumar **(Parliament, 2015 – 2018)**

Jilila Nalibu Kumar is a Fijian politician and former educator who served as an MP and as Assistant Minister for Education, Heritage and Arts in 2015.

Born in the Sigatoka Valley in Nadroga–Navosa Province, she was educated at Fulton College before pursuing a career in teaching. She dedicated many years to the education sector and was eventually promoted to become Principal of Jasper Williams High School in Lautoka.

Kumar entered politics in 2014 as a candidate for the FijiFirst party and contested the 2014 general election but was unsuccessful in entering parliament.

She entered parliament in 2015 following the resignation of FijiFirst MP Dr. Neil Sharma. During her parliamentary tenure, she also served as a member of the Standing Committee on Foreign Affairs and Defence, contributing to the scrutiny of policies and matters relating to Fiji's foreign relations, national security and defence affairs.



Selai Adimaitoga

(Parliament, 2018 – 2022)

Selai Adimaitoga was elected to parliament in 2018 as a member of the FijiFirst party and served as Assistant Minister for iTaukei Affairs from 2018 to 2022. During her tenure, she advocated strongly for rural development, women's empowerment and the advancement of iTaukei communities.

Drawing on her own experience as one of the few female sugarcane farmers in Fiji, she brought practical insight into parliamentary discussions on agriculture, rural livelihoods, and economic opportunities for ordinary Fijians. Although she was not re-elected at the 2022 general election, she remained recognised for her grassroots leadership and dedication to community service.

She was also an active member of the CWP Fiji Group from 2019 to 2022, supporting initiatives aimed at advancing women's leadership, empowerment and community development in Fiji.



Tanya Waqanika

(Parliament, 2020 – 2022)

Tanya Waqanika is a lawyer and former parliamentarian with a diverse career spanning law, media and politics. Originally from Natumua, Tavuki, Kadavu, she earned her Bachelor of Laws degree from Bond University in Queensland, Australia, and later obtained a Master of Business Administration degree from The University of the South Pacific (USP) in Fiji.

In the political arena, Waqanika contested the 2018 general election for the Social Democratic Liberal Party (SODELPA) but was not elected. In 2019, she was nominated by SODELPA for the position of Speaker of Parliament. Following the parliamentary vote, Ratu Epeli Nailatikau was elected as Speaker. In 2020, she entered parliament following the resignation of Sitiveni Rabuka. She was a member of the CWP Fiji Group from 2019 to 2022.

She began her legal career in 1997 as a researcher/legal officer in the Prime Minister's Policy Analysis Unit. She later joined the Office of the Attorney-General. She also worked as a solicitor and legal manager for Suva City Council. In 2007, she joined Fiji Television Limited as Legal Manager, later advancing to Head of Content and Local Production. After leaving Fiji TV in 2014, she established her own law firm.



Adi Litia Qionibaravi **(Parliament, 2018 – 2022)**

Adi Litia Qionibaravi, from Ucunivanua, Verata, Tailevu, is a trained lawyer who spent over 30 years working in the Ministry of Fijian Affairs. In 2005, she was appointed as Chief Executive Officer of the Fijian Affairs Board (FAB), where she oversaw the country's provincial councils, the Fijian Affairs scholarship unit and the Secretariat of the Great Council of Chiefs.

Qionibaravi later entered politics, serving as General Secretary of the Social Democratic Liberal Party (SODELPA) in 2016, during which time she was involved in reforms to the party constitution. She was elected to parliament in 2018 and served as an MP until 2022. She was a member of the CWP Fiji Group from 2019 to 2022 and was also a member of the Standing Committee on Foreign Affairs and Defence and Public Accounts.



Lynda Diseru Tabuya **(Parliament, 2018 – Present)**

Lynda Diseru Tabuya is a Fijian lawyer, politician and social advocate who has played a prominent role in Fiji's political and public life. Recognised for her advocacy on social justice, women's empowerment and community development, she has emerged as one of Fiji's influential political leaders.

Born in 1973 in Christchurch, New Zealand, Tabuya hails from Tiliva, Nakasaleka, Kadavu, with maternal links to Nagasauva, Tawake, Cakaudrove. She attended Yat Sen Primary School and Adi Cakobau School, where she became dux of the school and the first recipient of the chiefly Cakobau family's Overall Prize for Excellence. She then pursued legal studies and went on to build a successful career in law before entering politics. She holds a Bachelor of Laws degree from Bond University in Australia and a Master of Laws degree from Washington University in St. Louis, Missouri, United States. Prior to her political career, she served as a law lecturer at The University of the South Pacific (USP), where she contributed to legal education and the development of future legal professionals.

She entered politics in 2014 and quickly established herself as a strong advocate for good governance, workers' rights and social equality. She was elected to the Parliament of Fiji at the 2018 general election, becoming the highest-polling female candidate and the fifth highest-polling candidate overall. During this time in parliament, she served as Opposition Whip and was widely recognised for her outspoken advocacy on issues affecting women, workers and vulnerable communities.

In 2022, she joined the People's Alliance party and was appointed one of its Deputy Party Leaders. Following her re-election to parliament at the 2022 general election, she was appointed Minister for Women, Children and Poverty Alleviation on 24 December 2022. In this role, she championed policies aimed at strengthening social protection, promoting gender equality and improving the welfare of disadvantaged groups. She served in the portfolio until December 2024. She became the first woman Leader of Government Business in Parliament. Subsequently, she was appointed Minister for Information and later expanded her portfolio in 2026 to become Minister for Information, Environment and Climate Change. She is currently the Chairperson of the Special Committee on Emoluments.



Premila Devi Kumar

(Parliament, 2018 – Present)

Hon. Premila Devi Kumar stands as a respected woman parliamentarian whose public service has reflected commitment, courage and purpose. First elected to Parliament in 2018 and re-elected for a second term in 2022 under the FijiFirst Party, she has contributed meaningfully to national development through key ministerial portfolios, including Industry, Trade and Tourism; Housing and Community Development; Local Government; and Education, Heritage and Arts.

Since 2022, Hon. Kumar has continued to serve with distinction as the sole female member of the Opposition, demonstrating the vital role women play in parliamentary leadership and national decision-making. She currently serves as Deputy Chair of the Standing Committee on Economic Affairs, a member of the Privileges Committee, and Deputy Chair of the Commonwealth Women Parliamentarians (CWP) Fiji Group, where her leadership helps advance women's representation, participation and empowerment in public life.

Before entering Parliament, Hon. Kumar built an impressive and wide-ranging career across education, environmental management, public policy, investment promotion and consumer protection. Beginning as a teacher and later becoming a teacher educator, she laid a strong foundation in service to learning and community development before expanding her leadership into environmental advocacy and economic advancement.

Her work as Investment Manager at the Fiji Islands Trade & Investment Bureau strengthened trade and private sector development, while her 12-year tenure as Chief Executive Officer of the Consumer Council of Fiji firmly established her as one of Fiji's leading voices for consumer rights, consumer protection, fair markets and ethical trade. Through this work, she championed fairness, accountability and justice for ordinary Fijians.

She also elevated Fiji's international standing in consumer protection, standards and fair trade. She served on the ACP-EU Follow-up Committee of the European Economic and Social Committee and as a Council Member of Consumers International. Her leadership in successfully securing Fiji's bid to host the 34th ISO/COPOLCO Meeting and Related Events in Nadi, and her role as Co-Chair of the event, showcased Fiji's capacity and commitment to responsible consumer policy on the global stage.

In the education sector, She provided steady and decisive leadership during one of the nation's most challenging periods. Among her notable achievements was leading the safe reopening of schools, supporting the successful resumption of national examinations during the COVID-19 pandemic, and guiding Fiji's post-pandemic recovery in education with care, resilience and determination.

As Minister for Housing and Community Development, she pursued accountability and fairness by initiating and seeing through public inquiries into the PCN-Lagilagi Housing project and Housing Authority of Fiji land lot allocations, reinforcing her commitment to justice, transparency and improved outcomes for Fijian communities.

Her contributions have been widely recognised, including the Most Influential Woman of the Year Award in 2010 from The Fiji Times and the 2015 Executive Woman of the Year Award by Fiji Women in Business. These honours celebrate her outstanding leadership, professional excellence and enduring contribution to Fiji's public, business, education and consumer sectors, while inspiring women and girls to pursue leadership with confidence and purpose.

Hon. Kumar holds a Master of Science degree in Trade and Environment from the University of Wageningen in the Netherlands and a Bachelor of Science degree from the University of Rajasthan in India. Her journey reflects the strength of women's leadership and the powerful contribution women parliamentarians continue to make in shaping a fairer, more inclusive and empowered society.



Sashi Kiran

(Parliament, 2022–present)

Sashi Kiran is the Minister for Women, Children and Social Protection, a position she has held since December 2024. She was first elected to parliament in 2022 for the National Federation Party (NFP) and served as Assistant Minister for Women, Children and Social Protection for two years.

She has served as a member of the Standing Committee on Social Affairs and as Deputy Chair of the Standing Committee on Economic Affairs. She has also been a member of the CWP Fiji Group since 2022.

In September 2023, she moved a motion to set up the Fiji Truth and Reconciliation Commission to help heal the nation from its turbulent political history of coups. She was appointed as the Chairperson of the Fiji Truth and Reconciliation Commission and led the work on drafting the Fiji Truth and Reconciliation Commission Act that was passed by parliament in December 2024.

Kiran is the first woman from the Pacific to be elected to the Inter-Parliamentary Union (IPU) Working Group on Science and Technology. She was elected to this role in October 2025 during the 151st IPU Assembly, representing the Asia-Pacific geopolitical group.

She hails from Lautoka and was the trailblazing founder and former director of one of the largest non-governmental organisations in Fiji, the Foundation for Rural Integrated Enterprises and Development (FRIEND). She has developed social, economic and health empowerment programmes to serve communities for more than two decades and was a well-known development practitioner before joining politics. She has served on many local and global boards including those of CIVICUS and the Asia South Pacific Association for Basic and Adult Education, as well as on the University of Exeter (UK) Global Community Food and Health Project Advisory Board. She has also served as Chair of the USP Lautoka Campus Advisory Board.

Kiran was the first woman Chairperson of the Pacific Organic Ethical Trade Community (POETCom), a role to which she was appointed in 2021. She stepped down from this position in 2023 to focus on her political career.

In 2017, Kiran served in the Commonwealth Observer Group for the elections in Papua New Guinea.



Alitia Vakatai Bavou Cirikiyasawa Bainivalu (Parliament, 2022–present)

Alitia Vakatai Bavou Cirikiyasawa Bainivalu is a member of the People's Alliance party and was elected to parliament on 24 December 2022. She is originally from Nabalabala, Saivou, Ra, and is one of the five women who were successfully elected to parliament in that year.

Bainivalu worked in the civil service under the Ministry of Fisheries for eight years before leaving for further studies in Tokyo, Japan, in 2017. She returned to Fiji in 2020 and later worked as a researcher at the Office of the Leader of the Opposition for two and a half years. She was sworn in as an MP on 24 December 2022 and was also appointed as Assistant Minister for Tourism and Civil Aviation, a position she held for 18 months. During this period, she was also appointed as Chairperson of the Standing Committee on Social Affairs, becoming the first woman to hold this position. She has also been a member of the CWP Fiji Group since 2022.

On 28 June 2024, Bainivalu was appointed as Minister for Fisheries and Forestry, becoming the first woman to hold this portfolio. Alongside her ministerial responsibilities, she also serves as the Government Whip – only the second woman to be appointed to the position in the past 50 years. She continues to hold both offices.

On 25 September 2024, the Cabinet appointed Bainivalu as the Advocacy Champion for the Commonwealth Living Lands Charter (CALL) strategy, a role in which she advances issues such as climate change, biodiversity loss, and land degradation or desertification.

Bainivalu holds a Master of Science degree from Tokyo University of Marine Science and Technology (Japan) and a bachelor's degree in Marine Studies from The University of the South Pacific (USP). She is married to Aminiasi Bainivalu. They have five children.



Lenora Salusalu Qereqeretabua

(Parliament, 2018 – Present)

Lenora Salusalu Qereqeretabua is the Deputy Speaker of the Parliament of Fiji, Assistant Minister for Foreign Affairs and External Trade, and an MP representing the National Federation Party (NFP). First elected to parliament at the 2018 general election, she has established herself as a respected parliamentarian, communications professional, and advocate for women's empowerment, environmental sustainability and community development.

Qereqeretabua has served as Deputy Speaker of Parliament since December 2022, playing a key role in supporting the effective functioning of Fiji's legislature. She was initially appointed as Assistant Minister for Housing and Local Government in December 2022 before assuming the role of Assistant Minister for Foreign Affairs in June 2023. She previously served as Deputy Chairperson of the Standing Committee on Foreign Affairs and Defence and now chairs the same committee.

Prior to entering politics, she built a distinguished career in communications, media and corporate social responsibility. She held several senior positions at Vodafone Fiji, including Public Relations and Media Officer and, later, Manager of the Vodafone ATH Fiji Foundation, where she led community development and corporate social responsibility initiatives. From 2012 to 2018, she worked as an independent public relations consultant and was a sought-after facilitator and master of ceremonies for numerous local, regional and international events.

A well-known media personality throughout the Pacific, she gained regional recognition as the long-serving host and anchor of *The Pacific Way*, a television programme produced by the Secretariat of the Pacific Community (SPC). Through this role, she helped promote Pacific cultures, regional cooperation and development issues across the region.

Her commitment to public service extends beyond parliament. She has served as a Board Member of Save the Children Fiji and has actively supported organisations such as Lifeline Fiji and Wows Fiji, contributing to initiatives focused on child welfare, mental health and community resilience. Between 2015 and 2017, she also served on Fiji's National Flag Committee, participating in national consultations regarding a proposed new national flag.

An advocate for greater women's representation in leadership and decision-making, she currently serves as the Pacific Regional Representative on the CWP Steering Committee and as Chairperson of the CWP Fiji Group. Her contributions at both the national and regional levels continue to advance the participation and leadership of women in parliamentary democracy.

She holds a postgraduate certificate in human resource management from The University of the South Pacific (USP).

FIJI'S FIRST FEMALE ACHIEVERS IN PARLIAMENT

Breaking Barriers, Inspiring Generations

1966**Adi Losalini Raravuya Dovi**

Adi Losalini Raravuya Dovi was one of the first women elected to parliament, serving in the House of Representatives from 1966 to 1977.

In 1972 she was appointed first female Government Whip.

She was also appointed as the first female member for the Legislative Council.

1966**Irene Jai Narayan**

Irene Jai Narayan was the first Indo-Fijian woman Member of Parliament in 1966.

She was the first female National President of a political party (National Federation Party) from 1976 to 1979.

She also served as the first female Opposition Whip from 1979 to 1984 and the first female Deputy Leader of the Opposition from 1984 to 1985.

She is the longest-serving woman parliamentarian in Fiji's legislative history, having served as a Member of Parliament for 21 years.

2014**Ro Teimumu Kepa**

Ro Teimumu Kepa became the first iTaukei female to serve as a Political Party Leader and the Leader of Opposition.

2014**Mereseini Rakuita**

Mereseini became the first female Minister for Lands and Mineral Resources in 2014 to 2016.

2018**Dr. Jiko Fatafehi Luveni**

Dr. Jiko Fatafehi Luveni was the first Fijian woman to serve as Speaker of the Parliament of Fiji, holding office from 2014 to 2018.

She was also the first female dentist in Fiji.

2022**Lynda Tabua**

She became the first female Leader of Government Business in Parliament.

**1966****1966****1970****1992****2014****2014****2018****2022****2022****2025****1970****Anaseini Qionibaravi**

Anaseini Qionibaravi was the first woman to serve in the Senate from 1970 to 1976.

1992**Meraia Taufa Vakatale**

Meraia Taufa Vakatale was the first Fijian woman appointed as a Cabinet Minister in 1992.

In 1997, she became the first woman Deputy Prime Minister of Fiji. In 1999, she became the first female President of the Soqosoqo ni Vakavulewa ni Taukei (SVT) Party.

2022**Alitia Vakatai Bavou Cirikiyasawa Bainivalu**

Alitia Bainivalu was the first female Chairperson appointed in the Parliamentary Standing Committee on Social Affairs.

In 2024 she was appointed the first female as Minister for Fisheries and Forestry.

She is the second female Government Whip appointed after fifty years.

2025**Lenora Qereqeretabua**

Lenora qereqeretabua became the first female to be appointed as Chaiperson of Standing Committee on Foreign Affairs Defence.

Disclaimer

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