

**STANDING  
COMMITTEE ON  
ECONOMIC AFFAIRS**

**CONSOLIDATED REVIEW  
REPORT OF THE SUGAR  
CANE GROWERS FUND  
ANNUAL REPORTS 2023 &  
2024**

**Appendices**

# **ANNEX 1**

## **WRITTEN SUBMISSIONS**



# Sugar Cane Growers Fund

## Presentation to Economic Affairs Committee

Board & ( SPFL) Management Presentation · 26<sup>th</sup> August 2026



**Fiji  
BUSINESS  
EXCELLENCE  
AWARDS**



# Core Objectives



|                                                                         |                                                                   |
|-------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------|
| 01                                                                      | 02                                                                |
| Past Findings & Recommendation Update                                   | SPFL Update – By Chairman (SPFL)                                  |
| 03                                                                      | 04                                                                |
| Opportunities & Challenges                                              | Origins & Act Review                                              |
| 05                                                                      | 06                                                                |
| SCGF Positions as of 31 <sup>st</sup> August 2026 & Mortgagee Sale Data | Products, Services Position                                       |
| 07                                                                      | 08                                                                |
| SCGF High Level Strategic Plans –                                       | ADB – Gap Analysis and Roadmap                                    |
| 09                                                                      | 10                                                                |
| Conclusion                                                              | Appendix - Industry Transformation, Import, Export & Agro Tourism |

 2 Actioned

 2 In Progress

 1 Ongoing

 2 Govt / Authority

| # | Recommendation                                           | SCGF Response / Key Action                                                                                                                                                        | Responsibility     | Expected Timing                                |
|---|----------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------|------------------------------------------------|
| 1 | Advise / Engage SPFL on relevant matters                 | Up-date in presentation- chairman                                                                                                                                                 | SPFL Board & Mgmt  | Part of SPFL Strategic Plan<br>Actioned        |
| 2 | Formal Engagement with SPFL & improve governance         | Ongoing & Part of SPFL Presentation-Chairman                                                                                                                                      | SCGF/ SPFL Board   | After next Board meeting<br>In Progress        |
| 3 | Legislative / structural matters before Ministry         | Matter is before the Ministry, Ministry of Finance and Solicitor-General’s Office.                                                                                                | SCGF Board / Mgmt  | Cabinet soon; Bill next Sitting<br>In Progress |
| 4 | SCGF concerns – Industry, milling, tramline and industry | Recommendation & presentation made to the Sugar Select Committee and continues to be concern, fragile with loans                                                                  | Government-SCC     | Govt to decide way forward<br>In Progress      |
| 5 | Promote Awareness & attract / support growers            | Continues targeted awareness:), radio, print, social media, community meetings, grower visits & Special Call Care Program and lead Org – Prime Minister’s Sugar Cane Farmer award | SCGF /Stakeholders | Ongoing<br>Actioned & Ongoing                  |
| 6 | Number of Related Institutions and Relevance             | To be determined by the authorities (Sugar Select Committee). Refer FAO Report.                                                                                                   | Authorities /SSC   | Authorities to decide<br>In Progress           |
| 7 | Inquiry in the Industry and Business Model               | To be determined by the authorities (Sugar Select Committee).                                                                                                                     | government - SSC   | Authorities to decide<br>In Progress           |



✓ 5 Implemented

🕒 2 WIP

🔄 5 Ongoing

|    |                                                 |             |                                                                                                                                |
|----|-------------------------------------------------|-------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| 1  | Review Org Structure & 1984 Act                 | WIP         | MOF, MOAWS & SI for Cabinet Approval                                                                                           |
| 2  | Comprehensive Growers' Fund info in AR          | Implemented | Implemented                                                                                                                    |
| 3  | RBF oversight for lending activities            | WIP         | Strongly supported ; would reduce political interference                                                                       |
| 4  | Full loan details (recurring, yield, growers)   | Implemented | Implemented                                                                                                                    |
| 5  | Improve reporting style & eliminate errors      | Implemented | Implemented – proofreading & vetting before Cabinet/Parliament                                                                 |
| 6  | Raise awareness & attract new growers           | Ongoing     | Aggressively continues – additional benefits being promoted- MPI, General Insurance, Loyal Cards, Interest reduction, savings, |
| 7  | Performance matrix aligned with KPIs            | Implemented | Implemented in all future Annual Reports                                                                                       |
| 8  | Include relevant SDGs in Annual Reports         | Implemented | Implemented – supports Fiji's international commitments                                                                        |
| 9  | Maintain & upgrade digital platforms            | Ongoing     | Continues to upgrade and introduce innovative solutions- DMS, Chatbot, E Wallet Revolving Limit                                |
| 10 | Pandemic remote operations & IT infrastructure  | Ongoing     | Noted with appreciation; exploring AI & further digital services, Fuel Crisis Call                                             |
| 11 | Innovation, \$3.056m surplus & Excellence Award | Ongoing     | Continues innovation; giving back >\$2m to the community                                                                       |



# SPFL

## 1. BACKGROUND AND CORPORATE MANDATE

- South Pacific Fertilizers Limited (SPFL) was established in the 1980s under the Companies Act to secure a stable and localized supply of fertilizer for Fiji's sugar cane sector. Of the five industry stakeholders, two are the principal shareholders: the Sugar Cane Growers Fund (SCGF), which holds 90.6% of the company's equity, and the Sugar Cane Growers Council (SCGC), which holds the remaining 9.4%.
- SPFL is principally the provider of crop nutrition and crop protection products to Fiji's sugar cane industry, while continuing to serve other agricultural sectors. Its key functions include bulk procurement of source materials and ingredients, fertilizer blending and packaging, and distribution and logistics, undertaken in collaboration with the Fiji Sugar Corporation Limited (FSC).
- Historically, SPFL was structured to ensure that cane farmers could access highly subsidized agricultural inputs essential to the continued production of sugar, an important export commodity and contributor to the Fijian economy.

## 2. GOVERNMENT SUBSIDY SUPPORT

- SPFL records indicate that approximately \$229.0 million (VAT-inclusive) in fertilizer subsidies was provided by Government between 2009 and 2026. For the 2026/2027 period, Government has allocated a further \$15.0 million (VAT-inclusive). Accordingly, cumulative Government fertilizer subsidy support is expected to reach approximately \$244.0 million by July 2027.
- In addition, more than \$17.0 million (VAT-inclusive) was provided to the company in weedicide subsidies between 2017 and 2026, with a further \$850,000 (VAT-inclusive) allocated for 2026/2027. Cumulative weedicide subsidy support is therefore expected to exceed \$18.0 million by July 2027.

# SPFL- Strategic Imperatives



## 3. STRATEGIC IMPERATIVE: PROFITABILITY AND SELF-SUSTAINABILITY

Since March 2026, Government has indicated that consideration is being given to whether SPFL will continue to receive the same level and scope of financial support as part of Government's contribution to the Sugar Industry. Against this backdrop, SPFL must proactively initiate, formulate and pursue strategic pathways towards greater business profitability, commercial resilience and self-sustainability.

The newly appointed Board has accordingly been tasked with this responsibility, alongside the realignment and repositioning of the company's operational, human resources, audit and risk, and administrative frameworks. These reforms are intended to establish a sound foundation for the next Strategic Plan.

A draft three-year Strategic Plan for 2027–2029 is expected to be presented to the Board at its next meeting in early October 2026. However, given the growth strategy being contemplated, consideration is also being given to a broader five-year Strategic Plan covering 2027–2031.

## 4 STRATEGIC PATHWAYS UNDER CONSIDERATION

The following strategic pathways are being developed for incorporation into the forthcoming Strategic Plan. Some initiatives are likely to require reasonable capital expenditure (CAPEX), in addition to the proposals previously shared with the Honourable Minister and Honourable Assistant Minister on 15 June 2026.

### A. STRATEGIC DOMESTIC MARKET REPOSITIONING

#### 1. Diversification of Current Product and Service Offerings

##### 1.1 Sugar Cane

- Improve and enhance existing product offerings.
- Introduce and develop liquid fertilizer solutions.
- Explore organic complements and/or substitutes.

##### 1.2 Other Crops

- Extend and improve current product offerings.
- Develop liquid fertilizer alternatives and substitutes.
- Explore organic complements and/or substitutes.

##### 1.3 Weedicides and Insecticides

- Explore and expand the current product range.
- Increase sales volumes and market penetration.
- Develop and assess organic alternatives/substitutes.

##### 1.4 Other Ancillary Farm Products and Services – All Sectors

- Wholesale specialized farm equipment, including power-driven sprayers, protective wear and related equipment.
- Provide Technical Agronomy Services through bundled farm packages.
- Pursue technological innovation, including the use of farm drones for data collection and precision application of fertilizer and weedicides.

# SPFL- Strategic Imperatives



## B. REGIONAL MARKET SCAN AND MARKET ACCESS

- **Explore and capitalize on opportunities** in Papua New Guinea's large agricultural sector and in other Pacific Island Countries (PICs). Management recently returned from an exploratory visit to Solomon Islands and has reported to the Board that opportunities there appear limited. This should not, however, diminish future regional efforts, particularly where specific niche products and services may present viable opportunities.
- **SPFL would benefit from Government support** through inter-governmental strategic alliances and partnerships within the Asia-Pacific region, particularly in relation to market access and trade negotiations, strategic sourcing of key materials, and access to specialist human capital, expertise and skills.
- **Explore market-access** opportunities arising from Government's membership of the Pacific Community (SPC), as well as collaboration with FAO, ADB, the EU and other technical and development partners. Relevant initiatives may include the Horizon 2030 Food Systems Strategy and the National Agrifood Investment Plan. Potential demand for organic fertilizers across PICs should also be assessed and, where viable, developed.
- **Strengthen institutional partnerships outside the Sugar Industry** as part of SPFL's domestic and regional marketing and business-development strategy.

## C. FUTURE GOVERNMENT CROP DEVELOPMENT INITIATIVES

3.1 **Explore potential** additional revenue streams from the crop and livestock sectors should the Ministry of Agriculture and/or Government decide to revive and strategically develop copra and cocoa as part of a long-term programme for export commodity diversification. Such programmes could also promote integrated semi-livestock farming models, including the “cattle–copra” concept. These initiatives could ultimately generate additional demand for SPFL products and services.

3.2 **Procurement Strategy** for our raw materials. Going forward, SPFL needs to assess the current procurement methodology in terms of effectiveness, cost-savings, and delivery logistics. If there is any opportunity to improve in terms of cost-savings, delivery logistics, and certainty of supply, then it may be prudent to pursue and formulate an appropriate Procurement Strategy & Hedging Policy that suits us.

## 4 FINANCIALS

- SPFL Finalization of the FY2025 financial statements, particularly related-party transactions;
- Review of the Articles of Association and arrangements between the two shareholders.

# Market Analysis: Opportunities in the Sugar Cane Industry



## Growing Demand

Global sugar consumption is rising, driven by food and biofuel sectors. Government support provides a defined market, though declining prices pressure the industry .

## Emerging Markets

New markets in Asia and Africa present opportunities. Over 50–70% of Fiji's cane is burnt — improving quality is critical for premium pricing.

## Technological Advances

Modern Farming technology increases yield and reduces waste through mechanization and government assistance programs- Commercial Farming,



Political Will and Commitments To transform Industry – clear road map

# SCGF Act 1984 and its Origin... correct narrative



| Year | Key Historical Milestone                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                     |
|------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| 1946 | The United Kingdom negotiated a price increase for Commonwealth sugar (from £stg 19.10.0 to £stg 25.5.0 per ton), explicitly stipulating that a portion of this increase must establish reserve funds for price stabilization, capital rehabilitation, and labor welfare.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                    |
| 1959 | <p>The <b>Sugar Price Stabilization Fund (SPSF)</b> and <b>Capital Development Fund (CDF)</b> were established by Ordinance. Initial contributions totaled £stg 2,597,210, credited to general accounts (43.5% Millers / 56.5% Growers).</p> <p><b>Section 15 of the Ordinance (1959) have provisions for the growers to claim their share</b> Unclaimed monies may be transferred to SPSF after five years, reinforcing the conditional and time-bound nature of any entitlement.</p> <p><b>Ordinance (Section 22):</b> Explicitly dictated that funds are not assignable or transferable to any individual grower. <b>No person shall have a personal claim or proprietary right to the monies held in these accounts.</b> The funds were mandated to be used collectively for the benefit of the industry as a whole.</p> |
| 1970 | Following Lord Denning’s Award, the SPSF was abolished, and \$6 million was transferred to the <b>Sugar Cane Price Support Fund</b> under the administration of the Permanent Secretary for Finance. By this time, the millers had fully utilized their entitlement; hence, the remaining capital was derived from the grower-allocated portion.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                             |
| 1975 | The guaranteed cane price clause was deleted from the Sugar Cane Contract by the Chief Justice. Consequently, the accumulated funds (which had grown to \$12.5 million) were legally frozen within a trust account under the Finance Control Management Act.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                 |

|             |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                  |
|-------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
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| 1983 - 1984 | By late 1983, the frozen investments reached \$17,573,389. The administration was reviewed for transition, with concerns raised regarding the impact on the banking system if invested funds were withdrawn for individual farmer payouts. To maintain high-yield investments exceeding 13% and ensure financial stability, it was decided that from January 1, 1984, the funds would be consolidated and managed collectively rather than disbursed. To unfreeze these critical funds and utilize them for the industry, Parliament enacted <b>Act No. 9 of 1984</b> , formally establishing the Sugar Cane growers fund Authority as a statutory body to manage these assets as a collective lending facility. |

# Review of the SCGF Act 1984: Priority Reform Agenda-Dec 2025-DEC 2026



|   |                                                                                                                                                                                     |
|---|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| 1 | <b>Governance &amp; Oversight</b><br>Strengthen reporting frameworks; consider Reserve Bank of Fiji oversight as recommended by the Select Committee.                               |
| 2 | <b>Board Appointments</b><br>Fit and Proper criteria with balanced expertise in Lending, Grower Relations, Finance, Investment, and HR.                                             |
| 3 | <b>Board Subcommittees</b><br>Mandatory Credit and Assets & Liability Subcommittees; Board may co-opt independent members by skillset.                                              |
| 4 | <b>Code of Conduct</b><br>Formalize conflict of interest provisions and meeting governance protocols.                                                                               |
| 5 | <b>Audit &amp; Reporting</b><br>Strengthen annual reporting standards and independent audit requirements.                                                                           |
| 6 | <b>Scope of Lending</b><br>Expand services to include insurance, social security / savings, and support for co-operatives and sugar industry companies and outside sugar industry . |
| 7 | <b>Expanded Functions</b><br>Enable investments, joint ventures, and formation of a charitable arm for broader industry benefit.                                                    |
| 8 | <b>Prudential Guidelines</b><br>Establish robust investment guidelines and fund protection provisions.                                                                              |



# Unconditional Support to the Growers & Industry- August 2026

SCGF exists to serve every cane grower in Fiji — providing financial access, industry stability, and a pathway to sustainable livelihoods across all districts

7

District Offices

Lautoka, Nadi, Ba, Tavua, Rakiraki, Labasa &  
Seaqaqa, plus weekly agency services to  
Sigatoka

30th June 2026

80+

Years of Service

Supporting Fiji's sugar industry since 1946

FSC with Commercial  
Banks & FDB

Market Share

|              | \$M        |      |         |
|--------------|------------|------|---------|
| <b>Banks</b> | <b>55</b>  | 48%  | May-26  |
| <b>CI</b>    | <b>0</b>   | 0%   | Apr-26  |
| <b>FDB</b>   | <b>15</b>  | 13%  | AR 2025 |
| <b>SCGF</b>  | <b>42</b>  | 37%  | Aug-26  |
| <b>CCSLA</b> | <b>3</b>   | 3%   |         |
|              | <b>115</b> | 100% |         |

Only Growers SCGF –

65% -  
\$37/\$57 (M)

4032

Growers

\$42.374 M

Portfolio

# 31st August 2026



High Risk -  
25%

| Portfolio as at 31st August 2026 by Production |       |         |                 |         |
|------------------------------------------------|-------|---------|-----------------|---------|
| Production                                     | Count | %       | Loan Portfolio  | %       |
| 0-100                                          | 2097  | 47.54%  | \$10,640,242.41 | 25.11%  |
| 100-200                                        | 1150  | 26.07%  | \$9,219,005.84  | 21.76%  |
| 200-300                                        | 643   | 14.58%  | \$8,066,302.28  | 19.04%  |
| 300-400                                        | 305   | 6.91%   | \$4,339,837.90  | 10.24%  |
| 400-500                                        | 114   | 2.58%   | \$2,403,990.98  | 5.67%   |
| 500-600                                        | 49    | 1.11%   | \$1,107,192.89  | 2.61%   |
| 600-700                                        | 24    | 0.54%   | \$413,452.66    | 0.98%   |
| 700-800                                        | 15    | 0.34%   | \$443,108.31    | 1.05%   |
| 800-900                                        | 9     | 0.20%   | \$184,886.81    | 0.44%   |
| 900-1000                                       | 3     | 0.07%   | \$22,534.73     | 0.05%   |
| 3400-3500                                      | 2     | 0.05%   | \$5,534,440.63  | 13.06%  |
| Grand Total                                    | 4411  | 100.00% | \$42,374,995.44 | 100.00% |

A further 847 growers with exposure of approximately \$6.033 million are high risk- 50tonnes below

| Portfolio as at 31st August by Age |       |         |                 |         |
|------------------------------------|-------|---------|-----------------|---------|
| Age Group                          | Count | %       | Loan Portfolio  | %       |
| 0-35                               | 137   | 3.11%   | \$1,530,883.47  | 3.61%   |
| 36-55                              | 1569  | 35.57%  | \$16,017,435.55 | 37.80%  |
| 56-65                              | 1388  | 31.47%  | \$11,578,647.14 | 27.32%  |
| 66-85                              | 1221  | 27.68%  | \$7,309,016.82  | 17.25%  |
| >85                                | 94    | 2.13%   | \$404,571.82    | 0.95%   |
| FSC                                | 2     | 0.05%   | \$5,534,440.63  | 13.06%  |
| Grand Total                        | 4411  | 100.00% | \$42,374,995.43 | 100.00% |

High Risk -  
31.26 %

| Portfolio as at 31st August 2026 by Gender |       |         |                 |         |
|--------------------------------------------|-------|---------|-----------------|---------|
| Gender Group                               | Count | %       | Loan Portfolio  | %       |
| Female                                     | 403   | 9.14%   | \$4,175,012.06  | 9.85%   |
| Male                                       | 4006  | 90.82%  | \$32,665,542.74 | 77.09%  |
| FSC                                        | 2     | 0.05%   | \$5,534,440.63  | 13.06%  |
| Grand Total                                | 4411  | 100.00% | \$42,374,995.43 | 100.00% |

| Portfolio as at 31st August 2026 by Product |       |                 |         |
|---------------------------------------------|-------|-----------------|---------|
| Product Group                               | Count | Loan Portfolio  | %       |
| BLP Loan                                    | 24    | \$81,250.07     | 0.19%   |
| CDRF Loan                                   | 689   | \$537,291.52    | 1.27%   |
| FSC                                         | 2     | \$5,534,440.63  | 13.06%  |
| Improvement Loan                            | 885   | \$6,483,436.54  | 15.30%  |
| Investment Loan                             | 702   | \$8,091,298.71  | 19.09%  |
| Personal Loan                               | 793   | \$6,649,762.52  | 15.69%  |
| Refinance of Cane Growers Loan              | 964   | \$10,713,658.27 | 25.28%  |
| Refinance of Outside Debt                   | 150   | \$2,879,629.60  | 6.80%   |
| Rehabilitation Loan                         | 11    | \$172,790.11    | 0.41%   |
| Subsistence Farming                         | 8     | \$69,327.39     | 0.16%   |
| Working Capital Loan                        | 183   | \$1,162,110.08  | 2.74%   |
| Grand Total                                 | 4411  | \$42,374,995.43 | 100.00% |



# 31st August 2026

| Mill    | Total Accounts | Total Grower Count -SCGF | Total Production | Total Portfolio | Total Grower Count -Productive | Total Production | Portfolio Percent | Pro/ SCGF Pro | SCGF<br>Pro//Total Mill |
|---------|----------------|--------------------------|------------------|-----------------|--------------------------------|------------------|-------------------|---------------|-------------------------|
| Lautoka | 948            | 927                      | 123,964.19       | \$13,662,835.57 | 2397                           | 348,721.52       | 32%               | 22%           | 36%                     |
| Rarawai | 2044           | 1827                     | 214,389.19       | \$14,410,587.55 | 3698                           | 543,854.94       | 34%               | 38%           | 39%                     |
| Labasa  | 1419           | 1278                     | 225,490.85       | \$14,301,572.31 | 3031                           | 583,611.51       | 34%               | 40%           | 39%                     |
| Total   | 4411           | 4032                     | 563,844.23       | \$42,374,995.43 | 9126                           | 1,476,187.97     | 100%              | 100%          | 38%                     |

|                | Total Arrears  | Total Loan-Default | Total Accounts | Total Portfolio | % Balance Arrear | Total Growers | Total Production |
|----------------|----------------|--------------------|----------------|-----------------|------------------|---------------|------------------|
| HeadOffice-FSC | \$0.00         | \$0.00             | 1              | \$5,534,440.63  | 0%               | 2             | 12,577.44        |
| Lautoka        | \$7,487.33     | \$65,932.11        | 338            | \$3,170,899.20  | 2%               | 1035          | 159,733.60       |
| Nadi           | \$12,599.01    | \$116,882.07       | 370            | \$3,486,247.14  | 3%               | 983           | 129,840.16       |
| Sigatoka       | \$2,441.60     | \$20,020.93        | 136            | \$1,193,265.24  | 2%               | 377           | 46,570.32        |
| Ba             | \$30,731.44    | \$176,530.36       | 900            | \$7,377,685.38  | 2%               | 2166          | 327,213.30       |
| Tavua          | \$8,272.55     | \$43,922.27        | 339            | \$2,621,863.45  | 2%               | 704           | 94,579.35        |
| Labasa         | \$20,625.83    | \$82,184.57        | 894            | \$7,680,129.30  | 1%               | 2494          | 404,779.04       |
| Seaqqa         | \$6,653.89     | \$46,525.64        | 353            | \$5,860,361.09  | 1%               | 537           | 178,832.47       |
| RakiRaki       | \$18,129.83    | \$221,007.93       | 446            | \$3,545,041.72  | 6%               | 828           | 122,062.29       |
| Debt Recovery  | \$1,137,732.68 | \$1,825,774.15     | 633            | \$1,905,062.29  | 96%              |               |                  |
| Total          | \$1,244,674.17 | \$2,598,780.03     | 4,411          | \$42,374,995.43 | 6%               | 9126          | 1,476,187.97     |

## Financial Performance Snapshot 2020 – August 2026

| Loan Portfolio                      | 2020       | 2021       | 2022       | 2023       | 2024       | 2025 (Unsigned) | 31 Aug 26 (Unaudited) |
|-------------------------------------|------------|------------|------------|------------|------------|-----------------|-----------------------|
| Total Assets                        | 73,592,914 | 75,449,004 | 78,877,480 | 82,218,934 | 89,230,836 | 90,160,376      | 89,822,953            |
| Total Investments                   | 22,803,521 | 22,068,530 | 25,333,539 | 24,827,735 | 25,363,559 | 42,234,883      | 41,058,034            |
| Loans to Growers (Net Portfolio)    | 27,545,977 | 28,020,462 | 30,407,678 | 30,889,988 | 31,539,954 | 35,432,104      | 35,566,347            |
| Provision (Non Performing Accounts) | 3,685,521  | 2,552,458  | 2,163,750  | 1,720,704  | 1,428,937  | 1,274,209       | 1,330,883             |
|                                     |            |            |            |            |            |                 |                       |
| Profitability                       | 2020       | 2021       | 2022       | 2023       | 2024       | 2025 (Unsigned) | 31 Aug 26 (Unaudited) |
| Net Profit (SCGF)                   | 1,719,927  | 3,056,524  | 2,836,424  | 2,705,230  | 5,969,466  | 2,276,333       | 1,144,824             |
| Group Profit (SPFL)                 | 6,806,990  | 5,716,578  | 9,669,336  | 6,385,471  | 7,007,112  | 5,276,333       | N/A                   |
| Grower & Production                 | 2020       | 2021       | 2022       | 2023       | 2024       | 2025 (Unsigned) | 31 Aug 26 (Unaudited) |
| No. of Productive Growers           | 11,622     | 11,397     | 10,872     | 10,563     | 10,260     | 10,260          | 9,126                 |
| Annual Sugar Cane Production (tons) | 1,729,281  | 1,417,267  | 1,639,004  | 1,565,486  | 1,331,922  | 1,331,922       | 1,476,188             |
|                                     |            |            |            |            |            |                 |                       |
| Approvals/Payments                  | 2020       | 2021       | 2022       | 2023       | 2024       | 2025 (Unsigned) | 31 Aug 26 (Unaudited) |
| Total Application Approved-No       | 2,621      | 2,049      | 2,581      | 2,160      | 1,920      | 1,810           | 1,176                 |
| Approved Application Value          | 9,870,827  | 7,480,461  | 10,262,496 | 9,199,521  | 9,501,494  | 9,710,799       | 6,180,646             |
| Total Loan Payments Made- No        | 2,215      | 2,948      | 3,662      | 3,215      | 2,651      | 2,956           | 1,659                 |
| Loan Payments Value                 | 7,998,661  | 6,527,411  | 9,500,557  | 9,035,906  | 8,094,775  | 9,854,003       | 6,189,870             |
| Average Monthly Application Value   | 822,569    | 623,372    | 791,713    | 752,992    | 674,565    | 821,167         | 773,734               |
|                                     |            |            |            |            |            |                 |                       |
| Arrears/ Provisions / Write Off     | 2020       | 2021       | 2022       | 2023       | 2024       | 2025 (Unsigned) | 31 Aug 26 (Unaudited) |
| Arrears Trends ( Macro)             | 13%        | 11%        | 10.0%      | 8%         | 7%         | 6%              | 7%                    |
| % Provision /Gross Loan             | 13.38%     | 9.11%      | 7.12%      | 5.57%      | 4.53%      | 3.60%           | 3.74%                 |
|                                     |            |            |            |            |            |                 |                       |

SCGF's financial performance from 2020 through August 2026 reflects the Fund's commitment to sustainable operations, prudent financial management, and growing service delivery to Fiji's sugar cane grower community.

There are EWS that arrears is increasing due to delayed harvesting and failure to harvesting

## Mortgagee Sales Information 2021 – 2026

| Mortgagee Sale |                                                                                           | No         | %           | \$ Value               | %           |
|----------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------|-------------|------------------------|-------------|
| 1.             | Number of Mortgagee Sale loan cleared in full                                             | 68         | 43%         | \$ 746,551.57          | 44%         |
| 2.             | Number of Mortgagee Sale cases advertised and came under arrangement or partially cleared | 18         | 11%         | \$ 176,766.78          | 10%         |
| 4.             | Number of Mortgagee Sale cases written off                                                | 5          | 3%          | \$ 136,933.29          | 8%          |
| 5.             | Number of Mortgagee Sale cases Re-advertised                                              | 47         | 30%         | \$ 479,920.48          | 28%         |
| 6.             | Number of Mortgagee Sale cases still pending not settled                                  | 19         | 12%         | \$ 149,709.46          | 9%          |
| <b>TOTAL</b>   |                                                                                           | <b>157</b> | <b>100%</b> | <b>\$ 1,689,881.58</b> | <b>100%</b> |

1. The number of mortgagee sales completed, including the location of each case.
2. The number of mortgagee sale cases still pending, including their respective locations.
3. The type of asset involved in each mortgagee sale.
4. The original loan amount and the outstanding balance owed that resulted in the mortgagee sale for each case.

1. SCGF Follows all due process and absolute good governance- text, follow visits, letters, demands and then mortgagee sale, last chance, right of equity and then transfer- 18 months to 24 months arrears due to nature of payments.
2. Majority had been legacy debts with no major actions taken before – lacked monitoring and reporting
3. Mortgagee sale is the last resort – arrangements to either plant cane, or pay 50% of the arrears and come up with arrangements
4. Average 26 – six years including repeated cases

# Mortgagee Sales Information 2021 – 2026

| Number of Mortgagee Sale loan cleared in full            |               |                      |  | Number of Mortgagee Sale cases advertised and came under arrangement or partially cleared |               |                      |
|----------------------------------------------------------|---------------|----------------------|--|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------|----------------------|
| Row La                                                   | Count of Farm | Sum of Loan Balance  |  | Row La                                                                                    | Count of Farm | Sum of Loan Balance  |
| Ba                                                       | 22            | \$ 158,333.07        |  | Ba                                                                                        | 5             | \$ 23,211.02         |
| Labasa                                                   | 12            | \$ 186,228.16        |  | Labasa                                                                                    | 1             | \$ 6,007.12          |
| Lautoka                                                  | 1             | \$ 4,333.38          |  | Lautoka                                                                                   | 4             | \$ 31,221.62         |
| Nadi                                                     | 4             | \$ 21,965.53         |  | Nadi                                                                                      | 2             | \$ 31,120.26         |
| Rakiraki                                                 | 9             | \$ 75,733.63         |  | Seaqaqa                                                                                   | 3             | \$ 70,642.57         |
| Seaqaqa                                                  | 11            | \$ 249,935.25        |  | Sigatoka                                                                                  | 2             | \$ 9,758.25          |
| Sigatoka                                                 | 3             | \$ 18,529.27         |  | Tavua                                                                                     | 1             | \$ 4,805.94          |
| Tavua                                                    | 6             | \$ 31,493.28         |  | (blank)                                                                                   |               |                      |
| (blank)                                                  |               |                      |  | <b>Grand Tot:</b>                                                                         | <b>18</b>     | <b>\$ 176,766.78</b> |
| <b>Grand Tot:</b>                                        | <b>68</b>     | <b>\$ 746,551.57</b> |  |                                                                                           |               |                      |
|                                                          |               |                      |  |                                                                                           |               |                      |
|                                                          |               |                      |  |                                                                                           |               |                      |
|                                                          |               |                      |  |                                                                                           |               |                      |
| Number of Mortgagee Sale cases written off               |               |                      |  | Number of Mortgagee Sale cases Re-advertised                                              |               |                      |
| Row La                                                   | Count of Farm | Sum of Loan Balance  |  | Row La                                                                                    | Count of Farm | Sum of Loan Balance  |
| Labasa                                                   | 1             | \$ 5,312.81          |  | Ba                                                                                        | 9             | \$ 50,693.82         |
| Rakiraki                                                 | 3             | \$ 95,653.73         |  | Labasa                                                                                    | 10            | \$ 123,161.86        |
| Seaqaqa                                                  | 1             | \$ 35,966.75         |  | Lautoka                                                                                   | 2             | \$ 12,078.98         |
| (blank)                                                  |               |                      |  | Nadi                                                                                      | 1             | \$ 5,227.94          |
| <b>Grand Tot:</b>                                        | <b>5</b>      | <b>\$ 136,933.29</b> |  | Rakiraki                                                                                  | 8             | \$ 129,797.66        |
|                                                          |               |                      |  | Seaqaqa                                                                                   | 6             | \$ 84,149.14         |
|                                                          |               |                      |  | Sigatoka                                                                                  | 5             | \$ 31,855.03         |
|                                                          |               |                      |  | Tavua                                                                                     | 6             | \$ 42,956.05         |
|                                                          |               |                      |  | (blank)                                                                                   |               |                      |
| <b>Grand Tot:</b>                                        | <b>47</b>     | <b>\$ 479,920.48</b> |  |                                                                                           |               |                      |
|                                                          |               |                      |  |                                                                                           |               |                      |
|                                                          |               |                      |  |                                                                                           |               |                      |
|                                                          |               |                      |  |                                                                                           |               |                      |
| Number of Mortgagee Sale cases still pending not settled |               |                      |  |                                                                                           |               |                      |
| Row La                                                   | Count of Farm | Sum of Loan Balance  |  |                                                                                           |               |                      |
| Ba                                                       | 5             | \$ 37,497.60         |  |                                                                                           |               |                      |
| Labasa                                                   | 6             | \$ 35,435.17         |  |                                                                                           |               |                      |
| Rakiraki                                                 | 4             | \$ 34,602.18         |  |                                                                                           |               |                      |
| Seaqaqa                                                  | 2             | \$ 26,615.58         |  |                                                                                           |               |                      |
| Tavua                                                    | 2             | \$ 15,558.93         |  |                                                                                           |               |                      |
| (blank)                                                  |               |                      |  |                                                                                           |               |                      |
| <b>Grand Tot:</b>                                        | <b>19</b>     | <b>\$ 149,709.46</b> |  |                                                                                           |               |                      |
|                                                          |               |                      |  |                                                                                           |               |                      |
|                                                          |               |                      |  |                                                                                           |               |                      |
|                                                          |               |                      |  |                                                                                           |               |                      |

# Products & Services



INTEREST RATES: 0% - 3.95%

SCGF offers a comprehensive suite of financial products and services tailored to the needs of registered sugar cane growers. From subsistence loans to specialized commercial financing, the Fund provides accessible capital at competitive interest rates — significantly below market levels. Digital services, legal support, and insurance guidance further extend the Fund's value proposition.

## Loan Products

### Subsistence Loan- SP

**Up to \$7,000** — Designed to meet immediate household and farming needs of registered growers. Accessible with streamlined application processes.

### CDRF Loan

**\$5,000 — Interest Free** — Climate Disaster Relief Fund loan, currently on hold. Governed under the PPSR Act 2017.

### Priority Loan

**\$5,000 — Unsecured** — Fast-track financing for urgent grower needs. Governed under the PPSR Act 2017.

### New Farmer & Lease Premium

**30% of cost — up to \$7,500** — Supports new entrants to cane farming and lease premium payments to reduce barriers to entry.

### BLP Commercial Loan

**\$8,000 – \$100,000** — Business and livelihood program financing for registered growers seeking to expand commercial operations.

### Specialized &SP Commercial Loan

**Up to \$120,000 — Secured** — Maximum single-borrower facility for significant farm investment, machinery, or land development. Requires Board approval.

## Non-Lending Services

### Legal Services

Probates, estate administration, transfers (natural love & affection), sales & purchase, deeds, and provisional title services. Fees from \$300, to be determined based on complexity.

### Valuation Services

In-house farm valuation at a flat fee of **\$150** — significantly below the market rate of \$350–\$450 charged by private valuers.

### Digital Services

**ALERT** notifications and **mySCGF Online** platform and **MySCGFApp** enable growers to access account information, submit applications, and receive updates digitally. Application fees discounted by 50% for digital channels.

### Insurance Guidance

**TISA** - Optional insurance support including MPI coverage (up to \$0.500M) and **Sun Insurance** General insurance guidance with very affordable premium payment assistance. Helps growers manage risk and protect assets.

### Savings Scheme –SCGF 5Si

Ability to have direct deductions for Savings – FNPF, Unit Trust, Banks, insurance

### Loyalty Programs

Special Discounts with Services partners (23) – Discounts 32-12.5%

**Registered Growers:** 2,541 total registered; 1,162 (27%) are active loan borrowers; **SCGF 5Si** :158 Growers Registered for FNPF Deductions.



# Competitive Fee Structure

## AFFORDABILITY & INCLUSION

SCGF's fees and charges are intentionally structured to be **20–30% of current market rates**, making the Fund the most affordable source of agricultural finance available to Fiji's sugar cane growers. Beyond baseline affordability, the Fund has introduced targeted fee concessions and interest rate incentives to support vulnerable growers, promote sustainable practices, and encourage digital adoption.



### Natural Disaster, Medical & Funeral

**Application Fee: \$0 (Waived)**

Growers affected by natural disasters, facing medical emergencies, or dealing with funeral expenses are exempt from application fees. Introduced in 2023, this concession ensures that financial hardship does not prevent access to urgent support.



### Women & Youth Growers

**Application Fee: 50% Discount**

Women and youth growers applying for farm and machinery purchase loans receive a 50% discount on application fees. This initiative supports gender equity and generational renewal in the sugar industry by lowering the cost of entry for new and emerging growers.



### Climate Change Funding

**Application Fee: 50% Discount**

Growers accessing climate change adaptation and resilience funding benefit from a 50% application fee discount. This supports the Fund's commitment to sustainable agriculture and helps growers invest in climate-smart farming practices.



### Green Cane Harvest Incentive

**Interest Rate: 0.5% Reduction for 12 Months**

Growers practicing green cane harvesting — a more environmentally sustainable method — receive a 0.5% interest rate reduction for 12 months. With growers practicing **75%** green cane harvest, this incentive reinforces the Fund's environmental commitment.



### Off-Season Burnt Cane

**Interest Rate: 3.1% with Flexible Repayment**

Growers harvesting burnt cane during the off-season benefit from a concessional interest rate of 3.1% with flexible repayment terms, acknowledging the seasonal cash flow challenges faced by growers outside the main crushing season.



### Digital Services Discount

**Application Fee: 50% Discount**

Growers who apply for loans and services through SCGF's digital channels — **mySCGF Online** and **ALERT** — receive a 50% discount on application fees. This drives digital adoption, reduces processing costs, and improves service delivery speed.

**\$1m -Fees, \$0.5m -insurance and \$0.5m- interest given back -\$2m**

# SCGF ICT INITIATIVES AND THEIR IMPACT ON FARMERS

Leveraging Technology. Empowering Growers. Building a Stronger Future.

| # | KEY INITIATIVE                                                                                                                           | IMPACT ON FARMERS                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                     |
|---|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| 1 |  <b>Implementation of Core Business Solution</b>        | <p>SCGF implemented a modern integrated ICT system covering: CRM, Loan Origination, Loan Processing &amp; Approval, Loan Management, Arrears Management, Digital Platforms, Reporting &amp; Dashboards, Integration.</p> <p>Automates processes, improves data accuracy, turnaround times, accessibility and reduces paper usage.</p> <p>Faster and more consistent service delivery for farmers.</p> |
| 2 |  <b>Mobile Application for Growers</b>                  | <p>mySCGF Mobile App enables growers to access services from their smartphones:</p> <p>View and manage business transactions, Download loan statements, Apply for additional loans, Track loan application status, Make new loan enquiries, Receive SCGF news &amp; notifications, Lodge complaints or enquiries &amp; track status.</p>                                                              |
| 3 |  <b>Digital Communication and Farmer Engagement</b>     | <p>SCGF communicates:</p> <p>New products, Loan information, Farmer success stories, Events, Important announcements, Industry information.</p> <p>Connecting with growers, service providers, stakeholders and the wider public.</p>                                                                                                                                                                 |
| 4 |  <b>Faster Access to Emergency Financial Assistance</b> | <p>Through digital channels, SCGF can respond quickly in times of need. Example: <b>Fuel Crisis Assistance Plan (May 2026)</b></p> <p>Mobile phone contact → Loan request → Digital processing → Approval → Electronic disbursement via M-PAiSA e-wallet.</p> <p>Funds received the same day without the need for multiple physical visits.</p>                                                       |
| 5 |  <b>The Next Phase – AI and Digital Transformation</b> | <p>SCGF is advancing beyond basic digitization with 2026 strategic initiatives:</p> <p>Online Document Management System, AI-powered Chatbot for 24/7 support, Rollout of mobile-network-based Overdraft Revolving Loan Facility.</p> <p>24/7 digital engagement for routine enquiries, accessing documents and emergency loans.</p>                                                                  |

## OVERALL ICT IMPACT ON SCGF GROWERS – SIX MAJOR BENEFITS

|                                                                                                                                                                                        |                                                                                                                                                                                                    |                                                                                                                                                                                      |                                                                                                                                                                                               |                                                                                                                                                                                        |                                                                                                                                                                                                                            |
|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <b>1 ACCESSIBILITY</b><br><br>Farmers can access information without always visiting an SCGF office. | <b>2 CONVENIENCE</b><br><br>Loan balances, statements, transactions and applications can be accessed digitally. | <b>3 FASTER SERVICE</b><br><br>Automation reduces manual processing and improves turnaround time. | <b>4 TRANSPARENCY</b><br><br>Growers have better visibility of their loan accounts and application status. | <b>5 COMMUNICATION</b><br><br>SMS, mobile, online and social media channels keep growers informed. | <b>6 FINANCIAL INCLUSION</b><br><br>Digital and mobile channels bring financial services closer to farmers, including in rural areas. |
|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|

Technology that serves today. Innovation that empowers tomorrow.

| Status      | As at Dec 2025 |                | Jan - July 2026 |              | Aug-26 |             |       | To Date        |
|-------------|----------------|----------------|-----------------|--------------|--------|-------------|-------|----------------|
|             | Count          | Value          | Count           | Value        | Count  | Value       | Count | Value          |
| Approved    | 183            | \$1,286,058.85 | 21              | \$91,216.50  | 7      | \$23,200.00 | 211   | \$1,400,475.35 |
| Declined    | 29             | \$323,072.00   | 10              | \$59,800.00  | 0      | \$0.00      | 39    | \$382,872.00   |
| In progress | 0              | \$0.00         | 0               | \$0.00       | 2      | \$3,500.00  | 2     | \$3,500.00     |
| Total       | 212            | \$1,609,130.85 | 31              | \$151,016.50 | 9      | \$26,700.00 | 252   | \$1,786,847.35 |

|                    | As at Dec 2025 | Jan - July 2026          | August 2026        |               |                    | YTD                |
|--------------------|----------------|--------------------------|--------------------|---------------|--------------------|--------------------|
|                    |                | Total Registration (YTD) | Existing Customers | New Customers | Total Registration | Existing Customers |
| SCGF Mobile App    | 1021           | 153                      | 12                 | 0             | 12                 | 1186               |
| SCGF Online Portal | 130            | 0                        | 0                  | 0             | 0                  | 130                |
| IS Alerts          | 535            | 0                        | 0                  | 0             | 0                  | 535                |
|                    | 1686           | 153                      | 4                  | 0             | 4                  | 1851               |

1851/  
4032=46%

# SCGF INNOVATION LAUNCHES

SMART SOLUTIONS. STRONGER FUTURE.



03

SEPTEMBER  
2025



Before  
Year End



DMS

DOCUMENT MANAGEMENT SYSTEM  
SUGAR CANE GROWERS FUND



SCGF  
Smart  
CHATBOT

YOUR SMART ASSISTANT  
ASK • GET ANSWER • SAVE TIME



GEDSI



SCGF *E-e*ccess

Emergency Electronic Excess Facility

Access Funds When  
You Need Them Most



INNOVATE  
for impact



INTEGRATE  
with purpose



EMPOWER  
our community



ELEVATE  
our future

<https://scgf.com.fj/>



SCGF Smart



members of the SCGF team?

See more team members



Learn about SCGF's services



Ms. Sheetal Shalini

Manager Information Technology

View Profile

See more team members

Here are some of the key members of the  
Sugar Cane Growers Fund (SCGF) team:

Would you like to learn more about a  
specific team member or see additional

# Legal Services in addition to Core



## OUR LEGAL SERVICES: ENABLING GROWERS, EMPOWERING THE INDUSTRY

### LEGAL SERVICES (UNDER ONE ROOF)



#### TRANSMISSION BY DEATH (TBD)

Streamlined Estate Transmission  
(Faster Loan Access)



#### TRANSFER

Affordable Farm Administration & Mortgage Sale  
(Legal Sorting)



#### PROBATE/LOA

Access Funds & Trust Appointments  
(Financial Flow)



#### SALE AND PURCHASE AGREEMENT

Secure & Efficient Transactions  
(One-Stop Shop)



#### WILL (FREE)

Future Security  
(Social Responsibility)



#### DEEDS (Renunciation/ Arrangement)

Solve Estate & Family Issues  
(Farm Stability)



#### PROVISIONAL TITLE

Fast Title Replacement & Mortgage  
(Avoid Fund Delay)



#### POWER OF ATTORNEY

Financial Management  
(Debt Recovery)

### 5 KEY BENEFITS FOR OUR SUGAR CANE GROWERS



#### FASTER LOAN ACCESS

Simultaneous processing with Transmission by Death & Provisional Titles. Access funds without waiting weeks for registration.



#### ELIMINATE ABANDONED FARMS

Prevents issues like unresolved legal conflicts, excessive debt, or conveyance hurdles leading to farm abandonment.



#### CONTINUOUS CANE PRODUCTION

Timely administration through Probate/LOA means rightfully beneficiaries manage cane proceeds and maintain planting, growing, and harvesting.



#### REDUCED FINANCIAL BURDEN

Affordable legal services, especially for estate transfers and those unable to pay legal fees upfront, avoiding "double dipping" of costs.



#### LONG-TERM FAMILY SECURITY

Avoid future estate issues for families with free Wills and professional Deeds of Family Arrangement, ensuring inheritance.



## Mortgage Protection Cover (MPI)

**Coverage:** Outstanding loans on death or total disability

**Coverage Cap:** \$50,000 for Performing Loans

**Age Limit:** Up to 70 years

**Premium 2025–27:** SCGF pays 100%

**Premium 2028–29:** SCGF pays 50%

**From 2030:** Growers bear full premium cost

**Review:** Annual in January; 6 months notice before August rollover

**Total Premium Paid-31/08/2026-\$402,721.51**

**Settled Amount-31/08/2026(18 Claims)-\$177,578.38**

**Claims in Process(5 Claims)-\$107,684.72**



## Sun Insurance Coverage Farm House Protection

**Cover:** Grower's General House for farm houses

**VIP Option 1:** \$168.75 for \$30,000 cover  
2: \$140.25 for \$20,000 cover

**Death Benefit:** \$2,000 for the insured person where death occurs within the insured premises & Funeral Cost to \$1,000.00-after three consecutive years of continuous policy coverage

**All other perils are excluded apart from:** Fire, Earthquake, Tsunami, Volcanic Eruption, Lightening

**Process:** No certification or valuation required

**Claims:** Paid directly to growers within 2 weeks the applicable administration cost of \$250.00.

**Policies Received-31/07/2026:** \$234

**First claim paid to Mr. Venesh Kumar of Etatoka, Ba** (Rarawai Sector, Farm No. 1412) sum of \$29,750.00 based on the insured sum of \$30,000.00, less the applicable administration cost of \$250.00 on 17th July 2026



## GEDSI Initiative

Gender Equality, Disability & Social Inclusion

**Women Farmers:** 50% discount on application fees

**Growers with Disabilities:** 100% fee waiver

**Youth (< 35 years):** 50% discount for farm & machine purchases

**Farm Purchase Equity:** Reduced from 20% → 10%

**Machines / Implements:** Equity reduced from 5% → 0%

**Condition:** Fully secured mortgages required

**Women Farmers:** Currently, SCGF supports 400 women farmers, [who collectively have loan portfolio of \$4,047,623.01, representing 11 percent of the Total]

**Framework:** Strengthens inclusivity under We-Fi



Supporting our people through fair employment practices, development, recognition and reward



## NO EMPLOYMENT CONTRACTS & RETIREMENT AGE

Fiji Bank & Finance Sector Employees Union Agreement was reviewed and signed in 2023.

All staffs employment contract was removed except for CEO.

Retirement age increased to 60 years.



## JOB EVALUATION SALARY REVIEWS &

SCGF continues to give equal attention to our people despite many setback of the industry and the environment that we operate in.

Have continuously accommodated many benefits, friendly working environment with salary and bonus payments, education programs and insurance payments.

Union request of 3% for 2024; Market Movement & Job Evaluation Exercise reflected staff salary increases from 4% to 20%, based on years of association with SCGF.

**SALARY MOVEMENT 4% → 20%**



## AWARDS & RECOGNITION

### FIJI BUSINESS EXCELLENCE AWARD

- 2021 – Achievement Level
- 2022 – Achievement Level
- 2023 – Prize Level
- 2026 – Participating

### TEAM EXCELLENCE AWARD

- 2022 – 2 Star & Special Recognition
- 2023 – 2 Star & Special Recognition
- 2024 – 1 Star award

### FIJI HUMAN RESOURCE INSTITUTE

#### 2024: Silver Awards in all categories

- HR Emerging Leader – Prithi Ram
- HR Talent & Development
- HR Innovation in Practice
- HR Environment & Sustainability in Practice

#### 2025: 7 Gold Awards • 1 Silver Award

- Human Resources Visionary Leader – CEO Raj Sharma
- Human Resources Practicing Leader – HRE Prithi Ram
- Human Resources Talent Development
- Human Resources Safety & Health at Work
- Human Resources Diversity, Equality, Equity & Inclusion
- Human Resources Well-Being & Engagement
- Human Resources Environment & Sustainability in Practice

#### 1 Silver Award

- Human Resources Innovation in Practice



## STAFF REWARDS & RECOGNITION

### PURPOSE

The Employee Awards for SCGF is to inspire, motivate and encourage our people to do the best; bring up the positive engagement of our people to be at the forefront and to create environment for being respectful, quickly recognized:

### CATEGORIES

- Spot Awards [CEOs Special Award]
- Employee of the Quarter Award
- Year End Award:

- Employee of the Year
- Best Employee Male
- Best Employee Female
- Best District Award [Performance]
- Best Department Award [Performance]
- Special CEO's Recognition Award
- Year of Service Awards [Completion of 10 Years of Work Service and over]

# Prime Minister's Sugar Cane Farmers Award



Ministry of Multi-Ethnic Affairs & Sugar Industry

Capital  
INSURANCE  
THE PACIFIC'S INSURER

RESERVE BANK OF FIJI

**Prime Minister's  
Sugarcane Farmers'  
Award  
2025**

Entries open 20th October 2025  
and closes 31st January 2026.

All entries to be submitted to nearest FSC Sector Offices

Sugar Industry Tribunal

FSC  
FIJI SUGAR CORPORATION

SRIF

SPF

BUSINESSLINK  
PACIFIC

F-D-B

सत्यमेव जयते

Headed by SCGF and main award function expected in September or October 2026

# Strategic Plan 2023–2028 — Pillars & Enablers



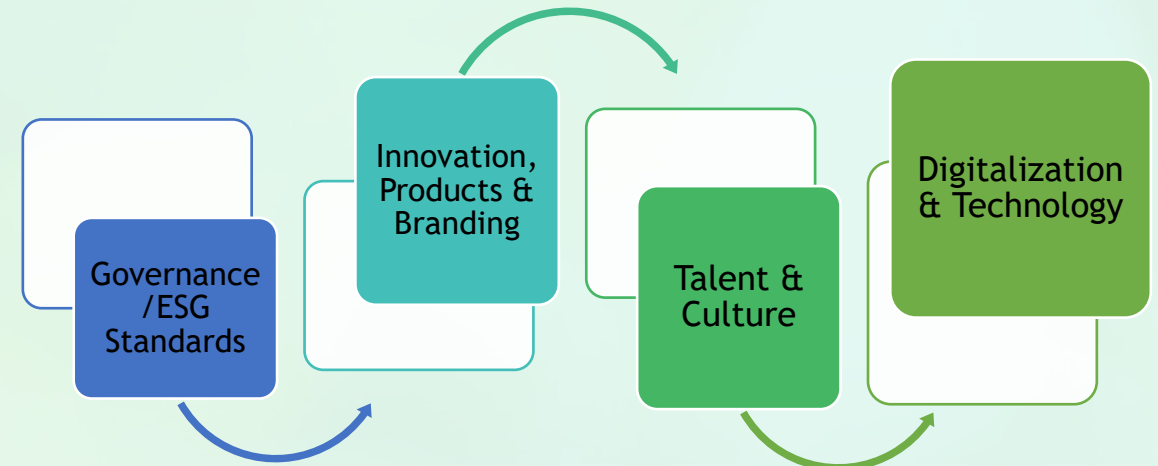
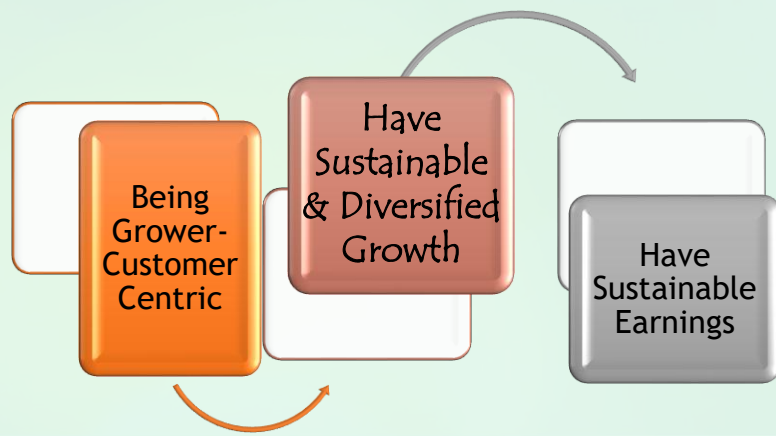
The SCGF's strategic framework is built on six pillars and five enablers designed to strengthen governance, expand services, and ensure long-term sustainability for Fiji's sugar industry.

## Strategic Pillars

1. **Financial Sustainability** — Diversification and affordable lending
2. **Market Share Growth** — Target >65% from current 37%
3. **SDG Engagement** — Deepen sustainability initiatives/ Diversified Accounts  
**Service Efficiency** — Improved turnaround times
5. **Industry Core Funding** — Sustainable earnings with checks and balances
6. **Integrated Farming** — >20% of portfolio beyond sugarcane

## Strategic Enablers

1. **Governance** — Policies, delegations, audits, risk and compliance/ Act Review
2. **Industry Trust Fund** — \$0.075M government-approved; \$1.8M premiums paid
3. **Products & Branding** — Continuous review, surveys, radio, social media
4. **People & Culture** — Staff recognition, training, performance management
5. **Digital Services** — Online loans, mySCGF App, M-PAiSA, QR, automated Documentation, Chatbot
6. **Digital Transformation:** The SCGF is exploring online portals, automated documentation, savings products, revolving loans, and HR systems — all subject to Board consideration — to modernize service delivery for growers.



# Opportunities Moving Forward

2026 - 2027



## Enhance Commercial Investments (> 6%)

**SPFL (\$16.9m)- Revisit the Governance, Structure, Expansion, Scope, Diversification**

- HFC / HO Building
- Veitari Complex-On Hold
- Drasa Property

### Savings Scheme

- FNPf (8%)
- UTOF / FHL UT (>3%)
- Banks / Others (>3%)



### UN Sustainable Development Goals

- Climate Change (BLP)
- Solar Alliance Irrigation / Green Finance ISA
- GEDSI for Women growers (RBF)
- Crop Insurance – PICRI & Howden

### Deepen our Digital Platform

- Document Management System
- Chat bot Project
- Pre approved loans / MPAiSA (\$2k)/ 5SI Savings

### SCGF Foundation-exploring

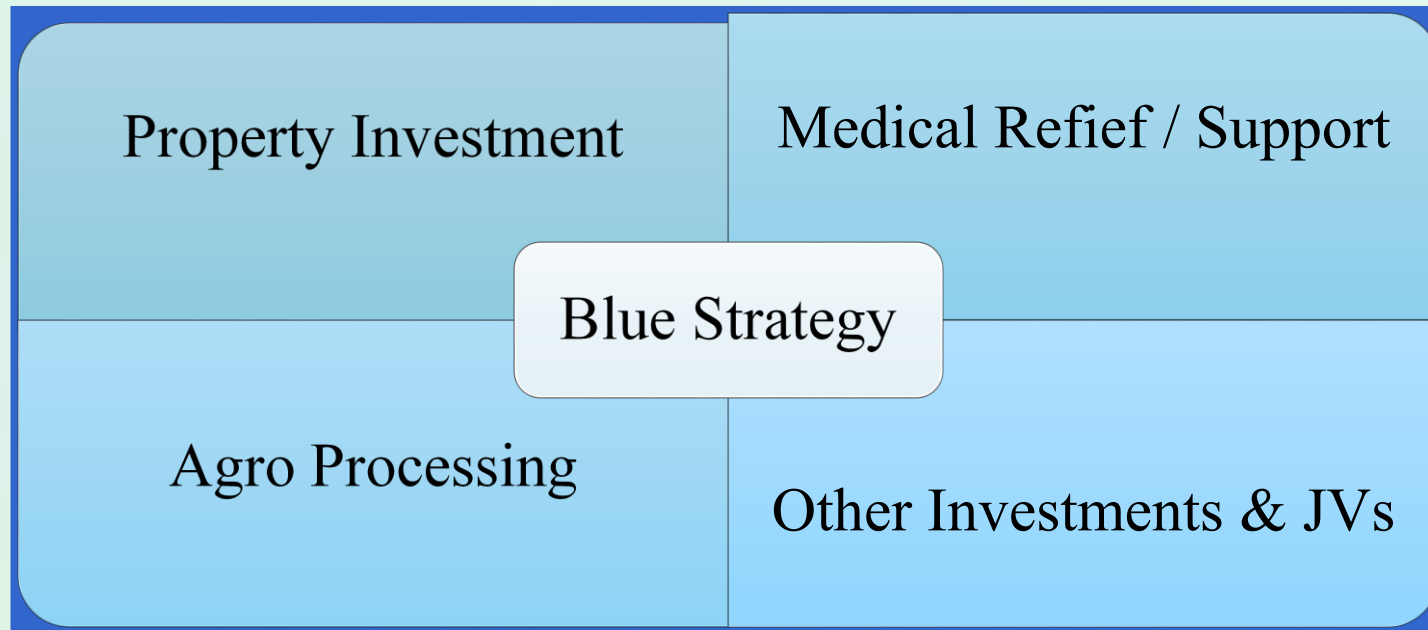
- Charity arm to help the most vulnerable in the cane farming communities – ESG \$1m + \$1m Fees = \$2m

*(\*From these investments, the benefits are directly passed on to growers\*)*





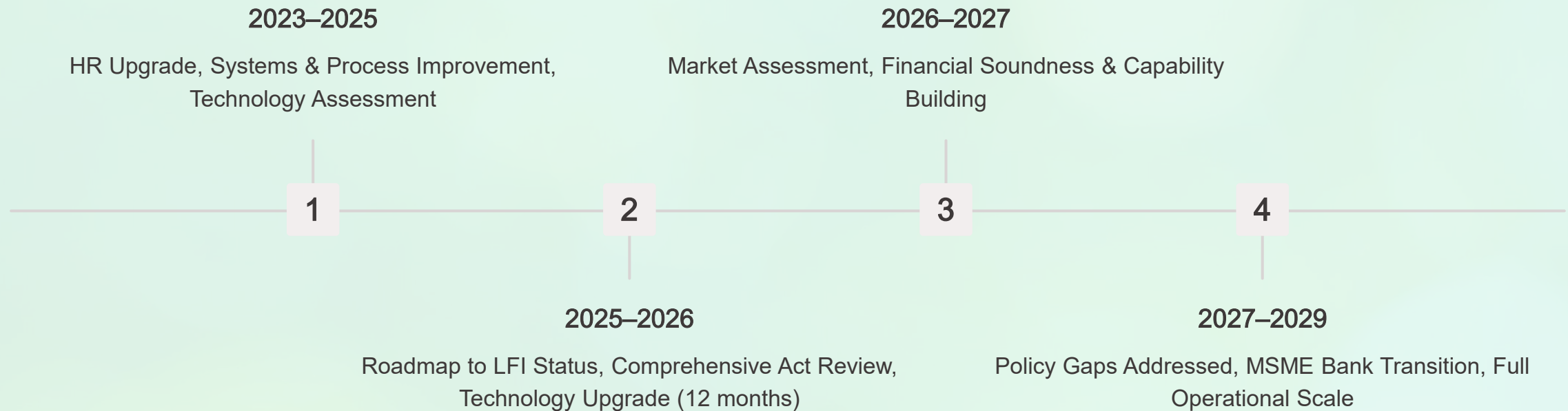
# Strategic Plan 2023- 2028 – Mid Term Review



# ADB Strategic Findings: Roadmap to Transformation



The ADB Gap Report identifies a clear pathway from SCGF's current state to a Licensed Financial Institution (LFI) by 2025–2026 and ultimately an MSME Bank by 2029. SCGF is positioned to **complement, not compete with**, the Fiji Development Bank.

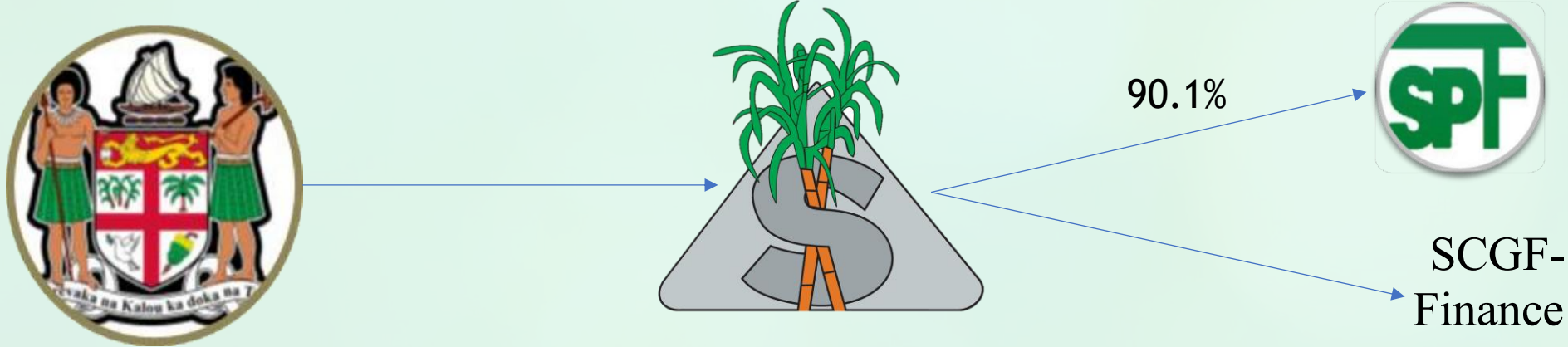


❏ The Act review is foundational — without legislative reform, downstream milestones including LFI licensing and MSME Bank status cannot be achieved.



## SCGF Transformation: Proposed Staged Structure

The proposed structure ensures SCGF's current mandate and services to cane growers remain fully intact while creating a separate subsidiary to expand financial inclusion for farming families — offering loans, savings, and insurance at affordable rates.



### SCGF (Parent Entity)

Retains core mandate supporting cane growers and the sugar industry. No dilution of services or focus.

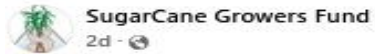
- Cane grower lending
- Industry support services
- Government-backed mandate

### Subsidiary Financial Institution

A separate entity with dedicated capital injection and/or joint ventures — potentially with rural banks (e.g., India) — to serve farming families.

- Affordable loans for families
- Savings products
- Insurance schemes
- Improved livelihoods for farming communities

# Latest Community Contributions 4th & 7th September 2026



## Donation Handover

The SCGF Sports and Social Club gratefully acknowledges the generous donation of essential healthcare and sanitary supplies made possible through the generous contributions of Bring a Smile NZ, Fiji Muslim League, Fiji Muslim FANCA Sports Federation, and FIANZ.

The donated items include:

Adult Diapers – Medium, Large and Extra Large  
Bath Chairs  
Commode Chairs  
Sanitary Supplies

The items were formally handed over by Mr. Haroon to Mr. Rakesh Roshan, Treasurer, SCGF Sports and Social Club, in the presence of SCGF staff members Mr. Sagar Dayal, Mr. Anald Sharma, and Mr. Shikant Chand.

Expression of Interest (EOI) for Assistance

To ensure the donated supplies are distributed to individuals and families who are most in need, an Expression of Interest (EOI) process will be facilitated.

Contact Person: Mr. Rakesh Roshan  
Phone: 9127561

The SCGF Sports and Social Club extends its sincere appreciation to all donor organisations for their generosity, compassion, and commitment to supporting the wellbeing and dignity of members of our community.

Together, we extend care, dignity and support where it matters most.



See less



SugarCane Growers Fund

1h · 🌐

## KOROSOMO HILL CLEAN-UP INITIATIVE

Community action. Environmental responsibility. A cleaner Fiji. 🌱🍌  
Mr. Jonathan Batisarisari of the Waka Family, initiated a meaningful Korosomo Hill Clean-Up Initiative, bringing together organisations and the local community in a collective effort to care for and protect our environment.

The initiative received great support from the Ministry of Environment, Fiji Police Force, A K Hire Services, and the Korosomo Village community.

Representing the Sugar Cane Growers Fund (SCGF), Mr. Arvind Chandra and Mr. Vijinesh Naidu joined the clean-up, contributing to this important community-led environmental initiative.

A heartfelt Vinaka Vakalevu to the Waka Family, our partner organisations and the Korosomo community for coming together and making a positive difference.

Together, we can keep our communities clean, our environment protected, and Fiji greener. 🌱🇫🇯

#SCGF #KorosomoHill #CleanUpInitiative #CommunityAction  
#EnvironmentalResponsibility #CleanerGreenerFiji  
#CommunityPartnership See less



1. Annually \$500K plus MPI
2. Interest rate \$500k
3. Green cane \$38k

Through staff social club & SCGF

4. Burnt House cash
5. Wheelchairs and others
6. Grocery packs
7. Tree planting + Environment
8. Medical Check Up & Screening
9. Cancer awareness
10. Other community sponsors



Commitment and Dedication across the Business for Industry and Growers;

Genuine Relationship with all stakeholders and uphold the Governance ;

Continuous improvements despite challenges;

Support the growers' needs, and

Diversification for sustainability – self sufficient.



# Welcome to SCGF Vinaka Vakalevu

[www.scgf.com](http://www.scgf.com)



Email

[enquiries@scgf.com.fj](mailto:enquiries@scgf.com.fj)



Phone

6650777  
9989627

Follow us on:



Linked



# Industry Reform-Solution

## Industry Governance & Structures

Acts, Regulations, Corporate Governance ,  
Board & Executive Appointments- Fit and  
Proper, Reporting and Accountability, KRA  
& KPIS, Disclosures and Communication ,  
Audit and Compliance, A-political- Deep  
Engagement with Growers (FSC) and  
Empathic approach

## Innovation & Technology

Technology Transfer, Technology intervention (SRIF)/ Yield  
Production/Accountability of Programs/ Discipline of  
Programs, Fertilizers and various forms/ Seminars and  
workshops/ Modern Machines

**Consider FAO Report and its Recommendation**

## Market, Value

World Price- where selling, open market,  
premium price, Refined/ Ethanol ,  
Congregation Production & Milling, Quality,  
Burnt Cane ? Climate Finance

## Financial Access and Social Security

SCGF Act Review, Banks, Social Security –  
Savings and insurance, FNPF Act Review ,  
Crop Insurance with sugar sales levies,  
Traning

## Milling & Transport

FSC- Milling, Balance sheet, Org Culture, Deep  
Engagement with stakeholders – Farmers, clear  
communication. JVs or Management Contract of  
the Miller – run effectively

## Resource- Land Use – Manpower

Lease expiry, Maximum use of land , task Force (CBUL) ,  
Diversification, climate change, Rental reviews & Interest,  
Young Farmers and attraction, Agro investors, commercial  
farmers , Grants and Subsidies , Cost of Production



# Proposed Three-Phase Reform Plan

## Phase 1 (0–12 Months)

- Stabilize finances- FSC .
- Improve grower payment systems- Guarantee Price - \$100 plus \$5 performance ,
- Reduce unnecessary costs- all institutions .
- Strengthen governance, discipline – Fit and Proper of Executives and Boards
- Resource at MOAWS (Monitoring & Accountability)/ Have PS and relocate- West in transition

## Phase 2 (1–3 Years)

- Modernize mills- look at management contract of mills- India, Australia, China etc .
- Increase mechanization.
- Expand cane production- commercial
- Implement digital systems.
- Plan ethanol and cogeneration projects subject to land, lease, commercial farming and production

## Phase 3 (3–10 Years)

- Diversify into high-value sugar products.
- Become a regional bioenergy producer.
- Increase exports.
- Attract private investment.
- Build a financially self-sustaining industry.
- Execute ethanol and cogeneration projects subject to land, lease, commercial farming and production

## Critical Success Factors

For reform to succeed, the industry needs:

- Stable and independent leadership.
- Strong Government commitment to long-term reform.
- Genuine partnership with growers.
- Commercial discipline and accountability.
- Investment in modernization and innovation.
- Transparent performance reporting.

## Lease Issues - 7 points



| -                                   | TLTB NORTHWEST REGION<br>Lautoka - Rakiraki |             | TLTB SOUTHWEST REGION Nadi - Sigatoka |             | TLTB NORTHERN REGION Labasa - Seaqaqa |             | Total       | %           |
|-------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------|-------------|---------------------------------------|-------------|---------------------------------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|
|                                     | No                                          | %           | No                                    | %           | No                                    | %           | No          | %           |
| Partly Renewed - House Site Only    | 91                                          | 8%          | 0                                     | 0%          | 62                                    | 21%         | 153         | 6%          |
| Wholly Renewed                      | 259                                         | 23%         | 866                                   | 89%         | 203                                   | 70%         | 1328        | 56%         |
| Not Renewed                         | 340                                         | 31%         | 103                                   | 11%         | 23                                    | 9%          | 466         | 19%         |
| Pending Inspections & Consultations | 415                                         | 38%         | 0                                     |             | 0                                     | 0%          | 415         | 19%         |
| <b>Total</b>                        | <b>1105</b>                                 | <b>100%</b> | <b>969</b>                            | <b>100%</b> | <b>288</b>                            | <b>100%</b> | <b>2362</b> | <b>100%</b> |

1. Some of our suggestions are without limiting to-

- Those lease- renewals for the growers to continue, Government pays direct to TLTB for minimum of 30-year lease and if the grower wishes to have 50 years or 99 years, the difference in cost to be met by the grower. This will avoid any infringement and good will payment;
- The above should apply only to productive growers and or the growers those have succession plan to produce cane, and make maximum use of land;
- If the grower is not productive and/ or does not have succession plan, then should surrender the lease, giving opportunity for those who need the farm however can opt for residential lots;
- Those growers who do not wish to continue farming [c above] and only need for residential, Government should consider paying at least 2/3 of the cost and 100% on case by case.;
- Where the growers wish to continue farming and landowners not agreeing, such growers should be provided residential lots fully funded by Government and another agriculture lease offered with premium paid and at least 5-10 acres of cane farm developed for first year and or maximum funding of \$10,000 released progressively; and
- Where the landowners wish to take over for own use and/or government or other developments—there should be clear plan to make the maximum use of the land.
- The Government should also support landowners with similar program and with lease cost paid and at least 5-10 acres of cane farm developed for first year and or maximum funding of \$10,000 released progressively.



## Lease Expiry – Emerging Credit Risk

- Western and Labasa districts have 39 expired leases involving \$110,159 across SCGF loan products.
- Of these, only 3 growers are currently producing, while 36 are unproductive.
- 16 leases are under renewal, while 23 loan accounts are classified as doubtful/loss, with recovery actions underway.
- A further 360 leases, representing approximately \$988,477, are due to expire within the next five years.

Seaqqa has an additional 26 expired leases totaling \$82,658, with a further 11 leases totaling \$186,891 due to expire by 2031.

Joint meeting of SCGF/SCGC/ TLTB held – last week 27<sup>th</sup> August with growers in Nadi lease renewals and similar meeting.

## Lease Renewal Task Force

The establishment of the Government's multi-agency lease renewal taskforce provides internal Lease Renewal Task Force/Working Group to coordinate cases, prioritize high-risk exposures and engage directly with TLTB and relevant Government agencies. Ministry to take lead or MOF.

# Implementation 2019- 2020



|    | Consolidated Review Report of the Sugar Cane Growers Fund 2019 and 2020 Annual Reports                                                                                                                                       | SCGF Responses                                                                                                                                                                                      | Update                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                       |
|----|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| 1. | The Committee recommends South Pacific Fertilizers Pte. Ltd to invest into diversified products including production of natural fertilizers in addition, to compounded fertilizers which they have been using for many years | This has been advised to SPFL vide email on 27 <sup>th</sup> May 2024 (email copied to Board Chairmen and Ministry) and also advised through meeting with CEO of SPFL on 6 <sup>th</sup> June 2024. | Diversification: SPF is pursuing additional revenue streams through pesticide imports, servicing non-sugar farmers, rice supply, and potential expansion into Pacific markets, particularly Papua New Guinea. SPF is also considering research into natural fertilizer production. – advised 25 <sup>th</sup> August 2026 – it needs 25 to 30% over period – |
| 2. | The Committee recommends SCGF as a majority shareholder to improve the financial performance of South Pacific Fertilizers Pte Ltd to                                                                                         | There has been ongoing discussion at our Board level after the next Board meeting we will official write to SPFL.                                                                                   | Board had been advised/ review the management affairs                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                        |

|    | Consolidated Review Report of the Sugar Cane Growers Fund 2019 and 2020 Annual Reports                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                  | SCGF Responses                                                                                     | Responsibility / Implementation Agency | Expected Date of Action Plans                                                                      |
|----|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
|    | reduce reliance on the government subsidy                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                               | This has been discussed with SPFL at last AGM.<br><br>The report has been submitted SPFL           |                                        |                                                                                                    |
| 3. | The Committee strongly recommends the review of the Sugar Cane Growers Fund Act to expand its financial products not only to sugar cane farmers but also to non-sugar farmers so that it can become a financial facility for every farmer who may need assistance. Products should also focus on climate resilience including insurance and cover for natural disasters | This is duly noted this is before the Ministry, Ministry of Finance and SG's Office \              | SCGF Board / Management.               | Expected to be Progress to cabinet soon and as bill in the next Sitting as advised by SG's office. |
| 4. | The Committee noted that the SCGF had raised their concern on the need to improve the efficiency of the mill which has direct impact on SCGF and the well-being of farmers. The Committee recommends that there needs to be a review of rail system, growers' engagement and a feasibility of commercializing its products.                                             | There is recomemnation and presenation made to Sugar Select Committee and part of the presenation. | Government to decide on the way foward | Government to decide on the way foward.                                                            |



# Implementation 2019- 2020

|    | <b>Consolidated Review Report of the Sugar Cane Growers Fund 2019 and 2020 Annual Reports</b>                                                                                                                                                                          | <b>SCGF Responses</b>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                         | <b>Responsibility / Implementation Agency</b> | <b>Expected Date of Action Plans</b>      |
|----|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------|
| 5. | The Committee commends the SCGF for its various products and services catering to cane farmers. However, it emphasizes the necessity for heightened education and awareness amongst farmers regarding the available products and services to increase cane production. | Noted with appreciation and in light of this –. SCGF continues to promote and revamp the awareness program of targeted marketing in collaboration with stakeholders (Open day June 2024) Radio and Print Media, social media, Community meetings, Grower Visitation and Special Call Care Program programs- project based activity for those healthy producing growers who do not have loans. | SCGF/ Stakeholders.                           | Ongoing.                                  |
| 6. | Given the number of related sugar subsidiary bodies operating in a small country like Fiji, the Committee strongly recommends a review of their relevance                                                                                                              | This is to be determined by the authorities – Sugar Select Committee                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                          |                                               | Authorities to decide- Refer FAO Report . |
| 7. | The Committee also recommends an inquiry into the sugar industry to be undertaken to create a business model for the sugar sector.                                                                                                                                     | This is to be determined by the authorities Sugar Select Committee                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                            |                                               |                                           |

# Implementation 2021



|     | Recommendations                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                | Responses                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                            |
|-----|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| 3.1 | That SCGF review its organizational structure effectively to improve sugar cane cultivation in Fiji and benefit growers. The Committee recommends that the SCGF review the 1984 Act, as it is very outdated, to enhance the structure in line with current business standards. | Management appreciates the observation. Work in Progress with MOF & MOAWS & SI for Cabinet to approve                                                                                                                                                                                |
| 3.2 | To ensure that the Annual Report includes comprehensive information about the growers' fund for future reference.                                                                                                                                                              | Implemented.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                         |
| 3.3 | Since the SCGF provides loans to growers, it should fall under the oversight of the Reserve Bank of Fiji.                                                                                                                                                                      | Normally lending institutions that accept deposit and fall under the Banking Act 1995 are supervised by RBF. SCGF would not have any objection as most of the policies and process framework of SCGF aligned to such RBF supervision policy. This will avoid political interference. |
| 3.4 | The Committee recommends that the SCGF include comprehensive information on recurring loans, loan proportions relative to yield, the number of growers, and complete loan details in future SCGF Annual Reports.                                                               | Implemented.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                         |

|     | Recommendations                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                         | Responses                       |
|-----|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------|
| 3.5 | The Committee recommends enhancing the reporting style and eliminating the errors found in the 2021 Annual Report for future submissions. Advise for proofreading and sending the reports for thorough vetting before presenting them to the Cabinet. ?? or Parliament? | Implemented.                    |
| 3.6 | Raise awareness among new growers and implement additional benefits to attract their interest in sugar cane cultivation                                                                                                                                                 | Aggressively continues to do so |
| 3.7 | That, SCGF includes the performance matrix aligned with the KPIs in all future annual reports to justify budgetary allocations                                                                                                                                          | Implemented                     |
| 3.8 | That, SCGF should include relevant SDGs in its annual reports as required by the Parliament, to demonstrate its support to Fiji's commitment towards international goals.                                                                                               | Implemented                     |
|     |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                         |                                 |

# Implementation 2021



|      | Recommendations                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                             | Responses                                                                                                                                |
|------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| 3.9  | The Committee commends SCGF for its upgraded digital platforms and recommends their continued maintenance for the future                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                    | SCGF Continues to further upgrade and bring innovative solution.                                                                         |
| 3.10 | The Committee commends SCGF staff for successfully operating during pandemic from various remote locations. This was made possible through current advanced IT infrastructure. SCGF's new Core Business Solution—Len decider, the <del>BeaconPro</del> system, and Vodafone's cloud platform that were instrumental in this effort. The concept of cloud computing has significantly enhanced the Information Technology environment in today's modern era. | This duly noted with apperception and management exploring other digital services Including AI                                           |
| 3.11 | The Committee acknowledges that, despite the challenges, SCGF adapted innovative business models to protect employees and continued to serve the growers, which led to opportunities for innovation. This effort resulted in a historic surplus of \$3.056 million and the achievement of Fiji's first-ever Business Excellence Award.                                                                                                                      | This is noted with appreciation and SCGF continues to chart innovation and productivity with Giving Back over \$2m back to the community |



# Industry Challenges & Proposed Solutions

## Key Challenges

- High production costs and low yields
- Manpower shortages and lease expiry issues
- Weather, climate risk, and mill governance
- Need for diversification and accountability
- Coordination, Collaboration, Governance among institutions – Demarcation

## Proposed Solutions

- Right-size farm operations (1.5m–2m tonnes)
- Mechanical harvest and labor mobilization
- **Task Force on leases; grants and blended finance**
- Crop diversification and insurance programs

# Industry & Stakeholders



Sugar Cane Growers Fund (the Fund) is a statutory body providing affordable Loans to sugar cane growers in Fiji.

## How Aligned to Approved NDP – Get Basic Right

9126 ( 500) active Growers - 1.33m tones – (2024] and 1.4m [2025] Every year 0.2m Tones =Ministry

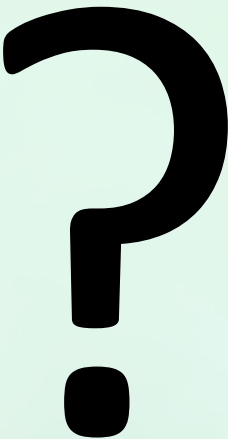
???

Supported by Government Funding- \$50-\$70m and brings return of \$140- \$230m

NDP- 1]Milling Efficiency. 2] Cane Production and Yield, 3] Improve Research and Development, 4] Improve Harvesting and Transportation 5] Improve Institution and Legislation



|                                                          | Baseline  | 2025-2027 | 2028-2029 |
|----------------------------------------------------------|-----------|-----------|-----------|
| Average amount of sugarcane produced per hectare (tones) | 47        | 52        | 55        |
| Area under cane (ha)                                     | 33,572    | 36,000    | 38,500    |
| Tonnage                                                  | 1,577,884 | 1,872,000 | 2,117,500 |
| Annual increase in sugarcane farmer income (%)           | \$3,500   | 25        | 20        |
| Sugar mill efficiency (TCTS)                             | 10.5      | 10.5      | 10        |
| New farmers (number)                                     | 80        | 400       | 700       |



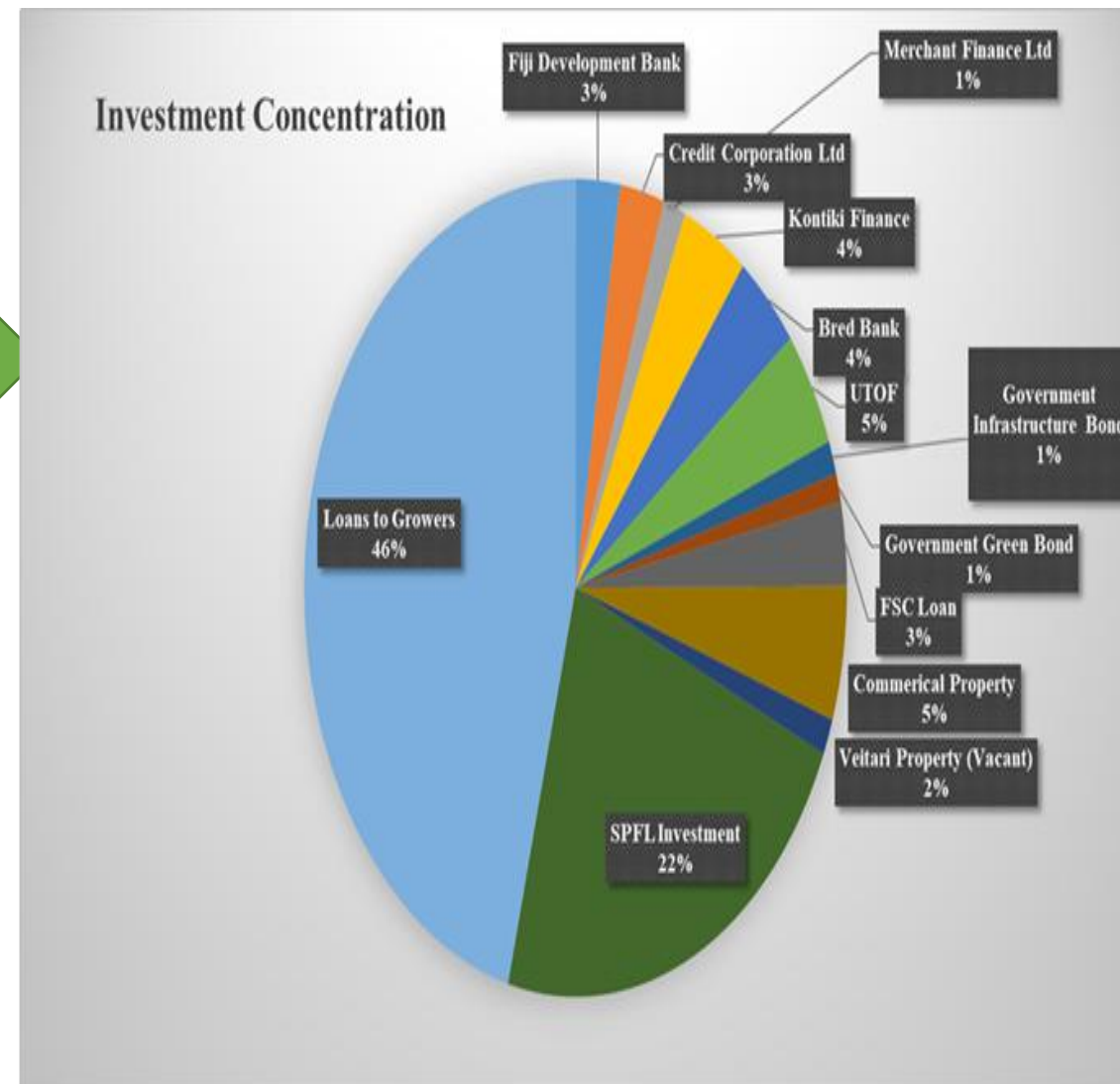
# Gaps & Challenges>> Market Space & Opportunities



2.47%

1. Opportunity for SMEs in agro-business and Government has refocused to agriculture
2. Agriculture Loans - Banks -\$130m (CFL \$21.5), CI-\$26.1m and FDB -\$71.2 [CFL-\$16.2] SCGF\$38m
3. \$286.8m
4. CFL - \$75.7m - SCGF (48%)
5. Total Loans Bank-\$10,332m, CI -\$774m, [Sept25] FDB- \$464m (24) SCGF \$38m \$11,608m 2.47 %

71% -





# Import Substitution: A \$100M+ Domestic Opportunity- Prudently

Fiji spends over **FJD \$100 million annually** on fresh produce imports for the tourism sector alone. Hotels and resorts in Nadi, Denarau, and the Coral Coast prioritize local sourcing but require consistent, quality supply — a gap SCGF-supported diversification can fill.

## Cereals

Wheat for flour milling; **rice** for daily caloric intake — both heavily imported despite domestic production potential.

## Meat & Seafood

33% of imported produce. Beef, bacon, and premium meats sourced for tourist industry quality standards.

## Dairy

Cheese, butter, and milk powder largely imported. Fiji's domestic dairy sector faces ongoing production challenges.

## Fruits & Vegetables

FJD \$17M in fresh fruit imports annually. Potatoes, capsicums, broccoli, and lettuce dominate vegetable import bills.

## Vegetable Oils

Palm and oilseed oils represent a significant and growing portion of the national import expenditure.

# Export Crops & Agro-Tourism: High-Value Opportunities-Prudently



## Leading Agricultural Exports

### → Kava (Yaquona)

Fiji's #1 highest-value agricultural export with strong global demand.

### → Dalo (Taro)

Core root crop export with strong demand in New Zealand, Australia, and the US.

### → Turmeric & Ginger

High demand in US and EU markets for superior curcumin content; available fresh, frozen, or value-added.

### → Cassava & Assorted Vegetables

Eggplants, chilies, okra, and long beans shipped in high volumes.

## Tourism Sector Demand

Resorts in Nadi, Denarau, and Coral Coast prioritize local supply of:

- **Vegetables:** Potatoes, colored capsicums, broccoli, lettuce, zucchini
- **Fruits:** Tomatoes, oranges, rock melons, bananas, pineapples
- **Protein:** Beef, bacon, prawns, and cheese

**Key requirement:** Consistent, year-round supply meeting resort quality standards — especially during off-seasons.



## Before Diversification: Strategic Prerequisites

Successful diversification requires rigorous upfront planning. SCGF must guide growers through a structured assessment before committing capital to new crops or segments.

### Crop & Market Selection

Identify which crops suit which segments. Rice (Fiji Rice Ltd), dairy, and export groups require fixed markets and Government company partnerships. Engage Trade Commissioners and Investment Fiji.

### Grower Profiling

Determine which growers — by demographic or geographic location — are best suited for diversification. Conduct adequate soil testing before any commitment.

### Return Analysis

Establish what crop per acre delivers higher returns than sugar. Diversification must be economically justified, not merely aspirational.

### Policy & Finance Enablers

Advocate for RBF agricultural finance targets to increase from 4% to 8%. Explore Government loan guarantee schemes and blended finance options.



# Enabling Diversification: Guidance, Finance & Support

SCGF, with adequate resources and policy backing, can play a pivotal role in enabling grower diversification — from financial literacy to crop insurance and direct buyer payment mechanisms under the Personal Property Security Act.

## Financial Support Mechanisms

- Financial assistance, grants, and blended finance
- Special crop insurance schemes
- Payment immediately after loan deduction
- Buyers pay direct under Personal Property Security Act
- Government loan guarantee scheme advocacy

## Extension & Capacity Building

- Close monitoring and guidance to farmers
- Mentoring, motivation, awards, and rewards
- Specialized agricultural extension services
- Financial literacy and bookkeeping training
- Guidance and coaching on crop selection

❏ SCGF with adequate resources and policy can play an important role in bridging the gap between aspiration and execution for cane growers.

# ANNEX 2

## RESEARCH BRIEF

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Information Brief – for Standing CommitteeStanding Committee on Economic Affairs

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**Comparative Analysis on Sugar Cane Growers Fund Annual Reports 2023 and 2024****1.0. Overview**

This brief is provided to the Standing Committee on Economic Affairs (“SC-EA” or “Committee”) as requested through its secretariat. This analysis is a summary of some of the key issues in the Sugar Cane Growers Council (“SCGC”) Annual Report (“AR”) for financial year 2023<sup>1</sup> and 2024<sup>2</sup>. The summary is designed to assist Honourable Members of Committee undertake their comparisons and related analysis of the organisation’s performance as discussed in the ARs. The narrative provided here is only intended to assist the Committee with its appraisal of the reports and does not aim to provide in-depth oversight on the FCGC.

**2.0. Introduction**

The Sugar Cane Growers Fund (***the Fund***) is a body corporate established in Fiji on 26 July 1984 under the *Sugar Cane Growers Fund Act 1984*. The address of its registered office and the principal place of business is located at 2nd floor, Sugar Cane Growers Council (**SCGC**) Building, 75 Drasa Avenue, Lautoka. The consolidated financial statements of the Fund for the year ended 31 December 2024 comprise the Fund and its subsidiary, South Pacific Fertilizers Pte Limited (together referred to as the “Group”). The principal activity of the subsidiary, South Pacific Fertilizer Pte Limited (SPFL), during the year was importing bulk fertilizer, blending, packing and distributing to local markets. SPFL is incorporated in Fiji and its registered office is at Waterfront Road, Veitari, Lautoka

**3.0. Principal activity**

The principal activity of the Fund as outlined under the Sugar Cane Growers Fund Act 1984, Section 4, is to provide loans to sugar cane growers to increase production of sugar cane, improve efficiency in the planting, growing and transportation of sugar cane, rehabilitate farms, buildings and other installations damaged, destroyed or affected by floods, cyclones, droughts or other natural disasters, establish sugar cane farms and to construct buildings and other installations on those farms, crop diversification and to provide assistance to the personal family needs of growers during periods of financial distress or hardship and to benefit the cane growing industry. The principal activity of the subsidiary during the year was importing bulk fertilizer, blending, packing and distribution to local market.

**4.0. Mission**

We exist: to provide quality, fair & affordable financial services to all cane growers of Fiji. Be ethical and honest in all our dealings. Enhance livelihood of all the cane growers’ we Serve. Be sustainable and contribute in transformation of the industry. Be part of the Prosperity journey for the cane growers.

**5.0. Vision**

To be the premier and Sustainable Financial Service provider for Fiji’s sugar cane growers.

**6.0. Objective**

Embedded across business as **GRROWERSII** which stands for-

**Growth** – for all stakeholders of SCGF

**Responsible** – in all our dealings across

**Resilient** – be there in good & bad times

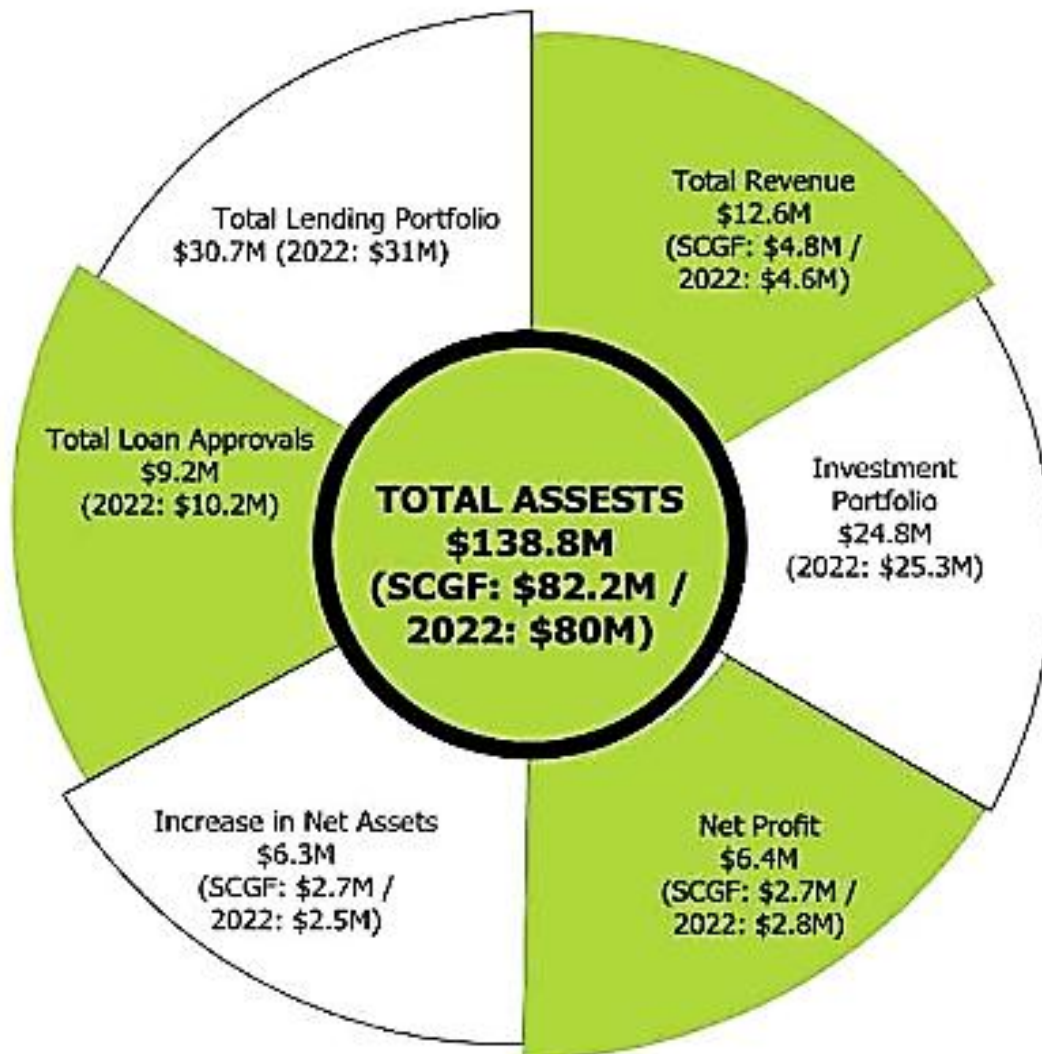
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<sup>1</sup> Sugar Cane Growers Fund, Annual Report 2023, Parliamentary Paper No. 165 of 2024, Sugar Cane Growers Fund, Lautoka.

<sup>2</sup> Sugar Cane Growers Fund, Annual Report 2024, Parliamentary Paper No. 160 of 2025, Sugar Cane Growers Fund, Lautoka.

- Opportunity** – for all stakeholders but prudently
- Willingness** – listen, help with compassion
- Empathy** – for all stakeholders
- Responsive** – with dedication and commitment
- Sustainable** – for its longevity
- Innovations** – think inside & outside the box
- Integrity** – highest level of integrity & honesty

## 7.0. At Glance



Source: SCGC AR 2023, p.006 – Above is the chart for At Glance performance of the SCGC in FY 2023



### FINANCIAL HIGHLIGHTS

- Total Assets: **\$87.8 million**
- Loan Portfolio: **\$31.5 million**
- Total Equity: **\$83.9 million**
- Net Profit: **\$5.9 million**



*Source: SCGC AR 2024, p.3 – Above is the chart for At Glance performance of the SCGC in FY 2024*

| Item                   | 2023                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                             | 2024                 |
|------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------|
| Lending and Operations | <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• <b>Priority Loans:</b> Provide financing of up to <b>\$5,000</b> for farm development, sugar cane planting, farm equipment repairs, housing repairs, education expenses, weddings, drainage and roading works, weedicides, borehole drilling, medical needs, and the purchase of working bullocks or horses. Interest rates range from <b>3% to 6%</b> with a <b>5-year repayment term</b>.</li><li>• <b>Specialized Loans:</b> Offer funding of up to <b>\$50,000</b> for larger investments such as the purchase of cane farms, farm machinery, cane trucks, farmhouse construction, refinancing of existing loans, and other personal or approved purposes. Interest rates range from <b>3% to 6%</b>, with</li></ul> | Exactly same as 2023 |

|  |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                  |  |
|--|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--|
|  | <p>repayment periods between <b>5 and 15 years</b>.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Business Link Pacific (BLP) Specialized Loans:</b> Designed to support small and medium-sized cane growers and business enterprises. Loans of up to <b>\$30,000</b> are available at a concessional <b>5% interest rate</b> and include a <b>16% grant contribution</b> towards project costs. The loan term is <b>5 years</b>.</li> <li>• <b>Cane Development Revolving Fund (CDRF):</b> Provides loans of up to <b>\$5,000</b> under a government-funded program for farm development and sugar cane planting. These loans carry <b>0% interest</b>, are repayable over <b>5 years</b>, and include a <b>one-year grace period</b>.</li> <li>• <b>General Requirement:</b> For all loan facilities, borrowers are required to <b>fully repay loans at least five years before lease expiry</b>.</li> </ul> |  |
|--|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--|

## 8.0. Loan Portfolio Comparison: 2023 vs 2024

| Mill         | 2023 Portfolio (\$)  | 2024 Portfolio (\$)  | Change (\$)       | Change %     |
|--------------|----------------------|----------------------|-------------------|--------------|
| Lautoka      | 12,642,390.65        | 11,787,753.68        | -854,636.97       | -6.8%        |
| Rarawai      | 12,801,599.33        | 12,893,049.68        | +91,450.35        | +0.7%        |
| Labasa       | 11,261,758.98        | 12,046,008.07        | +784,249.09       | +7.0%        |
| <b>Total</b> | <b>36,705,748.96</b> | <b>36,726,811.43</b> | <b>+21,062.47</b> | <b>+0.1%</b> |

### Key Observations

- The **overall portfolio remained stable**, increasing by only **\$21,062 (0.1%)**.
- **Labasa recorded the strongest growth**, increasing its portfolio by **\$784,249 (7.0%)**.
- **Rarawai's portfolio remained largely unchanged**, growing by less than **1%**.
- **Lautoka experienced a decline of \$854,637 (6.8%)**, offsetting gains made in Labasa and Rarawai.

## 8.1. Loan Portfolio Share Comparison

| Mill    | 2023 Portfolio Share | 2024 Portfolio Share* |
|---------|----------------------|-----------------------|
| Lautoka | 34%                  | 32.1%                 |
| Rarawai | 35%                  | 35.1%                 |
| Labasa  | 31%                  | 32.8%                 |

*Calculated using 2024 portfolio totals.*

## 8.2. Change in Market Share

- **Labasa increased its share from 31% to 32.8%.**
- **Rarawai maintained its position** at approximately **35%** of the total portfolio.
- **Lautoka's share fell from 34% to 32.1%.**

## 8.3. Account Base Comparison

The 2023 table shows **6,486 total accounts**, while the 2024 table shows:

- 5,420 Total Application Count
- 1,133 Accounts in Arrears

The account measures are not directly comparable because the 2024 table uses different categories. However:

| Mill    | 2023 Accounts | 2024 Applications |
|---------|---------------|-------------------|
| Lautoka | 1,532         | 1,236             |
| Rarawai | 2,946         | 2,400             |
| Labasa  | 2,008         | 1,784             |
| Total   | 6,486         | 5,420             |

**Rarawai continues to have the largest customer base.**

Between 2023 and 2024, the **loan portfolio remained essentially unchanged at approximately \$36.7 million**. Growth occurred in **Labasa (+7%)** and marginally in **Rarawai (+0.7%)**, while **Lautoka contracted (-6.8%)**. Portfolio concentration shifted slightly toward Labasa. From a risk perspective, **Lautoka maintains the healthiest portfolio**, whereas **Labasa and Rarawai require focused recovery and monitoring efforts due to higher arrears and default levels**, with default rates exceeding 8% of portfolio value compared to 3.6% in Lautoka. This suggests that although Labasa's portfolio has grown, the quality of that growth may warrant closer examination.

Loan Portfolio by Mills

|         | Total Accounts # | % No | SCGF Total Production | Total Portfolio | Portfolio % | Total Production | Percent SCGF Production / Total Mill Production |
|---------|------------------|------|-----------------------|-----------------|-------------|------------------|-------------------------------------------------|
| Lautoka | 1532             | 24%  | 163,852.50            | \$12,642,390.65 | 34%         | 392,047.60       | 42%                                             |
| Rarawai | 2946             | 45%  | 283,598.09            | \$12,801,599.33 | 35%         | 617,816.60       | 46%                                             |
| Labasa  | 2008             | 31%  | 244,810.39            | \$11,261,758.98 | 31%         | 555,622.17       | 44%                                             |
| Total   | 6486             | 100% | 692,260.98            | \$36,705,748.96 | 100%        | 1,565,486.37     | 44%                                             |

Source: SCGC AR 2023, p.030

| Mill    | Total Accounts | Total Arrears  | Total Loan-Default | Total App Count | Total Portfolio | % Grower Count |
|---------|----------------|----------------|--------------------|-----------------|-----------------|----------------|
| Lautoka | 212            | \$240,295.84   | \$424,200.85       | 1,236           | \$11,787,753.68 | 17%            |
| Rarawai | 553            | \$604,291.99   | \$1,048,773.94     | 2,400           | \$12,893,049.68 | 23%            |
| Labasa  | 368            | \$602,203.55   | \$1,046,110.39     | 1,784           | \$12,046,008.07 | 21%            |
| Total   | 1133           | \$1,446,791.38 | \$2,519,085.18     | 5420            | \$36,726,811.43 | 21%            |

Source: SCGC AR 2024, p.28

## 9.0. Loan Purpose Portfolio Comparison: 2023 vs 2024

| Product Category               | 2023 Count | 2024 Count | Change | 2023 Portfolio (\$) | 2024 Portfolio (\$) | Change (\$) | Change % |
|--------------------------------|------------|------------|--------|---------------------|---------------------|-------------|----------|
| BLP Loan                       | 30         | 41         | +11    | 122,782.43          | 192,368.56          | +69,586.13  | +56.7%   |
| CDRF Loan                      | 1,503      | 1,336      | -167   | 1,638,259.65        | 1,487,350.32        | -150,909.33 | -9.2%    |
| FSC                            | 1          | 1          | 0      | 4,582,803.08        | 4,000,307.39        | -582,495.69 | -12.7%   |
| Improvement Loan               | 1,571      | 1,082      | -489   | 6,458,791.63        | 5,995,340.42        | -463,451.21 | -7.2%    |
| Investment Loan                | 1,315      | 950        | -365   | 8,647,715.92        | 7,927,755.13        | -719,960.79 | -8.3%    |
| Personal Loan                  | 741        | 581        | -160   | 2,417,879.72        | 3,313,990.26        | +896,110.54 | +37.1%   |
| Refinance of Cane Growers Loan | 1,058      | 998        | -60    | 9,497,163.81        | 9,785,533.43        | +288,369.62 | +3.0%    |
| Refinance of                   | 222        | 174        | -48    | 3,023,985.83        | 2,676,997.28        | -346,988.55 | -11.5%   |

|                      |    |     |      |            |              |               |             |
|----------------------|----|-----|------|------------|--------------|---------------|-------------|
| Outside Debt         |    |     |      |            |              |               |             |
| Rehabilitation Loan  | 26 | 16  | -10  | 196,503.40 | 181,752.41   | -14,750.99    | -7.5%       |
| Subsistence Farming  | 19 | 11  | -8   | 119,863.49 | 68,492.45    | -51,371.04    | -42.9%      |
| Working Capital Loan | -  | 230 | +230 | -          | 1,096,923.78 | +1,096,923.78 | New Product |

#### Overall Loan Purpose Portfolio

| Indicator       | 2023            | 2024            | Change               |
|-----------------|-----------------|-----------------|----------------------|
| Total Accounts  | 6,486           | 5,420           | -1,066 (-16.4%)      |
| Total Portfolio | \$36,705,748.96 | \$36,726,811.43 | +\$21,062.47 (+0.1%) |

#### Loan Purpose Portfolio Mix Comparison

| Product Category               | 2023 % | 2024 % | Change (ppt) |
|--------------------------------|--------|--------|--------------|
| Refinance of Cane Growers Loan | 25.87% | 26.64% | +0.77        |
| Investment Loan                | 23.56% | 21.59% | -1.97        |
| Improvement Loan               | 17.60% | 16.32% | -1.28        |
| FSC                            | 12.49% | 10.89% | -1.60        |
| Personal Loan                  | 6.59%  | 9.02%  | +2.43        |
| CDRF Loan                      | 4.46%  | 4.05%  | -0.41        |
| Refinance of Outside Debt      | 8.24%  | 7.29%  | -0.95        |
| Working Capital Loan           | -      | 2.99%  | +2.99        |

#### 9.1. Loan Purpose Portfolio Value Remained Stable

Despite a **16.4% reduction in account numbers**, the overall portfolio remained virtually unchanged at **\$36.7 million**. This suggests a shift toward **larger average loan balances per borrower**.

#### 9.2. Refinance of Cane Growers Loan Remains the Largest Product

- Increased from **\$9.50 million** to **\$9.79 million**.
- Portfolio share increased from **25.9% to 26.6%**.
- Continues to be the dominant lending product.

#### 9.3. Strong Growth in Personal Loans

- Portfolio increased by **\$896,111 (37.1%)**.
- Share increased from **6.6% to 9.0%**.
- Indicates growing demand for personal financing among borrowers.

#### 9.4. Investment and Improvement Loans Declined

- Investment Loan portfolio fell by **\$720,000 (-8.3%)**.
- Improvement Loan portfolio fell by **\$463,000 (-7.2%)**.
- Combined, these two products declined by more than **\$1.18 million**.

#### 9.5. New Working Capital Product Introduced

- Generated a portfolio of **\$1.10 million** across **230 accounts**.
- Represents **3.0% of total portfolio** in its first year.
- Suggests a strategic move toward supporting growers' short-term operating needs.

#### 9.6. Reduction in Loan Counts Across Most Products

Almost all traditional products experienced a decline in borrower numbers:

- Improvement Loans: **-489 accounts**
- Investment Loans: **-365 accounts**
- CDRF Loans: **-167 accounts**

• Personal Loans: **-160 accounts**

Despite lower account numbers, some portfolios increased, indicating larger loan amounts per borrower.

The 2024 loan portfolio remained stable at **\$36.7 million**, despite a significant reduction in total accounts. The portfolio composition shifted toward **Refinance of Cane Growers Loans, Personal Loans, and the newly introduced Working Capital Loan**. Personal Loans recorded the strongest growth among existing products, while Investment, Improvement, and FSC loan categories declined. The introduction of Working Capital Loans helped offset reductions in several traditional lending categories, allowing the overall portfolio value to remain largely unchanged while supporting a leaner borrower base.

| Loan Purpose | Category                           | Sum of Count | Sum of Loan Balance     | %              |
|--------------|------------------------------------|--------------|-------------------------|----------------|
|              | BLP Loan                           | 30           | \$ 122,782.43           | 0.33%          |
|              | CDRF                               | 1503         | \$ 1,638,259.65         | 4.46%          |
|              | FSC                                | 1            | \$ 4,582,803.08         | 12.49%         |
|              | Improvement Loan                   | 1571         | \$ 6,458,791.63         | 17.60%         |
|              | Investment Loan                    | 1315         | \$ 8,647,715.92         | 23.56%         |
|              | Personal Loan                      | 741          | \$ 2,417,879.72         | 6.59%          |
|              | Refinance Of Cane Growers Loan     | 1058         | \$ 9,497,163.81         | 25.87%         |
|              | Refinance of Outside Debt          | 222          | \$ 3,023,985.83         | 8.24%          |
|              | Rehabilitation Loan                | 26           | \$ 196,503.40           | 0.54%          |
|              | Subsistence Farming                | 19           | \$ 119,863.49           | 0.33%          |
|              | <b>Grand Total</b>                 | <b>6486</b>  | <b>\$ 36,705,748.96</b> | <b>100.00%</b> |
|              | <b>Source: SCGC AR 2023, p.031</b> |              |                         |                |
|              | Product Group                      | Count        | Loan Portfolio          | %              |
|              | BLP Loan                           | 41           | \$192,368.56            | 0.52%          |
|              | CDRF Loan                          | 1336         | \$1,487,350.32          | 4.05%          |
|              | FSC                                | 1            | \$4,000,307.39          | 10.89%         |
|              | Improvement Loan                   | 1082         | \$5,995,340.42          | 16.32%         |
|              | Investment Loan                    | 950          | \$7,927,755.13          | 21.59%         |
|              | Personal Loan                      | 581          | \$3,313,990.26          | 9.02%          |
|              | Refinance of Cane Growers Loan     | 998          | \$9,785,533.43          | 26.64%         |
|              | Refinance of Outside Debt          | 174          | \$2,676,997.28          | 7.29%          |
|              | Rehabilitation Loan                | 16           | \$181,752.41            | 0.49%          |
|              | Subsistence Farming                | 11           | \$68,492.45             | 0.19%          |
|              | Working Capital Loan               | 230          | \$1,096,923.78          | 2.99%          |
|              | <b>Grand Total</b>                 | <b>5420</b>  | <b>\$36,726,811.43</b>  | <b>100.00%</b> |
|              | <b>Source: SCGC AR 2024, p.30</b>  |              |                         |                |

## 10.0. Arrears Trend Comparison: 2023 vs 2024

### 10.1. Year-End Position (December)

| Indicator               | Dec-23     | Dec-24        | Change      | Change % |
|-------------------------|------------|---------------|-------------|----------|
| Grower Count Default    | 1,712      | 1,133         | -579        | -33.8%   |
| Total Arrears (\$)      | 1,602,320  | 1,446,791.38  | -155,528.62 | -9.7%    |
| Total Loan Default (\$) | 2,621,463  | 2,519,085.18  | -102,377.82 | -3.9%    |
| Total Portfolio (\$)    | 31,996,240 | 32,534,135.48 | +537,895.48 | +1.7%    |
| % Balance Arrears       | 8%         | 8%            | No change   | -        |

### 10.2. Key Observation

While the loan portfolio grew by **1.7%**, both arrears and defaults declined, indicating an overall improvement in portfolio quality.

### 10.3. Trend Analysis by Quarter

#### 10.3.1. Grower Count in Default

| Quarter   | 2023  | 2024  | Difference |
|-----------|-------|-------|------------|
| January   | 1,912 | 1,746 | -166       |
| March     | 1,783 | 1,642 | -141       |
| June      | 1,798 | 1,329 | -469       |
| September | 1,782 | 1,293 | -489       |
| December  | 1,712 | 1,133 | -579       |

- Defaulting grower numbers were lower throughout 2024 than 2023.
- The strongest improvement occurred between June and December.
- By year-end, defaulting growers fell by **33.8%**, a significant improvement in borrower repayment behaviour.

#### 10.3.2. Total Arrears

| Quarter   | 2023 (\$) | 2024 (\$) | Difference (\$) |
|-----------|-----------|-----------|-----------------|
| January   | 1,944,813 | 1,608,347 | -336,467        |
| March     | 1,869,259 | 1,531,600 | -337,659        |
| June      | 1,901,821 | 1,455,832 | -445,989        |
| September | 1,904,000 | 1,473,663 | -430,337        |
| December  | 1,602,320 | 1,446,791 | -155,529        |

- Arrears remained consistently below 2023 levels throughout 2024.
- The largest improvement occurred in June 2024.
- Total arrears declined by nearly **\$500,000** during the middle of the year compared with the same period in 2023.

#### 10.3.3. Total Loan Default

| Quarter   | 2023 (\$) | 2024 (\$) | Difference (\$) |
|-----------|-----------|-----------|-----------------|
| January   | 3,032,745 | 2,729,074 | -303,671        |
| March     | 2,636,704 | 2,602,980 | -33,724         |
| June      | 2,653,756 | 2,317,874 | -335,882        |
| September | 2,984,851 | 2,437,145 | -547,706        |
| December  | 2,621,463 | 2,519,085 | -102,378        |

- Loan defaults were lower in every quarter of 2024.
- The biggest improvement occurred in September, when defaults were **18.4% lower** than September 2023.
- Year-end defaults reduced despite a larger portfolio.

#### 10.3.4. Portfolio Growth

| Quarter   | 2023 Portfolio (\$) | 2024 Portfolio (\$) | Difference (\$) |
|-----------|---------------------|---------------------|-----------------|
| January   | 30,998,112          | 32,696,060          | +1,697,948      |
| March     | 28,444,166          | 29,909,023          | +1,464,857      |
| June      | 29,980,388          | 29,909,023          | -71,365         |
| September | 31,697,797          | 31,587,310          | -110,487        |
| December  | 31,996,240          | 32,534,135          | +537,895        |

- Portfolio value remained stronger in most quarters during 2024.
- Despite challenging economic conditions, portfolio growth was maintained.
- The year closed with a portfolio exceeding **\$32.5 million**, compared with **\$32.0 million** in 2023.

#### 10.3.5. Arrears Ratio Performance

| Quarter | 2023 | 2024 |
|---------|------|------|
|---------|------|------|

|           |     |    |
|-----------|-----|----|
| January   | 10% | 8% |
| March     | 9%  | 9% |
| June      | 9%  | 8% |
| September | 9%  | 8% |
| December  | 8%  | 8% |

- The arrears ratio improved in 3 of the 5 quarters.
- January showed the most significant improvement, falling from **10% to 8%**.
- The portfolio maintained an arrears ratio of **8%** for most of 2024 despite growth in lending activities.

The 2024 loan portfolio demonstrated **stronger credit quality and collection performance** compared to 2023. The number of growers in default fell significantly by **34%**, while total arrears declined by **10%** and total loan defaults decreased by **4%**. At the same time, the loan portfolio expanded by **1.7%**, indicating that portfolio growth was achieved without a deterioration in asset quality. The most notable achievement was the reduction in defaulting growers from **1,712 to 1,133**, suggesting improved recovery efforts, better repayment behaviour, or strengthened credit monitoring. The arrears ratio remained stable at **8%**, despite growth in the overall portfolio, demonstrating improved portfolio management and enhanced loan performance across the institution.

**Overall, 2024 showed a healthier, more resilient loan portfolio characterized by lower arrears, fewer defaulting growers, reduced default balances, and modest portfolio growth.**

| Loan Trend | Type                               | Jan-23          | Mar-23          | Jun-23          | Sep-23          | Dec-23          |
|------------|------------------------------------|-----------------|-----------------|-----------------|-----------------|-----------------|
|            | Grower Count Default               | 1,912           | 1,783           | 1,798           | 1,782           | 1,712           |
|            | Total Arrears                      | \$1,944,813.45  | \$1,869,259.00  | 1,901,821       | 1,904,000       | 1,602,320       |
|            | Total Loan-Default                 | \$3,032,745.49  | \$2,636,704.00  | 2,653,756       | 2,984,851       | 2,621,463       |
|            | Total Portfolio                    | \$30,998,112.48 | \$28,444,166.00 | 29,980,388      | 31,697,797      | 31,996,240      |
|            | % Balance Arrears                  | 10%             | 9%              | 9%              | 9%              | 8%              |
|            | <b>Source: SCGC AR 2023, p.035</b> |                 |                 |                 |                 |                 |
|            | Type/<br>Quarter                   | Jan-24          | Mar-24          | Jun-24          | Sep-24          | Dec-24          |
|            | Grower Count Default               | 1,746           | 1,642           | 1,329           | 1,293           | 1,133           |
|            | Total Arrears                      | 1,608,346.64    | \$1,531,600.47  | \$1,455,831,.82 | \$1,473,662.81  | \$1,446,791.38  |
|            | Total Loan-Default                 | 2,729,074.44    | \$2,602,979.81  | \$2,317,874.45  | \$2,437,144.90  | \$2,519,085.18  |
|            | Total Portfolio                    | \$32,696,060.26 | \$29,909,022.92 | \$29,909,022.92 | \$31,587,310.46 | \$32,534,135.48 |
|            | % Balance Arrears                  | 8%              | 9%              | 8%              | 8%              | 8%              |
|            | <b>Source: SCGC AR 2024, p.33</b>  |                 |                 |                 |                 |                 |

## 11.0. New Farmer Assistance Programme (NFA) Comparison: 2023 vs 2024 Programme Summary

| Indicator                             | 2023         | 2024         | Change      | Change % |
|---------------------------------------|--------------|--------------|-------------|----------|
| Beneficiary Count                     | 267          | 267          | 0           | 0%       |
| Paid to TLTB (\$)                     | 554,213.50   | 324.00       | -553,889.50 | -99.9%   |
| Reimbursed to Growers/Applicants (\$) | 952,316.91   | 88,240.88    | -864,076.03 | -90.7%   |
| Total Programme Value (\$)            | 1,506,530.41 | 1,414,913.73 | -91,616.68  | -6.1%    |

### 2024 Funding Composition

| Funding Source                       | Amount (\$)          | Share of Total as per report | Actual Percentage |
|--------------------------------------|----------------------|------------------------------|-------------------|
| SCGF                                 | 777,446.25           | 54.9%                        | 56.89%            |
| FDB                                  | 500,551.59           | 35.4%                        | 36.63%            |
| Reimbursed to Growers/Applicants     | 88,240.88            | 6.2%                         | 6.46%             |
| Paid to TLTB                         | 324.00               | 0.0%                         | 0.02%             |
| <b>Actual Total</b>                  | <b>1,366,562.72.</b> | <b>100.0%</b>                | <b>100.0%</b>     |
| <b>Report Total: AR 2024, p35</b>    | <b>1,414,913.73</b>  |                              |                   |
| <b>Difference from actual report</b> | <b>48,351.01</b>     |                              |                   |

### Key Observation

Unlike 2023, where funding was primarily channelled through **TLTB payments and reimbursements to growers**, the 2024 programme appears to have been financed mainly through **SCGF and FDB contributions**, together accounting for over **90% of total programme funding**.

*The actual Manual Calculation does not match with the calculations in the AR 2024, p35.*

### Key Findings

#### 11.1. Beneficiary Coverage Remained Unchanged

- Both years supported **267 beneficiaries**.
- The programme maintained its outreach despite changes in funding structure.

#### 11.2. Programme Value Declined Slightly

- Total programme value decreased from **\$1.51 million** in 2023 to **\$1.41 million** in 2024.
- This represents a modest decline of **6.1%**.

#### 11.3. Major Shift in Funding Structure

| 2023                                                                                                                                                                   | 2024                                                                                                                                                                                                            |
|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Paid to TLTB: <b>\$554,213.50</b></li> <li>Reimbursements: <b>\$952,316.91</b></li> <li>Total: <b>\$1.51 million</b></li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>SCGF funding: <b>\$777,446.25</b></li> <li>FDB funding: <b>\$500,551.59</b></li> <li>Reimbursements: <b>\$88,240.88</b></li> <li>Total: <b>\$1.41 million</b></li> </ul> |

This suggests a transition from direct reimbursement-based support toward a model funded largely through SCGF and FDB resources.

#### 11.4. Reimbursements Declined Significantly

- Reimbursements fell from **\$952,316.91** to **\$88,240.88**.
- This represents a reduction of approximately **91%**.
- The reduction may indicate changes in programme design, eligibility, or payment mechanisms.

### Average Assistance per Beneficiary

| Year | Total Programme Value | Beneficiaries | Average Support per Beneficiary |
|------|-----------------------|---------------|---------------------------------|
| 2023 | \$1,506,530.41        | 267           | \$5,642                         |
| 2024 | \$1,414,913.73        | 267           | \$5,299                         |

### Observation

- Average assistance per participant declined from approximately **\$5,642** to **\$5,299**.
- This represents a decrease of about **6.1%**, consistent with the overall decline in programme value.

The **New Farmer Assistance Programme (NFA)** maintained support for **267 beneficiaries** in both 2023 and

2024. Total programme expenditure declined slightly by 6.1%, from \$1.51 million to \$1.41 million, reducing average assistance per beneficiary from \$5,642 to \$5,299. The most significant change was the **shift in funding structure**. While the 2023 programme relied largely on **TLTB payments and reimbursements to growers**, the 2024 programme appears to have been funded predominantly through **SCGF (\$777,446) and FDB (\$500,552)** contributions. This indicates a strategic move toward institutional funding support while maintaining the same level of beneficiary coverage.

New Farmer Assistance Programme (NFA)

| Paid to TLTB | Count | Reimbursed to Growers/Applicants Bank and Loan Account | Total          |
|--------------|-------|--------------------------------------------------------|----------------|
| \$554,213.50 | 267   | \$952,316.91                                           | \$1,506,530.41 |

Source: SCGC AR 2023, p.036

| New Farmer Assistance/Lease Renewal Premium |              |              |              |                                                        |                |
|---------------------------------------------|--------------|--------------|--------------|--------------------------------------------------------|----------------|
| Count                                       | SCGF         | FDB          | Paid to TLTB | Reimbursed to Growers/Applicants Bank and Loan Account | Total          |
| 267                                         | \$777,446.25 | \$500,551.59 | 324          | \$88,240.88                                            | \$1,414,913.73 |

Source: SCGC AR 2024, p.35

## 12.0. Investments & Diversified Portfolio

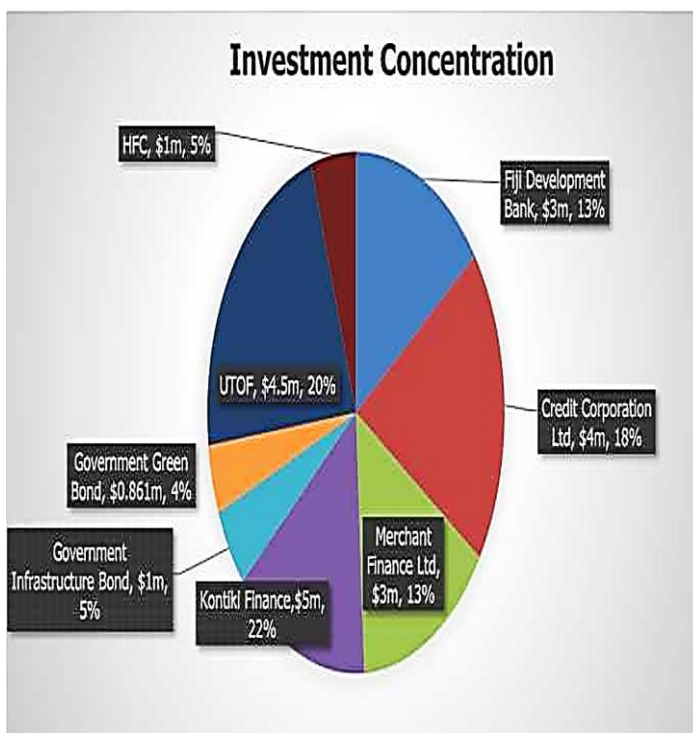
| Area                                   | 2023                                                              | 2024                                                                                      | Update / Change                                                    |
|----------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <b>Investment Portfolio Value</b>      | \$24.8 million                                                    | \$47.1 million                                                                            | Increased by <b>\$22.3 million (90%)</b> from 2023.                |
| <b>Portfolio Growth</b>                | Not specified                                                     | Grew from \$38.2 million to \$47.1 million during 2024                                    | <b>23% growth</b> achieved in 2024.                                |
| <b>Investment Objective</b>            | Maximize long-term returns while managing short-term fluctuations | Same objective maintained                                                                 | No major change; continued focus on risk-return balance.           |
| <b>Investment Strategy</b>             | Diversification across a wide array of assets                     | Expanded into more resilient sectors and diversified asset classes                        | Enhanced diversification strategy.                                 |
| <b>Return on Investments</b>           | Average return of <b>3.2%</b> (above market average of 2.5%-3.0%) | Net investment income before expenses of <b>\$5.6 million</b>                             | Significant improvement in investment earnings.                    |
| <b>Commercial Property Investments</b> | No commercial property investment highlighted                     | Acquired <b>Vitogo Parade, Lautoka</b> with HFC Bank secured as major tenant for 17 years | <b>New investment category introduced.</b>                         |
| <b>Fixed Income Investments</b>        | Continued according to investment policy                          | Maintained fixed income securities and commercial lending despite low interest rates      | Continued investment approach under challenging market conditions. |
| <b>Unit Trust of Fiji Portfolio</b>    | Not specifically highlighted                                      | Strong growth due to higher dividends and capital gains                                   | New performance success highlighted in 2024.                       |
| <b>Diversification Initiatives</b>     | ADB engaged to conduct Gap Analysis for                           | Diversification expanded through actual                                                   | Shift from <b>planning and assessment</b> to                       |

|                                    |                                                             |                                                                                 |                                                    |
|------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------|
|                                    | diversification into a Licensed Financial Institution (LFI) | investments into resilient sectors and commercial property                      | <b>implementation and execution.</b>               |
| <b>ADB Transformation Project</b>  | New engagement with ADB commenced                           | Ongoing, not a major feature in reporting                                       | Continued initiative with less emphasis in 2024.   |
| <b>Focus on Growers</b>            | Long-term growth of growers' savings                        | Financial wellbeing and security of growers through stronger investment returns | Stronger emphasis on tangible benefits to growers. |
| <b>Asset Portfolio Composition</b> | Diversified investments emphasized                          | Diversified asset portfolio demonstrated against core lending business          | Portfolio diversification further strengthened.    |

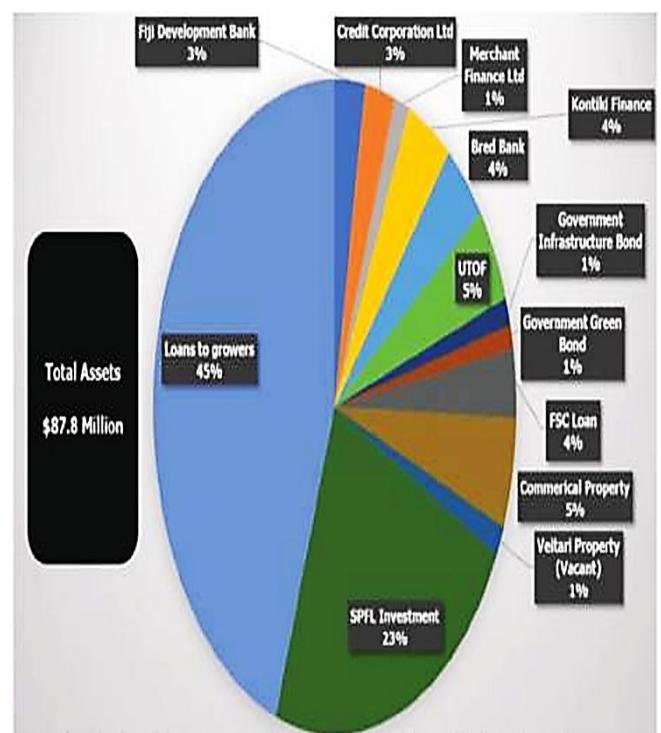
### 12.1. Key New Developments in 2024

- Investment portfolio reached **\$47.1 million**.
- Achieved **23% portfolio growth** during the year.
- Generated **\$5.6 million net investment income before expenses**.
- Acquired **SCGF's first commercial property (Vitogo Parade, Lautoka)**.
- Expanded investments into **resilient sectors**.
- Unit Trust of Fiji investments delivered strong dividend and capital growth.
- Diversification strategy moved from planning stages to active implementation.

**2023** focused on strengthening the investment framework, diversification planning, and the ADB-led transformation strategy. **2024** demonstrated significant execution of those strategies through substantial portfolio growth, commercial property acquisition, enhanced diversification, and stronger investment income, resulting in improved value creation for growers.



AR 2023, p037



AR 2024, p41

## 13.0. Legal Services Comparison: 2023 vs 2024

### 13.1. Overall Service Delivery

| Legal Service/Instrument | 2023 | 2024 | Change | % Change |
|--------------------------|------|------|--------|----------|
|--------------------------|------|------|--------|----------|

|                                     |           |           |           |              |
|-------------------------------------|-----------|-----------|-----------|--------------|
| Will                                | 7         | 3         | -4        | -57.1%       |
| Transmission by Death               | 30        | 22        | -8        | -26.7%       |
| Power of Attorney                   | 7         | 4         | -3        | -42.9%       |
| Provisional Title                   | 2         | 6         | +4        | +200.0%      |
| Probate / Letters of Administration | 12        | 10        | -2        | -16.7%       |
| Sales & Purchase Agreements         | 6         | 14        | +8        | +133.3%      |
| Transfer                            | 18        | 23        | +5        | +27.8%       |
| Deed                                | 9         | 16        | +7        | +77.8%       |
| <b>Total Services Delivered</b>     | <b>91</b> | <b>98</b> | <b>+7</b> | <b>+7.7%</b> |

### 13.2. Civil Litigation Comparison

| Indicator                        | 2023         | 2024    | Change              |
|----------------------------------|--------------|---------|---------------------|
| Appeal Matters                   | 2            | 2       | No Change           |
| Favourable Court Orders Obtained | 6            | 8       | +2                  |
| Pending Cases at Year-End        | 8            | 14      | +6                  |
| Payment Monitoring               | Not Reported | Ongoing | Enhanced Monitoring |

### 13.3. Service Mix Comparison

| Service Type                        | 2023 Share | 2024 Share |
|-------------------------------------|------------|------------|
| Transmission by Death               | 33.0%      | 22.4%      |
| Transfer                            | 19.8%      | 23.5%      |
| Probate / Letters of Administration | 13.2%      | 10.2%      |
| Deed                                | 9.9%       | 16.3%      |
| Sales & Purchase Agreements         | 6.6%       | 14.3%      |
| Power of Attorney                   | 7.7%       | 4.1%       |
| Will                                | 7.7%       | 3.1%       |
| Provisional Title                   | 2.2%       | 6.1%       |

### 13.4. Key Performance Highlights

| Area                            | Performance                         |
|---------------------------------|-------------------------------------|
| <b>Strongest Growth</b>         | Provisional Titles (+200%)          |
| <b>Second Highest Growth</b>    | Sales & Purchase Agreements (+133%) |
| <b>Third Highest Growth</b>     | Deeds (+78%)                        |
| <b>Largest Decline</b>          | Wills (-57%)                        |
| <b>Most Common Service 2023</b> | Transmission by Death (30 cases)    |
| <b>Most Common Service 2024</b> | Transfers (23 cases)                |
| <b>Total Service Growth</b>     | +7 services (+7.7%)                 |

### 13.5. Legal Service Expansion

| Area                           | 2023              | 2024 |
|--------------------------------|-------------------|------|
| Lease Preparation & Execution  | Not Reported      | ✓    |
| Mortgage & Caveat Registration | Limited Reference | ✓    |
| Land Ownership Verification    | Not Reported      | ✓    |
| Estate & Succession Matters    | ✓                 | ✓    |
| Conveyancing Services          | ✓                 | ✓    |
| Grower Legal Support           | ✓                 | ✓    |
| Legal Literacy Support         | Not Reported      | ✓    |

### 13.6. Benefits to Growers Identified in 2024

| Benefit Area       |
|--------------------|
| Secure Land Tenure |

|                                      |
|--------------------------------------|
| Faster Access to Finance             |
| Reduced Legal Disputes               |
| Estate Planning & Succession Support |
| Affordable Legal Access              |
| Improved Legal Literacy              |

### 13.7. Challenges Identified in 2024

| Challenge                        | Impact on Growers                                   |
|----------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------|
| Land Ownership & Tenure Disputes | Delays in farm development and financing            |
| Estate Succession Issues         | Ownership transfer complications                    |
| Contractual Uncertainties        | Difficulty understanding agreements and lease terms |
| Limited Legal Literacy           | Increased vulnerability in disputes                 |
| Access to Justice Constraints    | Difficulty pursuing legal remedies                  |
| Delays in Land Registration      | Slower processing of legal transactions             |
| High Cost of Legal Services      | Reduced ability to obtain legal assistance          |

### 13.8. Executive Summary

| Indicator                      | 2023 | 2024 | Result               |
|--------------------------------|------|------|----------------------|
| Total Legal Services Delivered | 91   | 98   | ▲ Improved           |
| Court Orders Obtained          | 6    | 8    | ▲ Improved           |
| Pending Litigation Cases       | 8    | 14   | ▲ Increased workload |
| Appeal Matters                 | 2    | 2    | Stable               |

### 13.9. Key Takeaways

- Legal service delivery increased by **7.7%**, from **91 matters in 2023 to 98 matters in 2024**.
- Significant growth occurred in **Provisional Titles (+200%)**, **Sales & Purchase Agreements (+133%)**, and **Deeds (+78%)**.
- **Transfers became the most frequently provided legal service** in 2024.
- Favourable court orders increased from **6 to 8**, demonstrating stronger litigation outcomes.
- The number of pending cases increased from **8 to 14**, indicating greater demand for legal support.
- The Legal Department expanded its role beyond litigation and conveyancing by providing greater support for land tenure, succession planning, legal literacy, and access to finance.

### 13.10. Overall Assessment

| Area                    | Assessment   |
|-------------------------|--------------|
| Service Delivery        | Improved     |
| Litigation Outcomes     | Improved     |
| Grower Support          | Expanded     |
| Workload                | Increased    |
| Strategic Value to SCGF | Strengthened |

**Overall, 2024 reflects a more mature and active Legal Department, with higher service volumes, stronger litigation performance, and a broader contribution to grower support and institutional risk management.**

## 14.0. Financial Analysis: FY2023 vs FY2024

The financial statements indicate that SCGF delivered a stronger financial performance in FY2024 compared to FY2023. While revenue declined, profitability improved significantly due to lower cost of goods sold, improved gross margins, reduced finance costs, and stronger Fund performance.

### 14.1. Statement of Profit or Loss Comparison (Group)

| Item    | FY2023 (\$) | FY2024 (\$) | Change (\$) | Change (%) |
|---------|-------------|-------------|-------------|------------|
| Revenue | 47,567,661  | 41,646,841  | (5,920,820) | -12.4%     |

|                                           |              |              |             |         |
|-------------------------------------------|--------------|--------------|-------------|---------|
| Cost of Goods Sold                        | (39,455,574) | (30,988,069) | 8,467,505   | -21.5%  |
| Gross Profit                              | 8,112,087    | 10,658,772   | 2,546,685   | +31.4%  |
| Finance Income                            | 2,563,764    | 2,593,962    | 30,198      | +1.2%   |
| Other Operating Income                    | 1,869,713    | 1,506,697    | (363,016)   | -19.4%  |
| Total Income                              | 12,545,564   | 14,759,431   | 2,213,867   | +17.6%  |
| Administrative & Other Operating Expenses | (4,961,340)  | (5,552,185)  | (590,845)   | +11.9%  |
| Profit from Operations                    | 7,584,224    | 9,207,246    | 1,623,022   | +21.4%  |
| Finance Costs (Net)                       | (287,338)    | (223,258)    | 64,080      | -22.3%  |
| Profit Before Tax                         | 7,296,886    | 8,983,988    | 1,687,102   | +23.1%  |
| Income Tax Expense                        | (911,415)    | (1,976,876)  | (1,065,461) | +116.9% |
| Net Profit After Tax                      | 6,385,471    | 7,007,112    | 621,641     | +9.7%   |

## 14.2. Key Financial Highlights

### 14.2.1. Revenue

| Indicator | FY2023   | FY2024            |
|-----------|----------|-------------------|
| Revenue   | \$47.57M | \$41.65M          |
| Change    |          | -\$5.92M (-12.4%) |

### 14.2.2. Analysis

- Revenue declined by 12.4%.
- Despite lower revenue, profitability improved because operating costs reduced at a faster rate.

### 14.2.3. Gross Profit

| Indicator    | FY2023  | FY2024   |
|--------------|---------|----------|
| Gross Profit | \$8.11M | \$10.66M |
| Gross Margin | 17.1%   | 25.6%    |

### 14.2.4. Analysis

- Gross profit increased by **31.4%**.
- Gross margin improved from **17.1% to 25.6%**.
- This indicates significantly improved cost control and operational efficiency.

## 14.3. Profitability Analysis

| Indicator              | FY2023  | FY2024  | Change |
|------------------------|---------|---------|--------|
| Profit from Operations | \$7.58M | \$9.21M | +21.4% |
| Profit Before Tax      | \$7.30M | \$8.98M | +23.1% |
| Net Profit After Tax   | \$6.39M | \$7.01M | +9.7%  |

### 14.3.1. Key Observations

- Operating profit increased by over **\$1.6 million**.
- Profit before tax increased by **23.1%**.
- Despite higher tax expenses, net profit still increased by almost **10%**.
- FY2024 was the stronger profit-generating year.

## 14.4. Expense Analysis

| Item                    | FY2023 (\$) | FY2024 (\$) | Change |
|-------------------------|-------------|-------------|--------|
| Cost of Goods Sold      | 39.46M      | 30.99M      | -21.5% |
| Administrative Expenses | 4.96M       | 5.55M       | +11.9% |
| Finance Costs           | 287,338     | 223,258     | -22.3% |

## Interpretation

### 14.4.1. Positive

- Significant reduction in production/operating costs.
- Lower finance costs improved overall profitability.

### 14.4.2. Areas to Monitor

- Administrative expenses increased by nearly **\$591,000**.

#### 14.5. Fund Performance Comparison

| Item                    | FY2023 (\$) | FY2024 (\$) | Change (\$) | Change (%) |
|-------------------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|------------|
| Finance Income          | 2,563,764   | 2,593,962   | 30,198      | +1.2%      |
| Other Operating Income  | 2,274,863   | 5,602,261   | 3,327,398   | +146.3%    |
| Total Income            | 4,838,627   | 8,196,223   | 3,357,596   | +69.4%     |
| Administrative Expenses | (2,110,581) | (2,195,723) | (85,142)    | +4.0%      |
| Profit Before Tax       | 2,705,230   | 5,969,466   | 3,264,236   | +120.7%    |
| Net Profit              | 2,705,230   | 5,969,466   | 3,264,236   | +120.7%    |

##### 14.5.1. Analysis

The Fund experienced exceptional growth in 2024:

- Total income rose by **69.4%**.
- Profit more than doubled from **\$2.71 million to \$5.97 million**.
- Growth was driven largely by a substantial increase in other operating income.

#### 14.6. Comprehensive Income

| Indicator                  | FY2023      | FY2024      | Change |
|----------------------------|-------------|-------------|--------|
| Total Comprehensive Income | \$6,385,471 | \$7,007,112 | +9.7%  |

##### 14.6.1. Attribution

| Component                | FY2023    | FY2024    | Change   |
|--------------------------|-----------|-----------|----------|
| Owners of Parent         | 5,971,397 | 6,491,781 | +520,384 |
| Non-Controlling Interest | 414,074   | 515,331   | +101,257 |
| Total                    | 6,385,471 | 7,007,112 | +621,641 |

#### 14.7. Key Financial Ratios

| Ratio               | FY2023 | FY2024 |
|---------------------|--------|--------|
| Gross Profit Margin | 17.1%  | 25.6%  |
| Net Profit Margin   | 13.4%  | 16.8%  |
| Operating Margin    | 15.9%  | 22.1%  |

##### 14.7.1. Analysis

All major profitability ratios improved in FY2024:

- Gross margin improved by **8.5 percentage points**.
- Net margin improved by **3.4 percentage points**.
- Operating margin improved by **6.2 percentage points**.

FY2024 was a stronger financial year than FY2023 despite lower revenue. Revenue declined by **12.4%**, but improved cost management led to a **31.4% increase in gross profit** and a **23.1% increase in profit before tax**. Net profit increased from **\$6.39 million to \$7.01 million**, while gross profit margins improved from **17.1% to 25.6%**.

The Fund's performance was particularly impressive, with profit increasing by **121%**, driven by a substantial rise in other operating income. Lower finance costs, stronger operational efficiency, and improved profitability ratios demonstrate that FY2024 was characterized by higher quality earnings and stronger financial sustainability.

#### Overall Assessment

| Area                     | FY2023   | FY2024          |
|--------------------------|----------|-----------------|
| Revenue Growth           | Moderate | ▼ Lower         |
| Cost Management          | Good     | ▲ Much Stronger |
| Gross Profitability      | Good     | ▲ Stronger      |
| Operating Performance    | Good     | ▲ Stronger      |
| Net Profitability        | Strong   | ▲ Stronger      |
| Financial Sustainability | Strong   | ▲ Improved      |

**Overall, FY2024 delivered superior financial results through improved efficiency, stronger margins, and**

significantly higher profitability, positioning SCGF in a stronger financial position for future growth and lending activities.

## 15.0. Sustainable Development Goals (SDG) Analysis

The Sugar Cane Growers Fund (SCGF) demonstrates a consistent and evolving commitment to the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) as part of its **2023-2028 Strategic Plan**. A comparative analysis reveals that while the core work plans remained steady, the **2024 achievements often showed quantitative growth and the introduction of more targeted environmental initiatives** compared to 2023.

### 15.1. Social and Economic Empowerment

| SDG Goal                            | 2023 Achievements                                                                                | 2024 Achievements                                                                                                                        |
|-------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <b>SDG 1: No Poverty</b>            | Total loans portfolio reached <b>\$30.740m</b> .                                                 | Total gross loan approvals reached <b>\$10.278m</b> for the year.                                                                        |
| <b>SDG 3: Good Health</b>           | <b>16</b> medical loan fees waived (\$0.103m). Free medical checkups in Labasa and Sigatoka.     | <b>23</b> medical loan fees waived ( <b>\$121,500</b> ). Free checkups in Seaqaqa and Ba. Progress on a medical center/dialysis project. |
| <b>SDG 4: Quality Education</b>     | <b>77</b> "Back to School" loans (\$0.139m). <b>30</b> staff attended training.                  | Education-related promotions continued. Staff training increased to <b>42</b> sessions (18 internal, 7 in-house external, 17 external).  |
| <b>SDG 5: Gender Equality</b>       | Women farmers were <b>6%</b> of growers by number (298) and <b>8%</b> of the portfolio (\$2.7m). | Women farmers grew to <b>7%</b> by number (397) and <b>9%</b> of the gross portfolio ( <b>\$3.2m</b> ).                                  |
| <b>SDG 10: Reduced Inequalities</b> | <b>50% reduction</b> in loan application fees for women farmers for farm/implement purchases.    | Continued the <b>50% fee discount</b> for women. Explored social protection products with UNCDF.                                         |

### 15.2. Sustainable Infrastructure and Innovation

- **SDG 9 (Industry, Innovation, and Infrastructure):** In 2023, the Fund focused on the launch of the **mySCGF App** (May 31) and farm mechanization loans (0.575m). *By 2024, machinery loans increased to 0.871m* (56 loans). A major 2024 addition was the **SCGF Loyalty Card Program**, providing growers discounts with service partners.
- **SDG 11 (Sustainable Cities and Communities):** Farmhouse extension and repair loans grew from **359 loans (1.610m) in 2023 to 363 loans (1.675m)** in 2024.
- **SDG 7 (Affordable and Clean Energy):** While 2023 saw 8 solar kit loans (**0.015m**), **2024 recorded only 2 loans (0.003m)**.

### 15.3. Environmental and Climate Action

The 2024 report shows a significant shift toward **Green Finance** and specific climate mitigation:

- **Green Cane Incentive Program (2024):** A major new initiative introduced in 2024 offers a **reduced interest rate of 4%** (0.5% lower than the standard rate) to growers who harvest at least 75% of their crop as green cane. This program benefited **790 growers** with a total loan portfolio of \$7.55m.
- **SDG 13 (Climate Action):** The 2023 report focused on formulating the ESG Policy Guideline. In 2024, the Fund reported that **25% of its total normal income** (\$1.173m) was effectively "given back" to growers through subsidized fees and climate/SDG programs.
- **Climatic Risk Assessment:** By 2024, the Fund had integrated systematic **climatic impact assessments** into its lending portfolio, classifying loans based on their vulnerability to flooding and drought.

### 15.4. Governance and Partnerships

- **SDG 16 (Peace, Justice, and Strong Institutions):** Legal services for non-core lending matters grew from **91 completed documents** in 2023 to **98 documents** in 2024. Corporate governance was

strengthened in 2024 through 100% implementation of audit findings and the introduction of new policies like the Investment Policy and Fraud and Corruption Policy.

- **SDG 17 (Partnerships for the Goals):** Both years emphasized collaboration with the Ministry of Sugar Industry and international partners like UNCDF and ADB. In 2024, its subsidiary, **South Pacific Fertilizers (SPFL)**, also directly linked its activities to SDGs 2, 5, 8, 12, and 17 through fertilizer supply and employment parity.

**Detailed info on: AR 2024, p42-46 AND AR 2023, p41-46**

## Suggested Questions

### Questions from AR 2023

1. The "At a Glance" summary notes a total lending portfolio of \$30.7 million, yet the Mill Portfolio table cites a net grower loan balance of \$32.12 million; can you clarify the discrepancy between these two figures? **(Pages 006, 030)**
2. The subsidiary South Pacific Fertilizers (SPFL) saw a net profit drop of over 46% (from \$6.83 million to \$3.68 million) in one year; what primary factors contributed to this significant decline in performance? **(Page 008)**
3. With 43% of your borrowers producing less than 100 tonnes of cane, how is the Fund ensuring the long-term creditworthiness and financial sustainability of these smallholders? **(Page 030)**
4. Only 8 solar kit loans were approved throughout 2023; how does the Fund plan to improve the accessibility and uptake of this specific SDG 7 initiative? **(Page 043)**
5. Net profit for the Fund decreased from \$2.836 million in 2022 to \$2.71 million in 2023; what specific operational costs or market conditions led to this decline? **(Page 081)**

### Questions from AR 2024

1. Renewable energy financing saw a sharp decline, with solar kit loan approvals dropping from 8 in the previous year to only 2 in 2024; what has caused this loss of momentum? **(Page 45)**
2. The Fund's net profit more than doubled from \$2.705 million in 2023 to \$5.969 million in 2024; to what extent is this "transformative growth" merely a result of the \$3.539 million impairment write-back on the SPFL investment rather than core operational gains? **(2023 Page 81; 2024 Page 83)**
3. In 2023, the Legal Department successfully completed multiple Wills and Powers of Attorney for growers, but these services were abruptly suspended in April 2024; why was a service that directly supports "secure land tenure" and "estate succession" discontinued? **(2023 Page 38; 2024 Page 38)**
4. Despite the introduction of the "Green Cane Incentive Program" in 2024, the actual uptake of solar kit loans dropped from 8 in 2023 to only 2 in 2024; is there a disconnect between the Fund's high-level ESG framework and the actual financial needs of the growers? **(2023 Page 43; 2024 Page 44)**

24/07/2026

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# **ANNEX 3**

## **VERBATIM REPORT**

# **[VERBATIM REPORT]**

## **STANDING COMMITTEE ON** **ECONOMIC AFFAIRS**

### **ANNUAL REPORT**

Ministry of Sugar Industry Annual Report 2021 and 2022

**SUBMITTEES:**     (1) Ministry for Sugar  
                          (2) Sugar Industry Tribunal  
                          (3) Sugar Cane Growers Fund

**VENUE:**            **Big Committee Room, Parliament**

**DATE:**             **Tuesday, 8<sup>th</sup> September, 2026**

**VERBATIM NOTES OF THE MEETING OF THE STANDING COMMITTEE ON ECONOMIC AFFAIRS HELD AT THE COMMITTEE ROOM (EAST WING), PARLIAMENT PRECINCTS, GOVERNMENT BUILDINGS ON TUESDAY, 8TH SEPTEMBER, 2026 AT 9.20 A.M.**

Present

|                        |   |                    |
|------------------------|---|--------------------|
| Hon. S. Tubuna         | - | Chairman           |
| Hon. P.D. Kumar        | - | Deputy Chairperson |
| Hon. S.T. Koroilavesau | - | Member             |
| Hon. A.N. Tuicolo      | - | Member             |

**Interviewee/Submittee: Ministry of Agriculture, Waterways and Sugar Industry**

In Attendance:

|                       |   |                                                      |
|-----------------------|---|------------------------------------------------------|
| (1) Dr. Andrew Tukana | - | Permanent Secretary                                  |
| (2) Mr. Praneel Naidu | - | Director Operations                                  |
| (3) Ms. Rinu Dayal    | - | Principal Economic Planning Officer – Sugar Industry |
| (4) Mr. Nitin Singh   | - | Manager, Human Resources – Sugar Industry            |

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MR. CHAIRMAN.- Honourable Members, members of the media and the public and the secretariat, ladies and gentlemen, a very good morning to you all and it is a pleasure to welcome everyone to this public hearing session. At the outset for information purposes, pursuant to Standing Order 111 of the Standing Orders of Parliament, all Committee meetings are to be open to the public. Therefore, this submission meeting is open to the public and the media and it is aired live on Parliament's channel through the *Walesi* platform and live streamed through the Parliament's *Facebook* page.

For any sensitive information concerning this submission that cannot be disclosed in public, this can be provided to the Committee either in private or in writing, but do note this will not only be allowed in a few specific circumstances which include;

- (1) National security matters;
- (2) Third party confidential information;
- (3) Personnel or human resources matters; and
- (4) Meetings whereby the Committee deliberates on all issues before it and develops its recommendations and reports.

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

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

In terms of other protocols of this Committee, be advised that whilst the meeting is in progress, movement within the meeting room will be restricted. There should be minimal usage of

mobile phones, whereby answering of mobile phones should be done outside this room and all mobile phones are to be on silent mode.

I would like to introduce myself and following this I will the honourable Members introduce themselves.

*(Introduction of Committee Members)*

MR. CHAIRMAN.- With us this morning, is our first submittee who are the representatives from the Ministry of Agriculture, Waterways and Sugar Industry, which the Committee has invited to provide us their submission on the Ministry of Sugar Industry Annual Report 2021 and 2022.

The purpose of the submission is to assist the Committee in its examination of the Ministry's performance, programmes, policies and strategic initiatives undertaken to support the development and sustainability of Fiji's sugar industry.

The Committee also seeks to gain a better understanding of the Ministry's achievements, challenges, financial and operational performance, stakeholder engagement and measures being implemented to improve industry productivity, profitability and long-term growth. With this brief introduction, I now take this time to invite our submission guests to introduce themselves and after that I will ask the Ministry to make a short presentation and following that we will have another question-and-answer session. You do not have to go through the whole submission that you have prepared but just provide an overview of the achievements that are being made for that specific year, the constraints and other challenges.

*(Introduction of representatives from the Ministry of Agriculture, Waterways and Sugar Industry)*

DR. A. TUKANA.- Mr. Chairman, if I may say a few opening remarks. To start off, the Annual Report before the Committee provides an account of the Ministry's activities and performance for the 2021-2022 Financial Year. The sugar industry has been an important pillar of Fiji's economy for many generations. It has supported thousands of farming families, has provided employment throughout the cane belt, generated export earnings and supported a significant rural economic ecosystem.

At the same time, we must acknowledge that the industry has experienced a long-term decline in productivity and competitiveness. This decline is not attributable to one single issue, it is the result of a combination of factors, such as ageing mills infrastructure, ageing farmers, labour shortages, land tenure issues, conversion of arable land into housing and other development, increasing production costs, climate change, declining soil health, transport challenges and changes in the international sugar market.

I put forward this morning, that we should not look at the sugar industry only through the lens of what it has achieved historically. However, we must also ask what the industry needs to become if it is to remain viable for the next generations to come. I have a few areas that we would like to look at, however, I can leave that to the discussions that will follow.

MR. CHAIRMAN.- You would like to make a short presentation on what was achieved during the year that we are currently scrutinising, in terms of the achievement, what are the challenges and following that, then we can have a question-and-answer session.

DR. A. TUKANA.- Mr. Chairman, I would like to request the Director....

HON. P.D. KUMAR.- Mr. Chairman, I think the Permanent Secretary started off very well and he wanted to tell us some of the things they want to do. That is a very important point that we would like to hear, since we already know the problems in the industry, however, now you want to share with us the way forward, and perhaps after that, you can very briefly ....

DR. A. TUKANA.- Mr. Chairman, I have a list of ways that we think we should move forward on to improve the industry and the sector. I think one of the most important ones is the industry needs reform. Since taking over the portfolio, our focus has been on reforming the industry rather than just simply maintaining the status quo. Even though the Government has been continuing to provide substantial support to the farmers in the industry, we need to try and maintain some of that, but the Government cannot alone support the long-term solution. We cannot continue to indefinitely address structural problems through subsidies and short-term interventions.

The industry needs to become more productive, efficient, commercially sustainable and climate resilient. This requires reform across the entire value chain, around production, housing, transportation, milling, research and development, land use, farmer services, mechanisation and value addition. The recent merger of the sugar industry or portfolio with the agriculture portfolio provides an important area that we can take advantage of. These are to:

- integrate agricultural extension services with the sugar sector;
- strengthen research and technology transfer;
- have a better coordination mechanism;
- align sugar production with water and land management;
- reduce the duplication between government agencies;
- improve the delivery of services to farmers; and
- take a whole-of-sector approach to rural development.

The second one we have is diversification. This is a very important area in terms of trying to uplift the livelihoods of those farmers who are unproductive as sugar remains as an important industrial and will continue to play a significant role in Fiji's economy. However, we need to recognise that every farmer or every piece of land will not remain economically viable for sugarcane farmers indefinitely. As I mentioned earlier, for a small holder farmer, the economics can be challenging because the input costs are high. The labour is increasingly difficult to obtain. Harvesting costs are high. Transportation costs are also high and climate events can severely affect production. The farmer has limited ability to achieve economies of scale with a small scale of production.

Our approach is we need to create an environment where small holder farmers have options. And these options will focus on the production of vegetables, fruits, wood crops, legumes, high value horticulture, livestock, as well as systems of intercropping, crop rotation, and agro-processing opportunities. The objective is to allow farmers to generate additional or alternative income streams to reduce their dependence on a single commodity like sugar.

This also has wider national benefits, and will relate to stronger food security, reduce dependence on imported food and improve rural incomes and livelihood, have greater climate resilience and opportunities to supply the tourism industry and the development of agro processing of potentially higher value export commodities. Diversification should not be viewed as moving away from sugar. It should be viewed as giving farmers more choices and ensuring that land is used for the activity that provides the best sustainable economic return.

I also mention here that the European Union Diversification Study has already started. Phase one has been completed, and we are currently waiting for the report to come in soon. A bit of background regarding the study, the EU team was in Fiji in June 2026 and undertook the first phase of field and analytical work. The first phase is intended to give Government evidence, based on where sugar remains commercially viable, where diversification may provide better returns, where integrated farming systems can be appropriate, and what markets and value chains can support those alternatives.

Based on the information, that report from the first phase will inform the second phase, which will also include a potential pilot intervention from the project. We are not proposing a wholesale transition away from sugarcane, we want the evidence to tell us where sugar should remain, where diversification makes economic sense and where an integrated farming model can provide the greatest return.

The other area as we move forward honourable Members is mechanisation. We already have a lot of this happening within the agricultural portfolio. We also have a lot of that happening within the sugar portfolio. However, at this point in time, we all know that there is a huge shortage of labour. I think the way for us to go forward is to have sustainable mechanisation programmes.

Manual harvesting is one of the things that is currently happening and is becoming more difficult and costly. However, mechanisation also needs to be expanded, particularly where it can reduce production costs and improve harvesting efficiency. The Committee may have also heard some of the problems we have with mechanical harvesting. Most of these machines just work on areas that are flat and not easily able to harvest on hilly terrain.

The Government has already supported cooperatives and service providers with mechanical harvesters, with fertiliser applicators and sugarcane planters. We are also continuing to examine mechanisation solutions that are suitable for Fiji's different terrain. I think the team had also made a trip this year or last year, just to see some of the harvesters or mechanical harvesters that they have overseas that may be applicable to Fiji's condition.

Another area is milling and infrastructure. We also need to be realistic about the condition of the industry's physical infrastructure as Fiji's mills are very old and significant expenditure is required to maintain those plants, equipment and safety standards. However, maintenance alone is not enough. We need to improve milling efficiency and sugar recovery. The cane quality, milling efficiency, factory performance, and recovery are also equally important.

Mr. Chairman and Members, there is the roads and transport networks. At the moment, we have more than 90 percent of cane which is transported by road and less by rail. Even though we had invested, the Government invested a lot of money to upgrade those rails over the last few years. The cane access road network is extensive; however, it requires continuous maintenance, upgrading, and flooding and climate events can quickly reverse planned infrastructure work. However, the rail remains important in selected areas and a complete return to rail would require significant time and capital investment. Therefore, our approach needs to be practical and economically sustainable, combining road, rail, and improved logistics where appropriate.

Mr. Chairman, there is also the area around climate resilience. We have all heard about El Nino that is starting to impact us, and drought is a major concern for all of us. So, climate change is no longer a future consideration. The industry is already experiencing flooding, waterlogging, saltwater intrusion, cyclones, and periods of drought.

Our work therefore needs to move from responding to climate disasters to being prepared for them. This means we must have drought tolerant varieties for crops, not only for sugar but also for other crops as well. We must have better water management, better drainage and soil moisture conservation practices incorporated into our practices. We need to improve agronomic practices. We must have more crop diversification, and importantly, we must have better early warning systems.

The integration of agriculture, waterways and sugar gives Government a stronger platform to address these issues and to have a better coordinated approach. As I had mentioned earlier, the other one is on institutional reforms. We have many institutions around the sugar sector, and we are now looking at, for example, the council members for the Growers Council. We had been working with them recently for them to write up a Terms of Reference (TOR) to see how best we can have the elections to bring those councillors back to be able to give strategic direction to the Sugar Cane Growers Council. That is one of the things we are working on.

HON. P.D. KUMAR.- Considering that sugar is back with agriculture, I expected the Permanent Secretary to discuss what the quick gains are that you see in this sector. Some of the things that you have mentioned is sort of long term. It is not going to happen overnight. There are certain areas because we have been looking at sugar industry for a while, if you review the Committee's Reports, you will see the areas which we have mentioned along with the recommendations on what needs to be done very quickly. I will give you an example. Why can we not have the whole sugar sector have one board only for synergies rather than each institution having its own board, there is a lack of synergy. What is your thought on this?

DR. A. TUKANA.- Mr. Chairman, if I may respond, since these boards have legislation that they operate with, if we can make it into one board then obviously, we need to review the Acts or legislation they work with. One of the short-term things that we are looking into now is, for example, on the Growers Fund Board, we need to have representatives from all these entities. However, we see most of that is not happening or is limited. There must be someone to represent the farmers sitting on that board and someone from the Sugar Cane Growers Council when their current terms expire, who are the most appropriate people who can sit in. I totally agree with you, to have one board or one neck for them to operate under will be more streamlined and efficient. However, the only issue is for us to be able to review that legislation and see how best they can get it to do that.

HON. P.D. KUMAR.- We talk about the legislation being a barrier in this case, however, I am sure the legislation must be specific as to who the representatives would be for each board. Now, if you select individuals for say FSC and if other legislations say the same thing, then that means that they can be placed on other boards as well. I hope that the Ministry for Agriculture is going to look at that as soon as possible because then only we will be able to see synergies.

Now, you also mentioned that sugar being with Ministry for Agriculture means that extension services will be available. We also know that there are Field Officers with FSC. That does not make sense. Is there any plan to get them over either with SRIF so that they can roll out some of the new varieties of cane, soil testing and leaf analysis, et cetera? Can they help? Is there any immediate plan to sort that out or is it still linked to the legislation?

DR. A. TUKANA.- We had discussions over the last month or so and prior to that, we had already been talking about this issue. The field services exist within FSC. However, some of those works cannot be carried out by SRIF because they do not have the manpower. So, we are closely working with them to ensure how best we can work together and take out some of these new technologies. We have already noted that limitation and we are working with them very closely to ensure we....

HON. P.D. KUMAR.- Our concern is, we have been making recommendations and things are not moving in the right direction. This is a Parliamentary Committee. After public consultation, after meeting the stakeholders, particularly the growers, they also do not see value in some of these institutions as well as the staff being wrongly placed in an institution that is supposed to be focusing on milling rather than farm-related matters.

I do not have the page number but if I look at your 2021-2022 Report, there is a place where reference is made to about \$212,216, that is, 12 percent was given to Sugar Research Institute (SRIF) for the procurement of a fully developed analytical machine for soil and leaf analysis.

Now, I see there is value in getting the right equipment to get the job done, just like SRIF has been working extremely hard in getting new varieties of cane which is suitable for our climatic condition. However, our finding has shown that there is very low uptake. There is no point getting the research done, with lots of money being spent plus the staff being paid, however, if there is no uptake for those varieties, if there is no push for that variety that has been a problem in the sugar industry, how do you think you are going to deal with this particular issue?

MR. P. NAIDU.- For the uptake of new varieties, for the uptake of husbandry practices, the uptake of a lot of the larger farmers, they do take on board the recommendations by SRIF. Unfortunately for the smallholders, as we have identified, a lot of farmers producing 100 tonnes, 150 tonnes or less, they are very hesitant to take that on board, because they are used to a certain variety, for example, *mana* in this case. A lot of farmers do not want to move from *mana*.

HON. P.D. KUMAR.- Can I stop you here? What I would like to hear is percentages, not a lot of farmers. You give us precise percentage of those farmers who have taken up the new varieties. If you do not have the number now, you can submit it to our Secretariat, because that will clarify the doubt we have. Similarly, like we have with the soil and leaf analysis, and when you talk to the fertilisers and the farmers, there is only one type or two types of blends of fertilisers, which is going into the soil without soil analysis. There are a lot of issues, which I hope you all understand and that needs to be sorted out. That is all I wanted to raise.

MR. CHAIRMAN.- Looking at 2021-2022 and the considerable subsidy provided during those years to support farmers, one of the concerns that we have is, subsidies have been provided to all the farmers without any clear targeting, and given that, only 20 percent of the farmers might be producing 80 percent of the total tonnage, while the other 80 percent of farmers are not performing. Are there any ideas of how you can better target as this will also go down to how do we strategise the way forward for the industry?

I was in Labasa the other day, we agreed that the new way forward now is, only the bigger farms will survive. The smaller farms are the ones that we are going to be targeting for this diversification. Can you identify some ways in which you can target the assistance towards those who are contributing significantly to their production?

MR. P. NAIDU.- Mr. Chairman, you have picked on it quite aptly when you said that 80 percent of the farmers are getting the benefit, but they are not producing the yields that we want them to produce. Unfortunately, the current grant is set as such that, around 50 percent or more goes into cane top-up payment. Generally, everyone has access to that. If you want to have a way forward, then we need to set some tiers. We have set tiers for the Sugar Cane Development and Farmer's Assistance Programme, whereby if you are producing 100 tonnes or less, you get access to one hectare of planting or replanting, that is \$2,000 per hectare. If you are producing between 100 tonnes to 300 tonnes, you get access to two hectares, which is \$4,000. If you are producing more than 300

tonnes, then you have access to four hectares or above even that four hectares of replanting, which is \$8,000 or more, that is based on tier level systems. That is something we are looking at.

We cannot say with confidence that it will work for all programmes, but it has worked for Sugar Cane Farmer's Development Programme. We are also looking into fertiliser subsidy, how we can implement such a tier system. For sugar stabilisation, which is the cane top-up, it might prove a lot more difficult because we want farmers to get access to one benefit, to pass along to everyone. We cannot have a tier system in cane top-up.

We are also looking at how we can set up a system, which is more reward system based rather than a generic payout to all farmers, no matter what they achieve. We had introduced a farm incentive programme, but that was based on, if you increase your yield, your production from the previous season, you get \$5 per tonne additional benefit on every tonne of cane additional you produce. However, it has not really yielded the results that we required of it. This year we are going to re-divert that into probably Green Cane Farmer's Incentive Programme. Those farmers who supply green cane, will get the benefit of that programme. There are some areas where we are manoeuvring. and looking at other ways, we can get the programmes to yield the better results, so it is a work in progress.

MR. CHAIRMAN.- Permanent Secretary, you raised some very important points relating to the way forward, diversification, mechanisation, building infrastructure, roads, climate resilience, institutional reform, et cetera. One of the issues that I think needs to be attended to is also land use planning. Land use is very important. And if you are going to have a strategy for the future, we need to know how much land we have.

Currently we have about 50,000 hectares, but only 20,000 hectares is being used. Where are the rest? We must start with availability of land, how many farmers that we can have. I think that is an area too that needs to be urgently addressed. A national Land Use Plan, iTLTB is doing this, but it is only for their interest. We must have a national land use plan where we demarcate all the flat areas to be used for agriculture. On the hill lands then you move up other land uses like commercial, housing, et cetera. This has been done in other countries, but I think to maintain the sugar industry and agriculture we need to have those nuclear plants not to be made.

DR. A. TUKANA.- Your points are noted, Mr. Chairman. Within the sugar portfolio, we are already starting to work with them because they have drones that can do mapping. We also have our team with us at Land Use. So, one of the things that we came to see when we got in was, they estimate the potential cane production based on the land area without looking to see in those parcels of land, how much is actually used to grow cane, and the rest is left idle.

That is something that we are also working very closely with them on and with our team to now try and map out all those farms and see what is actually being used for cane production and what can be used for other types of crops or livestock and also to probably do some tests around the soil that can give us an idea on what to grow on the soil that are being unutilised. But I also note your point, Mr. Chairman, that there also needs to be collaboration with the Ministry of Land in developing that larger land use plan.

HON. A.N. TUICOLO.- Mr. Chairman, through you, I have a question on the labour issues. We recognize that the farm labour shortages are immediate challenges for the industry driven by declining willingness to do manual harvesting and understaff harvesting gangs. Beyond the Fiji Corrections Service' operation *Musu Dovu* Initiative, has your Ministry discussed partnering with the Ministry for Youth and Sports to engage youth or sports groups to assist our kid farmers?

DR. A. TUKANA.- I think we still need to discuss that with them. That point is very important and noted because we cannot totally rely on the Corrections Service to do most of that. But one of the other ways we are looking at, it was just to use the mechanical harvesters and also support some of the manual harvesting through some of the grants that we are providing. We will certainly work closely with the other ministries, the Ministry for Youth and Sports to explore other opportunities.

HON. P.D. KUMAR.- Mr. Chairman my question is more related to the findings we have made on the ground. When we moved around from different farm area, the farmers were complaining about stray animals, wild pigs, stray livestock and horses, and this is serious damage they have done to their farms.

What we heard in Lomawai where the farmers took initiative of gathering the stray livestock in one area and they had made a call to Ministry for Agriculture but then they did not have a vehicle, the vehicle was somewhere in Ba. They waited patiently and by the time the vehicle was supposed to reach them, the animals jumped over the fence and disappeared. They expressed their frustration because the losses are borne by the farmers and not by Ministry of Agriculture or by anyone else. How can the Ministry of Agriculture improve? I understand that you are doing some poundage, or whatever your legislation allows you to do, however, I think there must be a quick sort of helpline or some kind of mechanism where they can make a call and the nearest staff can attend to them. The current mechanism is not working, considering the number of complaints we received.

DR. A. TUKANA.- Mr. Chairman, stray animals are a huge issue now and we understand that; however, it boils down as well to the owners of those livestock. For example, once we capture a cow, the owner will say it does not belong to him after that cow has done damage to someone else's plantation and if you put it in a pound, someone will come and claim it. All these issues are there.

At the moment we are reviewing the Brands and Pound Act, which is under the five Acts that govern the work being done. The first five that we are reviewing for this financial year, for example, the PS and the Minister have more powers to make quick decisions.

Currently, we have this issue of bovine brucellosis and bovine tuberculosis happening in Fiji in cattle. We have constructed pounds in certain areas where we know that there is a high population of animals.

The law says that the people in those areas can take those animals to the nearest pound, so once the animals are in there, then after a certain time, then it will be open to auction. If not, then the owners can come and collect those animals after paying the fee for that retention in the pound.

However, when these animals mix, there is the potential of transmission of tuberculosis from an infected animal to a clean animal. The Act is limited, so the owners of those animals can still come, make a declaration and remove the animals. These are some of the things that we are trying to address. Currently, it does not allow us to and once the animals are released, they become a problem again when they are left to roam freely because the owners are not ensuring that they fence them or that they tether them even if they are just a few.

In a way, it is very similar to stray dogs, where the owners are not responsible enough. They do not ensure that their dogs are confined, dogs go out without licenses, they can kill or they bite somebody and it can also lead to an automotive accident where the person dies. They are not responsible enough and we are trying to raise this awareness that if you own livestock, you also need to be responsible to feed them, to give them water to drink and to ensure that they do not roam.

I take note of your point, honourable deputy Chair, that we need to have a mechanism. One of the things we can also do is, if we see that there are large numbers of cattle or horses on the road and if it is reported to us, then we can also do a campaign to go and capture them and take them to a pound. This is what we have been doing over the years, however, we just need those reports to come up to us very quickly.

Obviously, these landowners or farmers will not have transport as well to capture them, to take them to the nearest bound. Some of these animals are quite feral and can cause injury to humans. I do understand where you are coming from and we will work very hard to ensure that we can streamline this mechanism.

If you drive through close to Lawaqa Road and you see that there are a lot of cattle, give us a call and we will try to ensure that we do a campaign, capture them and put them in the pound. However, the only issue is we are trying to review the Act now and they can still be released. If we had more power, then we would just put them into the pound or send them to the meatworker. That will reduce the numbers of animals in those areas. These are some of the areas that we are working on.

MR. CHAIRMAN.- Rather than reviewing the whole Act, which can take time to do, but under section 51, you can make quick amendments, are you considering that because the issue is very big. I would suggest that under section 51 of the Standing Orders if you can just make few changes as quickly as possible so that this problem can be addressed. The farmers are not getting motivated, they are demotivated because it is a loss of income for them.

DR. A. TUKANA. - Mr. Chairman, the point is noted.

MR. CHAIRMAN. - Are there any other questions from the honourable Members?

HON. S.T. KOROILAVESAU.- Permanent Secretary, you had stated that the expenses in the transportation sector for cane, both rail and road, even to reinvigorate the railway is going to be very expensive to get it back online. We had a discussion yesterday and you had stated that the team from the Ministry of Sugar had made trips overseas to look at other systems overseas.

I just wanted to ask if this extensive transportation of cane is going to be a huge challenge in regards to cost, has there been any studies for countries like India and Pakistan? They actually have juices where they actually have small factories in every big cane farming area where they extract the juice and then take the juice to the mill to actually mill it? Will that work? Has there been any consideration on that?

MR. P. NAIDU.- There has not been a specific study on that honorable Member. However, we have done some reading on that. The thing with extracting juice is if it is not delivered to the factory on time, leads to fermentation, it loses the sugar content. And currently in Fiji, even when we are milling it at the sugar mills, it is a bit of a challenge to convert it to crystal sugar. So for the time being, we are not actively looking into that. But if we get our mills upgraded, other things in place, then we probably might be able to revisit that area again.

MR. CHAIRMAN. - Thank you. Any other comments?

HON. P.D. KUMAR. - I do have a question related to two issues. One is the annual reports. I had raised it previously because it is all about parliamentary accountability. We have noted that the Ministry for Sugar Annual Reports have come in late. It is almost like four years late and the same thing applies to all other sugar entities except for FSC, and I think one other organisation but the rest

of them have been submitting their annual reports very late, in particular the Sugar Industry Tribunal which is extremely late. You are the Ministry for Sugar and you have to set an example to the rest of them. We note that the Ministry for Sugar has not set a good example and the others have followed suit. So that would be one of the challenges that the Ministry must take on board and ensure that all the annual reports are submitted on time for Parliamentary scrutiny. So, I just wanted to make a comment on that.

And then from your report itself, we do understand that the Ministry for Sugar, you have very few staff because you have been managing the funds generally. But reading your report, it says that two staff monitored about 860 farms and that is across seven different programmes. The question is, how do you ensure that the funds are utilised in the best possible way? Giving the fund is one thing, monitoring is another and ensuring that it is used effectively and wisely is another. How do you do that with two staff?

MR. P. NAIDU.- Honourable Member, in 2021-2022 Annual Report, we had only two monitoring officers. Since then, we have increased the monitoring officers to now four. We first do a lot of desktop analysis. We look at the report and reconcile it within the system to the farmers, and then individually, those are the 800 or 1,000 plus farmers we choose and physically monitor.

We have a monitoring system where we do a lot of desktop monitoring. We identify if there are gaps or areas where we can improve and we work with FSC. Mr. Chairman, FSC has this robust Field Information System (FIS) through which, we can monitor and track which subsidies have gone to which farmers and check with those farmers if the subsidies have reached them. By those accounts, we can with confidence say, that majority of the funds reach where it should – to the farmers.

However, as alluded to earlier, the return on those investments is another question altogether. We need to do a more detailed and thorough analysis of those investments we have done into those farmers, if they have yielded returns or not. That is one area which we believe we have lagged in and are looking to improve on that aspect as well. For example, fertiliser subsidy, previously we were providing \$20 million so, this year it is \$15 million. However, we have not been able to link if that subsidy has yielded the return it should return. The soil health is a problem, we understand the blend, there are only three blends available now, and it is not really based on the soil testing. The blends are just distributed based on if it is a plant crop, if it is a ratoon crop, as such. Those are some areas which we are looking to improve on, and once we get those areas in sync, we should be able to better report on those matters.

MR. CHAIRMAN. - I think from all the discussions that we have had, the subsidies and every support that we are giving to the industry is not yielding return, because we continue to note the substantial reduction in the production and the tonnage produced. In terms of whether it is yielding production, I do not think the return has been attained. That is why we need to be looking at what is the best way for the industry.

HON. S.T. KOROILAVESAU.- Mr. Chairman, I wanted to again look at the land use plan, working with iTLTB in that regard. We had visited a lot of areas in regards to the sugar industry. It has also been noted of increasing farm areas for non-productive farmers – the land that had been returned to the landowners. I am talking about the Western side, between Sigatoka and Lautoka. We have seen huge land areas that have been turned to bush and forest. This is basically an iTLTB issue. We have also seen good productive areas, mainly in Nadi and Lautoka, which have been turned into factories, industries and housing.

Mr. Chairman has stated that this is a national issue. We should try and resolve it. Honourable Premila has said, if you cannot change the whole Act, maybe you can ask the honourable Minister to bring in those portions that can be changed to correct it; iTLTB to look at the landowners' initiatives so that they gain maximum return. However, I think this is a national issue that we need to look at collectively so that we can maintain, if we want to maintain the sugar industry. I wanted to ask the PS, if you can make a comment on what I had stated.

DR. A. TUKANA.- Mr. Chairman, I think you are correct in saying that iTLTB just looks out for the landowners. They want the maximum gains they can get. However, on the other side, we are also thinking about the farmers who need to farm the land and survive. At the moment, the CEO for iTLTB is a Board member at FSC. That is one way we are trying to get him to see the other issues as well. But we certainly note your point that we need to work together with the other line ministries as well. For example, with the Ministry of Lands, when some of these lands need to be converted from agriculture to development, they come through us to do the groundwork, and then we normally give a recommendation that okay this land is still suitable for agriculture. We need to save it for agriculture, but the final decision is with the Minister of Lands. Those are some of the things that we need to work closely with them on, to ensure that we have a common goal at the end of the day.

MR. CHAIRMAN.- I think we have come to the end of this session and of course, sugar is quite a priority. The Government is aware also that there is a special task force on sugar that is already being formed. And we are also gathering information, so all this information will also be part of the way forward. We will still have the sugar industry. When we were in Labasa, they questioned the Prime Minister whether sugar will continue. Of course, Government is committed to ensuring that the sugar industry remains to be there. But in what shape or form? That will be decided by the Special Committee on the Sugar Industry. We might have more or reduced. It must tie in also with the European Union, the diversification study, the FAO report that was produced three years ago, all these things must be put together for us to formulate the way forward. We cannot continue the way it is now. We cannot continue providing subsidies because we are also not encouraging other industries that need to be supported.

There is a big demand for coconut, cocoa, coffee and other produce. But we are subsidising only one industry, which is also counterproductive to the other agriculture industry, so sugar itself must be profitable, sustainable into the future, and of course, farmers must have some profit in gaining the livelihood and income, not from sugar on a sustainable basis.

On behalf of the Economic Affairs Committee, I would like to thank the Permanent Secretary and the team for availing yourselves to making your submission, and of course, we thank you for your time and hope that you will avail yourselves if the Committee has any other further queries and questions on this matter.

The Committee adjourned at 10.13 a.m.

The Committee resumed at 10.24 a.m.

**Interviewee/Submittee:      Sugar Industry Tribunal**

In Attendance:

- |                             |   |                                   |
|-----------------------------|---|-----------------------------------|
| (1) Mr. Timothy Brown       | - | Registrar/Industrial Commissioner |
| (2) Mr. Semi Leweniqila     | - | Sugar Industry Tribunal           |
| (3) Ms. Winnie Niumataiwalu | - | Assistant Registrar               |
| (4) Ms. Nisha Singh         | - | Accounts Officer                  |
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MR. CHAIRMAN.- Honourable Members, members of the media and the public, the secretariat, ladies and gentlemen, a very good morning to you all and it is a pleasure to welcome everyone to this public hearing session.

At the outset, for information purposes, pursuant to Standing Order 111 of the Standing Orders of Parliament, all Committee meetings are to be open to the public. Therefore, this submission meeting is open to the public and the media and aired live on the Parliament's *Facebook* page. For any sensitive information concerning this submission that cannot be disclosed in public, this can be provided to the Committee either in private or in writing. But do note that this will only be allowed in a few specific circumstances, which include:

- (1) National security matters;
- (2) Third party confidential information;
- (3) Personnel or human resource matters; and
- (4) Meetings whereby the committee deliberates on all issues before it and develops its recommendations and reports.

I wish to remind our members and invited submittees that all comments and questions to be asked are to be addressed through the Chairperson. Also be mindful that only invited submittees will be allowed to ask any questions or give any comments to the Committee. This is a Parliamentary meeting and all information gathered here is covered under the Parliamentary Powers and Privileges Act and the Standing Orders of Parliament.

Please note that the Committee does not condone libel or slander or any allegations against any individual that is not present today to defend themselves. In terms of other protocols, please be advised that once the meeting is in progress, movement within the meeting room will be restricted, there should be minimal use of mobile phones, whereby answering of the phone should be done outside of this room and all mobile phones are to be on silent mode.

*(Introduction of Committee Members)*

MR. CHAIRMAN.- Our second submittee are representatives from the Sugar Industry Tribunal, which the Committee has invited to provide a submission on the Sugar Industry Tribunal Annual Report 2021. The purpose of the submission is to assist the Committee with its examination of the Tribunal's performance and functions, operations, including its role in dispute resolution, stakeholder engagement, and effective administration.

The Committee also seeks to gain a better understanding of the Tribunal's achievements, challenges, strategic priorities, and measures being undertaken to improve service delivery and support the interest of sugarcane growers and industry stakeholders.

With this brief introduction I now take this time to invite our submission guests to introduce themselves before we proceed with the submission. I would ask you to introduce yourselves and following that we will just ask you to make a brief presentation on the report instead of going through the entire report that you have submitted.

*(Introduction of representatives from the Sugar Industry Tribunal)*

MR. T. BROWN.- We sent our presentation, however, I am not too sure whether they have put it up for presentation.

MR. CHAIRMAN.- I think it is very detailed. Perhaps you can just go through the main features of the Report. We will give you maybe 10 minutes just to go through it.

MR. T. BROWN.- Before the Registrar, I will ask the Assistant Registrar to present that part, and the Accounts Officer will present the accounts section.

MS. M. NIUMATAIWALU.- Our presentation provides an overview of the Sugar Industry Tribunal covering its 2021 Annual Report as well as the key operational and financial developments until to-date. Since 2021, we had a total of 16,913 registered growers. In comparing that to August 2026, there are 13,771 growers. There was an exercise that the Tribunal office had done in the year 2024 whereby there were 4,750 cancellations for all those non-productive growers. And for harvesting limit processing, there were 1,176 harvesting limits approved out of 1,255 forms applied to the Tribunal's Office. The cancellations were done in 2024, but there was a notice given to the growers for them to appeal if they do not want their contracts to be cancelled. There was a total of 1,325 growers reinstated to their old contract numbers.

MS. N. SINGH.- Mr. Chairman, we would like to present our budget situation. Our balance as at 7th September, 2026 is \$912.34, immediate expenses to be met amounting to \$19,655.33, resulting in a loss of \$18,742.99. Our anticipated expenses are amounting to \$38,343.62. The Tribunal's office requires additional \$100,000 for its operational expenses.

Moving on, the financial performance for the year ended 31st December 2021. Income received was \$369,403, expenses were \$396,053, which resulted in a deficit of \$26,650 and the Auditors Report that we received for year 2021 was unqualified. Total assets amounting to \$100,353, total liabilities was \$40,159, which gave a net asset of \$62,194. The budget allocation and funding challenges. Budget allocation for financial year 2021 has always been well below our request for the current financial year.

MR. S. LEWENIQILA.- I will now address the questions that the Committee had written.

What measures are in place to minimize delays in the commencement and completion of the crushing season?

I am not too sure where the question is coming from, but basically the commencement of crush and the cessation of crush is outlined in the Master Award. The Tribunal will receive an application from FSC. The Tribunal will refer that to the Sugar Cane Growth Council. The Sugar Cane Growers Council will respond, the Registrar will meet the parties, and then once there is an agreement between the parties, the Registrar will advise the Tribunal to issue an order. That is the process. We have not had an issue about the lateness of the start, but basically what is taken into account is mill readiness. The mill has to be ready.

Secondly, the volume of matured cane. Before the season starts, the FSC field team will go out and breaks the cane in the middle to test the sugar quality. What we want to know is the volume of that cane, whether it is enough to supply the mill. So that will be taken into account.

Thirdly, the gangs and growers who are ready to harvest and this is measured by the number of memorandum of gang agreements that are delivered to the sector office. Some gangs wait two weeks after the crush and then they fill their memorandum of gang agreements. What we want to do is to ensure that we have enough gangs to start the mill, so that we have enough cane so that the mill can continue to crush. Those are the points that we have to take into consideration before the Tribunal can issue an order.

The second is the forecast price. This also relates to a question later, that is why it is kept a secret. I will share with you, and I ask you to keep this confidential but basically under the Master Award, the Tribunal Accountant, the Growers Accountant, and the FSC Accountant audit the books before the final cane price is announced. When we are making a forecast price, at that time we do an estimate on how many tonnes of cane will we harvest this year, how many tonnes of sugar we will make from that cane, what are the tonnes of cane per tonne of sugar, and how much molasses will we do. Then we estimate based on that and what we have been selling, how much will we get for sugar, and how much will we get for molasses.

In the 2026 estimates, we would have a total sugar sale of \$134, 663,000. For molasses, it is \$17,947,000. The total is \$152,811,000. There are some certified deductions taken, and the auditors will go through them, but we put an estimate of bulk loading, export and customs charges, insurance, wharf fees for sugar, wharf fees for molasses, marketing costs, lorry and trailer allowance. This is the lorry and trailer allowance that are paid back to the growers under the Master Award, and the molasses handling.

And this comes to about \$535, 309, 936 million. The total revenue for distribution is \$147, 301,346.18. The grower share is 70 percent. That is \$103.110,942 million is the grower's share. That is divided, and then from the grower's share, they also pay a one-third contribution for SRIF. That is taken out, and the growers also have a bundle insurance that is taken off the top for any issues, burnt houses, deaths. That is taken off the top because all the growers' benefit, and that is \$548,280.

So the net payable after all the deductions is \$101,024,247 and that is divided by the total amount of cane as I said before, \$1496,000. So the price of cane comes to \$67,000.53. That is money from sale of molasses and sugar.

Now, under the Master Award, the price of cane is reduced by 15 percent to take into account exchange rates that can fluctuate badly. That 15 percent of the 67 comes to 5740. Now over 5740, another Master Award again, the growers receive 60 percent of the forecast price. So that is \$34.44. And the second payment that is six weeks after comes to \$11.48. That is to answer the question of why is it so low?

HON. P.D. KUMAR.- Mr. Chairman, if I can ask some questions related to that. We went around, we had conversations with the farmers, we met the Sugar Cane Growers Council et cetera. One of the concerns raised by the farmers, wherever we visited, they felt that there was less disclosure on how the forecast price was calculated. They said they do not even know how much sugar was sold at what price in the international market. So they felt that when we talk about the sugar industry, without the farmers there is no sugar industry, which is a fact because they are funding FSC, they are funding everyone else. Even the exchange rate and wharfage fee and everything.

But unfortunately for farmers, it is really a sour deal. We understand that Master Award was made in the colonial era and unfortunately from that time with few amendments, we are still carrying on the same mechanism which is not doing justice to farmers. Even worse is, when they have to wait for 16 months or 15 months or whatever time frame to recover all their money from the first year's crop. They do have a very valid point in terms of airing their grievances and that is demotivating for farmers. We all understand when a copra farmer, when a *kava* farmer takes their produce, they are paid immediately. But unlike the sugar sector, a lot has to do with changing the Master Award and other legislations, et cetera.

My question to you is, what effort has been placed into changing the Master Award? Because when we put up a tribunal, I know it is very specifically stated what your roles are. And you need to create that fairness in the system, that is why you are there. But unfortunately from the farmer's point of view, the system is not fair to them. So what would you suggest? What changes are you going to propose? What can be done to make the system fair to every party, not just the millers, but to farmers as well.

MR. T. BROWN.- Mr. Chairman, maybe at the outset I should say that the Master Award was made not during the colonial era, it was made around the 1980s, that is way after independence and it was made during the heydays of the industry, when the industry was really making a lot. Now there is nothing sinister about it. I am sad that the farmers are thinking that in terms of working out the forecast price, there is some kind of dealings that is going in there that they are not aware of.

The representatives of the Sugar Cane Growers Council are very much aware of that. Our dilemma is, we are weighing sugar cane but selling sugar and it is not the same thing. The tonnage of your cane does not equate the sugar, so we will have to wait until the sugar is sold to determine. Therefore, the exercise in forecasting the price is really like neither here nor there, and we have to make an estimate based on most recent figures. The last time we did this exercise was about two years ago. We used that to forecast the cane price. The first or second payments for the cane growers are usually made before the actual money arrives is determined.

The 15 percent is the margin that we usually put in and the Tribunal, as a creature of statute, we work within what is in the law so we really cannot go outside of that in terms of the formula that is used to calculate that price, we have to be very careful because we cannot determine a forecast price that is good for them because farmers would naturally be wishful thinking, give us a good price but then experience will tell us that we are not producing that much.

At the end of the day, we cannot continue to pay at the level that they have seen at some other time. We are doing our best. We had some experiences with the figures not being quite accurate that affected the final determination of the forecast price as compared to the actual price that got paid.

To answer the question and to settle the farmers' anxiety in terms of how the forecast price is set, I would like to clarify that their interests are paramount in consideration of what price, however, at the same time, all other factors have to be considered as well.

HON. P.D. KUMAR.- Thank you for THE clarification, since the farmers are listening and watching the television, this is for them to understand how the forecast price is actually calculated. We had further discussions with the Sugar Cane Growers Council and we felt that it is very important when they produce the newsletters for the farmers, all these issues need to be addressed through the newsletter so that farmers are well versed with the methodology, calculation, factors taken into consideration, et cetera, for clarity purposes. We understand that the word forecast is not real. It is what you are assuming would be.

So going back to what I meant was colonial era, the mechanism was same, except that it is now written clearly in the Master Award and we have carried that system forward for many decades. What is the best international practice? Is it still the same that farmers must wait several months before they are paid, or is the international best practice something else? It is important for the farmers to hear this.

MR. S. LEWENIQILA.- We paid farmers for sugar content. I think the world goes like that. If you farm, then you have to farm the right variety of cane that produces the best optimum result for you. That would be more of a fair playing field. The problem with us is that we are paying sugar cane tonnage and then selling sugar. To put it like a world level production system, if the system went back to you, will be paid according to how much sugar content is in the harvest that you produce in your cane.

For some time, we tried to put in some mechanism to do that, to pay when it started, however, due to Government policy, it stopped again. To seriously answer that question, fairly, the way to go, you get paid for sugar content rather than the weight of your cane.

MR. T. BROWN.- Just to add to what the Tribunal said, everyone is saying to change the Master Award. There are two parties to the Master Award - growers and the millers. The Tribunal cannot change the Master Award on its own, since this is an agreement between two parties.

HON. P.D. KUMAR.- So, who facilitates between the two parties?

MR. T. BROWN.- The Tribunal will. The parties will have to make that submission. Like you are saying, they have not got this, they have not got that. They want a chance, the methods of payment. We have not got any submission from the Growers Council who are the representative of the growers about changing the cane formula or putting in a cane quality payment system. We are now working with a team from Australia, including the council, to look at ways we can introduce a cane quality payment system. But to do that, we have to get a submission. We cannot dictate, and say it has to be this. Someone has to make the submission. And on the other part, FSC will say, “it is going to affect our finances.” So, unless a party to the Master Award makes a submission, the Tribunal cannot make any changes.

HON. P.D. KUMAR.- On that note, would you like to say....

MR. T. BROWN.- Yes, I was going to say that we have received directives from the Ministry for Sugar under the last Minister to consider reviewing the Master Award. We have started that process by forming a working group. We did not only include the Growers Council and FSC, but we have tried to include a wide group of stakeholders to come in and talk about how we could make changes to the Master Award. We had set ourselves a timetable by the end of the year, before November, that we come up with something.

It was interesting that at our first meeting, there has been a lot of talks about, even extremes like, let us just get away with the whole document and start along with it. But at the same time there were some reservations too, the Cane Growers Council and I think FSC as well seemed anxious about introducing other people into this. They said, “this is only ours, we should talk about it.” These are the challenges that we face. We want to change the document, but then some of the players in the group are resisting the change.

As a Tribunal, we tried forward looking and were saying, “let us talk about the document, how can we change it, do we do a new document altogether or amend the existing document?” We

started that process and we are hopeful that we get the buy-in from all stakeholders and at the end of the day it produces the....

HON. P.D. KUMAR.- I hope they all understand that if they do not want to cooperate then the Parliament will change the law and that would be the ultimatum, and that is not where we want to go because we would like to see that the industry thrives, survives and does better and we already know how the industry is sliding downwards.

Going back to my stakeholder consultation when the Committee went out, there was another issue raised by the farmers and it was to do with the Tribunal decision which is still pending on FSC planning to get rid of the railway network. I wanted to know when you receive something like this, what is the process involved and how long does it take to make a decision?

MR. R. SHARMA.- Madam, can we just go through the questions because that is one of the questions?

HON. P.D. KUMAR.- No, that is fine. I mean, we can jump the questions. Basically, the process is under the Master Award that the Tribunal makes the decision to close or not to close a tram line. In the Rarawai case, FSC had applied to shut the tramline from Lausalutu Tawatawa point. That is the whole of the Tavua area.

Mr. Chairman, FSC's proposal was then sent to the Council for their submission. The Council in the details opposed FSC's submission. Based on that, it was put before the Tribunal. The Tribunal heard the cases. And as I said in my report to you, two things. first, you had only 88 growers using the tramline. Second, you have millions of dollars to spend to repair the tramline. So, the Tribunal had to make a decision one way or the other. The Tribunal found that we should just leave it as status quo, and if a party wants to come back, they can come back. That is why he said it is temporarily closed. All the growers who were involved have been compensated fully by FSC as a conversion allowance from rail to lorry. In the presentation we made, you will look at individual growers and what do they get for their conversion allowance. It is not closed for good, either party can come back.

As I shared with you, the honourable Minister then ordered the FSC to open the tramline. The FSC then went about fixing the tramline, but it did not get any money from the honourable Minister. Then the Rarawai Mill boiler caught fire, so the whole process shut down. The same issue for Lautoka. So little cane is coming by rail that any businessman will say let us shut it down. The Tribunal did not want to make the final order. It has left it as status quo so that if and when government decides to fix the rail or put in cage bins, then the rail is still there. That is the situation we are in.

MR. S. LEWENIQILA.- Mr. Chairman, the railway is indeed a big issue and it is central to the sugar industry. It is the best system that would work in terms of farmers, at the end of the day. The final cost of production would really help them out. However, FSC has a very strong case in that they cannot afford to maintain it and keep it going.

I, as the Tribunal, am in that kind of fix – do I go this way or do I go that way? If I order FSC to keep it open, they say, we simply do not have the money to keep it open. FSC has shown statistics, that even when the tramlines are open, they are not being used. Farmers have consistently asked the farmers' representatives to show proof that you will really use it because they want to have their cake and eat it too. They want to choose whether they will use the trucks, lorries, or use the railway line when it suits them. However, FSC does not have that luxury.

In terms of farmers trying to force the hand of the Tribunal to make a decision one way or the other, I feel is a bit overstepping the mark because the law clearly states that the Tribunal is to see the overall picture of what is good for the industry. The last experience that Mr. Brown talked about is that Lausalutu, where we made a decision in favour of FSC that it would be temporarily closed, but then FSC, because of a directive from government, said they will open it. Then they were going to open it and then promised that some money was going to come, but then it did not happen, and it went the other way around.

This time around, when the FSC is asking for closure of the whole tramline system, I feel, as the Tribunal, that is not a decision that should be put on us to make. It is an overall industry decision. We all know how tramlines are important, but to force the hand of the Tribunal to make a decision either way is, I feel, forcing us to enter into that political playground where people, without having the overall consideration which we are mandated to do.

MR. CHAIRMAN.- There has been a lot of talk on the railway, but I think the way forward is perhaps if you are going to have a sugar industry for the future, in order for it to be sustained, we still need railways. However, to come up with ways that you can also use it to transport the public.

You have to come up with a more innovative approach where it can be used also for the public instead of just six months. You can use it in order to sustain it, because the costs are quite exorbitant in terms of maintaining the current railway structure. I think that into the future we will sustain the industry and ensure that it is cost effective. We still need the railway, but we have to come up with new arrangements, maybe to have a sort of national railway system where we can have passengers also.

Another company can be involved. In six months, we can use it for cane and the other six months and maybe for 12 months you can use it for other users. If people want to watch the Drua in Lautoka, they can go from Nadi or from Suva to go and watch the game. But those are the sort of things that the Government has to take into account.

With the current structure that we have, it is very tight because the industry is not sustainable, production is declining, FSC is insolvent, so you have got all these issues there that needs not be addressed by Government.

HON. A.N. TUICOLO.- Through you Mr. Chairman, this is in regards to the current versus the recommended yields. We understand that the average yield for Fijian sugarcane farmers currently stands at approximately 50 tonnes per hectare. However, to ensure long-term profitability and sustainability, growers need to achieve a target of at least 65 tonnes per hectare. Could you clarify what percentage of the registered growers are currently meeting or exceeding the 65 tonne benchmark? Additionally, what specific initiatives or support systems are planned to assist farmers whose yields fall below this target?

MR. S. LEWENIQILA.- Mr. Chairman through you, sorry, we do not have the data here, but we have the data in the office that we can send to the Committee.

MR. CHAIRMAN.- Perhaps you can provide that to Ms. Awantika, our secretariat in terms of detailed information.

HON. P.D. KUMAR.- Just one more question on the presentation that was made. It is about the new producers, and I think cancelling of the contract and then on appeal about thousand plus were reinstated. Can you explain if they did not produce anything and then when they appealed, the contract was reinstated. Can you explain that?

MR. S. LEWENIQILA.- Yes, under the Master Award, they are served a notice saying if they do not want their contract cancelled, they have got to show some reasons why their contract should be reinstated. And in most of these cases where they have decided to plant cane and they have one acre cane for harvest cancelled in 2024, planted cane in 2025, and harvested in 2026. So they apply using the form saying, “I planted one acre of cane last year and it is going to be harvested this year. Can my contract be reinstated?” That is when the contract is reinstated.

MR. T. BROWN.- We take deregistration seriously, because it is a cumbersome process to be registered. And because farmers, the wording of the law is such that we kind of have to give some leeway. The letter, the notice that goes out is, show cause why you should be permanently deregistered. So that is the provision where we sent out the letter then they prove that they can produce to that level and we give them that opportunity to continue. We really need the production level and we are desperate for the production level to be that.

MR. CHAIRMAN.- One of the issues that we were discussing about the way forward and for the industry is to perhaps have bigger farms where we will be more profitable. Currently, if you have 100 tonnes, that is not going to be sustainable. And at the same time, perhaps maybe when you are registering farmers, because I noticed when you went to Nabou, not the other week, certainly iTaukei farmers wanting to come on board. It is about 100 to 150. So, if those farmers come in, they will not be sustainable. You have to look at bigger farms. Maybe perhaps more than 300 tonnes or 400 tonnes. Those will be the ones that will still survive under the current economic climate.

MR. S. LEWENIQILA.- That, Mr. Chairman, is definitely the way forward. There are numerous reports and I am sure you are aware of it. The FAO reports and numerous reports previously have considered that our small holder farms seems not to be working for the industry and bigger farms, more mechanisation and all those sort of things, will definitely be something that needs to be carefully considered.

We believe that it is for the lawmakers to make the necessary changes and we can implement those changes. The land holding, the farm size and all that is prescribed under law and that is all we work within and how much they are supposed to produce within their land allotment is all prescribed. So we are just working with what is there. If the laws are changed, in terms of forward-looking and what we want for the future, I am positive, as I can hear from the Chairperson, there is hope for the industry.

HON. P.D. KUMAR.- Just my last question, and I always talk about it, the late presentation of annual reports, it affects parliamentary scrutiny, et cetera. I mean we are talking about an annual report which is five years behind and I am sure things have changed over a period of time, so it is a sheer waste of time when we go over very old reports. Can the Tribunal assure the Committee that you will be able to complete the rest of the annual reports and submit on time or what is the issue that the annual reports were not able to be submitted on time?

MR. T. BROWN.- Yes, way back in 2016 we had a lot of issues. We had the accounts officer changed continually and we were able to get the 2021, the 2022 is now being audited and we are waiting for the audit report. We want to do the 2023 and 2024 before the end of the season and then 2025 and 2026. That is where we are at the moment. Things are now in place and we are looking forward to getting the 2022 before the end of September, so that we can use that to rollover the 2023, and then do the 2024 and 2025.

MR. CHAIRMAN.- Thank you very much, Mr. Brown. On behalf of the Economic Affairs Committee, I wish to sincerely thank the team from the Sugar Industry Tribunal for availing

yourselves for this submission meeting. We thank you for your time. and we hope that you will avail yourselves if the Ccommittee has any further queries on this matter.

The Committee adjourned at 11.09 a.m.

The Committee resumed at 11.32 a.m.

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

In Attendance:

- |                           |                                                   |
|---------------------------|---------------------------------------------------|
| (1) Mr. Raj Sharma        | Chief Executive Officer                           |
| (2) Mr. Marika Luveniyali | Chairman, South Pacific Fertilizer Limited (SPFL) |
| (3) Mr. Tevita Madigibuli | Member                                            |
| (4) Mr. Francis Pesamino  | Finance Officer                                   |
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MR. CHAIRMAN.- Honourable Members, members of the media and the public, the secretariat, ladies and gentlemen, a very good morning to you all. It is a pleasure to welcome everyone to this public hearing session.

At the outset, for information purposes, pursuant to Standing Order 111 of the Standing Order of Parliament, all Committee meetings have to be open to the public. Therefore, this submission meeting is open to the public and the media and is aired live on the Parliament's channel through the *Walesi* platform and live stream through the Parliament's Facebook page.

For any sensitive information concerning the submission that cannot be disclosed in public, this can be provided to the Committee either in private or in writing. But please note that this will only be allowed in few specific circumstances which include;

- (1) National security matters;
- (2) Third party confidential information;
- (3) Personnel or human resource matters; and
- (4) Meetings whereby the Committee deliberates on all issues before it and develops its recommendations and reports.

I wish to remind honourable Members and our invited submittees that all comments and questions to be asked are to be addressed through the Chairperson. Also, be mindful that only the invited submittees will be allowed to ask any questions or give comments to the Committee. This is a Parliamentary meeting and all information gathered here is covered for under the Parliamentary Powers and Privileges Act and the Standing Order of Parliament.

But please note that the Committee does not condone libel or slander or any allegations against any individual that is not present here today to defend themselves.

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

*(Introduction of Committee Members)*

MR. CHAIRMAN.- With us this morning is our third submittee, the representatives from the Sugar Cane Growers Fund, which the Committee has invited to provide us a submission on the Sugar Cane Growers Fund 2023-2024 Annual Report. The purpose of this submission is to assist the Committee in its examination of the Fund's performance, governance, financial operations, and service delivery to sugar cane growers.

The Committee also seeks to gain a better understanding of the Fund's lending and support programmes, key achievements, challenges encountered, strategic priorities, and measures being implemented to enhance assistance to growers and contribute sustainably to Fiji's sugar development. With this brief introduction, I will take this time to invite our submission guests to introduce themselves before we proceed on with the submission. Please note that if there are any questions by the honourable Members, we will wait until you finish your presentation. Then we can have a question and answer session.

*(Introduction of representatives from Sugar Cane Growers Fund)*

MR. R. SHARMA.- Mr. Chairman, we have our presentation, and we will just flick through the important points, and if you could put it to the viewpoint of it. These are the highlights that we have at the back of it. It is basically we look at briefly of the last findings and implementations. Then we will look at South Pacific Fertilizers Limited (SPFL) in particular because we had very limited discussions in SPFL. Also we will look at our products and services. Most of the key things that we will present is more to do with the changes and all those presentations that we have.

On the views, the first audit was to do with SPF presentations, financials and diversification. That, we will leave it for the Chair and the Board members to elaborate on that. Then it was to do on the implementation programme. Then we had a few things of Sugar Cane Growers Fund, on the products and services, how we are going to create the awareness, which we continue to do. It has been implemented.

One of the most important things in the past recommendations of the Committee was to look at our Act review. To update you, we are still with the Ministry. The Ministry of Finance had endorsed it last week, the Solicitor-General has advised to get it cleared by latest by this Friday. Then it goes to the Committee and thereafter to the Cabinet. Together with that, the mention of continuous awareness of our products and services was part recommendations that we have continued to do.

Latest challenges, I think some of the things that we have raised were to do with the industry. Since last two years, I think a number of initiatives have been rolled out together with most of the things, Mr. Chairman and Deputy Chair and honourable Members, we expected to come through the Sugar Select Committee. I am sure the committee is quite aware of that.

Now, let us move on. I think the particular is to do with the SPFL and we got the chair of SPFL to elaborate more on what SPFL intends to do.

MR. T. MADIGIBULI.- Mr. Chairman and honourable Members, as I have already mentioned, SPFL is a subsidiary of Sugar Cane Growers Fund and effectively, essentially, it provides service to the sugar industry, basically in terms of fertilizer. I think if you look back in history from 2009, after its establishment, the Government has been very, profound in supporting the sugar industry by way of fertilizer.

I just did an analysis over the past 18 months up to this financial year, I am talking about the government financial year, Government would have contributed \$244 million in terms of fertilizer. That is an average of about \$13.6 million. In addition to that, the weedicide and insecticide. And for the past 10 years, the Government has been very helpful in providing subsidy. By the end of July next year, Government would have contributed \$18 million by the end of the 10 years which is basically about \$1.8 million.

In our last meeting with the honourable Minister of Agriculture early this year, we were told that going forward, they want SPFL to look at diversification plans because of the need to reduce reliance on the Government, which we have taken note of and as a matter of fact, the new board was just appointed early this year, and I think this is one of the primary responsibilities that our strategic plan that will start effective from 1st January 2027. Over the next three to five years, we will look at diversification and what we are trying to see is that there is less reliance on the Government.

What we do not see and we plead for the Government not to just cut the finance off, at least reduce maybe the next five to 10 years, maybe it is declining rather than just cut it off immediately because it will result in financial loss to the company. We have a responsibility for the sugar farmers.

These are our primary people that we look forward to, and we know the contribution of the sugar industry to the national economy. Not only for the past year, but we also look back at the history. So, there is a huge number of populations that depends on sugar cane, and we want to see that Government will still partner as it has been the case over the past in terms of South Pacific fertilizer for the past 20 years.

That is basically what we want and some of the strategies that we have decided to look at what the current products are, the current offering that we have. What we are trying to do is try to expand not only in the volume, the character, the form. At the moment we are just concentrating on blending and supplying. We are trying to go into liquid fertilizer and also introduce the organic form as well.

We understand that the Government has just launched a few months back in January the Horizon 2000 food system security systems strategy and the National Agri Food Investment Plan. And I think the SPFL must also work with Government in ensuring that we look at the five pillars of this plan, which the Government has partnered with the economic partners, the European Union, and FAO as well.

We see an opportunity there, especially in terms of organic markets. Now people are living a lifestyle based on healthy lifestyle, eating habits, and we also to ensure that we go into that market. So, our focus is not only on the sugarcane, we want to expand our income stream towards the other crops as well, so that other farmers in the agriculture sector are not left behind.

So, this is basically what we plan to do. And not only that, but that is also the plan. If other crops, whatever we are doing at the moment, our current product, we are trying to improve on that because basically 90 percent of our products are basically towards the sugarcane industry and we want to divest that so that we get the other Fiji farmers in the other sectors as well they enjoy in terms of solid and liquid fertilizer and organic complement as well.

And that also goes with the weedicide and insecticide. At the moment, there is very little that we have, if you compare the 244 million against the 18 million, so that is also aware while we take into account the need to be sustainable going forward and in line with the Horizon 2030 Food System where we all agree the importance of our people, our citizens to live a healthy lifestyle. This is why we want to integrate the organic alternative as well.

Finally, we look at other farm products in terms of the ancillary. We want to supply an augmented service to the agriculture. That is basically what we want to do. We want to expand to the wholesale specialized farming equipment where growers and farmers need power driven sprayers, protective wear and also related equipment and in terms of technical agronomy service, as we look at a bundle farm package that is beneficial to the farmers going forward.

Lastly, with the time that we are in, we need to be innovative in terms of application fertilizer, we also look at the use of drone in terms of applying fertilizer and weedicide as well. These are basically the strategies that we are looking at.

In terms of the market access, we want to go regional. In terms of focussing on the Fiji market alone, we are looking at regional partners regional markets, Papua New Guinea is a huge market where they grow a lot of corpora and other commodities there that we can penetrate and we are a source of expanding our income streams.

This is basically from the South Pacific Fertilizer. The procurement strategy of raw material. That is the biggest challenge maybe in terms of apart from the social funding which government is providing to source cheap, reliable, quality raw materials from Europe. So we basically supply data or supply from Canada, Southeast Asia, Vietnam, China, even up to as far as Ukraine and Morocco.

It is sort of a balancing act so that we see that we do not run short of this procurement. This is an issue that we think is important, the procurement strategy that the board should look into to ensure that we have a supply that is consistent, of good quality and is timely so that farmers or growers does not complain they get the produce as and when they require. And also in terms of the profit margin that we must ensure.

So, those are basically Mr. Chairman and the Members of the Committee, the strategy and we are looking at the requirements or the mandate of our principal shareholders of course, not forgetting our primary minority shareholder, which is the Sugar Cane Growers Council which is the representative of the growers.

And lastly, at the moment, we have been quite late with the finalization of our 2025 last year's financial statements. There were some changes, decisions that were made by the previous board that we think does not augur well with the new board. So, we have decided that we may have to call back or reverse some of the decisions that were made that were called by the last board, just to ensure that the South Pacific Fertilizer is financially profitable and sustainable.

And lastly, maybe the review of the article of association. At the moment, we are still working on the standard articles of association. We know there are some limitations there, and we would like with the agreement concurrence of the minority shareholder, we are working together to have a proper article of association. And I think that is basically the team would like to share on behalf of South Pacific Fertilizer. And I look forward to answering any queries that you may wish to raise up on behalf of the government.

MR. R. SHARMA.- Mr. Chairman, the challenges, I think, we know about what is happening in the industry. We will skip that slide. This is something that we intended to highlight, the origins of sugar industry, Sugar Cane Growers Fund, how it all started. But one thing is in the Act and the Ordinance Act of 1959. Section 15 and Section 22.

Normally, sometimes we are pressured that this is individual growers' funds or growers money. The history tells and this is what we have found. Of course, the founders have been the sugar cane farmers of that time and as well as the millers. So, millers took their shares out and it remained with the farmers money. And during the process, you will see that Section 15 says, and I quote, "the farmers were able to find that they had a legitimate claim. They were given five years to pay their money. They paid to the credits or pay to outside. Then the remain was consolidated and given as a government statutory fund..." means no individual farmer has the individual right on the fund.

That is why it is a government statutory fund. But obviously it has been funded and profound members are sugar cane farmers. It also says that it has no claims of any individual farmers. So, it has to run as a trust fund and that is what it is with what we are doing. The board appointed by the government of the day through the ministry. We can move to the next slide.

HON. P.D. KUMAR.- My question is again related to page 25 where you have shown the structure.

MR. R. SHARMA.- Page 25 of 2023 report?

HON. P.D. KUMAR.- Page 25 of the 2024 report. The shareholders, the governance and the whole organisation structure. So, when we were out in the field, the farmers had raised their concerns about the shareholding.

Now you are presenting it this way to us, that it's fine, but how will you raise this awareness to the farmers so that they understand the whole shareholding structure? Because till today they understand that it is their money that led to the formation of the Sugar Cane Growers Fund. I think that needs to be sort of highlighted so that there is no mistrust, but acceptance because this has come to the knowledge for the first time, so they are all in shock. How will you try and relay this message the way you are doing to us?

MR. R. SHARMA.- Mr. Chairman, this is the thing we have been trying for the last two years or so within the industry with these stakeholders, together with the Ministry. Our intention and plan is that we have continued – when we started with the exercise of review of Act from a year before last – going to the farmers, telling them, the origination foundation members are sugarcane farmers and the millers. This is the time when we look at the review of the Act, we continue to do it.

In the recent select Committee we have also advocated and are planning to make a press statement. Our board has approved it and it has gone to the Ministry, and even the previous Ministry has acknowledged this. Gradually, we will have to let the people know that this is how the Fund was and these were the things. Why we had gone back to 1959 to look at these things, is to bring them the right narrative. It took us some time to look at all the records and even the Hansard Reports of 1959 at the Office of the Solicitor-General, so we will continue to do that. When the approval of the review of the Act is done, we will continue to do that, definitely.

We quickly move to next. These are the things we are looking at to present in the review of the Act. One of the recommendations from the Committee before was, this should come as a trust fund. It should come under the supervision of the Reserve Bank of Fiji. We have also proposed that in the Act. There was a call by Sugar Cane Growers Council that farmer-members should be represented, though a member is there. We are also looking at that.

The certain things that we have recommended came from the recommendations of the Committee – to expand our business, look at within and outside of the sugar industry, our joint ventures, subsequent amendments to our investment that has gone into South Pacific Fertilisers, and especially the prudential guidelines as to how we are going to make this fund sustainable. These are the scopes that we have in the review of the Act.

As we speak, we are almost eight decades or 80 years old – the Sugar Cane Growers Fund. We have 4,032 growers with us and \$42.734 million loans. When we look at sugarcane farmers only, we represent 65 percent of the market share.

These are our figures as to what it is. There is a risk for us. The way the industry is going, we are very mindful of our prudent risks. You look at zero to 100 tonnes, almost 25 percent of our portfolio is of high risk. When we look at the age factor of the farmers, almost 31 percent of that, we have the risk right now. These were the things highlighted in the reports. We have to manage these things quite well.

This is the portfolio that we discussed. Currently, we are sitting at total arrears of 6 percent. However, if we take one of the major loan accounts, we are at 7 percent. Every month, it is increasing because farmers are yet to start harvesting. We have done better by the number of years. Looking at 2018, we were sitting at 25 percent, and we have brought it down to 7 percent, but this cannot be all the time. That is where the high risk is coming from.

Next is our financial performance. You will see that despite we are giving back to the farmers, we have sustained ourselves without any government support, and we continue to do so. Our profit remains stable to around \$1.8 million to \$2.5 million or even \$3 million, that we have done as to how we have been managing. To date, for the last eight months, we are at \$1.3 million. That is how we have been managing with balance sheet divestments in areas, where we can get the maximum return, and that we are passing down it to the farmers. You will see that we have invested into properties. These returns have reduced our interest rate and we thank the board for looking at the directions we are, but we cannot continue to do that. We can see there are early warning signals coming from the arrears. So, so far, we are on track 80 percent to 90 percent of what we have to lend. We are also not aggressively lending. That is not our core business. We are prudent of the environment and very quality loan that we intend to have.

HON. P.D. KUMAR.- About the loan. My apologies, we have to interrupt because as a Committee, we want to get knowledge and information so that we can do our work. Based on that, when we were out with the growers, one of the issues raised was that as a co-operative, they cannot get loan from Sugar Cane Growers Fund, but individually they can. But if you look at the function of the Sugar Cane Growers Fund, one of the functions is, it says here, to enable cane growers to participate in commercial ventures, which in the opinion of the board are intended to benefit the cane growing industry. And mechanization is one way of benefiting the sugar cane industry, particularly when there is a shortage of farmers. So why are the cooperatives not included?

MR. R. SHARMA.- Years back in 2018, 2019, we made a submission through Solicitor-General to our own legal opinion Solicitor-General. They provided an opinion that we can. We did all platforms and everything to start giving loans to the cooperative. Later on, the board revisited and then again consulted Solicitor-General. Then they said it cannot be done.

Since then, we have been going to them, through our Ministry that we should be giving loans to cooperatives. Technically what our Act says, we can only give it to the registered cane growers. That is a limitation. So, if a farmer is an individual, we can give it to him. If he is a member of a cooperative, cooperative is taken as a separate entity, which we could not. We tried the year before last through budget amendments. It has not been, and we continue to pursue it.

In fact, in these amendments, we have again put a request that we should be able to do it and give it to the cooperatives. From the board side and from the management, we would like to give it to the cooperatives. And even if there is a delay in the Act review, we may take it through the amendments by the minister and the select committee to have it for the cooperatives. We are just waiting for that feedback.

HON. P.D. KUMAR.- So, you have highlighted that. You took one opinion from Solicitor-General's Office, you took another opinion from Solicitor-General's Office and it was opposite to what they initially agreed.

MR. R. SHARMA.- In 2018 we took it from our lawyers, R. Patel, at that time, 2018-2019. They said we took it to the board and then we went to Solicitor-General's Office, they said they could not.

Year before last, when we took it to the budget amendment, Solicitor-General advised it could be made but there were massive changes that we are bringing it to the, not massive, but there were a number of changes that we are bringing to the Act. They felt that we do it with inclusive of the Act review, but it is there on the agenda.

HON. P.D. KUMAR.- Alright, we have to be very mindful of the industry itself. Let us not follow a pattern of driving a system which will take another five, six years, because farmers cannot wait; the Government cannot wait. We want the industry to be viable. We have seen some very good examples where farmers have taken loans as cooperatives from FDB at an extremely high interest rate like 15 percent, 12 percent, and 14 percent. It is just crazy. And yet they were able to pay off their loan.

My suggestion would be that under section 51, you can bring in at least those small changes you want in your law while you are looking at the bigger change. Try and get that done because we want the farmers to have money so that they can invest in harvesters and assist the industry. Currently the labour shortage is so bad that they are suffering basically. That is my suggestion.

MR. R. SHARMA.- Point noted, Madam. We will wait for feedback this Friday, and we will make a submission by next Monday to our Ministry to take it through.

We move to the next slide. I think the Committee requested the mortgagee sale updates. You can see it on the slide that we have had in the last six years, 157 mortgagee sales that we had. So, an average of about 26. Mr. Chairman and honourable Members, these are not recently given loans. These are years back given loans. Previously, there were no aggressive follow-ups in the portfolio of loans, that is why we had 28 percent, 20 percent arrears. So these are not recently given loans that we would have called and you can see the number of mortgagee sales loan cleared.

Another factor is well as we follow up, we go to a very standard system. As soon as the accounts are in arrears, we send them a text message by system, our person go and visit them. Look at the harvesting period because we give them almost 18 months to clear the loan. So those are the things that we do. You will see as soon as the mortgagee sales are, despite we send the letters and all that, People do not take heed. As soon as it appears in papers, they ensure that the loans are cleared. So, 68 accounts of that, they had cleared in full.

Then the number of mortgagee sales partly settled, you will see 18 of them. We also had to write off loans since we have tried and continued and this is the figure that represents where we are. Majority has been a legacy of debts like we say.

HON. P.D. KUMAR.- Can you provide that information breakdown of who these people were and what kind of loan they owed and year it was taken to the Committee please?

MR. R. SHARMA.- Sure. We can. I think the next slide provides the arrears and sectors that you had received. It is by number of mortgagee sale loans cleared and number of mortgagee sales cases return off by each of the districts that you will see in Ba and Labasa, it is all presented.

HON. P.D. KUMAR.- We would like the names.

MR. R. SHARMA.- I will provide that information on a spreadsheet by this afternoon. These are basically our products and services that the Committee may be aware of whether you would like me to go through that in detail madam those are the products, we give special loans. This is our digital platform, these are the things that we had said, Document Management System and Chatbot was launched last week by Minister for Finance along with GEDSI which was also launched. We are bringing the digital overdraft facility that is coming by end of the year. This is another United Nations Capital Development Fund (UNCDF) project. The first three were supported by Asian Development Bank (ADB).

The growers fund is paying on behalf of the farmers mortgage protection. For almost a year now, we have paid \$402,000 for the farmers and you will see that 18 claims, \$177,000 has been received so far with 105 are claims that are still pending. This gives a peace of mind for the farmers that we bring it from our coffers. Sun insurance and Jetsy which we had talked about, there is no change on that, however, this is something that we are bringing for the women farmers and the youths.

We are the lead organisation for Sugarcane Farmers Award to motivate the farmers as Prime Minister's Award. We are looking at 17th of October as the date tentatively set for that Award. These are our plans going forward and you will see the pillars and strategic plan all the while we would like to maintain majority of the market share.

At least 20 percent of our portfolio should be non-sugar that we are looking at or not related to sugar directly. These are our projects in the work plans. We have achieved investments in properties. Also you will look at membership and savings that we got with Fiji National Provident Fund farmers now, talking to insurance companies.

Tomorrow we are meeting two of the insurance companies to look at crop insurance and bank insurance packages, the digital platform we have already talked about, exploring about the ESG framework is another initiative that we got for the work plan for this year.

This is something that is on our blue strategy where we continue to look at sustainable investment in properties, whether we can also support with medical centers for the farmers we tried that act limited, agro-processing, whether we can do it or we partnership, joint ventures to support the industry or to look at our sustainable development.

HON. P.D. KUMAR.- Why not start a mill?

MR. R. SHARMA.- Start a new mill? We just have to look at the Sugar Industry Act and all those things. In fact, the FAO report has some recommendations, more to do with payments and we have to look at that. Thank you very much. This is one of the agendas that we have done by ADB. They have reviewed whether we can become a agro-finance institution.

The gap of that is a very comprehensive report that we have actioned, but we have put it on hold. Unless and until our Act is reviewed. Now the question is, we have got only two Parliamentary sessions before the election. That is what we hear say. So, whether this Act review will also commensurate or not is another question for us, Mr. Chairman and the honourable Members. So, those are some timelines that has been set for our transformation.

HON. P.D. KUMAR.- Thank you for sharing that, I think we are running a bit tight with time.

MR. R. SHARMA.- We are coming to an end. Actually, these are the structure. Just flip to the next one. These are some social work we are actively involved in. So, last week we handed over some wheelchairs and diapers for the farmers that we continue to do. Yesterday our team was part of cleaning up in Seaqaqa highway.

HON. P.D. KUMAR.- Social responsibility

MR. R. SHARMA.- Yes, and there are a number of things that I think we do. That is all that we have got till here.

MR. CHAIRMAN.- Thank you very much Mr. Sharma. I would like to thank you for those presentation. I just have a comment we are talking about the way forward, ADB strategy and all that because it has to fit in with what the strategy that the government will need to be put in place because one of the problem they face is there are so many reforms have being done in bits and pieces all over the place but needs to be done according to what the select Committee will decide.

Once you have a future strategy for the industry then we need to work out how you can as an organization fits in to those strategy. Those are just my initial comments. And of course we heard from farmers the need for them to have more access to financial resources, perhaps that is also part of government also to be looking at that in terms of providing support with other agencies to look into how best you can support the farmers.

MR. CHAIRMAN.- Honourable Members, any other comments?

HON. P.D. KUMAR.- Mr. Chairman, I have two questions. One is related to the commercial building that was bought in Lautoka. I think it was about \$4 million.

MR. R. SHARMA.- Yes, Madam

HON. P.D. KUMAR.- My question is whether an independent valuation was undertaken? Secondly, do you have an investment policy?

MR. R. SHARMA.- Within our guidelines and policies, within our Act, it allows us to buy on properties, invest into properties. So, there is a guideline for us. Secondly, there is a...

HON. P.D. KUMAR.- I am not talking about the law. I am talking about investment policy.

MR. R. SHARMA.- We do have. We took it for amendment to the board. Just in the last board meeting, the board intended to have some changes made to the policy previously three, four years back, we took it to the board and the board had deferred it. So, we took it to the board in the last board meeting. The board has considered that some more changes to be made to the policy. But prior to that, we looked at our Act. We also know some farmers have raised concerns whether we do have provisions in our Act. It clearly states that we can own any...

HON. P.D.KUMAR.- Do you know under which section?

MR. R. SHARMA.- I think section 5(1). We can provide that. It says Sugar Cane Growers Fund can own, share and transfer real estate properties is mentioned. It is clearly mentioned in the Act. We can forward a copy of that Section and we will send it too over. And the other one is the valuation of the property. Definitely, we have bought it for \$4 million. The property by independent value was \$4,7 million. We get a return more than 6 percent on it right now, fully tenanted.

HON. P.D. KUMAR.- That is very good, because we have been pushing for this for a while, that the Sugar Cane Growers Fund needs to invest, which you have started doing that. The only reason why I spoke about the valuation, because it needs to be undertaken before you purchase the property, so that there is transparency and assurance given to every player who is attached to the Sugar Cane Growers Fund.

MR. R. SHARMA.- In that, we get about \$250,000 rent annually. Because of that rental, we have reduced our interest rate from 6 percent to 4.25 percent and then to 3.95 percent, giving back almost \$500,000 to the farmers. This is because of the rental, and we are forfeiting the MPI of almost \$400,000 dollars. So \$650,000 we are giving back, and this has been one of the reasons. The other one is we have acquired our own property, saving almost \$100,000 annually, which again, we are passing down to the farmers.

HON. P.D. KUMAR.- That is how it should be. We need to progress that way rather than being very restrictive. I am referring to page 77 of 2024 Annual Report, which is the financial statement. Number two says, as of June 2025, the fund acquired Vaitari land, which resulted in a loan restructure through debt swap of \$1.05 million, and interest was also revised to 5 percent. Can you give us more information on that?

MR. R. SHARMA.- Madam, FSC is a registered cane farmer, and we have been giving FSC loan. This is supported by croplands over the farms, and by government guarantee. We would not give loans without government guarantee. We initially looked at to ease their burden, whether we can buy one of the vacant lots as a property. That is where the Board decided that we do it against the valuation and we have done that land swap for that. We reduced their interest rate, likewise to the farmers, from 6 percent to 5.5 percent whereas the farmers had 3.95 percent. Currently, they continue to have certain loan facilities. We are not looking at only FSC, we have looked at the industry as a whole. We have provided them finance to support in cane payments and all those things, again, supported and guaranteed by government guarantee. They have been very prompt and up to date with the payments. That what it is right now.

MR. CHAIRMAN.- I have a comment relating to your presentation. I noted that you have a farmer's award. We met with the Ministry of Agriculture and Sugar a few minutes ago, before you came in. What we would like to see is more complementary between agriculture and sugar. That is why sugar had been shifted to the Ministry. Next week, they are having their own show and farmer's award. Perhaps in the future, look into how you can combine all these so that you can be working together.

MR. R. SHARMA.- This was started last year when the Ministry was separate. It is not only us, but all the institutions are contributing \$4,000 each. We are the primary sponsors with \$10,000. We have gone through with all the mill awards, and now it is left to the national. Coming back to the agriculture, I think all the sugar industry, as well as us, we had participated. For next week, we are putting up our booth there too for three days.

HON. P.D. KUMAR.- Who is the organiser for this award?

MR. R. SHARMA.- It is a committee that is headed by us, but the committee was formed by all the stakeholders, representatives are there.

HON. P.D. KUMAR.- Farmer's award is most appropriately not placed with you since your loans and all that.

MR. R. SHARMA.- Yes, but we took the initiative, Madam. It is supposed to be on a rotational basis. This year, we are completing. We will ask any of other institutions will come up. This Farmers Award had been in train from 2018, 2019 looking at these sponsors. I must also acknowledge the number of private sponsors that we have got inclusive of research.

HON. P.D. KUMAR.- But what I am saying is that let us stick to the mandate and be within the mandate too. Because there are other questions, I would like to ask Mr. Chairman, before you say time is up.

Looking at your report again, 17.5 percent fewer growers received loan disbursement in 2024, as compared to 2023. So, I just want to know why there were fewer farmers or growers who took loans in 2024 as compared to 2023.

MR. R. SHARMA.- Whilst we continuously advocate giving the loans, but we have also noticed that when the price of cane has been high, farmers take less loans. And that is what we want. We do not want the farmers to be overburdened with that. So that was one of the reasons.

HON. P.D. KUMAR.- When we met the farmers, one of the complaints they have given is this. That they continuously have to go to FDB for the loans and they are taking the loans at a very high rate. Last time we talked about the figure you said about \$15 million. The figure I quoted was over a period of time so that that is a pretty big amount when we talk about 34 million. Again if we have Sugar Cane Growers Fund and the same farmers are going to FDB and taking loan at a very high interest rate, then obviously some of the functions listed in your legislation is questionable.

MR. R. SHARMA.- Madam, we give almost \$9 million to \$10 million annually to the farmers. Our policies are very flexible except if the sugar cane farmer intends to venture into a non-sugar activity means if he wants to start up a service station if he wants to start up a shop which our Act does not allow and as well as for the cooperatives, we have not been able to give but for the sugarcane farmers I think when we compare it with other institutions, our policies have been quite flexible with the fees, charges and interest rate.

HON. P.D. KUMAR.- I am also holding the law here, but correct me, maybe if there are some amendments which I am not aware of. It says here to enable cane growers to participate in commercial ventures.

MR. R. SHARMA.- Commercial ventures that will support the sugar industry.

HON. P.D. KUMAR.- The opinions of the board are intended to benefit the cane growing industry. Yes, industry out and say for example if they want to set up a business that deals with fertilizer, weedicide or something else that the farmers need.

MR. R. SHARMA.- We have given to the farmers who want to purchase excavators, diggers, run a business of that nature. We have got the BLP loans to look at the farmers because our policies say that the majority of your repayment should be based on the sugar cane farm income. I think the board was of the view that we do not overexpose those limits when it comes to their genuine needs for the inputs on the sugar cane farming, we are not able to do. That is why we need to diversify all that.

HON. P.D. KUMAR.- I can understand the concerns, something that perhaps Sugar Cane Growers Fund needs to look at and understand why these farmers are going to FDB. If they have taken \$34 million out of FDB, for what reasons, what else can Sugar Cane Growers Fund do so that you can retain the farmers?

MR. R. SHARMA.- We will look at that. I think the Deputy Chairperson mentioned the size of the loans. Our loans have been limited to \$120,000, and all those individual cooperatives will get about \$300,000 alone. When you look at 10 cooperatives, you are looking at \$3 million, and those are the things.

HON. P.D. KUMAR.- I can understand the argument can still be there because you do not give to cooperatives. Where else can they go?

MR. S. LEWENIQILA.- Mr. Chairman, you raised the question of many farmers preferring FDB. My understanding is that based on our financial results, we approve at least 90 percent of the application that comes in and my speculation is that the Fiji Development Bank will approve less than 80 percent since it is their stringent policy. However, just as the CEO has mentioned, because of the size of the loan and our credit policy, we also look at the risks involved in terms of production.

This is why I can say confidently that they struggle since there is a very stringent response in terms of our lending. However, be rest assured that we always try to approve a loan which is the reason why even if it is an outside policy, it is referred to the Board.

MR. CHAIRMAN.- I have another comment relating to working together in regards to sugar and agriculture. Agriculture has substantial grant also and they provide to farmers. We understand that your major focus are the sugarcane farmers. Perhaps maybe to look into other farmers if they are moving into other diversification crops, maybe it would also be good to look into how best you can utilise a grant from a ministry. You will be able to discuss with them and at least have a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) since there are no substantial grants there.

If there are keen farmers wanting to have a tractor, no digger or whatever, you can access those grants. Additionally, perhaps maybe another way forward also when you are looking into bigger farms. This is where I am looking as there will be substantial work for you to undertake in terms of diversification.

HON. A.N. TUICOLO.- Just a follow-up question in regards to crop diversification. We understand that you support farmers looking to supplement their income through alternative crops and new business models. What is their success rate in making this transition?

MR. R. SHARMA.- We have information as part our the PowerPoint presentation that will show you the success, and when we looked at it, we do have loans up to \$7,000 that we can give it to them for other crops. Even the Business Link Pacific, which allows them up to \$100,000.

One thing with the diversification has been the farmers have to pay cash is one model. They plant the crop and they pay cash. Other one is that they can do it through cane payments. Non-cane payments have been a success rate. It ranges between 65 to 75 percent means arrears collection. So 25 percent is a non-timely repayment. 75 percent have been paying on time.

So generally, it has been a very successful story. A farmer is given a loan to plant *duruka*, harvested the crop and cleared the loan \$26,000 within 12 month's time. That is the level of success that we have got from the people. Some of the farmers ensure that they pay on a timely basis so we do not have to call them which is good.

When we look at other crops, we have funded some of the people in the rice industry; 60 percent to 70 percent of sugarcane farmers in the Northern Division are planting rice. In Sigatoka and Nadi, they have other crops that they are planting and some of them have been supported with

tractors. These are implements that we have financed them. There are good success stories that we do have.

MR. CHAIRMAN.- Have you supported any farmers?

MR. R. SHARMA.- We are about to sign an agreement with three parties with Valley Processors and Pacific Island Development Forum (PIDF). This is a new market, Valley Processors in Sabeto are the ones that we have met and we are supposed to sign up an agreement so that we can finance sugarcane farmers in parts of Rakiraki and Nadi areas who are already planting.

MR. CHAIRMAN.- Thank you very much, Mr. Sarma. I think we have come to the end of this meeting. Of course, I would like to thank the team from Sugar Cane Growers Fund for availing themselves to come all the way from Lautoka and meet up with us this afternoon. We thank you for your time and we hope that you will avail yourselves if the Ccommittee has any further stories on this matter. The meeting is now adjourned.

The Committee adjourned at 12.30 p.m.

# **ANNEX 4**

## **SITE VISIT/ CONSULTATION**

**11ECONOMIC AFFAIRS COMMITTEE**  
**WESTERN DIVISION SITE VISIT PROGRAMME**  
**Monday 24 August 2026 - Saturday 29 August 2026**

**Objective – Purpose of the sites visits is to review the following Annual Reports which are under scrutiny of the Committee.**

- 1.) Ministry of Sugar Industry Annual Report 2021-2022**
- 2.) Sugar Industry Tribunal Annual Report 2021**
- 3.) Sugar Cane Growers Fund Annual Report 2023 and 2024**
- 4.) Assets Fiji Pte Limited Annual Reports 2023 and 2024**
- 5.) Energy Fiji Limited Annual Report 2025**
- 6.) Rural Electrification**

**DAY 1: MONDAY, 24 AUGUST 2026**

**SUVA TO SIGATOKA**

| <b>Time</b> | <b>Activity / Meeting</b>   | <b>Venue</b> | <b>Contact Person</b> |
|-------------|-----------------------------|--------------|-----------------------|
| 1:40 pm     | Staff Pick-up: Awantika Raj | Nausori      | -                     |
| 1:50 pm     | Staff Pick-up: Katie        | Nakasi       | -                     |
| 2:00 pm     | Staff Pick-up: Tuita        | Valelevu     | -                     |

|         |                                                         |        |                                 |
|---------|---------------------------------------------------------|--------|---------------------------------|
| 2:30 pm | Pick-up: Hon. Tuicolo                                   | Suva   | -                               |
| 2:40 pm | Pick-up: Hon. Ravu                                      | Suva   | -                               |
| 2:45 pm | Pick-up: Hon. Koroilavesau                              | Suva   | -                               |
| 2:50 pm | Pick-up: Hon. Deputy Chairperson                        | Suva   | -                               |
| 3:00 pm | EFL: Site Visit to the New 20MW<br>Kinoya Power Station | Kinoya | Tupou Semesi ( <b>8914580</b> ) |
| 4:15 pm | Depart Suva for the Western Division                    | Suva   | -                               |

#### Overnight Accommodation

**Ramada Hotel, Sigatoka.**

#### DAY 2: TUESDAY, 25 AUGUST 2026

#### SIGATOKA TO NADI

| Time                 | Activity / Meeting | Venue                  | Contact Person |
|----------------------|--------------------|------------------------|----------------|
| 7:00 am -<br>8:00 am | Breakfast          | Ramada Hotel, Sigatoka | -              |
| 8:30 am              | Check-out          | Ramada Hotel           | -              |
| 8:40 am              | Depart Hotel       | Sigatoka               | -              |

|          |                                                                                                                                |                                               |                                  |
|----------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------|----------------------------------|
| 9:00 am  | <b>EFL:</b> Meeting with Beneficiary at Lawai Village & Site Visit to Butoni Wind Farm                                         | Butoni Wind Farm                              | Lusiano Koroiveibau<br>(9992576) |
| 11:00 am | <b>Sugar Reports</b> - Consultation Meeting with Cane Growers. <b>(to seek views on the SCGF, Mini of Sugar and Tribunal).</b> | Lomawai Sangam Temple                         | Mr Timoci Sila —<br>9990537      |
| 1:00 pm  | <b>EFL:</b> Site Visit to Google Landing Site                                                                                  | En route between Sigatoka and Nadi – Natadola | Navneet Sen<br>(8916310)         |
| 2:30 pm  | <b>Sugar Reports</b> - Consultation Meeting with Cane Growers. <b>(to seek views on the SCGF, Mini of Sugar and Tribunal).</b> | FSC Navo Office, Nadi                         | Mr Timoci Sila —<br>9990537      |
| 3.45 pm  | <b>Rural Electrification</b> – Quotation Scheme No. NA03-24                                                                    | Jayant Rd Malolo Transmitter Rd, Nadi         | Kamlesh - 8017248                |

### Overnight Accommodation

Vualiku Hotel, Nadi.

**DAY 3: WEDNESDAY, 26 AUGUST 2026****NADI - VUDA - LAUTOKA**

| Time                   | Activity / Meeting                                                                                                                                  | Venue                     | Contact Person                                                                                                                                                                                                              |
|------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| 7:00 am -<br>8:00 am   | Breakfast                                                                                                                                           | Vualiku Hotel             | -                                                                                                                                                                                                                           |
| 8:15 am                | Depart Hotel                                                                                                                                        | Nadi                      | -                                                                                                                                                                                                                           |
|                        |                                                                                                                                                     |                           |                                                                                                                                                                                                                             |
| 8.45 am                | <b>EFL</b> Site Visit to Nagado Power Station                                                                                                       | Nagado                    | Arnit Sharma/Uate ( <a href="tel:99852759992422">9985275/9992422</a> )                                                                                                                                                      |
| 9:45 am                | <b>EFL</b> : Site Visit to NCC Projects, Vuda Projects and Vuda 132kV Substation                                                                    | Vuda                      | Manoj ( <a href="tel:9999247">9999247</a> ), Armogam ( <a href="tel:9992406">9992406</a> ), Arnit Sharma/Uate ( <a href="tel:99852759992422">9985275/9992422</a> ), Saimone Rogoimuri ( <a href="tel:9992419">9992419</a> ) |
| 10:30 am -<br>11:00 am | <b>Rural Electrification</b> - LU02-13 (Electricity Supply to Abaca Village, Lautoka)                                                               | Abaca Village,<br>Lautoka | Department of Energy                                                                                                                                                                                                        |
| 11:15 am –<br>12.45 pm | <b>Assets Fiji Land</b> - AMEX Site Visit, Assets Fiji Land - Tropik Woodchip Site Visit and Assets Fiji Land - King's Jetty Local Wharf Site Visit | Lautoka                   | General Manager ( <a href="tel:7773715">7773715</a> ), Alisha Ali ( <a href="tel:7773714">7773714</a> )                                                                                                                     |
| 1:00 pm -<br>2:00 pm   | Lunch Break                                                                                                                                         | Lautoka                   | -                                                                                                                                                                                                                           |

|                      |                                                                          |                          |                                                  |
|----------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------------------------------|
| 2:00 pm -<br>3:00 pm | <b>Sugar Reports</b> - Site Consultation with Sugar Cane Growers Council | CGC Building,<br>Lautoka | Vimal Dutt ( <a href="tel:9992059">9992059</a> ) |
| 3:05 pm -<br>4:05 pm | <b>SCGF Report</b> - Site Consultation with Sugar Cane Growers Fund      | SCGF Centre,<br>Lautoka  | Raj Sharma ( <a href="tel:9991277">9991277</a> ) |

### Overnight Accommodation

Vualiku Hotel, Nadi.

**DAY 4: THURSDAY, 27 AUGUST 2026**

### LAUTOKA

| Time                 | Activity / Meeting                                                                                                             | Venue                            | Contact Person                                        |
|----------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------|
| 7:00 am -<br>8:00 am | Breakfast                                                                                                                      | Hotel                            | -                                                     |
| 8:45 am              | Depart Hotel                                                                                                                   | Nadi/Lautoka                     | -                                                     |
| 9:30 am              | <b>Sugar Reports</b> - Consultation Meeting with Cane Growers. <b>(to seek views on the SCGF, Mini of Sugar and Tribunal).</b> | Sugar Cane Growers Hall, Lautoka | Mr Timoci Sila<br>— <a href="tel:9990537">9990537</a> |

|                           |                                                                                                                                                                                                 |                                                                                               |                                                                          |
|---------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| 10:50 am<br>- 11:50<br>am | <b>SCGF, Sugar Tribunal and Ministry of Sugar Reports</b> - Joint Meeting with the Sugar Research Institute of Fiji (SRIF) and Fiji Sugar Corporation (FSC) and South Pacific Fertilizer (SPFL) | FSC Training Room, Lautoka Mill Compound                                                      | Bhan (CEO – FSC) – <b>9991429</b><br><br>Ashween (SPFL) - <b>9920465</b> |
| 12:00 pm<br>- 1:00 pm     | <b>Sugar Industry Tribunal Annual Report</b> - Site Consultation with the Sugar Industry Tribunal                                                                                               | “Sugar House” building at the Cnr Walu Street and Waterfront Road Lautoka on the Ground Floor | Menani - <b>9061980</b>                                                  |
| 1:15 pm –<br>2:15 pm      | <b>Ministry of Sugar Industry Annual Report</b> - Site Consultation with the Ministry of Sugar Industry                                                                                         | Ministry of Sugar Industry Boardroom, Level 1, Sugar House - Marine Drive                     | Praneel – (Director Sugar) - <b>9997396</b>                              |
| 3.30 pm                   | <b>Rural Electrification</b> - Electricity Supply at Natabua, Lautoka                                                                                                                           | Natabua Lautoka                                                                               |                                                                          |
| 5.00 pm                   | <b>Rural Electrification</b> - Electricity Supply to Navuso Settlement, Sabeto, Nadi                                                                                                            | Sabeto Nadi                                                                                   |                                                                          |

### Overnight Accommodation

**Vualiku Hotel, Nadi**

**DAY 5: FRIDAY, 28 AUGUST 2026****BA - TAVUA - RAKIRAKI**

| Time                | Activity / Meeting                                                                                                       | Venue              | Contact Person                     |
|---------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------|------------------------------------|
| 7:00 AM - 8:00 AM   | Breakfast                                                                                                                | Hotel              | -                                  |
| 8:30 AM             | Depart Vualiku Hotel                                                                                                     | Nadi               | -                                  |
| 9:00 AM - 9:45 AM   | <b>Rural Electrification</b> - BA03-19 (Electricity Supply to Gurdayal Sharma & 15 Others at Tabataba, Ba)               | Tabataba, Ba       | Department of Energy               |
| 10:00 AM - 10:45 AM | <b>Rural Electrification</b> - BA11-18 (Electricity Supply to Vatusui, Ba)                                               | Vatusui, Ba        | Department of Energy               |
| 11:00 AM - 12:00 PM | <b>Sugar Reports</b> - Consultation Meeting with Cane Growers Ba & Tavua <b>(to seek views on the SCGF and Tribunal)</b> | Veisaru Temple, Ba | Mr Bimlesh Kumar Nath<br>(9992774) |
| 12:00 PM - 12:30 PM | Travel                                                                                                                   | Tavua              | -                                  |
| 12:30 PM - 1:15 PM  | <b>Rural Electrification</b> - TA05-18 (Electricity Supply to Nadelei, Tavua)                                            | Nadelei, Tavua     | Department of Energy               |
| 1:15 PM - 2:00 PM   | Lunch Break                                                                                                              | Tavua              | -                                  |

|                   |                                                                                                               |                          |                                    |
|-------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------|------------------------------------|
| 2:00 PM - 2:45 PM | <b>Rural Electrification</b> - TA02-20 (Electricity Supply to Nabuna Street, Tavua)                           | Nabuna Street, Tavua     | Department of Energy               |
| 2:45 PM - 3:30 PM | Travel to Rakiraki                                                                                            | Rakiraki                 | -                                  |
| 5:00 PM - 5:45 PM | Check-in – Tanoa Rakiraki Hotel                                                                               | Rakiraki                 | -                                  |
| 6:15 PM           | <b>Sugar Reports</b> - Consultation Meeting with Cane Growers <b>(to seek views on the SCGF and Tribunal)</b> | Wailevu Temple, Rakiraki | Mr Bimlesh Kumar Nath<br>(9992774) |

Overnight Accommodation

**Tanoa Rakiraki Hotel**

**DAY 6: SATURDAY, 29 AUGUST 2026**

**RETURN TO SUVA**

| Time                 | Activity / Meeting                                                                                                        | Venue                       | Contact Person          |
|----------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------|-------------------------|
| 7:00 am -<br>8:00 am | Breakfast                                                                                                                 | Tanoa Rakiraki<br>Hotel     | -                       |
| 8.30 am              | Check Out – Hotel, leave for the site                                                                                     |                             |                         |
| 9.00 am              | <b>Rural Electrification</b> - RA02-18 (Electricity Supply to Lau Settlement Dreketi, Waimicia) TBA or any other location | Lau Settlement,<br>Rakiraki | Department of<br>Energy |

**END OF WESTERN DIVISION SITE VISIT PROGRAMME.**

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#### **ACCOMMODATION SCHEDULE**

| Date                      | Accommodation          |
|---------------------------|------------------------|
| Monday, 24 August 2026    | Ramada Hotel, Sigatoka |
| Tuesday, 25 August 2026   | Vualiku Hotel, Nadi    |
| Wednesday, 26 August 2026 | Vualiku Hotel, Nadi    |

|                          |                     |
|--------------------------|---------------------|
| Thursday, 27 August 2026 | Vualiku Hotel, Nadi |
| Friday, 28 August 2026   | Tanoa Rakiraki      |
| Saturday, 29 August 2026 | Return to Suva      |

# EAC Northern Division Programme

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31 August - 4 September 2026

## 31 August 2026 - Taveuni Site Visits

| Time                | Activity                                                                                                                                                  |
|---------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| 6:00 AM - 6:30 AM   | Flight: Nausori to Nadi                                                                                                                                   |
| 7:40 AM - 9:00 AM   | Flight: Nadi to Taveuni                                                                                                                                   |
| 9:00 AM - 9:30 AM   | Arrive at Matei Airport and travel to first site                                                                                                          |
| 9:30 AM - 10:30 AM  | <b>Rural Electrification</b> (Unfunded) TAVE01-25 – Bouma Village to Lavena Village –<br><b>Briefing Session with the Beneficiaries at Bouma Village.</b> |
| 10:50 AM - 11:15 AM | <b>EFL Visit</b> to Mua Solar PV Power Station                                                                                                            |
| 11.30AM - 1.00PM    | <b>Rural Electrification</b> TAVE02-17 – Drekeniwai and Burotu Settlement –<br><b>Briefing Session with the Beneficiaries at Burotu Settlement</b>        |
| 1.15 PM - 2:15 PM   | Lunch                                                                                                                                                     |
| 2.15 PM - 2:30 PM   | Travel to Hydro Site                                                                                                                                      |
| 2:30 PM – 3.30 PM   | <b>EFL Visit</b> to Taveuni Hydro Power Station                                                                                                           |
| 3:30 PM onwards     | Check-in at Garden Island Resort                                                                                                                          |

## 1 September 2026 - Savusavu (Navatu/Navakaka Cluster)

| Time              | Activity                                         |
|-------------------|--------------------------------------------------|
| 6:30 AM           | Check-out                                        |
| 7:00 AM           | Board ferry from Salia Jetty to Vatuyalewa Jetty |
| 8.15AM            | Arrive at Vatuyalewa Jetty                       |
| 8:15 AM – 9:15 AM | Travel to Navatu Area                            |

|                                                                       |                                                                    |
|-----------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------|
| 9:30 AM – 11:30 AM<br>9:45 AM - 10:45 AM<br>11:00 AM - 12:00 PM       | <b>Rural Electrification</b> SA01-26 – Korolevu & Drano Village    |
| <b>Joint Briefing Session with the Beneficiaries at Drano Village</b> | <b>Rural Electrification</b> SA02-26 – Bucalevu & Navakaka Village |
|                                                                       | <b>Rural Electrification</b> SA09-23 – Waivula Village             |
| 12:00 PM - 12:45 PM                                                   | Travel to Savusavu Town                                            |
| 12:45 PM - 1:00 PM                                                    | Lunch                                                              |
| 2:00 PM onwards                                                       | Check-in at Grand & Epic Hotel                                     |

## 2 September 2026 - Savusavu (Waisali/Nabalebale Cluster)

| Time                                                             | Activity                                                                         |
|------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| 8:15 AM                                                          | Depart Hotel                                                                     |
| 8:15 AM - 9:30 AM                                                | Travel to Dawara                                                                 |
| 9:30 AM - 10:30 AM                                               | <b>Rural Electrification SA01-18 – [DAWARA] Vunidawamoli, Natuvu &amp; Natua</b> |
| <b>Briefing Session with the Beneficiaries at Natua Village.</b> | <b>Rural Electrification</b> SA07-18 – Waisali Village & Settlements             |
| 10:45AM- 11:30 AM                                                | <b>Travel Waisali &amp; Nabalebale</b>                                           |
| 11: 40AM - 12:15 AM                                              | <b>Rural Electrification</b> SA04-18 – Nabalebale, Matakunea, Nasavu & Natuvu    |
|                                                                  | <b>Briefing Session with the Beneficiaries at Nabalebale Village.</b>            |
| 12:15 PM - 12:45 PM                                              | Lunch                                                                            |
| 2:00 PM onwards                                                  | Return to Hotel                                                                  |

## 3 September 2026 - Seaqqa / Dreketi Corridor

| Time              | Activity                  |
|-------------------|---------------------------|
| 8:10 AM - 9:20 AM | Travel to Naua Settlement |

|                     |                                                                                                                                                                                 |
|---------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| 9:30AM - 10:15AM    | <b>Rural Electrification LAB14-15 – Naua, Drawa &amp; Lutukina Settlement (Ongoing)</b><br><br><b>Briefing Session with the Beneficiaries at Naua Settlement.</b>               |
| 11.00 AM – 12:00 PM | <b>Sugar Reports - Meeting with Seaqaqa Cane Growers - At Police Bure</b>                                                                                                       |
| 12:30 PM - 1:30 PM  | Lunch – Seaqaqa                                                                                                                                                                 |
| 1:40 PM - 2:00 PM   | <b>EFL Visit - Seaqaqa Solar Site</b>                                                                                                                                           |
| 2.15 PM – 3.15 PM   | <b>Rural Electrification LAB36-18 – Dradramea &amp; Korolevu Settlements, Seaqaqa (Unfunded)</b><br><br><b>Briefing Session with the Beneficiaries at Dradramea Settlement.</b> |
| 4:00 PM onwards     | Check-in at Hotel Northpole, Labasa                                                                                                                                             |

#### 4 September 2026 - Labasa / Korotari Corridor

| Time                | Activity                                                                                                                                                             |
|---------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| 8:15 AM             | Depart Hotel Northpole                                                                                                                                               |
| 9:00 AM – 10.10 AM  | <b>Sugar Reports</b> - Meeting with Cane Growers at FSC Training Room.                                                                                               |
| 10:10 AM - 11:00 AM | Travel to Korotari                                                                                                                                                   |
| 11:30 AM – 1.00 PM  | <b>Rural Electrification LAB17-18 – Navakuru &amp; Suweni Settlements (Ongoing)</b><br><br><b>Briefing Session with the Beneficiaries at the Navakuru Settlement</b> |
| 1.15 PM - 2:15 PM   | Lunch                                                                                                                                                                |
| 2:15 PM             | Depart for Labasa Airport                                                                                                                                            |
| 4:30 PM             | Flight to Suva                                                                                                                                                       |

# ECONOMIC AFFAIRS COMMITTEE

## WESTERN DIVISION SITE VISIT SUMMARY

### Monday 24 August 2026 – Saturday 29 August 2026

**Objective – Purpose of the sites visits was to review the following Annual Reports which are under scrutiny of the Committee.**

- 1.) Ministry of Sugar Industry Annual Report 2021-2022
- 2.) Sugar Industry Tribunal Annual Report 2021
- 3.) Sugar Cane Growers Fund Annual Report 2023 and 2024
- 4.) Assets Fiji Pte Limited Annual Reports 2023 and 2024
- 5.) Energy Fiji Limited Annual Report 2025
- 6.) Rural Electrification

| Date & Day                 | Institution / Site Visited & Address                    | Concerns Raised During the Visit/Consultation                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                      | Committee's Comments (if any) |
|----------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------|
| 24 August 2026<br>(Monday) | EFL: Site Visit to the New 20MW<br>Kinoya Power Station | <b>General Information on the Site</b>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                             |                               |
|                            |                                                         | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The Kinoya Power Station is a key Energy Fiji Limited (EFL) project located in the Central Division and forms part of EFL's efforts to strengthen national energy security and grid reliability.</li> <li>EFL is investing in the Kinoya Power Station and Substation Project, which will add approximately 20MW of generation capacity together with associated</li> </ul> |                               |

substation infrastructure to support growing electricity demand and ensure a reliable power supply during Fiji's transition towards renewable energy targets.

### Key Findings

#### ◆ Operational Preparedness

- Discussions highlighted the importance of emergency generators and contingency measures to ensure continuity of operations during power disruptions or emergencies.
- The discussion reflected an awareness of operational risks and the need for ongoing preparedness planning.

#### ◆ Team Engagement and Coordination

- The visit reflected a positive and collaborative working environment among personnel.
- Participants demonstrated good teamwork, coordination and engagement during activities undertaken at the site.

### Recommendations

#### ✓ Maintain Organised Records

- Maintain organised records of operational and site activities for reporting and accountability purposes.

#### ✓ Enhance Emergency Preparedness

- Review emergency response procedures regularly.
- Ensure backup power systems and generators are available and operational.
- Conduct periodic inspections and testing of emergency equipment.

|                             |                                                                     |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                        |  |
|-----------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--|
|                             |                                                                     | <p> <b>Strengthen Communication and Coordination</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Provide clear instructions and communication during site activities and operations.</li> <li>• Designate responsible coordinators to improve efficiency and minimise confusion.</li> </ul>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                          |  |
| 25 August 2026<br>(Tuesday) | EFL Beneficiary Meeting & Butoni Wind Farm, Lawai Village, Sigatoka | <p><b>Key Matters Discussed</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The Committee received an update from Energy Fiji Limited (EFL) on the performance of the Butoni (Nabou) Wind Farm, future renewable energy plans, and concerns raised by landowners regarding access, communication and royalty arrangements.</li> </ul> <p><b>Concerns Raised and Key Findings</b></p> <p>◆ <b>Wind Farm Performance Below Expectations</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The wind farm was commissioned in 2007 with 37 turbines.</li> <li>• Two turbines were decommissioned following cyclone damage and were not included in insurance claims.</li> <li>• Of the remaining 35 turbines, 20 were refurbished and returned to EFL; however, only 7 turbines are currently operational.</li> <li>• The facility generated only 758 MWh of electricity in the previous year, which was considered significantly below expected output.</li> <li>• Committee Members expressed concern over the low return on a substantial public investment.</li> </ul> |  |

|  |  |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                       |  |
|--|--|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--|
|  |  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◆ <b>Wind Resource Limitations</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• EFL advised that turbines require a minimum wind speed of approximately 4 m/s to operate effectively.</li> <li>• Historical wind speeds at the site range between 4.6 and 5.5 m/s, limiting generation potential.</li> <li>• Members questioned whether sufficient feasibility assessments were undertaken prior to the project's approval.</li> </ul> </li> <li>◆ <b>Significant Public Investment</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Initial project costs were reported at approximately \$37 to \$38 million.</li> <li>• Additional rehabilitation and insurance-related expenditure following cyclone damage reportedly amounted to approximately \$50 million.</li> <li>• The Committee requested further information on project costs, insurance claims, refurbishment expenditure and the costs required to restore remaining non-operational turbines.</li> </ul> </li> <li>◆ <b>Transition from Wind to Solar Energy</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The Asian Development Bank (ADB), with support from consultant Entura, identified the site as suitable for a proposed 10 MW solar project.</li> <li>• EFL indicated it intends to cease further wind turbine refurbishment, decommission approximately eight turbines and utilise existing infrastructure for solar energy development.</li> <li>• Members stressed that lessons learned from the wind farm should inform future solar developments.</li> </ul> </li> <li>◆ <b>Renewable Energy Project Risks</b></li> </ul> |  |
|--|--|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--|

|  |  |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                     |  |
|--|--|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--|
|  |  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• EFL highlighted challenges associated with wind projects, including high capital costs, maintenance expenses, limited spare parts availability and dependence on suitable wind conditions.</li><li>• Solar-related risks discussed included battery lifespan limitations, battery disposal challenges, fire risks, grid integration issues and climate variability.</li><li>• The Committee emphasized the importance of undertaking climate resilience assessments, lifecycle costing and comprehensive feasibility studies before progressing with the solar project.</li></ul> <p>◆ <b>Landowner Engagement and Communication</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Members highlighted the need for stronger engagement and communication with landowners regarding the proposed transition from wind to solar energy.</li><li>• The importance of early consultation, regular updates and collaborative planning was emphasized to avoid future disputes.</li></ul> <p>◆ <b>Landowner Concerns Access to Roads</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Landowners stated they had initially been advised that roads constructed for the project would remain accessible to them.</li><li>• They expressed concern that access restrictions were later imposed.</li><li>• EFL advised that restrictions were primarily due to safety requirements associated with nearby 33kV transmission infrastructure, although farming access remains generally permitted.</li></ul> <p><b>Royalty Payments and Benefits</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Landowners raised concerns regarding royalty arrangements, benefit-sharing commitments and the lack of clarity surrounding payments received.</li></ul> |  |
|--|--|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--|

- EFL committed to providing relevant financial records and documentation relating to royalty payments and previous agreements.

### Recommendations

#### ✓ EFL to provide detailed information on:

- Original project costs;
- Insurance claims and related expenditure;
- Refurbishment costs;
- Operational and maintenance costs; and
- Estimated costs of restoring non-operational turbines.

#### ✓ Prior to development of the proposed 10 MW solar project:

- Complete comprehensive technical, environmental and financial feasibility studies;
- Assess climate change impacts and long-term sustainability;
- Evaluate battery management and disposal arrangements.

#### ✓ Strengthen engagement with landowners through:

- A structured communication strategy;
- Regular project updates;
- Consultation on project changes; and
- Early resolution of community concerns.

#### ✓ Review access arrangements by:

|                                     |                                      |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                        |  |
|-------------------------------------|--------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--|
|                                     |                                      | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Clarifying access rights;</li> <li>• Identifying safe access routes where possible; and</li> <li>• Balancing community needs with operational safety requirements.</li> </ul> <p>✅ <b>Clarify royalty and benefit-sharing arrangements by:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Verifying existing agreements;</li> <li>• Providing transparent payment records; and</li> <li>• Addressing outstanding concerns raised by landowners.</li> </ul> <p>✅ <b>Ensure lessons learned from the Butoni Wind Farm project are documented and incorporated into future renewable energy projects to avoid similar planning and implementation challenges</b></p>           |  |
|                                     |                                      |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                        |  |
| <b>25 August 2026<br/>(Tuesday)</b> | EFL Google Landing Site,<br>Natadola | <p><b>Key Matters Discussed</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The Committee met with EFL representatives and project personnel to understand the infrastructure requirements of the proposed Google-related development, particularly its electricity and water demands, EFL's role in supplying power, and the potential benefits to surrounding communities.</li> </ul> <p><b>Concerns Raised and Key Findings</b></p> <p>♦ <b>Lack of Information on Energy Demand</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Members sought clarification on the facility's total electricity demand, peak load requirements, expected power consumption and infrastructure capacity requirements.</li> </ul> |  |

|  |  |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                               |  |
|--|--|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--|
|  |  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• EFL confirmed it would supply electricity to the project but was unable to provide definitive figures on the facility's energy requirements during the visit.</li> <li>• The Committee noted that energy demand data is critical for assessing the project's impact on Fiji's electricity network and future energy planning.</li> </ul> <p>◆ <b>Uncertainty Regarding Water Consumption</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Members raised concerns regarding the volume of water required to operate the facility, the source of water supply and whether existing infrastructure could accommodate the demand.</li> <li>• Concerns were expressed given existing challenges in providing reliable water services to nearby communities.</li> <li>• No confirmed information was available on projected water usage or long-term water sourcing arrangements.</li> </ul> <p>◆ <b>EFL Infrastructure Commitments</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>EFL confirmed that:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Electricity will be supplied through an 11kV feeder connection;</li> <li>○ Underground cables have already been installed;</li> <li>○ A dedicated substation connection is being established;</li> <li>○ The developer is responsible for trenching and certain civil works; and</li> <li>○ The developer has contributed towards substation-related infrastructure costs.</li> </ul> </li> <li>• <b>While physical infrastructure preparations were advanced, operational demand forecasts remained unavailable.</b></li> </ul> |  |
|--|--|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--|

◆ **Infrastructure and Community Development Concerns**

• **Members discussed the wider implications of the development, including:**

- Future housing requirements associated with workforce growth;
- Electricity and water infrastructure needs for surrounding communities;
- Potential economic growth opportunities for the area; and
- Additional pressures on public services and utility networks.

- **The Committee emphasized that major infrastructure projects should contribute to broader community development and not solely benefit the development itself.**

◆ **Community and Landowner Benefits**

• **Questions were raised regarding:**

- Benefits that would accrue to local landowners and residents;
- Whether supporting infrastructure upgrades would improve services for neighbouring communities; and
- The extent of local employment and economic opportunities that would be generated.

- **Members stressed the importance of ensuring that large-scale developments deliver meaningful socio-economic benefits to surrounding communities.**

**Recommendations**

- ✓ **Obtain detailed information from the developer and EFL on:**

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|  |  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Maximum electricity demand (MW/MVA);</li> <li>• Annual electricity consumption forecasts;</li> <li>• Power reliability requirements;</li> <li>• Future expansion requirements; and</li> <li>• Potential impacts on the national grid.</li> </ul> <p>✓ <b>Undertake a comprehensive assessment of:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Daily and annual water consumption requirements;</li> <li>• Water source and supply arrangements;</li> <li>• Potential impacts on existing water infrastructure; and</li> <li>• Long-term sustainability and resilience measures.</li> </ul> <p>✓ <b>Strengthen integrated infrastructure planning involving:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• EFL;</li> <li>• Water Authority of Fiji;</li> <li>• Ministry of Lands;</li> <li>• Housing Authority;</li> <li>• Local government authorities; and</li> <li>• Project developers, to ensure both project and community needs are adequately considered.</li> </ul> <p>✓ <b>Request a Community Benefits Framework outlining:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Local employment opportunities;</li> </ul> |  |
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|                                     |                                                                    | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Training and skills development programmes;</li> <li>• Infrastructure improvements benefiting surrounding communities; and</li> <li>• Engagement with landowners and affected stakeholders.</li> </ul> <p>✅ <b>Arrange a follow-up technical briefing with EFL, project developers and Water Authority officials to address outstanding questions relating to energy consumption, water requirements, infrastructure capacity and long-term operational impacts.</b></p>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                  |  |
| <b>25 August 2026<br/>(Tuesday)</b> | Cane Growers Consultation Meeting, Lomawai Sangam Temple, Sigatoka | <p><b>Key Concerns Raised by Farmers</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Land lease expiry and renewal processes</b> remain the most significant challenge, with uncertainty surrounding renewals, limited communication on lease decisions, high renewal premiums, and farmers being required to negotiate directly with landowners. This has discouraged investment and resulted in productive cane land being abandoned.</li> <li>• <b>High lease renewal premiums</b> were highlighted as a major financial burden, with some farmers reporting costs of approximately <b>\$17,000 or more</b>. Many are forced to obtain loans to meet these costs, increasing debt levels and reducing profitability.</li> <li>• <b>Access to finance through the Sugar Cane Growers Fund (SCGF)</b> remains challenging. Farmers noted that loan amounts are often insufficient, lending criteria are heavily tied to land value and lease terms, and financing for machinery and transport equipment is difficult to obtain. As a result, many continue to depend on commercial lenders.</li> <li>• Concerns were raised regarding <b>governance and representation within the sugar industry</b>, including a perceived disconnect between decision-makers and</li> </ul> |  |

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|  |  | <p>active farmers, the need for stronger farmer representation, timely Growers Council elections, and greater accountability within industry institutions.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Farmers and Committee Members discussed the <b>long-term sustainability of the sugar industry</b>, including the need for mechanisation, modernization, increased production, and diversification into value-added products such as ethanol, sustainable aviation fuel, rum, and other sugar by-products.</li> <li>• Concerns were expressed regarding the <b>ageing farming population</b>, with younger generations increasingly moving away from agriculture, creating challenges for the future sustainability of the industry.</li> <li>• Farmers requested the continuation of <b>fuel subsidy programmes</b> and broader support measures to address rising production and operational costs affecting farm profitability.</li> <li>• Discussions also highlighted wider <b>financial challenges facing the sugar industry</b>, including FSC's reliance on government support and the slow progress in developing value-added industries.</li> <li>• <b>Stray horses and cattle</b> were identified as a persistent problem causing crop damage, reduced yields, increased labour costs and loss of income, with farmers expressing frustration over weak enforcement measures.</li> <li>• Mixed views were expressed regarding whether the <b>Ministry of Sugar should remain a standalone ministry or be integrated with the Ministry of Agriculture</b> to improve efficiency and coordination.</li> <li>• Concerns were raised regarding the <b>leadership and effectiveness of the Sugar Industry Tribunal</b>, with some farmers questioning whether the institution requires renewal and succession planning. Views were expressed that the Tribunal's leadership has remained in place for a long period, and consideration should be given to ensuring the institution remains responsive, effective and aligned with the current needs of the industry.</li> </ul> |  |
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|  |  | <b>Recommendations and Suggestions Raised</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Reform lease renewal processes to provide earlier notification, greater transparency and improved tenure security for farmers.</li> <li>• Review agricultural lease premium structures to ensure affordability and alignment with farm productivity and economic returns.</li> <li>• Review and modernise <b>SCGF lending policies</b> by increasing accessibility, expanding eligibility criteria, financing machinery and transport assets, and considering farmers' repayment history when assessing applications.</li> <li>• Explore the establishment of a dedicated <b>Agricultural Development Bank</b> or specialised agricultural financing model offering lower interest rates, flexible lending criteria and longer repayment periods.</li> <li>• Strengthen farmer representation through regular elections, increased participation in decision-making processes and improved governance arrangements across industry institutions.</li> <li>• Develop a long-term <b>Sugar Industry Transformation Strategy</b> focused on mechanisation, modernization, productivity growth and value-added industries.</li> <li>• Introduce programmes to encourage <b>youth participation in agriculture</b>, including training, entrepreneurship support and career pathways into farming.</li> <li>• Continue and review the effectiveness of fuel subsidy programmes to support farmers facing rising production costs.</li> <li>• Strengthen livestock control and enforcement measures to address crop damage caused by stray animals.</li> <li>• Review the institutional arrangements of the sugar sector, including the role and structure of the Ministry of Sugar.</li> </ul> |  |
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| <p><b>25 August 2026</b><br/><b>(Tuesday)</b></p> | <p>Rural Electrification (NA03-24),<br/>Jayant Road/Malolo Transmitter<br/>Road, Nadi</p> | <p><b>Key Matters Discussed</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The Committee met with residents to assess challenges relating to rural electrification, water supply, roads and subdivision infrastructure. Residents raised concerns regarding lengthy delays in accessing essential services despite having purchased lots and constructed homes.</li> </ul> <p><b>Concerns Raised and Key Findings</b></p> <p>◆ <b>Electricity Supply and Connection Issues</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Residents reported significant difficulties obtaining reliable electricity despite being located near existing power infrastructure.</li> <li>Homeowners have been required to personally fund electricity connections, including poles, cabling and installation costs, with one resident reporting expenditure of approximately <b>\$12,000</b>.</li> <li>Some households continue to experience limited electricity supply due to transformer and network capacity constraints.</li> <li>These issues have restricted household electricity use and increased costs for residents.</li> </ul> <p>◆ <b>Delays in Rural Electrification Applications</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Residents reported delays of more than <b>four years</b> in processing electrification applications.</li> <li>Concerns were raised regarding poor communication, lack of updates and repeated follow-ups without resolution.</li> </ul> <p>◆ <b>Water Supply Challenges</b></p> |  |
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|  |  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Residents highlighted ongoing water supply issues, including low water pressure, water shortages and multiple households relying on a single water meter.</li> <li>While some infrastructure has reportedly been installed and approved, final connections remain incomplete.</li> </ul> <p>◆ <b>Residents Bearing Infrastructure Costs</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Residents stated that they have collectively funded water pipelines, water extensions and electricity connections that would normally be expected as part of subdivision development.</li> <li>Concerns were raised that essential infrastructure responsibilities have effectively shifted from the developer to homeowners.</li> </ul> <p>◆ <b>Developer Accountability</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Residents questioned why residential lots were sold before electricity, water, roads and supporting infrastructure were fully completed.</li> <li>Concerns were raised as to whether subdivision approval requirements and infrastructure obligations had been properly enforced.</li> </ul> <p>◆ <b>Roads and Drainage</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Residents highlighted poor road conditions, narrow access roads, inadequate drainage and concerns regarding flooding and road damage during heavy rain.</li> <li>Poor access has increased transport and construction costs and created safety concerns.</li> </ul> <p>◆ <b>Growing Demand Exceeding Infrastructure Capacity</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The subdivision continues to expand, but electricity and water infrastructure has not kept pace with population growth.</li> </ul> |  |
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|  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Existing transformers and water systems appear unable to adequately meet current demand.</li></ul> <p>◆ <b>Financial Impact on Residents</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Residents reported increased construction costs, the need for alternative power sources, additional transportation expenses and delays in occupying homes due to infrastructure deficiencies.</li></ul> <p><b>Recommendations</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>✓ Urgently review all outstanding electrification applications and provide residents with clear timelines and status updates.</li><li>✓ Assess and upgrade transformer capacity and electricity infrastructure to meet existing and future demand.</li><li>✓ Accelerate water supply improvements, including completion of outstanding connections and upgrades to water pressure and reliability.</li><li>✓ Investigate developer compliance with subdivision approval conditions and infrastructure obligations.</li><li>✓ Improve coordination between the Department of Energy, EFL, Water Authority of Fiji, Fiji Roads Authority and relevant local authorities to ensure timely delivery of basic services.</li><li>✓ Upgrade roads, bridges and drainage infrastructure to improve access and resilience during adverse weather conditions.</li><li>✓ Establish better communication mechanisms and regular updates for affected residents.</li></ul> |  |
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| <p><b>25 August 2026<br/>(Tuesday)</b></p> | <p>Cane Growers Consultation Meeting, FSC Navo Office, Nadi</p> | <div> <h3>Concerns Raised and Key Findings</h3> </div> <div> <h4>◆ Rural Infrastructure Challenges</h4> </div> <div> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Inadequate access to clean water in several settlements and subdivisions.</li> <li>• Delays in infrastructure approvals and development.</li> <li>• Poor drainage and waterway maintenance affecting farming operations.</li> <li>• The <b>Malamala River</b> was identified as heavily clogged, contributing to flooding and significant reductions in cane production.</li> </ul> </div> <div> <h4>◆ Critical State of the Sugar Industry</h4> </div> <div> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Farmers noted that the sugar industry is no longer operating profitably.</li> <li>• Rising production costs continue to affect returns.</li> <li>• FSC remains heavily reliant on Government-backed financing.</li> <li>• Declining global sugar prices and the loss of EU preferential pricing arrangements have adversely affected industry revenues.</li> <li>• Cane production has declined significantly from historical levels of approximately <b>4 million tonnes</b> to around <b>1.3-1.6 million tonnes annually</b>.</li> </ul> </div> <div> <h4>◆ High Cost of Production</h4> </div> <div> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Rising fertilizer, transport, labour and harvesting costs are reducing profitability.</li> <li>• Farmers reported earning minimal returns despite continued production.</li> <li>• Current cane prices were considered insufficient to cover operating expenses.</li> </ul> </div> |  |
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◆ **Harvesting Challenges**

- Severe labour shortages.
- Increasing dependence on mechanical harvesting.
- Limited access to harvesting equipment.
- High harvesting and transport costs.
- Delays in cane delivery and processing.

◆ **FSC Operational Concerns**

- Farmers expressed dissatisfaction with FSC's responsiveness to growers' concerns.
- Poor communication between FSC and farmers.
- Delays in resolving operational issues.
- Concerns regarding leadership capability and accountability.

◆ **Cane Quality and Processing**

- Questions were raised regarding cane quality assessment methods.
- Concerns over delays between harvesting and crushing.
- Delayed processing was viewed as negatively affecting cane quality and farmer returns.
- Concerns were also raised regarding the overall efficiency of mill operations.

◆ **Sugar Cane Growers Fund (SCGF)**

- Farmers reported limited accessibility to Growers Fund loans.

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|  |  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Loan application processes were considered difficult and restrictive.</li> <li>• Many farmers continue to seek financing from commercial institutions.</li> <li>• Concerns were raised regarding outstanding debts and financing constraints.</li> <li>• The Committee noted that many farmers hold substantial loans with the Fiji Development Bank at commercial interest rates.</li> </ul> <p>◆ <b>Land Lease Issues</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• High lease renewal premiums continue to place financial pressure on farmers.</li> <li>• Significant costs are associated with lease renewals.</li> <li>• Uncertainty surrounding long-term land tenure security remains a major concern.</li> <li>• Farmers suggested government assistance for lease renewal premiums and reforms to current lease arrangements.</li> </ul> <p>◆ <b>Sugar Industry Tribunal, SCGF and Industry Institutions</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Discussions highlighted the need to review the effectiveness and performance of the <b>Sugar Industry Tribunal</b>.</li> <li>• The future role and effectiveness of the <b>Sugar Cane Growers Fund</b> was also discussed.</li> <li>• Concerns were raised regarding the performance of the <b>Sugar Cane Growers Council</b> and overall industry governance arrangements.</li> <li>• Members discussed opportunities to streamline industry institutions and improve accountability and service delivery.</li> </ul> <p>◆ <b>Industry Transformation and Diversification</b></p> |  |
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|  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• The Committee emphasized the need for the industry to move beyond traditional sugar production.</li><li>• Potential opportunities identified included:<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>◦ Ethanol production;</li><li>◦ Sustainable Aviation Fuel (SAF);</li><li>◦ Bioenergy and cogeneration; and</li><li>◦ Other value-added agricultural products.</li></ul></li><li>• Growing international demand for renewable energy and alternative fuel products was highlighted.</li></ul> <p>◆ <b>Farm Size and Productivity</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Discussions noted that traditional small farming models may no longer be economically sustainable.</li><li>• Consideration should be given to larger consolidated farming operations to improve economies of scale and productivity.</li></ul> <p>◆ <b>Youth Participation</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Concerns were raised regarding the ageing farmer population.</li><li>• The need to attract younger and educated farmers into agriculture was emphasized.</li><li>• Long-term sustainability of the industry workforce remains a concern.</li></ul> |  |
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|  |  | <p><b>Recommendations</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ Urgently clear and rehabilitate the <b>Malamala River</b> and other affected waterways to improve drainage and reduce flooding impacts on cane farms.</li> <li>✓ Improve coordination between the <b>Ministry of Sugar</b> and <b>Ministry of Agriculture</b> to address farmer concerns more effectively.</li> <li>✓ Review harvesting capacity and strengthen support for mechanisation.</li> <li>✓ Strengthen FSC's responsiveness, communication and stakeholder engagement.</li> <li>✓ Reform the <b>Sugar Cane Growers Fund</b> to improve access to affordable financing for farmers.</li> <li>✓ Review land lease renewal policies and explore measures to reduce the financial burden on farmers.</li> <li>✓ Strengthen agricultural extension services through closer collaboration with the Ministry of Agriculture.</li> <li>✓ Establish programmes to attract and retain young farmers in the sugar industry.</li> <li>✓ Develop a long-term <b>Sugar Industry Transformation Strategy</b> focusing on ethanol, sustainable aviation fuel, renewable energy and value-added agricultural products.</li> <li>✓ Review the governance and effectiveness of industry institutions, including the <b>Sugar Industry Tribunal</b>, <b>Sugar Cane Growers Fund</b> and <b>Sugar Cane Growers Council</b>, to improve efficiency, accountability and service delivery.</li> <li>✓ Explore farm consolidation and commercial farming models to improve productivity and competitiveness.</li> </ul> |  |
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| <p><b>26 August 2026<br/>(Wednesday)</b></p> | <p>Briefing session with the Dept of Energy and Energy Fiji Limited</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✚ The Committee received a briefing from the Department of Energy (DoE) and Energy Fiji Limited (EFL) on the implementation of rural electrification projects in the Western Division.</li> <li>✚ Officials advised that approximately 50 rural electrification projects, valued at around \$6.4 million, are currently being implemented.</li> <li>✚ Discussions focused on the progress of ongoing projects and the status of projects still awaiting implementation.</li> <li>✚ It was highlighted that a number of projects remain pending due to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◆ Funding limitations;</li> <li>◆ Procurement delays;</li> <li>◆ Adverse weather conditions;</li> <li>◆ Escalating material costs;</li> <li>◆ Contractor capacity constraints; and</li> <li>◆ Difficult access to remote locations.</li> </ul> </li> <li>✚ Officials explained that the Department of Energy facilitates community applications, consultations, approvals and funding submissions, while EFL undertakes technical assessments, costing, procurement and project implementation.</li> <li>✚ Members raised concerns over prolonged delays in the delivery of rural electrification projects despite annual government budget allocations.</li> <li>✚ The need for greater transparency, improved monitoring and timely reporting on project implementation was discussed.</li> <li>✚ Members highlighted concerns raised by communities regarding lengthy waiting periods for electricity connections and project completion.</li> </ul> |  |
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|  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>✚ Discussions noted that delayed electrification continues to affect socio-economic development opportunities in rural communities.</li><li>✚ Concerns were raised regarding newly established residential subdivisions where homeowners had purchased land but were without electricity and water services.</li><li>✚ Members discussed the impact of inadequate infrastructure planning and the failure to adequately account for future electricity demand in residential developments.</li><li>✚ Concerns were expressed that utility requirements may not have been sufficiently considered during subdivision approval processes.</li><li>✚ Discussions highlighted the limited visibility available on project progress, completion rates and pending projects.</li><li>✚ Members noted the absence of readily available performance data and updates on delayed projects.</li><li>✚ Officials discussed the challenges posed by flooding and adverse weather conditions on project implementation timelines.</li><li>✚ Procurement and supply chain disruptions were identified as contributing factors to project delays.</li><li>✚ Rising costs of electrical materials, particularly copper and other components, were discussed as a significant challenge affecting project delivery.</li><li>✚ Concerns were raised regarding contractor availability, capacity limitations and scheduling difficulties.</li></ul> |  |
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|                                       |                                           | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✚ Members discussed the importance of improving coordination among the Department of Energy, EFL, contractors, local authorities and communities.</li> <li>✚ The Department of Energy briefed Members on the assessment of alternative energy solutions for remote communities.</li> <li>✚ Discussions included the use of solar home systems and other renewable energy options where grid extensions are not economically feasible.</li> <li>✚ Members acknowledged the importance of balancing accessibility, affordability and sustainability in rural electrification initiatives.</li> <li>✚ The Committee emphasized the need for stronger accountability mechanisms to ensure government investments result in timely service delivery and tangible community benefits.</li> <li>✚ Discussions concluded with concerns over the broader impacts of delays on economic development, housing construction and public confidence in government infrastructure planning and delivery.</li> </ul> |  |
| <b>26 August 2026<br/>(Wednesday)</b> | EFL Nagado Power Station,<br>Nagado, Nadi | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The Committee was informed that the <b>Nagado Hydropower Station is currently non-operational</b> due to insufficient water pressure required to drive the turbine.</li> <li>• Officials explained that increased water demand in the Western Division has significantly reduced the pressure available for electricity generation.</li> <li>• Discussions highlighted that water supplied to consumers has increased from approximately <b>80 megalitres to 96 megalitres per day</b>, resulting in insufficient pressure for hydropower generation.</li> </ul>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                   |  |

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|  |  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The Committee was advised that the station was originally designed to generate approximately <b>2 MW of renewable electricity</b> through water supplied via the Water Authority's transmission system.</li> <li>• Members discussed the loss of a potential renewable energy source due to the station's inability to operate at its intended capacity.</li> <li>• Officials informed the Committee that consultant studies and technical assessments have identified possible solutions to restore generation capacity.</li> <li>• Discussions focused on the need to increase the diameter of sections of the pipeline network to improve water flow and pressure.</li> <li>• Members were informed that inspections and cleaning of the existing pipeline system may be required to remove blockages affecting water movement and pressure.</li> <li>• Concerns were raised regarding the condition of the existing pipeline infrastructure and the possibility that sediment build-up or blockages may be contributing to operational challenges.</li> <li>• Discussions highlighted that the hydropower scheme relies on infrastructure managed by both <b>Energy Fiji Limited (EFL)</b> and the <b>Water Authority of Fiji (WAF)</b>.</li> <li>• Members discussed the importance of close collaboration and coordinated planning between EFL and WAF to address the challenges affecting the station.</li> <li>• The Committee discussed the broader role of hydropower in reducing dependence on diesel-generated electricity.</li> <li>• Discussions highlighted the contribution hydropower can make towards strengthening Fiji's renewable energy mix.</li> </ul> |  |
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|  |  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Members observed that while a generation capacity of <b>2 MW</b> may appear small nationally, it could supply electricity to a substantial number of households and strengthen energy security.</li> <li>• Discussions emphasized the importance of renewable energy projects in supporting climate resilience and reducing reliance on imported fossil fuels.</li> <li>• Officials and Members discussed examples of <b>multi-stage hydropower generation systems</b>, including the Monasavu hydropower scheme where water is reused through multiple stages before discharge.</li> <li>• The Committee considered the potential application of similar multi-stage hydropower concepts for future renewable energy developments.</li> <li>• Discussions included the potential for such approaches to be explored in proposed hydropower developments in <b>Namosi</b>.</li> <li>• Members highlighted the need for stakeholder engagement and public awareness in future hydropower developments, particularly where communities may have concerns regarding environmental impacts and water resource management.</li> </ul> |  |
|  |  | <p><b>Key Issues Identified</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Non-operational hydropower station due to inadequate water pressure.</li> <li>• Increasing water demand affecting electricity generation capacity.</li> <li>• Underutilisation of a renewable energy asset capable of generating approximately 2 MW of electricity.</li> <li>• Need for pipeline upgrades, inspections, and maintenance works.</li> <li>• Uncertainty regarding the condition of the existing pipeline network.</li> <li>• Need for stronger coordination between EFL and WAF.</li> </ul>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                    |  |

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|                                       |                                                                   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Importance of hydropower in supporting Fiji's renewable energy and energy security objectives.</li> <li>• Importance of public awareness and stakeholder engagement for future hydropower projects.</li> </ul>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                               |  |
| <b>26 August 2026<br/>(Wednesday)</b> | Assets Fiji Sites (AMEX, Tropik Woodchip & King's Jetty), Lautoka | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✚ Officials briefed the Committee on existing lease arrangements involving freight operators, fishing-related businesses, and a waterfront property reserved for a proposed shipbuilding facility.</li> <li>✚ Discussions highlighted that several strategically located government-owned properties remain underutilized despite their significant commercial potential.</li> <li>✚ The Committee noted that some vacant sites continue to be maintained pending future government decisions on development.</li> <li>✚ Discussions focused on the status of a major waterfront property reserved for a proposed shipbuilding facility which has yet to be developed.</li> <li>✚ Members discussed existing lease management practices and the effectiveness of current leasing arrangements.</li> <li>✚ Concerns were raised that certain long-term lease agreements may limit the Government's ability to redevelop strategic assets in response to changing economic priorities.</li> <li>✚ Discussions emphasized the importance of ensuring lease arrangements remain aligned with national development objectives.</li> <li>✚ The Committee examined subleasing arrangements and discussed whether existing agreements adequately protect government interests.</li> <li>✚ Concerns were raised regarding situations where lessees generate additional income through subleasing activities.</li> </ul> |  |

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|  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>✚ Members discussed the lack of mechanisms in some lease agreements for Government to share in the financial benefits generated through subleases.</li><li>✚ Discussions highlighted the need for stronger oversight and governance of subleasing arrangements.</li><li>✚ Members noted the considerable commercial value of waterfront and port-adjacent assets due to their proximity to maritime infrastructure.</li><li>✚ Discussions focused on opportunities to improve utilization of these assets to generate greater economic returns and employment opportunities.</li><li>✚ Concerns were expressed that some leased properties have not delivered the level of development and economic activity initially proposed by investors.</li><li>✚ The Committee discussed the risk of strategic government land being committed to developments that do not proceed as planned.</li><li>✚ Members highlighted the need for safeguards within lease agreements to enable Government intervention where development commitments are not fulfilled.</li><li>✚ Discussions emphasized the importance of conducting periodic reviews of lease compliance, development performance, and investment outcomes.</li><li>✚ The Committee acknowledged that private investment on government-owned land can contribute to employment creation, skills transfer, and economic activity.</li><li>✚ Members discussed the need to balance investment benefits with ensuring fair and sustainable returns from public assets.</li></ul> |  |
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|                               |                                                            | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Discussions highlighted the importance of effective monitoring of government-owned properties to ensure lease obligations are met and assets are properly maintained.</li> <li>The Committee discussed the need for regular asset reviews to identify redevelopment opportunities and maximize the value of state-owned properties.</li> <li>Members emphasized the importance of strong lease governance, strategic planning, and asset management to safeguard long-term government interests.</li> <li>Discussions concluded with the view that improved asset utilization, stronger lease oversight, and enhanced revenue generation strategies could increase the contribution of state-owned properties to national economic development</li> </ul>                                          |  |
| 26 August 2026<br>(Wednesday) | Sugar Cane Growers Fund Consultation, SCGF Centre, Lautoka | <p><b>Financial Performance &amp; Sustainability</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Sugar Cane Growers Fund (SCGF) provided an overview of its role in supporting sugarcane farmers through financial services, development assistance, and industry support programmes.</li> <li>The Committee discussed SCGF's strong financial position, with total assets exceeding <b>\$90 million</b> and a loan portfolio of approximately <b>\$39 million</b>.</li> <li>Members were informed that SCGF holds approximately <b>63% of lending to sugarcane growers</b>, making it a key financial institution within the sugar sector.</li> <li>Discussions highlighted that SCGF continues to record annual profits while maintaining concessional lending rates and providing subsidies and support services to farmers.</li> </ul> |  |

- The Committee discussed the significant reduction in non-performing loans from approximately **25% in 2018 to 6% in 2025**, demonstrating improved financial management and loan recovery performance.

#### Digital Transformation & Service Delivery

- SCGF briefed the Committee on its digital transformation initiatives aimed at improving accessibility and service delivery to farmers.
- Discussions covered the introduction of:
  - Online loan application services;
  - Core banking systems;
  - Mobile application services;
  - Electronic document management systems; and
  - Proposed chatbot and artificial intelligence-based customer support services.
- Members discussed how digital services have reduced processing times and minimized travel costs for farmers.
- The importance of expanding digital platforms to improve financial inclusion and accessibility for farmers nationwide was discussed.

#### Legislative Reform

- Discussions highlighted that the **Sugar Cane Growers Fund Act 1984** is outdated and no longer adequately reflects the current operating environment.
- SCGF informed the Committee that a review of the legislation is underway.
- Discussions focused on proposed legislative changes to:
  - Strengthen corporate governance;

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|  |  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Expand lending services beyond sugarcane farmers;</li> <li>○ Allow broader investment opportunities; and</li> <li>○ Introduce stronger regulatory oversight mechanisms.</li> </ul> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Members discussed the importance of modernising the legislative framework to improve institutional flexibility and long-term sustainability.</li> </ul>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                      |  |
|  |  | <b>Diversification &amp; Institutional Transformation</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• SCGF discussed plans to diversify beyond its traditional sugarcane-focused mandate.</li> <li>• Discussions covered proposals for SCGF to evolve into a broader agricultural financing institution.</li> <li>• Members were informed of plans to eventually establish a subsidiary financial institution capable of providing: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Savings products;</li> <li>○ Insurance services; and</li> <li>○ Expanded agricultural financing.</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Discussions highlighted that diversification is viewed as critical due to the gradual decline of the sugar industry.</li> </ul> |  |
|  |  | <b>Challenges Facing the Sugar Industry</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• SCGF identified several challenges affecting sugar production and industry sustainability.</li> <li>• Discussions included concerns relating to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Expiring agricultural leases;</li> </ul> </li> </ul>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                               |  |

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|  |  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Uncertainty surrounding lease renewals;</li> <li>○ Labour shortages for cane harvesting;</li> <li>○ Rising production and harvesting costs;</li> <li>○ Climate-related impacts on farming;</li> <li>○ An ageing farmer population;</li> <li>○ Limited information sharing among institutions; and</li> <li>○ Continued reliance on government support by some industry entities.</li> </ul> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Members discussed the impact of these challenges on farmer confidence, productivity and future investment in the sugar sector.</li> </ul>                                                                          |  |
|  |  | <b>Governance &amp; Coordination</b>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                             |  |
|  |  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Discussions highlighted governance concerns affecting the broader sugar industry.</li> <li>• SCGF raised concerns regarding: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Political interference;</li> <li>○ Institutional interference;</li> <li>○ Weak collaboration among industry entities; and</li> <li>○ Duplication of services.</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Members discussed the need for stronger accountability mechanisms and performance monitoring for boards and senior executives across industry institutions.</li> <li>• The importance of improving coordination and information sharing among sector stakeholders was emphasized.</li> </ul> |  |

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|  |  | <div>South Pacific Fertilizers Limited (SPFL)</div> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• The Committee was informed that SCGF holds a <b>90.6% shareholding</b> in South Pacific Fertilizers Limited (SPFL).</li><li>• Discussions focused on SPFL's efforts to diversify beyond traditional fertilizer production.</li><li>• Members discussed opportunities for SPFL to expand into new products, services and commercial activities.</li><li>• The need for innovation and commercial sustainability to reduce reliance on government assistance was highlighted.</li></ul> <div>Committee Observations</div> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Members acknowledged SCGF as one of the strongest-performing institutions within the sugar sector.</li><li>• Discussions recognized SCGF's prudent financial management, innovation and responsiveness to farmers' needs.</li><li>• The Committee discussed the importance of continued legislative reform, institutional diversification and improved governance arrangements to ensure long-term sustainability.</li><li>• Members noted that stronger coordination among sugar industry stakeholders will be critical in supporting future industry reforms and improving sector performance.</li><li>• The Committee noted its intention to seek further clarification through an oral submission, including engagement with the SCGF Board, as part of its review of the 2023-2024 Annual Reports.</li></ul> <div>Key Issues Identified</div> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Strong financial position of SCGF.</li></ul> |  |
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|                                       |                                                                       | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Successful reduction in non-performing loans.</li> <li>• Need to modernise the Sugar Cane Growers Fund Act 1984.</li> <li>• Digital transformation and improved service delivery to farmers.</li> <li>• Diversification beyond sugarcane lending.</li> <li>• Expiring leases and lease renewal uncertainties.</li> <li>• Labour shortages and rising production costs.</li> <li>• Climate-related impacts on sugarcane farming.</li> <li>• Governance and accountability concerns within the sugar sector.</li> <li>• Weak coordination and information sharing among industry agencies.</li> <li>• Diversification and sustainability of SPFL operations.</li> <li>• Long-term sustainability of the sugar industry and sector reform efforts.</li> </ul> |  |
| <b>26 August 2026<br/>(Wednesday)</b> | Sugar Cane Growers Council<br>Consultation, SCGC Building,<br>Lautoka | <div><b>Governance of the Sugar Cane Growers Fund</b></div> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The Council raised concerns regarding the governance structure of the Sugar Cane Growers Fund and the removal of grower representation from the Board following the 2015 legislative amendments.</li> <li>• It was argued that growers should be represented on the Board as the Fund was established from resources derived from growers.</li> <li>• Discussions highlighted that the absence of direct grower representation has affected stakeholder confidence, accountability, and transparency in decision-making.</li> </ul> <div><b>Performance of the Sugar Industry Tribunal</b></div>                                                                                               |  |

- The Council acknowledged the important role of the Sugar Industry Tribunal in administering the Master Award and resolving disputes between growers and the miller.
- Concerns were raised regarding delays in Tribunal hearings and rulings on industry matters.
- Stakeholders advised that decisions on important operational matters often remain unresolved for extended periods, creating uncertainty for growers.
- The Council confirmed that delays in Tribunal decisions are a frequent concern raised by sugarcane farmers.

#### Need for Legislative Reform

- Discussions highlighted that several pieces of sugar industry legislation are outdated and no longer reflect current industry conditions.
- Concerns were raised regarding the adequacy of:
  - The Sugar Industry Act;
  - The Sugar Cane Growers Fund legislation; and
  - The Master Award.
- Stakeholders emphasized the need to modernise legislation to address:
  - Mechanisation;
  - Harvesting practices;
  - Logistics;
  - Cane quality management; and
  - Mill efficiency issues.

### **Re-establishment of Industry Institutions**

- The Council advocated for the re-establishment of former industry institutions and coordination mechanisms.
- Discussions included the possible return of:
  - Sugar Commission of Fiji;
  - Mill Area Committees; and
  - Other consultative industry platforms.
- Stakeholders noted that these mechanisms previously enhanced communication, industry oversight, coordination, and dispute resolution.

### **Industry Governance, Accountability & Compliance**

- Members discussed concerns regarding weak governance and accountability across sugar sector institutions.
- It was noted that several institutions have not consistently met statutory obligations, including the timely submission and publication of annual reports.
- Discussions highlighted concerns regarding continued reliance on Government financial assistance without corresponding structural reforms.

### **Cane Quality Payment System**

- The Council discussed previous attempts to introduce a cane quality-based payment system.
- Stakeholders acknowledged that the concept had merit but was not successfully implemented due to concerns raised by both growers and the Fiji Sugar Corporation.

- Discussions highlighted the need for any future payment system to fairly account for:
  - Grower performance; and
  - Milling efficiency.

#### **Land Tenure & Lease Security**

- Stakeholders identified land lease uncertainty as one of the most significant challenges affecting the sugar industry.
- It was noted that uncertainty surrounding lease renewals discourages growers from making long-term investments in farm development and infrastructure.
- The Council proposed greater Government involvement through head lease and sub-lease arrangements to provide farmers with greater security.
- Discussions highlighted the importance of secure land tenure in improving productivity and encouraging investment.

#### **Cooperatives & Mechanisation**

- The Council reported positive outcomes from grower cooperatives established to address labour shortages and improve mechanisation.
- Members were informed that approximately **48 grower cooperatives** have been established.
- Discussions highlighted that cooperatives have enabled shared investment in harvesters and agricultural machinery.
- Stakeholders viewed cooperative farming and farm amalgamation as viable approaches to increasing productivity and economies of scale.

#### **Grower Debt & Financial Sustainability**

- The Council raised concerns regarding increasing grower indebtedness.
- Discussions highlighted that rising production costs have reduced growers' ability to service loans.
- Concerns were expressed regarding potential increases in:
  - Loan restructuring;
  - Loan arrears;
  - Loan defaults; and
  - Mortgagee sales.
- Stakeholders noted that these risks may worsen if industry profitability continues to decline.

#### **Relationship Between Growers & Fiji Sugar Corporation**

- Discussions highlighted differing perspectives between growers and the Fiji Sugar Corporation (FSC).
- Growers raised concerns regarding FSC management costs and executive remuneration.
- It was acknowledged that FSC continues to face challenges associated with:
  - Ageing mills;
  - Inconsistent cane supply; and
  - High operational costs.
- Both growers and FSC acknowledged the need for improved communication and collaborative problem-solving to address industry challenges.

#### **Key Issues Identified**

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|                               |                                                            | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Lack of grower representation on the Sugar Cane Growers Fund Board.</li> <li>• Delays in hearings and rulings by the Sugar Industry Tribunal.</li> <li>• Outdated sugar industry legislation and regulatory framework.</li> <li>• Absence of former industry coordination mechanisms.</li> <li>• Weak governance, accountability and statutory compliance across industry institutions.</li> <li>• Need to review and improve the cane quality payment system.</li> <li>• Land tenure insecurity and lease renewal uncertainty.</li> <li>• Labour shortages and the need for increased mechanisation.</li> <li>• Rising grower debt and declining repayment capacity.</li> <li>• Weak collaboration and trust between growers and FSC.</li> <li>• Long-term sustainability concerns across Fiji's sugar industry.</li> </ul> |  |
| 26 August 2026<br>(Wednesday) | Rural Electrification (LU02-13),<br>Abaca Village, Lautoka | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✚ Application from 2013</li> <li>✚ House wiring has been done since last year</li> <li>✚ The Committee noted that EFL has maximum of 7 rural electrification construction per year.</li> <li>✚ Contractors volume of work... Have other work for the Govt</li> <li>✚ Tendor for the contractor sometimes one contractor wins most of the tendor</li> <li>✚ 50 Projects total in Western- 5 at contracting stage</li> <li>✚ Workers are not properly paid by the contractor</li> <li>✚ Dept of Energy giving fund set target, KPIs</li> <li>✚ Timeframe with the contractor... Usually 6 months</li> </ul> <div>Project Progress and Current Status</div>                                                                                                                                                                       |  |

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|  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• The Committee conducted a site visit to Abaca Village to assess the progress of the rural electrification project and understand challenges affecting implementation.</li><li>• Discussions were held with representatives from Energy Fiji Limited (EFL), the Department of Energy (DoE), contractors, and community representatives.</li><li>• The Committee was informed that the project requires the installation of approximately <b>154 power poles</b>.</li><li>• Officials advised that <b>76 power poles had been erected</b> at the time of the visit.</li><li>• Members discussed the slow progress of the project and concerns regarding delays in connecting the village to electricity services.</li><li>• Officials advised that the project commenced in <b>May</b> and is currently targeted for completion in <b>October</b>, subject to no further disruptions.</li></ul> |  |
|  | <p><b>Causes of Project Delays</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Discussions identified delays in obtaining <b>landowner approvals</b> as a major challenge affecting implementation.</li><li>• Officials advised that additional approvals were required for <b>vegetation and tree clearing</b> along the transmission corridor.</li><li>• Material shortages and supply chain disruptions were discussed as key factors affecting project delivery.</li><li>• Members were informed that adverse weather conditions had slowed construction activities.</li><li>• Discussions highlighted contractor resource constraints and workforce limitations during implementation.</li></ul>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                 |  |

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|  |  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Officials advised that the contractor was simultaneously undertaking several government-funded projects, affecting the pace of works.</li> </ul>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                             |  |
|  |  | <b>Contractor Performance and Capacity</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Members discussed concerns regarding contractor capacity and the impact this has on project completion timeframes.</li> <li>• Officials noted that only a limited number of contractors are available to undertake rural electrification works nationally.</li> <li>• Discussions highlighted that a small number of contractors are often awarded multiple projects, creating resource constraints.</li> <li>• Members discussed how resource sharing across project sites contributes to implementation delays.</li> <li>• Concerns were raised regarding whether existing procurement and contract management arrangements adequately incentivise timely project completion.</li> <li>• Discussions highlighted concerns over projects extending beyond contractual timelines with limited consequences for delays.</li> <li>• Members discussed the need to explore alternative procurement or contracting arrangements to improve performance and accountability.</li> </ul> |  |
|  |  | <b>Rural Electrification Programme Challenges</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The Committee expressed concerns regarding the slow pace of rural electrification projects nationally.</li> <li>• Discussions highlighted growing dissatisfaction among rural communities waiting for access to electricity despite government funding commitments.</li> <li>• Members noted that public expectations are often created following budget announcements and project approvals.</li> </ul>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                   |  |

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|  |  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Discussions highlighted that prolonged delays are frequently perceived by communities as government inaction.</li> <li>• Members noted that delays negatively impact public confidence in government service delivery programmes.</li> <li>• The Committee was informed that approximately <b>50 rural electrification projects</b> remain within the programme backlog.</li> <li>• Discussions highlighted concerns that only a limited number of projects are completed annually.</li> <li>• Members noted that current implementation rates may result in lengthy delays before all approved communities receive electricity access.</li> </ul> |  |
|  |  | <b>Project Monitoring and Communication</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Members discussed the need for stronger project monitoring and oversight mechanisms.</li> <li>• Discussions highlighted the importance of clearer reporting and regular updates on project implementation.</li> <li>• The Committee noted that improved communication with communities would strengthen transparency and public understanding of project progress.</li> <li>• Members emphasized the importance of greater accountability among implementing agencies to ensure timely delivery of projects.</li> </ul>                                                                                |  |
|  |  | <b>Community Impact and Benefits</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Discussions highlighted that access to reliable electricity is critical for improving livelihoods in rural communities.</li> <li>• Members discussed the role of electricity access in supporting education opportunities and access to information.</li> </ul>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                               |  |

- The Committee noted the importance of rural electrification in supporting economic opportunities and broader community development.

#### **Community Participation and Sustainability**

- Discussions identified opportunities for greater community participation in supporting project sustainability.
- Members discussed involving village youth and community members in maintenance awareness programmes.
- Discussions highlighted the importance of electrical safety awareness programmes within communities.
- Members noted that community involvement could strengthen local ownership of infrastructure and contribute to the long-term sustainability of electrification investments.

#### **Key Issues Identified**

- Delays in the completion of the Abaca Village Rural Electrification Project.
- Landowner and vegetation-clearing approval processes causing implementation delays.
- Material shortages and supply chain disruptions.
- Adverse weather impacts on project timelines.
- Contractor workforce and capacity constraints.
- Limited number of contractors undertaking multiple projects.
- Weaknesses in procurement and contractor performance management arrangements.
- Significant backlog of rural electrification projects.

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|                                      |                                                                             | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Need for stronger monitoring, reporting, and accountability mechanisms.</li> <li>• Community frustration arising from prolonged delays in receiving electricity services.</li> <li>• Importance of electricity access for education, livelihoods, economic development, and community wellbeing.</li> <li>• Need for greater stakeholder coordination and community participation.</li> </ul>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                              |  |
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| <b>27 August 2026<br/>(Thursday)</b> | Cane Growers Consultation Meeting, Sugar Cane Growers Council Hall, Lautoka | <b>Labour Shortages and Aging Farmers</b>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                           |  |
|                                      |                                                                             | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Farmers highlighted the ongoing shortage of labour within the sugar industry, which continues to affect harvesting operations and farm productivity.</li> <li>• Concerns were raised that significant areas of standing cane remain unharvested due to the unavailability of labour.</li> <li>• Elderly farmers indicated difficulties in maintaining their farms and undertaking harvesting activities due to age-related limitations.</li> <li>• Rising harvesting and transportation costs were identified as additional challenges affecting farmers' profitability.</li> <li>• Farmers noted a decline in family participation in sugarcane farming, contributing to labour constraints across the sector.</li> </ul> |  |
|                                      |                                                                             | <b>Cane Payment Arrangements</b>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                    |  |
|                                      |                                                                             | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Farmers expressed concerns regarding the current cane payment system, whereby payments are received in several instalments over an extended period.</li> </ul>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                             |  |

- It was noted that delays in receiving full payment create cash flow difficulties and affect farmers' ability to meet operational and household expenses.
- Participants suggested that alternative financing mechanisms be explored to enable farmers to receive a larger proportion of payment upon cane delivery.

#### **Financial Management of the Fiji Sugar Corporation**

- Farmers raised concerns regarding the financial sustainability and operational performance of the Fiji Sugar Corporation (FSC).
- Discussions focused on FSC's reliance on Government support, debt levels within the industry, and the need for greater transparency in financial management.
- Farmers emphasized the importance of ensuring that industry revenues and subsidies are managed efficiently to maximise returns to growers.

#### **Sugar Cane Growers Fund**

- Questions were raised regarding the effectiveness of programmes and services provided by the Sugar Cane Growers Fund (SCGF).
- Participants discussed the need to assess whether SCGF continues to effectively fulfil its grower-support mandate.
- Concerns were also expressed regarding the effectiveness of loan and insurance programmes and the level of farmer representation in decision-making processes.

#### **Industry Governance and Farmer Representation**

- Farmers emphasized that growers remain the foundation of Fiji's sugar industry and should be at the centre of all industry reforms.
- Participants called for greater consultation with farmers when implementing policy changes, institutional reforms, and industry initiatives.

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|  |  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>It was noted that the sustainability of industry institutions ultimately depends on the profitability and wellbeing of sugarcane farmers.</li> </ul>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                               |  |
|  |  | <b>Review of the Master Award</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Stakeholders discussed the need to review and modernise the existing Master Award to better reflect current industry conditions.</li> <li>Concerns were raised that certain provisions are outdated and no longer align with present-day production realities and operational challenges.</li> <li>Farmers supported reforms aimed at improving industry efficiency, competitiveness, and payment arrangements.</li> </ul>                                                                                                                       |  |
|  |  | <b>Sugar Industry Tribunal Related Discussions</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Farmers expressed concerns regarding the adequacy of current industry arrangements governing cane payments.</li> <li>Discussions highlighted the need to reassess existing payment mechanisms to better support growers.</li> <li>Stakeholders advocated for reforms that would improve payment efficiency and reduce financial hardship experienced by farmers.</li> <li>Participants raised concerns regarding industry governance arrangements and the need for greater consultation on reforms affecting growers</li> </ul> |  |
|  |  | <b>General Observations</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Farmers reiterated the need for reforms that prioritise grower welfare, profitability, and long-term industry sustainability.</li> <li>Strong support was expressed for enhanced transparency, accountability, and farmer participation in industry decision-making processes.</li> </ul>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                              |  |

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|                                      |                                                                               | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Participants advocated for policy and legislative reforms that would strengthen the viability and resilience of the sugar industry.</li> </ul>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                       |  |
| <b>27 August 2026<br/>(Thursday)</b> | Joint Meeting with SRIF, FSC & SPFL, FSC Training Room, Lautoka Mill Compound | <p><b>South Pacific Fertilizers Limited (SPFL)</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Concerns were raised regarding the governance structure of SPFL, particularly in relation to instances where management was allegedly approached directly by shareholders instead of through the Board of Directors.</li> <li>It was emphasised that management should remain accountable to the Board and that shareholder involvement in operational matters should be exercised through appropriate governance channels.</li> <li>Concerns were expressed that direct interference in management decisions could undermine accountability, create operational inefficiencies, and affect organisational performance.</li> <li>Discussions focused on the need for stronger corporate governance practices and clearly defined reporting structures within SPFL.</li> <li>Stakeholders highlighted the importance of maintaining an independent and effective Board to provide oversight and strategic direction.</li> <li>The Committee discussed the possibility of improving coordination among sugar industry institutions through shared governance arrangements or a more integrated management framework.</li> <li>Government fertilizer subsidy programmes were discussed, with stakeholders acknowledging the significant role such subsidies have played in supporting cane farmers and sustaining production.</li> <li>It was noted that substantial Government investment has been directed towards fertilizer assistance programmes over the years.</li> </ul> |  |

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|  |  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Concerns were raised regarding whether fertilizer utilisation is being adequately monitored to ensure maximum returns on Government-funded assistance.</li> <li>Discussions highlighted the importance of linking fertilizer assistance and grower financing to productivity outcomes and measurable performance indicators.</li> <li>Suggestions were made for soil testing and farm assessments to be undertaken before fertilizer and financial assistance are approved.</li> </ul>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                 |  |
|  |  | <b>Sugar Research Institute of Fiji (SRIF)</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Discussions focused on the need to strengthen research and development programmes aimed at improving sugarcane productivity and sustainability.</li> <li>Stakeholders highlighted the importance of developing and promoting improved cane varieties capable of increasing yields and resilience.</li> <li>Concerns were raised that some farming practices currently adopted by growers are outdated and require modernisation.</li> <li>Participants stressed the need for greater adoption of technology, mechanisation and precision agriculture within the sugar industry.</li> <li>It was noted that research findings should be translated into practical solutions that can be readily adopted by farmers.</li> <li>Discussions emphasised the importance of aligning research priorities with the needs and challenges faced by growers.</li> <li>There were calls for enhanced extension services to ensure that research outcomes are effectively communicated and implemented at the farm level.</li> </ul> |  |

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|  |  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Stakeholders discussed the importance of monitoring the impact of research programmes through measurable improvements in cane yields, farm productivity and profitability.</li> <li>• Considerable discussion centred on farm size and economic viability, with stakeholders noting that low-production farms often face significant challenges in generating sustainable income.</li> <li>• It was highlighted that a substantial proportion of growers produce relatively small volumes of cane, raising concerns regarding long-term economic viability.</li> <li>• Discussions focused on the need to establish productivity benchmarks and identify economically sustainable production levels for growers.</li> <li>• Participants highlighted the importance of evidence-based policies and research-driven decision-making in supporting the future development of the industry.</li> </ul> |  |
|  |  | <b>Fiji Sugar Corporation (FSC)</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Concerns were raised regarding the financial sustainability and operational performance of the Fiji Sugar Corporation.</li> <li>• Discussions focused on FSC's continued reliance on Government support and the broader implications for the future viability of the sugar industry.</li> <li>• Stakeholders raised concerns regarding operational efficiencies within the Corporation and the need to improve performance outcomes.</li> <li>• Participants discussed the importance of transparency and accountability in the utilisation of industry revenues, Government grants and other financial support mechanisms.</li> <li>• Concerns were expressed regarding industry debt levels and their impact on the long-term sustainability of the sector.</li> </ul>                                                                                        |  |

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|  |  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Discussions highlighted the need for improved coordination between FSC and other sugar industry institutions.</li> <li>• Stakeholders noted that growers remain the primary stakeholders within the industry and that FSC's operations should ultimately contribute towards improved farmer profitability.</li> <li>• The relationship between grower productivity and FSC's operational performance was discussed extensively.</li> <li>• Participants emphasised the need to improve cane supply reliability and strengthen collaboration between growers and FSC.</li> <li>• Discussions also focused on opportunities for diversification and value-adding initiatives within the sugar industry.</li> <li>• Stakeholders highlighted the importance of exploring emerging opportunities such as ethanol production, renewable energy initiatives and other by-products of the sugar industry.</li> <li>• The Committee sought views on the future structure of the sugar industry and the role FSC should play in supporting industry transformation.</li> </ul> |  |
|  |  | <b>Sugar Industry Institutional Framework</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Discussions were held on the effectiveness and relevance of existing sugar industry institutions and their respective mandates.</li> <li>• Participants highlighted the need for greater collaboration and coordination among institutions to reduce duplication and improve service delivery.</li> <li>• Views were sought regarding whether sugar sector functions should remain under a dedicated Ministry or be integrated into the Ministry of Agriculture.</li> <li>• Stakeholders discussed the advantages and disadvantages of both models and their potential impact on industry administration.</li> </ul>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                    |  |

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|                                      |                                                                                                        | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Concerns were raised regarding the effectiveness of the Sugar Industry Tribunal in resolving disputes and carrying out its legislative functions.</li> <li>Questions were raised regarding the current role of the Sugar Cane Growers Fund and whether its activities continue to align with its original mandate.</li> <li>Participants highlighted the importance of ensuring that industry institutions remain focused on supporting growers and improving sector performance.</li> <li>Stakeholders broadly supported reforms aimed at strengthening governance, improving accountability, enhancing productivity and ensuring the long-term sustainability of Fiji's sugar industry.</li> </ul>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                    |  |
| <b>27 August 2026<br/>(Thursday)</b> | Sugar Industry Tribunal<br>Consultation, Sugar House, Cnr<br>Walu Street & Waterfront Road,<br>Lautoka | <p><b>Discussion</b></p> <p>The Committee met with representatives of the Sugar Industry Tribunal (SIT) and received a comprehensive briefing on the Tribunal's statutory functions, operational performance, financial position, and challenges affecting its ability to effectively discharge its mandate under the Sugar Industry Act 1984.</p> <p><b>Tribunal Mandate and Functions</b></p> <p>The Tribunal informed the Committee that it is a statutory body established under the Sugar Industry Act 1984 and is responsible for maintaining orderly industrial relations within the sugar industry. Its key functions include dispute resolution, grower registration and transfer processes, industry compliance oversight, and the administration of matters governed under the Master Award. The Tribunal continues to serve as an independent regulatory and adjudicative body for growers and other stakeholders within the sugar industry.</p> <p><b>Financial Challenges</b></p> <p>The Tribunal advised that persistent reductions in approved budget allocations continue to adversely affect its operations and financial sustainability. Committee members were informed that annual budget submissions have consistently exceeded the approved allocations received from Government. For the 2025-2026 financial year,</p> |  |

the Tribunal requested \$650,000 but received only \$391,300. For the current financial year, a budget request of \$670,000 was submitted, however only \$160,000 was approved.

The Tribunal further highlighted its financial position for 2021, noting that it received a Government grant of \$364,553 and generated additional income of \$4,850, resulting in total income of \$369,403. Total expenditure for the year amounted to \$396,053, resulting in an operating deficit of \$26,650. The Tribunal expressed concern that its financial position has continued to deteriorate and indicated that urgent funding assistance would be required to ensure the continuation of its operations.

#### **Administrative and Operational Constraints**

The Tribunal informed the Committee that chronic underfunding continues to limit its ability to fulfil its statutory obligations and maintain effective service delivery. Budget reductions have affected operational activities, staffing requirements, and administrative functions.

The Committee was advised that existing staffing levels and administrative capacity are insufficient to adequately manage the Tribunal's increasing workload and responsibilities. These limitations have affected the timely processing of grower registrations, transfer applications, amendments, and other regulatory functions undertaken by the Tribunal.

The Tribunal also raised concerns regarding information management within the sugar industry. It was noted that the current system of data management remains fragmented across various organisations, resulting in duplication of information, inefficiencies, and operational challenges. Stakeholders emphasised the need for a centralised and integrated information management system that would enable relevant institutions to access and share information efficiently.

#### **Institutional Relationship with the Ministry**

The Tribunal raised concerns regarding its institutional relationship with the Ministry responsible for sugar affairs. It was noted that the Tribunal has experienced difficulties

in securing adequate engagement during budget consultations and policy discussions. The Tribunal further advised that challenges remain in obtaining ministerial support and timely consideration of funding requests, which has contributed to ongoing operational constraints.

#### **Legislative and Governance Issues**

The Tribunal expressed concern that successive amendments and institutional changes have weakened the effectiveness of the Sugar Industry Act 1984. It was submitted that the current legislative framework is no longer operating as originally intended and that certain provisions have either been amended or removed, creating gaps within the regulatory framework. The Tribunal therefore advocated for a comprehensive review of the legislation to restore clarity, effectiveness, and coherence across the industry.

The Committee was also informed that broader discussions on sugar industry reforms are currently underway, including stakeholder consultations aimed at developing a long-term strategy for the sector.

#### **Audit and Accountability**

The Tribunal informed the Committee that the Auditor-General had issued an Unqualified Audit Opinion on the Tribunal's 2021 financial statements. The audit confirmed that the financial statements fairly presented the Tribunal's financial position, adequate financial records had been maintained, sufficient information and assistance had been provided during the audit process, and compliance with the Sugar Industry Act 1984 had been achieved in all material respects. The Committee noted that these findings demonstrated sound financial governance and accountability despite the financial and operational challenges facing the Tribunal.

#### **Industry-Wide Concerns**

The Committee and Tribunal discussed broader challenges affecting Fiji's sugar industry. These included declining industry performance, delays in payments to farmers, reduced grower participation, the need to modernise regulatory and administrative systems, and the importance of developing a coordinated national

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|                                             |                                                                                                                                                   | <p>strategy to support industry recovery and long-term sustainability. The Committee further acknowledged ongoing work arising from the FAO review, which may assist in informing future policy reforms and recommendations for the sector.</p> <p><b>Committee Observations</b></p> <p>In concluding discussions, the Committee acknowledged the important regulatory and dispute resolution role performed by the Sugar Industry Tribunal. The Committee noted, however, that the Tribunal's effectiveness continues to be undermined by inadequate and unsustainable funding, staffing shortages, administrative limitations, and legislative shortcomings. The Committee further noted that many of the concerns raised by the Tribunal, particularly relating to funding and institutional support, have remained unresolved despite being consistently highlighted over several years. The Committee emphasised the importance of legislative reform, strengthened institutional collaboration, sustainable funding arrangements, improved administrative support, and integrated information management systems to enhance the Tribunal's effectiveness and support the long-term viability of Fiji's sugar industry.</p> |  |
| <p><b>27 August 2026<br/>(Thursday)</b></p> | <p>Ministry of Sugar Industry<br/>Consultation, Ministry of Sugar<br/>Industry Boardroom, Level 1,<br/>Sugar House, Marine Drive,<br/>Lautoka</p> | <p><b>Discussion Points</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The Ministry provided an overview of its roles and responsibilities in supporting, coordinating and monitoring the development of Fiji's sugar industry.</li> <li>• The Committee sought clarification on the Ministry's delayed Annual Reports and queried the reasons for the backlog in statutory reporting requirements.</li> <li>• Ministry officials acknowledged the reporting delays and advised that staffing limitations and capacity constraints within the Ministry had contributed to the backlog.</li> <li>• Discussions focused on measures being undertaken by the Ministry to address outstanding reports and improve compliance with reporting obligations.</li> </ul>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                |  |

- The Committee emphasised the importance of timely annual reporting to strengthen transparency, accountability and parliamentary oversight.

#### Industry Performance and Sustainability

- The Ministry highlighted the current state of the sugar industry and outlined key challenges affecting its sustainability and long-term viability.
- Discussions centred on the declining performance of the industry and the need for reforms to improve productivity, efficiency and profitability.
- Officials acknowledged that the industry continues to rely significantly on Government support and assistance programmes.
- The Committee sought the Ministry's views on the long-term sustainability of the industry and strategies being considered to address ongoing challenges.
- Discussions highlighted the need to focus on improving farm productivity, cane quality and operational efficiency throughout the industry.

#### Cane Quality Payment System (CQPS)

- Significant discussions were held on the proposed Cane Quality Payment System and its potential impact on cane growers and industry performance.
- Ministry officials advised that the current payment arrangement largely rewards cane quantity rather than cane quality.
- It was explained that the proposed CQPS aims to provide incentives for growers to improve cane quality and sugar recovery rates.
- Discussions focused on the relationship between cane quality and mill efficiency, noting that poor-quality cane affects sugar extraction and production outcomes.
- The Ministry outlined preliminary work being undertaken towards implementing the proposed payment system.

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|  |  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Committee Members sought clarification on implementation arrangements and the potential implications for cane growers.</li> <li>• Discussions highlighted the need for extensive awareness programmes and stakeholder consultations prior to introducing any new payment mechanism.</li> </ul>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                 |  |
|  |  | <b>Cane Quality and Farm Management Practices</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Officials identified poor farming practices as a major contributor to declining cane quality and reduced productivity.</li> <li>• Discussions focused on issues such as delayed harvesting, excessive weed infestation, poor field maintenance and inadequate ratoon management.</li> <li>• The Ministry highlighted the importance of adopting good agricultural practices to improve cane quality and maximise yields.</li> <li>• Concerns were raised regarding the continued use of farming methods that adversely affect cane production and sugar recovery.</li> <li>• Officials advised that considerable productivity gains could be achieved through improved farm management practices.</li> </ul> |  |
|  |  | <b>Sugarcane Varieties</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Discussions focused on the performance of different sugarcane varieties currently being cultivated throughout Fiji.</li> <li>• Ministry officials advised that some growers continue to utilise varieties that are climate resilient but do not necessarily provide optimal sugar recovery and productivity outcomes.</li> <li>• The Ministry encouraged the adoption of recommended cane varieties based on growing conditions and production requirements.</li> <li>• Officials highlighted the importance of balancing climate resilience with productivity and sugar yield considerations.</li> </ul>                                                                                                                           |  |

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|  |  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Discussions also focused on increasing farmer awareness regarding the benefits of improved cane varieties.</li> </ul>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                         |  |
|  |  | <b>Productivity Levels</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The Committee discussed the current productivity performance of the sugar industry and factors limiting production growth.</li> <li>Ministry officials noted that productivity levels vary significantly among growers.</li> <li>It was highlighted that while some farmers achieve high production levels, national averages remain comparatively low.</li> <li>Discussions focused on identifying strategies to increase production and improve grower profitability.</li> <li>The Ministry advised that improved farm management and better utilisation of available technologies could significantly enhance productivity outcomes.</li> </ul> |  |
|  |  | <b>Ratoon Management and Replanting</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Officials identified poor ratoon management as a major issue affecting cane yields.</li> <li>Discussions centred on the need for timely crop renewal and replanting programmes.</li> <li>The Ministry highlighted the importance of maintaining healthy ratoon crops and avoiding prolonged use of ageing cane stools.</li> <li>Committee Members were informed that timely replanting contributes significantly to improved productivity and farm performance.</li> <li>Discussions also covered improved field management techniques and better crop husbandry practices.</li> </ul>                                                |  |

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|  |  | <p><b>Soil Health and Fertility Management</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The Ministry discussed challenges associated with declining soil fertility within cane-growing areas.</li> <li>• Concerns were raised regarding increasing soil acidity and the long-term impacts on agricultural productivity.</li> <li>• Officials highlighted the risks associated with excessive dependence on chemical fertilizers.</li> <li>• Discussions focused on the importance of regular soil testing to guide fertilizer application and nutrient management practices.</li> <li>• The Ministry advocated for improved soil conservation measures and sustainable farming practices.</li> <li>• The benefits of crop rotation, intercropping and legume cultivation were discussed as methods of improving soil quality and productivity.</li> </ul> <p><b>Mechanisation and Labour Challenges</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Discussions highlighted labour shortages as one of the major challenges affecting the sugar industry.</li> <li>• The Ministry advised that the availability of harvesting labour has continued to decline in many cane-growing areas.</li> <li>• Committee Members discussed opportunities to increase mechanisation throughout the industry.</li> <li>• Officials explained that mechanisation opportunities are limited in certain areas due to terrain and farm layout constraints.</li> <li>• Discussions focused on balancing increased mechanisation with the practical realities of Fiji's cane-growing landscape.</li> </ul> |  |
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- The Ministry emphasised the importance of strategic planning to support greater mechanisation where feasible.

#### **Farm Size and Economic Viability**

- Discussions focused on the economic viability of current farming operations.
- Ministry officials highlighted concerns regarding the large number of small-scale growers operating below commercially sustainable production levels.
- The Committee discussed the relationship between farm size, production capacity and profitability.
- Officials shared views on the potential benefits of larger commercial farming operations.
- Discussions also considered options for improving economies of scale and increasing production efficiency.

#### **Farm Consolidation**

- The Ministry discussed farm consolidation as a possible strategy for improving industry productivity and sustainability.
- Officials noted that larger farm operations would be more conducive to mechanisation and efficient resource utilisation.
- Discussions centred on the advantages and challenges associated with farm consolidation.
- Committee Members sought views on how consolidation could be implemented while protecting the interests of existing growers.

#### **Land Tenure Issues**

- Significant discussion focused on land tenure challenges affecting the sugar industry.

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|  |  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Concerns were raised regarding lease uncertainties and their impact on investment decisions and long-term farm planning.</li> <li>The Ministry advised that tenure security remains an important factor in maintaining grower confidence.</li> <li>Discussions focused on the implications of fragmented landholdings and the resulting productivity challenges.</li> <li>Officials highlighted the importance of providing certainty for both landowners and tenant farmers.</li> </ul>                                                                       |  |
|  |  | <b>Government Assistance and Industry Support</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The Ministry outlined various Government assistance programmes available to support growers and industry stakeholders.</li> <li>Discussions focused on the administration and effectiveness of grants and other assistance initiatives.</li> <li>Committee Members sought clarification on monitoring processes used to ensure accountability in the utilisation of public funds.</li> <li>Officials advised that mechanisms are in place to monitor and evaluate funded projects and programmes.</li> </ul> |  |
|  |  | <b>Economic Contribution of the Sugar Industry</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The Ministry highlighted the importance of the sugar industry to Fiji's economy and rural communities.</li> <li>Discussions focused on the industry's contribution to employment, livelihoods and export earnings.</li> <li>Officials noted the continued significance of the sector despite ongoing structural and operational challenges.</li> </ul>                                                                                                                                                      |  |

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|                                      |                                                        | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The Committee acknowledged the industry's historical and economic importance to Fiji.</li> </ul> <p><b>Future Direction of the Industry</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Discussions centred on the future structure and direction of Fiji's sugar industry.</li> <li>Ministry officials highlighted the need for institutional, operational and policy reforms.</li> <li>The Committee discussed opportunities to improve competitiveness, productivity and overall industry performance.</li> <li>Emphasis was placed on ensuring that future reforms support grower profitability and long-term sustainability.</li> <li>Both the Committee and Ministry officials recognised the need for evidence-based decision-making to guide future industry development and transformation.</li> </ul>                   |  |
| <b>27 August 2026<br/>(Thursday)</b> | Rural Electrification, Navuso Settlement, Sabeto, Nadi | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The Committee was briefed on the Navuso Rural Electrification Project, which is being implemented by Energy Fiji Limited (EFL) in partnership with the Rural Electrification Unit under the Ministry of Energy.</li> <li>EFL advised that the project is being delivered through a contracted service provider and involves the installation of approximately 38 power poles to provide electricity access to households within the Navuso area.</li> <li>Officials informed the Committee that construction activities, including pole installation and vegetation clearing, were currently underway.</li> <li>EFL indicated that the project is expected to benefit approximately 10 to 12 households and is targeted for completion by December 2026, subject to weather conditions and other operational factors.</li> </ul> |  |

### **Project Delays and Implementation Challenges**

- Significant discussion focused on the lengthy delay between the project's initial approval and the commencement of implementation activities.
- Community members advised that they had been awaiting electricity access for several years despite approvals and funding arrangements having been secured.
- It was noted that the original quotation for the project was reportedly issued in 2018.
- Discussions revealed that Government funding had subsequently been approved through the Department of Energy; however, implementation did not proceed immediately after funding was secured.
- Committee Members expressed concern that lengthy implementation delays undermine public confidence in rural electrification programmes and affect the intended benefits of Government investments.

### **Roles, Responsibilities and Accountability**

- The Committee sought clarification regarding the respective responsibilities of Parliament, the Department of Energy, EFL and contractors in the delivery of rural electrification projects.
- Discussions noted that Parliament approves budget allocations for rural electrification projects, while funding is administered through the Department of Energy.
- EFL advised that it is responsible for the delivery of electrification infrastructure and connection works following the release of funding.
- Committee Members emphasised that once funding has been approved and released, responsibility rests with the implementing agencies and contractors to ensure timely project delivery.

#### **Availability of Project Information**

- The Committee expressed concerns regarding the inability of project representatives to provide complete details relating to project implementation.
- Members sought information on funding approval dates, fund disbursement dates, project commencement timelines and historical project records.
- Discussions highlighted the importance of officers attending parliamentary inspections being adequately briefed and equipped with project-specific information.
- Concerns were raised regarding the availability of records relating to contractor performance and implementation progress.

#### **Electricity Access and Community Impact**

- Community members informed the Committee that some households had lived in the area for decades without access to electricity services.
- Discussions highlighted the importance of electricity as an essential service for rural communities.
- Residents advised that many households continue to rely on solar systems and alternative energy sources to meet basic household needs.
- Members discussed the impact of lacking reliable electricity on education, communication, access to information, household productivity and overall quality of life.
- Community members highlighted the difficulties experienced during emergencies and major national events when reliable electricity services were unavailable.

#### **Factors Contributing to Delays**

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|  |  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• EFL and Ministry officials outlined a number of factors that have contributed to implementation delays in rural electrification projects.</li> <li>• Discussions identified delays in funding approvals under previous funding arrangements as one contributing factor.</li> <li>• Officials advised that quotations may expire before works commence, resulting in the need for revised cost assessments and procurement processes.</li> <li>• Increased construction and material costs over time were also identified as factors affecting project implementation.</li> <li>• Discussions noted challenges relating to landowner consent for pole installations and access approvals.</li> <li>• Vegetation clearing requirements and site access constraints were identified as additional implementation challenges.</li> <li>• Officials further noted that contractor scheduling, workforce availability and adverse weather conditions can significantly affect implementation timelines.</li> <li>• While acknowledging these challenges, the Committee stressed the importance of proactive planning and stronger project management practices.</li> </ul> |  |
|  |  | <b>Contractor Performance and Monitoring</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Committee Members questioned the capacity of contractors to complete approved rural electrification projects within expected timeframes.</li> <li>• Discussions focused on the need for improved monitoring of contractor performance throughout project implementation.</li> <li>• Members highlighted the importance of establishing clear project milestones and reporting requirements.</li> <li>• Concerns were raised regarding accountability mechanisms where contractors fail to meet agreed timelines.</li> </ul>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                             |  |

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|                                    |                                                  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The Committee emphasised that contract management arrangements should ensure timely completion of approved projects.</li> </ul> <p><b>Community Trust and Communication</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Residents expressed frustration regarding prolonged waiting periods and uncertainty surrounding project completion.</li> <li>Discussions highlighted the impact of delayed service delivery on public confidence in Government programmes and implementing agencies.</li> <li>Community members emphasised the importance of regular updates and communication regarding project progress and expected completion dates.</li> <li>EFL reaffirmed its commitment during the meeting that the project would be completed and commissioned by December 2026.</li> <li>The Committee stressed the importance of transparency, accountability and effective coordination among all stakeholders involved in the delivery of rural electrification projects.</li> </ul> |  |
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| <b>28 August 2026<br/>(Friday)</b> | Rural Electrification (BA03-19),<br>Tabataba, Ba | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Community representatives advised that rural electrification surveys were conducted as early as 2014; however, several approved projects remain incomplete despite numerous assessments and site visits over the years.</li> <li>Residents expressed concerns regarding the lengthy delays in the implementation of rural electrification projects and the absence of visible progress despite previous commitments made to communities.</li> <li>Discussions revealed that, in some areas, house wiring had already been completed while electricity poles had not been installed, preventing households from being connected to the electricity grid.</li> </ul>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                       |  |

- Community members further noted that there were instances where poles had been erected; however, households remained without electricity connections.
- Residents highlighted that several beneficiaries continue to wait for electricity despite projects having received approvals and partial implementation.
- Concerns were raised regarding the prolonged timeframe between project approval and project completion, with some communities reportedly waiting for many years to receive the intended benefits.

#### **Coordination Between the Department of Energy and EFL**

- Committee Members discussed apparent gaps in coordination between the Department of Energy and Energy Fiji Limited (EFL) regarding the implementation and monitoring of rural electrification projects.
- Concerns were raised regarding the availability and accessibility of project information, particularly relating to project status, implementation timelines, and completion progress.
- It was noted during discussions that the Department appeared to have limited access to project records, while implementation information was primarily maintained by EFL.
- Committee Members questioned whether existing monitoring and reporting arrangements were sufficient to ensure effective oversight of approved projects.
- Discussions highlighted the importance of strengthening communication, reporting mechanisms and project tracking systems between agencies involved in project delivery.

#### **Contractor Performance and Project Delivery**

- Significant discussions focused on the performance of contractors engaged to undertake rural electrification works.

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|  |  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Concerns were raised regarding projects that remained partially completed despite funding having been allocated and implementation activities commencing.</li><li>• Community representatives questioned the capacity of contractors to complete projects within expected timeframes.</li><li>• Discussions focused on contractor resources, including workforce availability, equipment and machinery required to deliver projects efficiently.</li><li>• Committee Members sought clarification regarding procurement processes and the criteria used in awarding rural electrification contracts.</li><li>• The Committee also discussed the need for improved monitoring of contractor performance and stronger accountability mechanisms where project delays occur.</li></ul>                                                                                                                                                             |  |
|  |  | <b>Water Supply Challenges</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Community members raised concerns regarding ongoing water supply challenges experienced within Tabataba and nearby communities.</li><li>• Residents highlighted the difficulties faced in accessing reliable supplies of clean and treated drinking water.</li><li>• Discussions noted the apparent contradiction of surrounding communities facing water shortages despite their proximity to major water infrastructure, including the Ba Water Treatment Plant.</li><li>• Community representatives expressed concerns that areas contributing to the broader water supply network continue to experience inadequate access to treated water services.</li><li>• Residents indicated a willingness to support implementation efforts by assisting with non-technical works, such as pipe-laying activities, if the relevant authorities could provide the required materials and technical support.</li></ul> |  |

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|  |  | <div> <h3>Community Concerns and Feedback</h3> </div> <div> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Residents expressed disappointment that similar concerns regarding electricity and water supply projects have been raised with various Government representatives over a number of years without satisfactory resolution.</li> <li>• Discussions highlighted growing frustration among community members regarding delays in service delivery and the lack of updates on project progress.</li> <li>• Community leaders emphasised the need for Government agencies to prioritise the completion of existing and partially implemented projects before approving or commencing new projects.</li> <li>• It was noted that several outstanding works appear to involve relatively minor extensions or completion activities that could significantly improve living standards for affected residents.</li> </ul> <div> <h3>Response from Officials</h3> </div> <div> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Representatives from the Department of Energy acknowledged the need for greater involvement in the monitoring and oversight of rural electrification projects implemented through EFL.</li> <li>• Officials acknowledged shortcomings in access to project information and records and recognised the need for improved reporting arrangements.</li> <li>• Discussions highlighted the importance of strengthening contractor oversight and ensuring projects are completed within agreed timelines.</li> <li>• Officials advised that certain project delays may be attributed to accessibility challenges, contractor-related limitations and broader project management issues.</li> </ul> </div></div> |  |
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| 28 August 2026<br>(Friday) | Rural Electrification (BA11-18),<br>Vatusui, Ba | <b>Project Background</b>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                       |  |
|                            |                                                 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The Committee conducted a site visit to assess the progress of the Rural Electrification Project in Vatusui Settlement, Ba.</li> <li>• The purpose of the visit was to verify concerns raised by communities regarding delays in receiving electricity despite Government-funded investments in the project.</li> <li>• The Committee met with officials from the Department of Energy, community representatives, and affected residents.</li> <li>• Discussions centred on a rural electrification project intended to serve approximately nine households.</li> </ul>               |  |
|                            |                                                 | <b>Electrification Status</b>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                   |  |
|                            |                                                 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• House wiring for affected households has already been completed.</li> <li>• Beneficiaries have completed all required household preparations and are ready to receive electricity connections.</li> <li>• Despite the readiness of households, electricity has not yet been supplied.</li> <li>• The infrastructure required for the project is largely in place.</li> <li>• Community members advised that the final connection works remain outstanding.</li> <li>• The project cannot be energized until the remaining works are completed by Energy Fiji Limited (EFL).</li> </ul> |  |
|                            |                                                 | <b>Delays in EFL Works</b>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                      |  |
|                            |                                                 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Officials informed the Committee that the remaining works involve connecting the project to the main power line.</li> </ul>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                            |  |

- EFL is required to energize the completed system before electricity can be supplied to households.
- The Committee was advised that the main transformer is expected to become available by December.
- EFL connection works were identified as the only major outstanding component of the project.
- Concerns were raised regarding the excessive waiting period experienced by residents despite substantial completion of project works.

#### **Contractor and Implementation Issues**

- Evidence was presented indicating that contractor-related actions may have contributed to implementation delays.
- It was reported that a power pole was relocated from its originally planned location.
- The relocation reportedly created complications affecting project completion.
- Committee Members noted the importance of engaging directly with contractors to establish accountability and gain a clearer understanding of the challenges encountered during implementation.

#### **Community Concerns**

- Approximately 11 households were reported to still be waiting for electricity connections.
- Residents expressed frustration that Government funding had already been committed to the project.
- Residents highlighted that house wiring had already been completed.

- Community members questioned why electricity had not yet been supplied despite the works undertaken.
- The Committee noted a disconnect between project implementation activities and the actual delivery of electricity services to beneficiaries.

#### **Oversight and Coordination Issues**

- Discussions highlighted the need for stronger monitoring and oversight by the Department of Energy.
- Concerns were raised regarding the effectiveness of project implementation monitoring.
- The Committee stressed the importance of improved communication between the Department of Energy and EFL.
- Members emphasized the need for timely follow-up on outstanding project works.
- The need for stronger project tracking mechanisms and reporting arrangements was highlighted.

#### **Committee Observations**

- Significant portions of the project have already been completed.
- Delays in final EFL connection works are the primary reason beneficiaries remain without electricity.
- The situation reflects weaknesses in project coordination.
- The situation also reflects shortcomings in contractor management.
- The Committee noted weaknesses in implementation oversight arrangements.

- The Committee stressed that communities should not experience lengthy delays once house wiring and preparatory works have been completed.

#### **Committee Recommendations**

- EFL should prioritise completion of all outstanding connection works.
- EFL should complete the remaining works as soon as possible and within the projected completion timeframe.
- The Department of Energy should strengthen supervision and monitoring of rural electrification projects.
- A detailed progress report should be obtained from EFL.
- The progress report should include outstanding works.
- The report should outline completion timelines.
- The report should identify contractor responsibilities.
- The report should explain the causes of implementation delays.
- A review of contractor performance should be undertaken.
- The review should determine whether project alterations or delays contributed to outstanding issues.
- Coordination between the Department of Energy and EFL should be strengthened through regular reporting and project tracking.
- Priority should be given to completion of partially completed projects before new projects commence.
- Community engagement should be enhanced through regular updates on project progress and expected completion dates.

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| <p><b>28 August 2026<br/>(Friday)</b></p> | <p>Cane Growers Ba and Tavua Consultation Meeting, Veisaru Temple, Ba</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Farmers expressed concerns regarding the ageing population within the sugar industry, noting that a significant number of active growers are between 50 and 70 years of age and that younger generations are showing limited interest in pursuing sugarcane farming as a livelihood.</li> <li>• Discussions highlighted concerns that the absence of a structured succession plan could contribute to a further decline in cane production and the long-term sustainability of the industry.</li> </ul> <p><b>Land Tenure and Lease Arrangements</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Farmers identified land lease insecurity as one of the most significant challenges affecting investment and productivity within the sugar industry.</li> <li>• Participants expressed the view that existing agricultural lease arrangements do not provide sufficient certainty to encourage long-term farm development and capital investment.</li> <li>• Discussions focused on the need for longer lease terms and greater security of tenure to support sustainable agricultural production and encourage farmers to invest in improving their farms.</li> </ul> <p><b>Financial Challenges Facing Farmers</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Farmers reported increasing production costs and declining returns from sugarcane farming, resulting in growing financial pressures on farming households.</li> <li>• Concerns were raised regarding deductions from cane payments and the financial impact of penalties associated with mill breakdowns and delays in cane processing.</li> <li>• Participants highlighted difficulties in accessing financing and noted that financial constraints continue to affect farm operations and productivity.</li> </ul> |  |
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- Discussions focused on the affordability of agricultural inputs and the increasing costs associated with maintaining sugarcane farms.

#### **Fiji Sugar Corporation (FSC)**

- Farmers expressed dissatisfaction with the operational performance of the Fiji Sugar Corporation (FSC).
- Concerns were raised regarding frequent mill breakdowns, delays in cane crushing and overall operational inefficiencies affecting the industry.
- Participants indicated that processing delays often result in reduced cane quality, production losses and financial hardship for growers.
- Discussions highlighted concerns regarding accountability and the effectiveness of industry resources in supporting growers and ensuring the sustainability of the sector.

#### **Declining Industry Productivity and Sustainability**

- Stakeholders acknowledged the significant decline in sugarcane production over recent decades and expressed concerns regarding the future viability of the industry.
- Discussions focused on declining productivity levels, reduced profitability and increasing challenges faced by growers throughout the country.
- Participants expressed the view that the traditional sugar export model faces significant challenges and requires reform to remain competitive and sustainable.
- Concerns were also raised regarding the long-term viability of existing milling operations and supporting industry institutions.

#### **Industry Reform and Diversification**

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|  |  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Discussions centred on the need for transformational change within the sugar industry to improve resilience and long-term sustainability.</li> <li>• The Committee discussed emerging opportunities beyond traditional sugar production, including ethanol production, sustainable aviation fuel, renewable energy initiatives and value-added agricultural products.</li> <li>• Farmers acknowledged the need for industry reform but emphasised that any transition should adequately safeguard grower livelihoods and ensure appropriate support mechanisms are in place.</li> <li>• Participants highlighted the importance of diversification as a means of improving farmer incomes and reducing dependence on traditional sugar markets.</li> </ul> |  |
|  |  | <b>Agricultural Theft and Rural Security</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Agricultural theft was identified as a major issue affecting farmers across the region.</li> <li>• Farmers reported increasing incidents involving the theft of crops, livestock and other agricultural produce.</li> <li>• Discussions highlighted the negative impact of theft on farmer confidence, productivity and willingness to invest in farming activities.</li> <li>• Participants noted that concerns regarding rural security have discouraged some farmers from pursuing further agricultural expansion and diversification.</li> </ul>                                                                                                                                                          |  |
|  |  | <b>Farmer Representation and Industry Governance</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Farmers advocated for stronger grower representation within industry institutions and decision-making bodies.</li> <li>• Concerns were raised that the views and interests of farmers are not always adequately reflected in industry policies and governance arrangements.</li> </ul>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                |  |

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|  |  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Discussions highlighted the importance of ensuring that growers have meaningful participation in decisions affecting the future direction of the sugar industry.</li> <li>• Participants supported transparent and representative governance structures within industry organisations.</li> </ul> <p><b>Sugar Cane Growers Fund (SCGF)</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Representatives of the Sugar Cane Growers Fund outlined various support services available to farmers.</li> <li>• Discussions covered low-interest loan facilities, mortgage protection insurance, house fire insurance assistance, women's farming support initiatives, loyalty programmes and discount schemes available to eligible growers.</li> <li>• Farmers acknowledged the availability of assistance programmes but noted that greater awareness and accessibility of these services are required.</li> <li>• Concerns were raised regarding the complexity of certain loan application procedures and the need to simplify access to financial assistance programmes.</li> </ul> <p><b>Future of the Sugar Industry</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Farmers expressed concern regarding the overall direction and future sustainability of Fiji's sugar industry.</li> <li>• Discussions highlighted the need for long-term strategic planning to address declining productivity, ageing farmers, land tenure challenges and institutional performance issues.</li> <li>• Participants emphasised that maintaining existing arrangements may not be sufficient to reverse the industry's decline and that substantial reforms may be required.</li> </ul> |  |
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- Stakeholders reiterated the importance of developing a sustainable, commercially viable and farmer-focused sugar industry capable of supporting future generations.

## **Ministry of Sugar Industry Annual Report 2021-2022**

### **Key Issues Raised by Farmers**

- Growing labour shortages continue to affect sugarcane production, harvesting operations, and farm maintenance.
- The ageing farmer population poses a significant threat to the long-term sustainability of the sugar industry.
- Younger generations are increasingly reluctant to enter the sugar industry, resulting in concerns regarding succession planning.
- Farmers expressed concerns regarding declining cane production and the overall viability of the industry.
- Rising production costs continue to reduce farmers' profitability and returns.
- The lack of attractive incentives for new entrants into the industry has contributed to declining youth participation.
- Farmers highlighted the need for Government intervention to encourage youth engagement in sugarcane farming.
- Concerns were raised regarding land lease insecurity and the impact of short-term leases on farm investment.
- Farmers noted that uncertainty surrounding lease renewals discourages investment in farm development and mechanisation.
- Stakeholders reiterated the importance of secure and longer-term land leases to promote confidence and productivity.

- Participants called for stronger policy measures aimed at improving industry sustainability and farmer welfare.
- The need for diversification within the sugar industry, including alternative agricultural activities and value-added industries, was discussed.
- Farmers supported greater Government assistance for industry modernisation and reform initiatives.

### **Sugar Industry Tribunal Annual Report 2021**

#### **Key Issues Raised by Farmers**

- Farmers expressed concerns regarding harvesting arrangements and the administration of harvesting assistance programmes.
- Concerns were raised regarding transparency in decisions affecting harvesting rates and payments.
- Stakeholders indicated that important decisions affecting growers are often communicated late or with limited consultation.
- Farmers called for improved engagement between industry institutions and growers prior to major policy decisions.
- Concerns were raised regarding deductions from cane payments.
- Farmers questioned deductions imposed during periods of mill breakdowns and harvesting delays that were beyond their control.
- Participants advocated for greater transparency in the determination of cane payments and industry deductions.
- The need to review and modernise existing industry arrangements and regulatory frameworks was highlighted.

- Farmers discussed the need to review provisions contained within the Master Award to ensure they remain relevant to current industry conditions.
- Stakeholders highlighted the importance of ensuring that growers have greater input into policy and regulatory reforms affecting the industry.
- Greater accountability and communication from industry institutions were identified as priorities.

### **Sugar Cane Growers Fund Annual Reports 2023 & 2024**

#### **Key Issues Raised by Farmers**

- Farmers acknowledged the support services currently provided by the Sugar Cane Growers Fund.
- Support programmes discussed included:
  - Low-interest loan facilities;
  - Mortgage protection insurance;
  - House fire insurance assistance;
  - Women's farmer assistance programmes; and
  - Loyalty and discount schemes.
- Farmers raised concerns regarding accessibility to existing support programmes.
- Participants indicated that loan application processes could be simplified to improve access.
- Concerns were raised regarding the Fund's responsiveness to current challenges facing farmers.

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|                                    |                                                             | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Farmers questioned whether Fund policies are adequately addressing emerging industry needs.</li> <li>• Stakeholders discussed the need for regular reviews of Fund programmes and services.</li> <li>• The importance of expanding financial support for mechanisation initiatives was highlighted.</li> <li>• Farmers noted that access to financing remains difficult despite existing assistance programmes.</li> <li>• Concerns were raised regarding major investment and expenditure decisions undertaken by the Fund.</li> <li>• Stakeholders called for stronger transparency and accountability regarding the use of grower funds.</li> <li>• Farmers advocated for greater consultation with growers before significant financial decisions are undertaken.</li> <li>• Participants called for stronger farmer representation in decisions affecting the operations and governance of the Fund.</li> </ul> <p>Greater awareness and promotion of available support services were also recommended.</p> |  |
| <b>28 August 2026<br/>(Friday)</b> | Cane Growers Consultation Meeting, Wailevu Temple, Rakiraki | <p><b>Limited Access to Financing for Mechanisation</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Farmers highlighted the increasing importance of mechanisation due to ongoing labour shortages.</li> <li>• Participants stated that purchasing sugarcane harvesters remains beyond the financial reach of many farmers.</li> </ul>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                   |  |

- Farmers advised that commercial lending institutions impose financing requirements that are difficult for growers to meet.
- Stakeholders indicated that current financing policies administered through the Sugar Cane Growers Fund do not adequately support cooperative groups wishing to acquire harvesting machinery.
- Farmers stressed that increased mechanisation would reduce harvesting costs and improve overall efficiency.
- It was noted that without access to harvesting machinery, farmers remain dependent on increasingly scarce labour resources.

#### Labour Shortages and Worker Reliability

- Farmers reported persistent difficulties in recruiting and retaining cane cutters.
- Labour shortages were identified as one of the most significant challenges currently facing the industry.
- Growers stated that labour shortages often result in delayed harvesting operations.
- Participants reported instances where labourers accepted advance payments but subsequently failed to undertake the agreed work.
- Such incidents have reportedly caused financial losses for farmers.
- Farmers noted that labour shortages contribute directly to unharvested cane and reduced production levels.
- Stakeholders emphasized that labour availability has become a major factor affecting profitability and sustainability.

#### Harvesting Subsidy Arrangements

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|  |  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Farmers raised concerns regarding the administration of the Government's harvesting subsidy programme.</li> <li>• Questions were raised about the transparency of subsidy allocation and distribution processes.</li> <li>• Stakeholders expressed dissatisfaction that a portion of the subsidy intended for farmers was reportedly redirected to machine operators.</li> <li>• Growers stated that they were not adequately consulted before changes were made to subsidy arrangements.</li> <li>• Participants highlighted the need for greater transparency regarding how harvesting subsidies are administered.</li> <li>• The importance of timely communication regarding subsidy changes was strongly emphasized.</li> </ul> |  |
|  |  | <b>Communication and Transparency Concerns</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Farmers expressed dissatisfaction with communication from the Sugar Industry Tribunal.</li> <li>• Concerns were raised regarding the lack of timely information on decisions affecting harvesting rates.</li> <li>• Stakeholders reported that information relating to subsidy arrangements was not adequately communicated to growers.</li> <li>• Participants called for more frequent engagement and consultation with farmers before implementing significant decisions.</li> <li>• Farmers emphasized that improved communication would strengthen trust between institutions and growers.</li> </ul>                                                                            |  |
|  |  | <b>Challenges Facing Farmer Cooperatives</b>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                  |  |

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|  |  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Participants acknowledged the benefits of cooperative arrangements among sugarcane farmers.</li> <li>• Farmers noted that cooperatives provide opportunities for shared ownership of costly harvesting machinery and equipment.</li> <li>• Stakeholders indicated that current financing arrangements make it difficult for cooperatives to secure funding.</li> <li>• Regulatory and policy barriers were identified as limiting the growth and effectiveness of farming cooperatives.</li> <li>• Participants recommended greater support for cooperative-based models to improve mechanisation and reduce operational costs.</li> </ul> |  |
|  |  | <b>Sugar Cane Growers Fund Governance Concerns</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Farmers raised concerns regarding major asset acquisitions undertaken by the Sugar Cane Growers Fund.</li> <li>• Questions were raised about investment decisions and expenditure priorities.</li> <li>• Stakeholders felt that growers were not adequately consulted before significant financial decisions were made.</li> <li>• Participants called for stronger accountability and transparency within the Fund.</li> <li>• Farmers emphasized the importance of having greater participation in governance matters affecting grower resources and investments.</li> </ul>          |  |
|  |  | <b>Agricultural Theft and Rural Security</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Farmers reported increasing incidents of agricultural theft.</li> <li>• Theft of crops, livestock, and farm equipment was highlighted as an ongoing concern.</li> </ul>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                       |  |

- Stakeholders advised that theft is imposing additional financial burdens on farming operations.
- Farmers noted that repeated theft discourages investment in alternative agricultural activities and diversification efforts.
- Participants called for stronger enforcement measures and improved rural security arrangements.

#### **Stray Livestock Damaging Sugarcane Farms**

- Farmers reported substantial damage to sugarcane crops from stray cattle and other livestock.
- Crop destruction caused by roaming animals was identified as a recurring problem.
- Participants advised that previous compensation arrangements for affected farmers no longer appear to be operating.
- Stakeholders expressed concern about the financial losses incurred from crop damage.
- Farmers called for stronger enforcement of livestock control regulations and review of compensation mechanisms.

#### **Declining Productivity and Industry Sustainability**

- Farmers reported declining cane yields over recent years.
- Rising production costs were identified as a major challenge affecting profitability.
- Labour shortages, reduced productivity, and operational challenges continue to impact farm returns.

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|  |  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Stakeholders expressed concern about the long-term sustainability of sugarcane farming under existing conditions.</li> <li>• Participants warned that many growers are questioning the future viability of remaining in the industry.</li> </ul> <p><b>Support Services Provided by the Sugar Cane Growers Fund</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Representatives outlined various support programmes currently available to growers.</li> <li>• These services include low-interest loan facilities.</li> <li>• Mortgage protection insurance schemes are available for eligible farmers.</li> <li>• Farm support financing programmes are provided through the Fund.</li> <li>• Welfare and insurance-related assistance schemes are also available.</li> <li>• While these services were acknowledged, stakeholders indicated that greater accessibility and alignment with current industry challenges are required.</li> <li>• Particular emphasis was placed on expanding support for mechanisation initiatives.</li> </ul> <p><b>Committee's Key Observations</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Farmers continue to face multiple interconnected challenges affecting productivity and profitability.</li> <li>• Labour shortages remain a critical issue across the industry.</li> <li>• Mechanisation support is insufficient to meet current industry needs.</li> <li>• Communication gaps exist between institutions and farmers.</li> <li>• Financing opportunities for cooperatives remain limited.</li> </ul> |  |
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- Agricultural theft and stray livestock continue to negatively affect farming operations.
- Declining cane yields and production levels are affecting farmer confidence.
- Farmers are increasingly seeking practical solutions that improve efficiency and reduce operational costs.

### Ministry of Sugar Industry Annual Report 2021-2022

#### Key Issues Raised by Farmers

- Growing labour shortages continue to affect sugarcane production, harvesting operations, and farm maintenance.
- The ageing farmer population poses a significant threat to the long-term sustainability of the sugar industry.
- Younger generations are increasingly reluctant to enter the sugar industry, resulting in concerns regarding succession planning.
- Farmers expressed concerns regarding declining cane production and the overall viability of the industry.
- Rising production costs continue to reduce farmers' profitability and returns.
- The lack of attractive incentives for new entrants into the industry has contributed to declining youth participation.
- Farmers highlighted the need for Government intervention to encourage youth engagement in sugarcane farming.
- Concerns were raised regarding land lease insecurity and the impact of short-term leases on farm investment.
- Farmers noted that uncertainty surrounding lease renewals discourages investment in farm development and mechanisation.

- Stakeholders reiterated the importance of secure and longer-term land leases to promote confidence and productivity.
- Participants called for stronger policy measures aimed at improving industry sustainability and farmer welfare.
- The need for diversification within the sugar industry, including alternative agricultural activities and value-added industries, was discussed.
- Farmers supported greater Government assistance for industry modernisation and reform initiatives.

### **Sugar Industry Tribunal Annual Report 2021**

#### **Key Issues Raised by Farmers**

- Farmers expressed concerns regarding harvesting arrangements and the administration of harvesting assistance programmes.
- Concerns were raised regarding transparency in decisions affecting harvesting rates and payments.
- Stakeholders indicated that important decisions affecting growers are often communicated late or with limited consultation.
- Farmers called for improved engagement between industry institutions and growers prior to major policy decisions.
- Concerns were raised regarding deductions from cane payments.
- Farmers questioned deductions imposed during periods of mill breakdowns and harvesting delays that were beyond their control.
- Participants advocated for greater transparency in the determination of cane payments and industry deductions.

- The need to review and modernise existing industry arrangements and regulatory frameworks was highlighted.
- Farmers discussed the need to review provisions contained within the Master Award to ensure they remain relevant to current industry conditions.
- Stakeholders highlighted the importance of ensuring that growers have greater input into policy and regulatory reforms affecting the industry.
- Greater accountability and communication from industry institutions were identified as priorities.

### **Sugar Cane Growers Fund Annual Reports 2023 & 2024**

#### **Key Issues Raised by Farmers**

- Farmers acknowledged the support services currently provided by the Sugar Cane Growers Fund.
- Support programmes discussed included:
  - Low-interest loan facilities;
  - Mortgage protection insurance;
  - House fire insurance assistance;
  - Women's farmer assistance programmes; and
  - Loyalty and discount schemes.
- Farmers raised concerns regarding accessibility to existing support programmes.
- Participants indicated that loan application processes could be simplified to improve access.

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|                                      |                                                              | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Concerns were raised regarding the Fund's responsiveness to current challenges facing farmers.</li> <li>• Farmers questioned whether Fund policies are adequately addressing emerging industry needs.</li> <li>• Stakeholders discussed the need for regular reviews of Fund programmes and services.</li> <li>• The importance of expanding financial support for mechanisation initiatives was highlighted.</li> <li>• Farmers noted that access to financing remains difficult despite existing assistance programmes.</li> <li>• Concerns were raised regarding major investment and expenditure decisions undertaken by the Fund.</li> <li>• Stakeholders called for stronger transparency and accountability regarding the use of grower funds.</li> <li>• Farmers advocated for greater consultation with growers before significant financial decisions are undertaken.</li> <li>• Participants called for stronger farmer representation in decisions affecting the operations and governance of the Fund.</li> <li>• Greater awareness and promotion of available support services were also recommended.</li> </ul> |  |
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| <b>29 August 2026<br/>(Saturday)</b> | Rural Electrification (RA02-18),<br>Lau Settlement, Rakiraki | <b>Project Background</b>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                               |  |

- The Committee undertook a site visit to Lau Settlement, Nalawa, Ra to assess the status of the Rural Electrification Project intended to provide electricity access to **36 households**.
- The Committee met with community members, local representatives, and relevant stakeholders to understand the reasons for the prolonged delay in implementation.
- Residents advised that the initial application for electricity was submitted in **2018**.
- Approval for the project was only communicated under the **2025-2026 Programme**, resulting in an approximate **seven-year delay** between application and approval.
- The estimated project cost is approximately **\$680,000**.
- The Committee was informed that project funding has already been approved through the relevant Government processes.

#### Delays in Project Delivery

- Residents expressed frustration regarding the lengthy delay in the implementation of the project.
- Community members noted that despite receiving assurances that the project had been approved and funded, little progress has been made.
- The Committee noted that residents had waited approximately seven years before receiving confirmation that the project was approved.
- Concerns were raised that approval processes and implementation timelines were excessively lengthy for a basic service delivery project.

#### Funding and Implementation Issues

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|  |  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Residents were advised that project funding had already been allocated and transferred through the appropriate channels.</li> <li>• Despite funding being available, physical implementation remains slow.</li> <li>• Concerns were raised regarding the inability to translate approved funding into completed works on the ground.</li> <li>• The Department of Energy reportedly advised that all requirements on its part had already been completed.</li> <li>• Discussions suggested that implementation bottlenecks may exist elsewhere within the project delivery framework.</li> </ul> |  |
|  |  | <b>Status of Physical Works</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Preliminary project activities have commenced, including vegetation clearing and corridor clearing.</li> <li>• Residents confirmed that major infrastructure works have not yet commenced.</li> <li>• Community members stated that contractor presence on-site has been infrequent.</li> <li>• Residents reported receiving little to no communication on anticipated completion timelines.</li> <li>• Concerns were raised regarding the slow pace of physical implementation despite funding availability.</li> </ul>                                         |  |
|  |  | <b>Contractor Capacity and Performance Concerns</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The Committee was informed that the contractor responsible for the project is simultaneously undertaking other rural electrification projects in nearby areas.</li> <li>• Stakeholders questioned whether the allocation of multiple projects to a single contractor had impacted delivery timelines.</li> </ul>                                                                                                                                                                                                                             |  |

- Concerns were raised that contractor workload may have reduced the contractor's ability to adequately service all assigned projects.
- Discussions highlighted that contractor capacity limitations may be contributing to implementation delays.

#### Land Access Issues

- The Committee confirmed that landowners have already granted consent for the project.
- Community members strongly refuted any suggestion that land access issues were causing the delay.
- Residents stated that all necessary permissions and clearances had already been provided.
- The community indicated its willingness to assist in facilitating project completion.
- The Committee concluded that land access is not an obstacle to the implementation of the project.

#### Stakeholder Coordination Issues

- Evidence gathered during the site visit suggested weak coordination among relevant stakeholders.
- Stakeholders identified included the Department of Energy, Energy Fiji Limited (EFL), contractors, local administrative offices, and community representatives.
- Residents indicated that project information provided by different agencies was often inconsistent.
- Community members expressed concern about receiving assurances without clear implementation schedules.

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|  |  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The Committee noted that communication processes require significant improvement.</li> </ul>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                         |  |
|  |  | <b>Rural Electrification Management</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Committee Members questioned whether EFL has a dedicated unit responsible for managing rural electrification programmes.</li> <li>• Concerns were raised that rural electrification projects may be administered within broader operational structures.</li> <li>• Members discussed whether this arrangement contributes to implementation delays and inadequate project monitoring.</li> <li>• Concerns were also raised regarding insufficient reporting on the performance of rural electrification projects.</li> </ul>                                 |  |
|  |  | <b>Monitoring and Accountability Issues</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The Committee noted longstanding concerns regarding the lack of detailed reporting on rural electrification projects.</li> <li>• The Committee found that monitoring and accountability mechanisms appear inadequate.</li> <li>• Discussions highlighted gaps in project tracking systems.</li> <li>• The lack of detailed progress reporting makes it difficult to properly assess project performance and effectiveness.</li> <li>• Members considered the need for stronger oversight measures and clearer project reporting requirements.</li> </ul> |  |
|  |  | <b>Local Level Monitoring</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The Committee observed that local administrative and development coordination mechanisms could play a stronger role in project monitoring.</li> </ul>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                  |  |

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|  |  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Discussions highlighted opportunities for local officials to identify implementation issues earlier.</li> <li>• Community representatives indicated that many project issues are only identified when parliamentary site visits are conducted.</li> <li>• The Committee noted that stronger local monitoring could help prevent prolonged delays.</li> </ul>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                             |  |
|  |  | <b>Committee Observations</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The Committee observed that community expectations remain high regarding access to electricity services.</li> <li>• Residents expressed eagerness to receive electricity connectivity as soon as possible.</li> <li>• Members observed that prolonged project delays have negatively affected public confidence in Government-funded development programmes.</li> <li>• The Committee noted that similar concerns have been repeatedly encountered during rural electrification site visits.</li> <li>• Members considered these recurring issues indicative of broader systemic weaknesses in project management, stakeholder coordination, monitoring, and communication.</li> <li>• The Committee emphasized that implementing agencies should proactively identify and resolve project challenges rather than relying on parliamentary site visits to uncover deficiencies.</li> </ul> |  |
|  |  | <b>Key Matters Raised by the Committee</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Reasons for the seven-year delay between application and approval.</li> <li>• Reasons for delays despite approved funding being available.</li> </ul>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                         |  |

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|  |  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Slow commencement of physical project works.</li> <li>• Contractor capacity and workload concerns.</li> <li>• Weak coordination among agencies involved in project delivery.</li> <li>• Lack of dedicated oversight for rural electrification projects.</li> <li>• Inadequate reporting, monitoring, and accountability mechanisms.</li> <li>• Limited local-level monitoring and escalation mechanisms.</li> </ul> <p>The need for stronger governance and implementation arrangements for rural electrification programmes.</p> |  |
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# ECONOMIC AFFAIRS COMMITTEE

## NORTHERN DIVISION SITE VISIT SUMMARY

### Monday 31 August 2026 – Friday 4 September 2026

| Date & Day                 | Institution / Site Visited & Address                                     | Concerns Raised During the Visit/Consultation                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                         | Committee's Comments (if any) |
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| 31 August 2026<br>(Monday) | <b>Rural Electrification</b> TAVE01-25 – Bouma Village to Lavena Village | <p><b>Grid Extension and Electrification</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>EFL confirmed that technical surveys and assessments for grid extension have been completed.</li> <li>Quotations, applicant details, and technical documentation have been submitted to the Department of Energy for consideration.</li> <li>The proposed grid extension project remains pending due to funding approval requirements.</li> <li>The estimated cost of extending electricity services to the affected communities is approximately \$1.9 million.</li> <li>Significant capital investment is required to connect remote communities to the national grid.</li> </ul> <p> <b>Solar Home System Concerns</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Beneficiaries raised concerns regarding prolonged delays in the installation of approved solar home systems.</li> <li>Some households had paid the required contributions approximately one year ago but were still awaiting installation.</li> </ul> |                               |

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|  |  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Community members expressed frustration over the lack of progress and delayed service delivery.</li><li>• Approximately \$75,000 was reportedly paid to the Department of Energy for solar installations since October last year, however installations remain outstanding.</li><li>• Concerns were raised regarding the suitability and long-term effectiveness of installing solar systems in high rainfall and rain-prone areas.</li><li>• Finding: Consideration should be given to the practicality and sustainability of placing solar systems in rain-prone regions where sunlight availability may be limited for prolonged periods.</li></ul> <p> <b>Existing Power Supply Capacity</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• EFL advised that current electricity generation capacity on Taveuni is sufficient to meet existing demand and support planned grid expansions.</li><li>• Existing generation infrastructure includes:<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>○ 1 MW Solar Farm.</li><li>○ 500 kW Battery Energy Storage System.</li><li>○ 700 kW Hydroelectric Facility.</li><li>○ Two 2 MW Diesel Generators.</li></ul></li></ul> |  |
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# ECONOMIC AFFAIRS COMMITTEE

## NORTHERN DIVISION SITE VISIT SUMMARY

Monday 31 August 2026 – Friday 4 September 2026

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|  |  | <div> <b>Future Energy Development</b></div> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• EFL acknowledged that future increases in electricity demand will require additional generation investments.</li><li>• Potential future energy developments include:<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>○ Additional solar generation capacity.</li><li>○ Expansion of battery storage systems.</li><li>○ Upgrading existing hydroelectric infrastructure.</li></ul></li></ul> <div> <b>Hydroelectric Development Opportunities</b></div> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Opportunities exist to further develop hydroelectric generation in Taveuni.</li><li>• EFL indicated that studies are being considered to assess:<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>○ Enhancement of the current hydro scheme.</li><li>○ Development of upstream hydro installations.</li><li>○ Expansion of dam capacity.</li><li>○ Feasibility of mini-hydro systems along existing waterways.</li></ul></li><li>• Committee Members observed that hydroelectric expansion may provide a more sustainable, reliable, and cost-effective long-term solution for Taveuni.</li></ul> |  |
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### Monday 31 August 2026 – Friday 4 September 2026

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|  |  | <div> <b>Information on Proposed Large Hydro Project</b></div> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• References were made to a larger hydroelectric development proposal intended to serve multiple communities.</li><li>• Detailed documentation and feasibility studies were not available during the site visit.</li><li>• The Committee requested that all relevant reports and technical assessments be provided for review.</li></ul> <div> <b>Community Feedback and Communication</b></div> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Community members highlighted limited communication regarding the status of their applications and projects.</li><li>• Concerns were raised regarding uncertainty surrounding project timelines and completion dates.</li><li>• Communities requested more regular updates from responsible agencies regarding funding approvals and implementation schedules.</li></ul> <div> <b>Committee Observations</b></div> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Delays in funding approvals continue to affect the timely implementation of rural electrification projects.</li><li>• Delays in solar installation projects have negatively impacted beneficiary confidence in the programme.</li></ul> |  |
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|                            |                                         | <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• There is a need for stronger coordination between EFL and the Department of Energy to improve project delivery.</li><li>• Renewable energy development remains strategically important for improving energy security and reducing reliance on diesel generation.</li><li>• Improved stakeholder engagement and transparent reporting mechanisms are required to keep communities informed of project progress.</li></ul>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                          |  |
| 31 August 2026<br>(Monday) | EFL Visit to Mua Solar PV Power Station | <p><b>Renewable Energy Infrastructure</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• The Committee was informed that electricity generated from the 1 MW Solar Photovoltaic (PV) System, 500 kW Battery Energy Storage System, and hydroelectric generation is supplied directly into the Taveuni electricity grid.</li><li>• The solar farm contributes significantly towards reducing dependence on diesel-generated electricity.</li><li>• Renewable energy infrastructure is playing an important role in supporting Fiji's clean energy transition.</li></ul> <p> <b>Battery Energy Storage System</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• The battery energy storage system serves as a critical backup during periods of low solar generation.</li><li>• Battery storage supports electricity supply during:</li></ul> |  |

# ECONOMIC AFFAIRS COMMITTEE

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- Night-time operations;
- Cloudy weather conditions; and
- Periods of reduced solar generation.

- Discussions highlighted the increasing importance of battery storage in ensuring grid stability and energy reliability.
- Additional battery storage capacity may be required to maximize renewable energy utilization in the future.



### **Solar Performance and Weather Conditions**

- Members noted that weather patterns vary significantly across different parts of Taveuni.
- Concerns were raised regarding communities located in areas with:
  - Frequent rainfall;
  - Heavy cloud cover; and
  - Reduced sunlight exposure.
- Questions were raised on whether solar home systems are the most suitable long-term solution for communities in rain-prone locations.

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|  |  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Members observed that solar systems may provide only an interim solution in areas with limited solar resources.</li><li>• Finding: Concerns remain regarding the installation of solar systems in rain-prone areas where prolonged cloudy conditions may affect system performance and reliability.</li></ul> <p> <b>Feasibility Studies and Due Diligence</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• The Committee emphasized the importance of undertaking comprehensive feasibility studies before selecting electrification technologies.</li><li>• Members stressed that investment decisions should be supported by:<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>○ Technical assessments;</li><li>○ Environmental considerations;</li><li>○ Cost-benefit analysis; and</li><li>○ Long-term community needs.</li></ul></li><li>• Concerns were raised that communities may be contributing financially towards solar installations without sufficient assessment of alternative options.</li><li>• The Committee emphasized the need for evidence-based decision-making in rural electrification projects.</li></ul> |  |
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|  |  | <p> <b>Hydroelectric Development Opportunities</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• EFL advised that preliminary studies have been conducted to assess water flow levels and hydropower potential in certain communities.</li><li>• Members noted that hydroelectric generation may provide a more reliable and sustainable solution in areas where solar performance is affected by weather conditions.</li><li>• The Committee encouraged further investigations into hydroelectric opportunities before substantial resources are committed to solar technologies in certain locations.</li><li>• Discussions highlighted the importance of exploring diversified renewable energy solutions.</li></ul> <p> <b>Maintenance and Asset Management</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• EFL advised that a structured maintenance programme is in place for the solar farm.</li><li>• Maintenance activities include:<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>○ Daily operational monitoring;</li><li>○ Weekly inspections;</li><li>○ Monthly solar panel cleaning;</li><li>○ Quarterly maintenance works;</li></ul></li></ul> |  |
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|  |  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>○ Six-monthly servicing; and</li><li>○ Annual maintenance assessments.</li><li>• Regular vegetation control and panel cleaning are undertaken to maintain system efficiency and energy production.</li></ul> <p> <b>Cyclone Resilience and Disaster Preparedness</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• The Committee was informed that the solar facility has been designed to withstand Category 5 Cyclone Standards.</li><li>• Appropriate structural foundations and panel securing systems have been incorporated into the design.</li><li>• Discussions highlighted the importance of maintaining strong disaster preparedness and risk management measures for renewable energy assets.</li></ul> <p> <b>Community Awareness and Communication</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• The Committee observed that some communities view solar installations as a permanent solution to electrification challenges.</li><li>• Members stressed the need for clearer communication regarding:<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>○ Benefits of solar technology;</li><li>○ Limitations of solar systems;</li></ul></li></ul> |  |
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|  |  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>○ Alternative renewable energy options; and</li><li>○ Long-term energy planning decisions.</li><li>• Communities should be fully informed regarding the rationale behind technology selection and investment decisions.</li></ul> <p> <b>Committee Observations</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Renewable energy developments have significantly contributed towards reducing reliance on traditional fuel sources.</li><li>• Electrification solutions should be tailored to local environmental and geographical conditions rather than applying a uniform approach across all communities.</li><li>• Long-term sustainability, reliability, and value for money should remain key considerations in public investments.</li><li>• Battery energy storage systems will continue to play a critical role in Fiji's renewable energy future.</li><li>• Greater consideration should be given to hydroelectric options in communities where climatic conditions may reduce solar system effectiveness.</li></ul> |  |
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# ECONOMIC AFFAIRS COMMITTEE

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### Monday 31 August 2026 – Friday 4 September 2026

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|                            |                                                                           | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>There is a need for greater transparency regarding the criteria used to determine electrification solutions for rural communities.</li> </ul>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                             |  |
| 31 August 2026<br>(Monday) | <b>Rural Electrification TAVE02-17 – Drekeniwai and Burotu Settlement</b> | <p> <b>Rural Electrification Project Status</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>An application covering 52 households was approved under the Rural Electrification Programme.</li> <li>The project includes house wiring works and connection preparations prior to electricity supply being provided to households.</li> <li>Community members welcomed the approval but expressed concerns regarding the lengthy waiting period for implementation.</li> </ul> <p> <b>House Wiring Works</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The house wiring contract was awarded to Quality Electric.</li> <li>Contractor mobilisation was expected to commence in September.</li> <li>House wiring was identified as the final stage before meter installation and grid connection.</li> <li>Residents sought assurance that wiring works would begin within the communicated timeframe.</li> </ul> |  |

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|  |  | <p> <b>Delays and Completion Timeline</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• No definitive project completion date was provided during the discussions.</li><li>• Project implementation remains dependent on:<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>○ Contractor availability and workload;</li><li>○ Availability of electrical materials;</li><li>○ Shipping schedules;</li><li>○ Transportation and logistics; and</li><li>○ Supply chain constraints.</li></ul></li><li>• Officials advised that similar projects have generally required several months to complete.</li><li>• Community members requested clearer timelines and regular progress updates.</li></ul> <p> <b>Material Supply Challenges</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Delays in the procurement of electrical materials have affected project implementation.</li><li>• Materials requiring procurement include:<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>○ Electrical cables;</li></ul></li></ul> |  |
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Monday 31 August 2026 – Friday 4 September 2026

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|  |  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>○ Wiring;</li><li>○ Meter boxes; and</li><li>○ Associated electrical equipment.</li></ul> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Transportation of materials to maritime and remote communities presents additional challenges.</li><li>• Shipping delays were identified as a contributing factor affecting project delivery.</li></ul> <p> <b>Landowner Consent Issues</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Several households were not included in the original approved list due to the absence of required landowner consent documentation.</li><li>• Affected households have since obtained the necessary consent and submitted the required documents.</li><li>• Officials confirmed that these applications will be considered in a future phase of the programme.</li><li>• Residents requested that outstanding applications be processed without further delay.</li></ul> <p> <b>Eligibility Requirements</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Officials reiterated that landowner consent remains a mandatory requirement for electrification assistance.</li></ul> |  |
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# ECONOMIC AFFAIRS COMMITTEE

## NORTHERN DIVISION SITE VISIT SUMMARY

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|  |  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Lack of consent documentation was identified as the principal reason for exclusion from the initial project scope.</li><li>• Community members were encouraged to ensure all supporting documents are submitted during the application process.</li></ul> <p> <b>Technical Limitations</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• The standard house wiring assistance programme generally applies to households located within approximately 295 to 300 metres of an existing electricity supply line.</li><li>• Households located beyond this distance may require a separate grid extension application.</li><li>• Technical requirements such as voltage drop limitations and additional infrastructure needs can affect eligibility.</li></ul> <p> <b>Community Concerns</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Residents raised concerns regarding prolonged delays in accessing electricity services.</li><li>• Community members expressed the need for better communication regarding project progress and expected connection dates.</li></ul> |  |
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# ECONOMIC AFFAIRS COMMITTEE

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|  |  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Beneficiaries highlighted the importance of electricity access for improving living standards, education, and economic opportunities.</li></ul> <p><b>👁️ Committee Findings and Observations</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• The Committee noted that the project has progressed beyond the approval stage and moved into implementation.</li><li>• Delays are largely associated with:<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>○ Material procurement challenges;</li><li>○ Contractor workload and capacity;</li><li>○ Shipping and transportation constraints; and</li><li>○ Administrative requirements.</li></ul></li><li>• There is a need for regular engagement with beneficiaries to provide updates on implementation progress.</li><li>• Rural and maritime communities continue to face unique logistical challenges that can affect the timely delivery of electrification projects.</li><li>• The Committee acknowledged the cooperation of residents and local leaders in supporting project implementation and ensuring the submission of required documentation.</li><li>• Finding: Greater transparency on project timelines, contractor work schedules, and material procurement status</li></ul> |  |
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# ECONOMIC AFFAIRS COMMITTEE

## NORTHERN DIVISION SITE VISIT SUMMARY

### Monday 31 August 2026 – Friday 4 September 2026

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|                                    |                                                 | <p>is required to manage community expectations and improve confidence in project delivery.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Finding: Households that have since met the landowner consent requirements should be prioritised for assessment under the next phase of the Rural Electrification Programme.</li> </ul>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                 |  |
| <b>31 August 2026<br/>(Monday)</b> | <b>EFL Visit</b> to Taveuni Hydro Power Station | <p> <b>Renewable Energy Generation and Supply</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Taveuni's electricity supply is primarily generated through renewable energy sources.</li> <li>The island's power generation system consists of:             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Hydroelectric generation;</li> <li>Solar photovoltaic generation; and</li> <li>Battery energy storage systems.</li> </ul> </li> <li>Diesel generators are generally utilised only during:             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>System faults;</li> <li>Maintenance periods; and</li> <li>Emergency situations.</li> </ul> </li> <li>Approximately 95% of Taveuni's electricity demand is supplied through renewable energy sources.</li> </ul> |  |

# ECONOMIC AFFAIRS COMMITTEE

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Monday 31 August 2026 – Friday 4 September 2026

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|  |  | <p> <b>Hydroelectric Facility Operations</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• The hydroelectric project was funded by the Government of China at an estimated cost of approximately \$21 million.</li><li>• Construction of the facility was completed over approximately three years.</li><li>• The project included:<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>◦ Hydroelectric generating facilities;</li><li>◦ Transmission infrastructure; and</li><li>◦ Grid expansion works.</li></ul></li><li>• The hydro facility remains a critical asset supporting energy security and reducing dependence on diesel generation.</li></ul> <p> <b>Increasing Electricity Demand</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• EFL advised that electricity demand on Taveuni has steadily increased as more communities and households are connected to the grid.</li><li>• The hydro station is currently operating close to its maximum generation capacity of approximately 700 kilowatts.</li><li>• Existing generation is supported by:</li></ul> |  |
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# ECONOMIC AFFAIRS COMMITTEE

## NORTHERN DIVISION SITE VISIT SUMMARY

Monday 31 August 2026 – Friday 4 September 2026

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|  |  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>○ 1 MW solar generation;</li><li>○ Battery energy storage systems; and</li><li>○ Backup diesel generation.</li></ul> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Current infrastructure will require expansion to accommodate future energy demand.</li></ul> <p> <b>Future Energy Requirements</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• EFL projections indicate that electricity demand on Taveuni could increase to between 3 MW and 5 MW within the next five to ten years.</li><li>• Growth in demand is expected to result from:<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>○ Ongoing rural electrification projects;</li><li>○ Population growth; and</li><li>○ Increased economic activity.</li></ul></li><li>• Strategic investment in additional generation capacity will be necessary to meet future demand.</li></ul> <p> <b>Potential for Hydroelectric Expansion</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• EFL advised that opportunities may exist to expand hydroelectric generation through infrastructure upgrades and improvements.</li></ul> |  |
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# ECONOMIC AFFAIRS COMMITTEE

## NORTHERN DIVISION SITE VISIT SUMMARY

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|  |  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Committee Members noted that hydroelectric expansion may provide a more sustainable and cost-effective solution than increased reliance on diesel generation.</li><li>• Further technical assessments and feasibility studies will be required to determine expansion opportunities.</li></ul> <p> <b>Water Resource Utilisation</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Members observed that substantial volumes of water used for hydroelectric generation are discharged downstream after electricity generation.</li><li>• Discussions highlighted the potential for collaboration between Energy Fiji Limited and the Water Authority of Fiji.</li><li>• Consideration could be given to utilising discharged water to support community water supply projects in nearby areas.</li><li>• Finding: Opportunities may exist to integrate hydroelectric infrastructure with community water supply initiatives to maximise public benefits from existing resources.</li></ul> <p> <b>Technical Capacity and Workforce Development</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• The Committee was informed that EFL has invested in specialised training programmes for technical personnel.</li><li>• Staff responsible for operating and maintaining hydro and solar infrastructure have received overseas technical training.</li></ul> |  |
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# ECONOMIC AFFAIRS COMMITTEE

## NORTHERN DIVISION SITE VISIT SUMMARY

Monday 31 August 2026 – Friday 4 September 2026

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|  |  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Ongoing capacity-building initiatives are undertaken to support the reliable operation of renewable energy systems.</li><li>• Committee Members commended the technical knowledge and competence of operational staff.</li></ul> <p> <b>Contractor Capacity and Project Delivery Challenges</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• EFL advised that there is a limited pool of locally based electrical contractors available to undertake electrification works.</li><li>• Key challenges identified included:<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>○ Limited contractor capacity;</li><li>○ Contractors declining larger projects;</li><li>○ Delays in project implementation;</li><li>○ Poor workmanship in some cases; and</li><li>○ Failure by some contractors to complete assigned works.</li></ul></li><li>• Contractor-related challenges continue to affect the timely delivery of rural electrification projects.</li><li>• Finding: Contractor availability and performance remain significant constraints affecting rural electrification delivery, particularly in remote and maritime areas.</li></ul> |  |
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# ECONOMIC AFFAIRS COMMITTEE

## NORTHERN DIVISION SITE VISIT SUMMARY

Monday 31 August 2026 – Friday 4 September 2026

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|  |  | <p> <b>Inter-Agency Coordination</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• A recurring concern raised during the visit was the need for stronger coordination between EFL and the Department of Energy.</li><li>• Committee Members observed inconsistencies in:<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>○ Project reporting;</li><li>○ Information sharing;</li><li>○ Communication processes; and</li><li>○ Project implementation oversight.</li></ul></li><li>• These issues have contributed to delays and uncertainty in some rural electrification projects.</li><li>• Finding: Improved communication and coordination mechanisms between EFL and the Department of Energy are required to enhance project delivery, accountability, and stakeholder confidence.</li></ul> <p> <b>Committee Observations</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• The Committee commended EFL's successful operation of a renewable energy-based electricity system that has significantly reduced reliance on fossil fuels.</li></ul> |  |
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# ECONOMIC AFFAIRS COMMITTEE

## NORTHERN DIVISION SITE VISIT SUMMARY

### Monday 31 August 2026 – Friday 4 September 2026

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|                               |                                                                                                                                           | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The hydroelectric facility continues to play a vital role in ensuring energy security for Taveuni.</li> <li>• Future growth in electricity demand will require proactive planning and investment in additional renewable generation capacity.</li> <li>• Hydroelectric expansion should be further explored as a long-term and sustainable energy solution.</li> <li>• Contractor management, quality assurance, and project monitoring mechanisms require strengthening.</li> <li>• Greater collaboration between EFL and the Department of Energy will be essential to improve implementation of rural electrification programmes.</li> <li>• Continued investment in technical training and workforce development will support the long-term sustainability of renewable energy infrastructure on Taveuni.</li> </ul> |  |
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| 1 September 2026<br>(Tuesday) | <b>Rural Electrification</b> SA01-26 – Korolevu & Drano Village<br><br><b>Rural Electrification</b> SA02-26 – Bucalevu & Navakaka Village | <b>⚡ Rural Electrification Project Status</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The Committee reviewed the progress of rural electrification projects being implemented by the Department of Energy and Energy Fiji Limited (EFL).</li> </ul>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                              |  |

# ECONOMIC AFFAIRS COMMITTEE

## NORTHERN DIVISION SITE VISIT SUMMARY

Monday 31 August 2026 – Friday 4 September 2026

**Rural Electrification** SA09-23 –  
Waivula Village

- Several rural electrification projects have completed surveys, technical designs, assessments and quotations and are ready for implementation.
- A number of projects have received approvals but remain pending due to funding constraints.
- Communities continue to await electricity connections despite projects reaching advanced planning stages.

### **Funding Challenges**

- Insufficient government funding was identified as the principal obstacle affecting project implementation.
- Several approved projects have remained outstanding for a number of years despite being technically ready to proceed.
- Some project quotations submitted as early as 2020 have yet to be actioned due to budget limitations.
- Delayed funding approvals have significantly affected project rollout and service delivery to rural communities.

### **Escalating Project Costs**

- The Committee noted that original project estimates are no longer reflective of current market conditions.

# ECONOMIC AFFAIRS COMMITTEE

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|  |  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Inflation and increasing infrastructure costs are expected to have significantly increased project expenditure requirements.</li><li>• Updated quotations and revised project costings are required to accurately determine funding needs.</li></ul> <p> <b>Incomplete Network Infrastructure</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• High-voltage transmission infrastructure has already been installed in some locations.</li><li>• However, low-voltage reticulation networks required to connect villages and households remain incomplete.</li><li>• Communities remain without electricity despite network infrastructure being located nearby.</li><li>• Completion of low-voltage networks is necessary before household connections can proceed.</li></ul> <p> <b>Household Electrification Delays</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• House wiring and customer connection works cannot commence until low-voltage infrastructure is completed and energised.</li><li>• Residents continue to experience delays in accessing reliable electricity services.</li></ul> |  |
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# ECONOMIC AFFAIRS COMMITTEE

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|  |  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Project implementation delays have affected community expectations and development opportunities.</li></ul> <p> <b>Phased Project Implementation</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Some electrification projects have been implemented in phases due to limited funding availability.</li><li>• Initial works have been completed in certain areas while subsequent phases remain on hold awaiting funding support.</li><li>• Communities have expressed concerns regarding uncertainty surrounding project completion dates.</li></ul> <p> <b>Project Monitoring and Management</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• The Committee identified the need for improved tracking of completed, ongoing and pending rural electrification projects.</li><li>• Better visibility of project status would support planning, budgeting and prioritisation processes.</li><li>• Accurate records would improve transparency and accountability in project implementation.</li></ul> <p> <b>Importance of Rural Electrification</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Reliable electricity is essential for improving the quality of life in rural communities.</li></ul> |  |
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# ECONOMIC AFFAIRS COMMITTEE

## NORTHERN DIVISION SITE VISIT SUMMARY

### Monday 31 August 2026 – Friday 4 September 2026

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|  |  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Electrification supports:<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>○ Economic development;</li><li>○ Educational opportunities;</li><li>○ Improved household wellbeing;</li><li>○ Community services; and</li><li>○ Social development.</li></ul></li><li>• The Committee recognised the importance of accelerating electrification projects to support rural development objectives.</li></ul> <p> <b>Committee Findings</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Finding: Several rural electrification projects are implementation-ready but remain delayed due to funding constraints.</li><li>• Finding: Some project quotations have remained outstanding since 2020, highlighting the need for urgent funding intervention.</li><li>• Finding: Existing high-voltage infrastructure is underutilised where low-voltage reticulation works have not been completed.</li></ul> |  |
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# ECONOMIC AFFAIRS COMMITTEE

## NORTHERN DIVISION SITE VISIT SUMMARY

### Monday 31 August 2026 – Friday 4 September 2026

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|                                 |                                                                                                                                                                 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Finding: Updated project costings are required to reflect current construction and infrastructure costs.</li> <li>Finding: A consolidated assessment of funding requirements is necessary to address the backlog of pending projects.</li> <li>Finding: Improved coordination between Energy Fiji Limited (EFL) and the Department of Energy is essential to improve project implementation and monitoring.</li> <li>Finding: Increased budget allocations and alternative funding sources should be explored to accelerate rural electrification across affected communities.</li> <li>Finding: Completion of low-voltage distribution networks should be prioritised in areas where high-voltage infrastructure has already been established.</li> </ul> |  |
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| 2 September 2026<br>(Wednesday) | <b>Rural Electrification SA01-18 – [DAWARA]</b><br><br>Vunidawamoli, Natuvu & Natua<br><br><b>Rural Electrification SA07-18 –</b> Waisali Village & Settlements | <b>Vunidawamoli Electrification Project</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The project quotation was received in 2022.</li> <li>The project consists of 112 applicants.</li> <li>Approximately 60 houses have been wired, with works currently in progress.</li> <li>The contract was awarded to Moons Electronic.</li> </ul>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                             |  |

# ECONOMIC AFFAIRS COMMITTEE

## NORTHERN DIVISION SITE VISIT SUMMARY

**Monday 31 August 2026 – Friday 4 September 2026**

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|  |  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Funding for the project was released in July 2023.</li><li>• The tender was subsequently awarded to Moons Electronic in 2025.</li><li>• The project is expected to be completed by September 2026.</li><li>• Community members sought clarification regarding the time lapse between funding approval and project implementation.</li></ul> <p><b>Wasali Electrification Project</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• The Wasali project is expected to be completed by December 2026.</li><li>• Concerns were raised regarding contractor requirements for accommodation and logistical support within the village.</li><li>• Villagers raised concerns about various implementation and communication issues affecting project progress.</li><li>• It was noted that contractors should make their own arrangements in accordance with contract requirements and project obligations.</li><li>• Community members highlighted concerns regarding the contractor's interaction with village resources.</li></ul> <p><b>Nabalebale Electrification Project</b></p> |  |
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# ECONOMIC AFFAIRS COMMITTEE

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|  |  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Full payment for the project has already been made to Energy Fiji Limited (EFL).</li><li>• The contractor engaged for the works is Tanoa Electrical.</li><li>• The tender has been awarded and project implementation is expected to proceed in accordance with contractual timelines.</li><li>• Officials advised that penalty provisions apply where contractors fail to complete works within the agreed timeframe.</li></ul> <p><b>Contractor Management Issues</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Concerns were raised regarding delays in mobilisation and implementation by some contractors.</li><li>• Members were advised that contractual penalties may be imposed where contractors fail to meet project delivery deadlines.</li><li>• Greater monitoring and oversight of contractor performance was identified as necessary to ensure timely project completion.</li></ul> <p><b>Village Governance and Coordination</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Concerns were raised regarding coordination and communication between government agencies and villages.</li></ul> |  |
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# ECONOMIC AFFAIRS COMMITTEE

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|  |  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• It was suggested that the iTaukei Affairs Board/Ministry should play a greater role in coordinating communication and implementation of development projects within villages.</li><li>• Improved engagement with village leadership structures was identified as important for project delivery and stakeholder management.</li></ul> <p><b>Community Resource Management</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Concerns were raised regarding the use of village resources during project implementation.</li><li>• It was emphasised that trees and other natural resources within village boundaries belong to the village and landowners.</li><li>• Contractors should not remove or utilize village resources without prior approval from the relevant landowners and village authorities.</li></ul> <p><b>Nakilini Community Concerns</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Community members advised that they are willing to pay for electricity services and connections.</li><li>• Residents requested clear information regarding:<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>○ The application process;</li><li>○ Eligibility requirements;</li></ul></li></ul> |  |
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**ECONOMIC AFFAIRS COMMITTEE**

**NORTHERN DIVISION SITE VISIT SUMMARY**

**Monday 31 August 2026 – Friday 4 September 2026**

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|  |  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>○ Connection procedures; and</li><li>○ Associated costs.</li><li>• Community members expressed a strong interest in being connected to the electricity network and requested assistance in progressing their applications.</li></ul> <p><b>🗨️ Committee Findings</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Finding: The delay between funding approval and project implementation requires further examination to improve project delivery efficiency.</li><li>• Finding: Stronger contractor monitoring mechanisms are required to ensure adherence to project timelines.</li><li>• Finding: Community engagement and communication should be strengthened throughout all stages of project implementation.</li><li>• Finding: Greater involvement of the iTaukei Affairs framework may assist in coordinating development projects in rural villages.</li><li>• Finding: Clear guidance should be provided to communities such as Nakilini on the process and requirements for obtaining electricity connections.</li></ul> |  |
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|                                |                                                                              | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Finding: Contractors must respect village resources and obtain appropriate approvals before utilizing any community-owned assets.</li> </ul>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                       |  |
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| 3 September 2026<br>(Thursday) | <b>Rural Electrification</b> LAB14-15<br>– Nuaa, Drawa & Lutukina Settlement | <p> <b>Project Status and Funding</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Government funding of \$269,752 for the Nuaa Settlement Rural Electrification Project was paid to Energy Fiji Limited (EFL) on 30 May 2022.</li> <li>Despite funding being released, the project took approximately three years to reach its current stage.</li> <li>The electrification infrastructure has now been connected to the main grid; however, some household connections remain outstanding.</li> <li>Members stressed that once funding is disbursed, implementation should proceed within a reasonable timeframe and tangible results should be delivered to communities.</li> <li>The key concern raised was that funds had been provided, but project delivery and service outcomes were significantly delayed.</li> </ul> <p> <b>Contractor Performance and Capacity Issues</b></p> |  |

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|  |  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• The project was initially awarded to Tanoa Electrical.</li><li>• Members were informed that the contractor's engagement was subsequently terminated.</li><li>• It was noted that the contractor was undertaking works in Mali and Vorovoro Island, impacting its capacity to deliver the project on schedule.</li><li>• Following the contractor's termination, EFL assumed responsibility for undertaking and progressing the project.</li><li>• EFL advised that contractor shortages remain a challenge within the Northern Division.</li><li>• Members were informed that only approximately three contractors operate within the Labasa area for rural electrification projects.</li><li>• Contractors undertaking multiple projects simultaneously continue to contribute to implementation delays.</li></ul> <p> <b>Lack of Monitoring and Oversight</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Serious concerns were raised regarding the lack of a formal monitoring system for rural electrification projects.</li><li>• Members noted that projects are funded and approved but are not consistently monitored until completion.</li></ul> |  |
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# ECONOMIC AFFAIRS COMMITTEE

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|  |  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• The Department of Energy was reported to rely largely on reports from EFL rather than independent field verification.</li><li>• It was suggested that Provincial Administrators (PAs), Roko Tuis and other local government officials should be actively involved in monitoring project implementation.</li><li>• Members observed that there is currently no structured system to monitor project progress from funding approval to project completion.</li></ul> <p> <b>Weak Coordination Between Agencies</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Members identified a lack of coordination between agencies involved in rural electrification projects.</li><li>• Concerns were raised that internal divisions of the Department of Energy often organise meetings independently, resulting in fragmented communication.</li><li>• Local Department of Energy representatives are frequently unaware of project progress and implementation updates.</li><li>• EFL reporting is submitted directly to Headquarters in Suva, limiting information flow to officers operating in the field.</li><li>• Local Department of Energy officers, Provincial Offices and Divisional Offices are not consistently included in project reporting and updates.</li></ul> |  |
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### Monday 31 August 2026 – Friday 4 September 2026

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|  |  | <div> <b>Proposal for Joint Monitoring Visits</b></div> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• It was proposed that Roko Tuis, Provincial Administrators, Department of Energy officials and EFL representatives undertake joint monitoring visits to project sites.</li><li>• Joint inspections would strengthen:<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>○ Monitoring and accountability;</li><li>○ Community engagement;</li><li>○ Information sharing; and</li><li>○ Early identification of project challenges.</li></ul></li><li>• Members agreed that a collaborative approach would improve project implementation and reporting.</li></ul> <div> <b>Community Communication Concerns</b></div> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Community members were not adequately informed of the Parliamentary Committee's visit.</li><li>• Communities reported receiving limited information regarding project status, expected completion dates and implementation challenges.</li><li>• Poor communication has contributed to frustration and misconceptions regarding Government commitment to rural electrification.</li></ul> |  |
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# ECONOMIC AFFAIRS COMMITTEE

## NORTHERN DIVISION SITE VISIT SUMMARY

Monday 31 August 2026 – Friday 4 September 2026

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|  |  | <p> <b>Outstanding Electrification Applications</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Several nearby communities, including Naua, Nakacagi and Natua, have electrification applications that remain outstanding.</li><li>• Some projects have received quotations but remain unfunded, while others have expired due to implementation delays.</li><li>• Members highlighted the need to prioritise long-standing applications and address electrification backlogs.</li></ul> <p> <b>Balelawa Electrification Project</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Members were informed that the Balelawa Electrification Project dates back to 2017.</li><li>• The original quotation has now expired.</li><li>• The estimated project cost is approximately \$1.4 million.</li><li>• Concerns were raised regarding prolonged delays and the need for updated quotations and funding consideration.</li></ul> <p> <b>Committee Findings</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Finding: Funding was released in 2022; however, project implementation and delivery did not occur within a reasonable timeframe.</li></ul> |  |
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# ECONOMIC AFFAIRS COMMITTEE

## NORTHERN DIVISION SITE VISIT SUMMARY

**Monday 31 August 2026 – Friday 4 September 2026**

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|  |  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Finding: There is a lack of effective monitoring and accountability mechanisms for funded rural electrification projects.</li><li>• Finding: Local Department of Energy representatives are not consistently informed of project reporting submitted directly to EFL Headquarters.</li><li>• Finding: Stronger coordination is required between EFL, the Department of Energy, Provincial Offices, Divisional Offices and local stakeholders.</li><li>• Finding: Joint monitoring visits involving EFL, the Department of Energy, Provincial Administrators and Roko Tuis should be institutionalised to improve oversight.</li><li>• Finding: Contractor shortages and contractor performance issues continue to affect the timely delivery of rural electrification projects.</li><li>• Finding: The primary issue identified is not the allocation of funding, but the timely implementation, monitoring and completion of funded projects.</li><li>• Finding: Long-outstanding projects such as Balelawa require urgent review, updated costing and prioritisation.</li><li>• Finding: Improved community communication is necessary to maintain public confidence in Government development programmes.</li></ul> |  |
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# ECONOMIC AFFAIRS COMMITTEE

## NORTHERN DIVISION SITE VISIT SUMMARY

### Monday 31 August 2026 – Friday 4 September 2026

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|                                |                                                    | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Finding: Greater accountability should be applied to ensure that projects funded through public resources are completed within approved timelines.</li> </ul>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                              |  |
| 3 September 2026<br>(Thursday) | Meeting with Seaqaqa Cane Growers - At Police Bure | <p> <b>Retention of the Ministry of Sugar</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Farmers strongly supported retaining a dedicated Ministry of Sugar rather than merging it with the Ministry of Agriculture.</li> <li>It was emphasized that the sugar industry requires specialised policy attention due to its economic significance and unique challenges.</li> <li>Participants stressed that leaders and decision-makers within the sector should possess practical knowledge and experience in the sugar industry.</li> </ul> <p> <b>Low Cane Prices and Profitability Challenges</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Farmers expressed concerns that current cane prices are insufficient to cover production costs.</li> <li>Rising costs continue to place financial pressure on growers, including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Labour costs;</li> <li>Harvesting expenses;</li> <li>Fuel costs;</li> </ul> </li> </ul> |  |

# ECONOMIC AFFAIRS COMMITTEE

## NORTHERN DIVISION SITE VISIT SUMMARY

Monday 31 August 2026 – Friday 4 September 2026

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|  |  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>○ Fertiliser costs;</li><li>○ Transportation costs;</li><li>○ Land lease payments; and</li><li>○ Farm machinery expenses.</li></ul> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Many growers indicated that profit margins have continued to decline in recent years.</li></ul> <p> Labour Shortages</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Labour shortages were consistently raised as one of the most significant challenges facing the sugar industry.</li><li>• Farmers reported difficulties in securing sufficient labour for planting, maintenance, harvesting and loading activities.</li><li>• Large volumes of cane reportedly remain unharvested due to labour constraints.</li><li>• Participants strongly supported greater mechanisation to address workforce shortages.</li></ul> <p> Mechanisation and Farm Modernisation</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Farmers called for increased access to modern harvesting and farming equipment.</li></ul> |  |
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# ECONOMIC AFFAIRS COMMITTEE

## NORTHERN DIVISION SITE VISIT SUMMARY

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|  |  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Greater investment in mechanisation was viewed as critical to improving productivity and reducing reliance on manual labour.</li><li>• There were requests for improved access to:<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>○ Tractors;</li><li>○ Harvesters;</li><li>○ Trucks; and</li><li>○ Modern farm implements. <a href="#">[Meeting wi...rs seaqaga   Word]</a></li></ul></li></ul> <p> Sugar Cane Growers Fund (SCGF)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Farmers acknowledged the support provided by the Sugar Cane Growers Fund (SCGF).</li><li>• Concerns were raised that existing loan limits are inadequate to purchase modern agricultural equipment.</li><li>• Calls were made for:<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>○ Increased loan ceilings;</li><li>○ More flexible lending conditions;</li><li>○ Lower interest arrangements; and</li><li>○ Additional financial assistance programmes.</li></ul></li></ul> |  |
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# ECONOMIC AFFAIRS COMMITTEE

## NORTHERN DIVISION SITE VISIT SUMMARY

### Monday 31 August 2026 – Friday 4 September 2026

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|  |  | <div> Land Tenure and Access to Agricultural Land</div> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Farmers highlighted concerns regarding long-term security of agricultural leases.</li><li>• Concerns were raised that productive cane land is increasingly being converted to non-agricultural purposes.</li><li>• Stakeholders stressed that secure land tenure is necessary to encourage long-term investment and maintain production levels.</li></ul> <div> Sugar Mill Operations and Efficiency</div> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Participants expressed concerns regarding the age and condition of existing sugar mills.</li><li>• Frequent mill breakdowns and operational stoppages were reported to impact harvesting schedules and farmer returns.</li><li>• Farmers called for:<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>○ Modernisation of mill infrastructure;</li><li>○ Improved maintenance programmes; and</li><li>○ Greater operational efficiency.</li></ul></li></ul> <div> Industry Diversification and Value-Added Production</div> |  |
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# ECONOMIC AFFAIRS COMMITTEE

## NORTHERN DIVISION SITE VISIT SUMMARY

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|  |  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Stakeholders supported moving beyond the production of raw sugar.</li><li>• Opportunities identified included:<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>○ Refined sugar production;</li><li>○ Ethanol production;</li><li>○ Sustainable aviation fuel; and</li><li>○ Other value-added sugar products.</li></ul></li><li>• Farmers indicated that diversification would strengthen industry sustainability and create additional revenue streams.</li></ul> <p> Infrastructure Challenges</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Farmers raised concerns regarding poor infrastructure in cane-growing areas.</li><li>• Key issues included:<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>○ Poor road conditions;</li><li>○ Inadequate water supply systems; and</li><li>○ Gaps in rural electrification services.</li></ul></li><li>• These challenges continue to increase farm operating costs and affect productivity.</li></ul> |  |
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# ECONOMIC AFFAIRS COMMITTEE

## NORTHERN DIVISION SITE VISIT SUMMARY

### Monday 31 August 2026 – Friday 4 September 2026

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|  |  | <div> Financial Pressures on Farmers</div> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Farmers highlighted ongoing difficulties in meeting loan repayment obligations.</li><li>• Delays in cane payments were reported to create cash-flow challenges.</li><li>• Stakeholders requested that lending institutions adopt more flexible arrangements for farmers experiencing financial hardship.</li></ul> <div> Accountability and Government Assistance</div> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Participants acknowledged Government assistance programmes supporting the sugar industry.</li><li>• Concerns were raised regarding:<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>○ Programme administration;</li><li>○ Monitoring of assistance;</li><li>○ Effectiveness of subsidies; and</li><li>○ Delivery of intended outcomes.</li></ul></li><li>• Farmers stressed the importance of ensuring assistance reaches intended beneficiaries and achieves measurable results.</li></ul> |  |
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# ECONOMIC AFFAIRS COMMITTEE

## NORTHERN DIVISION SITE VISIT SUMMARY

Monday 31 August 2026 – Friday 4 September 2026

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|  |  | <p>👁️ Committee Findings</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Finding: Labour shortages remain one of the primary challenges affecting sugar production and harvesting activities.</li><li>• Finding: Current cane prices and rising production costs continue to affect farmer profitability.</li><li>• Finding: Increased mechanisation is required to improve productivity and address labour constraints.</li><li>• Finding: Existing SCGF loan limits may not adequately meet the capital requirements of modern farming operations.</li><li>• Finding: Land tenure security remains critical to sustaining long-term investment and production within the sugar sector.</li><li>• Finding: Modernisation of sugar mills is necessary to improve efficiency and minimise disruptions to harvesting operations.</li><li>• Finding: Diversification into value-added sugar products presents opportunities to improve industry resilience and profitability.</li><li>• Finding: Improvements to rural infrastructure, particularly roads, water supply and electrification, would support increased productivity in cane-growing communities.</li></ul> |  |
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# ECONOMIC AFFAIRS COMMITTEE

## NORTHERN DIVISION SITE VISIT SUMMARY

Monday 31 August 2026 – Friday 4 September 2026

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|  |  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Finding: Greater accountability and monitoring of government-supported programmes are necessary to ensure effective use of public resources.</li><li>• Finding: Stakeholders remain committed to the sugar industry but believe substantial reforms are required to secure its long-term sustainability and competitiveness.</li></ul> <p> <b>Ministry of Sugar Industry</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Strong support was expressed for retaining a dedicated <b>Ministry of Sugar Industry</b>.</li><li>• Farmers opposed the merging of the sugar portfolio with other ministries, noting that the industry requires specialised attention and focused policy direction.</li><li>• Concerns were raised that the sugar industry may lose prominence if managed under a broader agricultural framework.</li><li>• Farmers stressed that decision-makers within the Ministry should possess practical knowledge and experience of the sugar industry.</li><li>• Calls were made for the Ministry to play a stronger role in monitoring industry agencies and ensuring accountability for industry outcomes.</li></ul> |  |
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# ECONOMIC AFFAIRS COMMITTEE

## NORTHERN DIVISION SITE VISIT SUMMARY

Monday 31 August 2026 – Friday 4 September 2026

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|  |  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Farmers requested greater engagement between the Ministry and cane-growing communities.</li></ul> <p> <b>Sugar Cane Growers Fund (SCGF)</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Farmers acknowledged the assistance provided through SCGF loan facilities.</li><li>• Concerns were raised that loan limits are insufficient given the rising cost of farm machinery and equipment.</li><li>• Farmers requested an increase in loan ceilings for:<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>○ Tractors;</li><li>○ Mechanical harvesters;</li><li>○ Cane trucks;</li><li>○ Farm implements; and</li><li>○ Land development activities.</li></ul></li><li>• Interest rates and repayment arrangements were raised as concerns by some farmers.</li><li>• Farmers requested more flexible repayment options, particularly during poor crop seasons.</li><li>• Concerns were raised regarding delays in loan approvals and processing.</li></ul> |  |
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# ECONOMIC AFFAIRS COMMITTEE

## NORTHERN DIVISION SITE VISIT SUMMARY

### Monday 31 August 2026 – Friday 4 September 2026

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|                                |                                       | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Calls were made for SCGF to expand assistance programmes to attract younger farmers into the sugar industry.</li> </ul> <p> <b>Sugar Industry Tribunal (SIT)</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Farmers raised concerns regarding delays in the resolution of cane industry disputes.</li> <li>• Issues relating to cane contracts, land tenure disputes, and industry grievances were highlighted.</li> <li>• Concerns were expressed regarding accessibility of Tribunal services, particularly for farmers in remote areas.</li> <li>• Farmers requested more awareness and education about the role and functions of the Tribunal.</li> <li>• Calls were made for faster processing and determination of disputes affecting farmers.</li> <li>• Stakeholders emphasised the importance of maintaining an independent Tribunal to safeguard the rights and interests of growers.</li> <li>• The need for stronger enforcement of Tribunal decisions was also raised during discussions.</li> </ul> |  |
| 3 September 2026<br>(Thursday) | <b>EFL Visit</b> - Seaqaqa Solar Site | <p><b>Discussion</b></p> <p>The Committee conducted a site visit to the proposed renewable energy development site at Korovuli, Seaqaqa to inspect the project</p>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                            |  |

# ECONOMIC AFFAIRS COMMITTEE

## NORTHERN DIVISION SITE VISIT SUMMARY

Monday 31 August 2026 – Friday 4 September 2026

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|  |  | <p>area and receive briefings from project representatives and stakeholders regarding the proposed solar energy development. Discussions focused on project ownership and management, land allocation, environmental approval requirements, generation capacity, battery storage infrastructure, climate change considerations, and project implementation timelines.</p> <p><b>Project Ownership and Management</b></p> <p>The Committee was informed that the project is being developed through private sector investment and forms part of ongoing efforts to expand renewable energy generation capacity. Project stakeholders advised that technical oversight and project management responsibilities are currently being led by a Japanese project manager representing the investors. It was noted that strong collaboration between investors, technical experts, and relevant authorities will be essential to ensure successful project implementation and delivery.</p> <p><b>Project Scope and Land Allocation</b></p> <p>Project representatives briefed the Committee on the proposed site boundaries and land allocation arrangements. The Committee was informed that the development area extends from the existing power plant towards the southern section of the site and continues to the creek boundary. It was further noted that certain portions of land, including an existing residential property, will be excluded from the project area and managed separately under an alternative lease arrangement. Stakeholders highlighted the importance of clearly defining and demarcating all project boundaries prior to the</p> |  |
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## NORTHERN DIVISION SITE VISIT SUMMARY

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|  |  | <p>commencement of construction activities to avoid future land-related disputes.</p> <p><b>Environmental and Regulatory Approvals</b></p> <p>The Committee was advised that the Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) process is currently underway as part of the project's regulatory approval requirements. Stakeholders noted that land permitting processes are progressing and are anticipated to be completed by January. Subject to the completion of all relevant approvals and permits, site preparation and construction activities are expected to commence shortly thereafter. The Committee noted that compliance with all environmental, regulatory, and permitting requirements remains a critical prerequisite for project implementation.</p> <p><b>Generation and Battery Storage Capacity</b></p> <p>The Committee received a detailed briefing on the proposed generation and energy storage capacity of the facility. It was noted that the solar energy project is expected to generate approximately 12 megawatts (MW) of electricity during daylight hours. In addition, the project will incorporate a 6 MW battery storage system designed to store excess energy generated during the day for distribution during evening periods and other non-generating hours. Stakeholders advised that the proposed generation capacity is significantly larger than similar projects currently operating within neighbouring areas</p> |  |
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# ECONOMIC AFFAIRS COMMITTEE

## NORTHERN DIVISION SITE VISIT SUMMARY

**Monday 31 August 2026 – Friday 4 September 2026**

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|  |  | <p>and will substantially contribute towards meeting regional electricity demand while strengthening energy security.</p> <p><b>Climate Change Considerations</b></p> <p>The Committee and stakeholders discussed the increasing impacts of climate change on infrastructure development and energy planning. Concerns were raised regarding changing rainfall patterns, weather variability, and other climate-related risks that may affect long-term project sustainability. Stakeholders emphasised the importance of incorporating climate resilience measures into project planning, engineering design, and operational frameworks to ensure the infrastructure remains resilient and adaptable to future environmental challenges.</p> <p><b>Project Implementation and Delivery</b></p> <p>The Committee was informed that, following the completion of all necessary regulatory approvals and permitting processes, the project is expected to proceed to construction and implementation phases. Stakeholders indicated that the anticipated project completion period is approximately 12 months following commencement of construction works. The importance of maintaining regular project monitoring, reporting mechanisms, and stakeholder engagement throughout implementation was highlighted to ensure that project milestones and delivery targets are achieved.</p> <p><b>Committee Observations</b></p> |  |
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## NORTHERN DIVISION SITE VISIT SUMMARY

Monday 31 August 2026 – Friday 4 September 2026

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|                                        |                                                                                                      | <p>In concluding discussions, the Committee noted that the proposed renewable energy development represents a significant investment in sustainable energy infrastructure and has the potential to improve electricity reliability, strengthen regional energy security, and contribute towards national development objectives. The Committee further noted that successful implementation will depend on the timely completion of environmental and regulatory approvals, finalisation of land and lease arrangements, effective coordination among stakeholders, sound environmental management practices, and the incorporation of climate-resilient infrastructure measures throughout the project lifecycle.</p> |  |
| <p>3 September 2026<br/>(Thursday)</p> | <p><b>Rural Electrification</b> LAB36-18<br/>– Dradramea &amp; Korolevu<br/>Settlements, Seaqaqa</p> | <p> Long-Standing Rural Electrification Application</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Community applications for electricity access date back to 1999.</li><li>• Residents have been pursuing electrification for more than 20 years.</li><li>• Approximately 55 households remain without electricity despite the presence of nearby power infrastructure.</li><li>• Community members expressed frustration over the lengthy delays and repeated follow-ups without implementation.</li></ul> <p> Funding Constraints</p>              |  |

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|  |  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• The project has been technically assessed and costed by Energy Fiji Limited (EFL).</li><li>• The estimated cost of the project is between \$940,000 and \$1 million.</li><li>• No current budget allocation exists for the project.</li><li>• Funding remains the primary reason for the delay in implementation.</li><li>• Community members questioned why the project continues to remain outstanding despite years of assessments and consultations.</li></ul> <p> Escalation of Project Costs</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Members were informed that project costs have increased significantly over time.</li><li>• Rising prices of materials, transportation and construction services have contributed to higher project costs.</li><li>• Continued delays are expected to result in further cost escalations.</li><li>• Members noted that delays in funding approvals create greater financial pressure on future project implementation.</li></ul> <p> Infrastructure Requirements</p> |  |
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|  |  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• The project requires substantial network extensions and infrastructure development.</li><li>• Required works include:<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>○ Installation of additional power poles;</li><li>○ Extension of 11kV high-voltage lines;</li><li>○ Installation of a transformer;</li><li>○ Construction of low-voltage distribution lines; and</li><li>○ Household service connections.</li></ul></li><li>• EFL advised that existing nearby power lines cannot simply be extended due to voltage drop and technical limitations.</li></ul> <p> Previous Community Contributions</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Community members advised that payments and contributions had previously been made towards electrification works.</li><li>• Concerns were raised that historical records relating to those payments could not be properly accounted for due to administrative changes over time.</li><li>• Residents requested clarification regarding the status of previous financial contributions.</li></ul> |  |
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|  |  | <div> Landowner and Easement Issues</div> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• The project will require consent from affected landowners and cane farmers.</li><li>• Easement agreements and access approvals must be secured prior to the commencement of construction works.</li><li>• Early engagement with stakeholders was identified as necessary to avoid future delays.</li></ul> <div> Lack of Clear Implementation Timeline</div> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Neither EFL nor the Department of Energy was able to provide a definitive commencement date for the project.</li><li>• No completion timeframe has been established.</li><li>• Implementation remains dependent on future funding allocations and procurement processes.</li></ul> <div> Community Concerns</div> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Residents expressed dissatisfaction with repeated surveys and consultations that have not resulted in project implementation.</li><li>• Community members requested clear information regarding:<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>◦ Whether the project will be funded;</li></ul></li></ul> |  |
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|  |  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>○ When works will commence; and</li><li>○ The expected completion timeline.</li></ul> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Concerns were raised regarding growing uncertainty and declining confidence in government development programmes.</li></ul> <p> Committee Findings</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Finding: Dradramea Settlement has been waiting for rural electrification for more than two decades despite multiple applications and assessments.</li><li>• Finding: Funding constraints remain the principal obstacle preventing project implementation.</li><li>• Finding: Continued delays have significantly increased project costs from original estimates.</li><li>• Finding: Repeated assessments without implementation have contributed to community frustration and reduced confidence in project delivery.</li><li>• Finding: Greater transparency is required regarding project prioritisation, funding decisions and implementation schedules.</li></ul> |  |
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# ECONOMIC AFFAIRS COMMITTEE

## NORTHERN DIVISION SITE VISIT SUMMARY

### Monday 31 August 2026 – Friday 4 September 2026

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|                           |                                                        | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Finding: Long-outstanding projects should be prioritised to prevent further cost escalation and prolonged hardship for communities.</li> <li>Finding: Early engagement with landowners and cane farmers is necessary to ensure that land access requirements do not delay future implementation.</li> <li>Finding: Stronger coordination between the Department of Energy, Energy Fiji Limited (EFL), Divisional Offices, Provincial Authorities and the Commissioner's Office is required to improve project monitoring and delivery.</li> <li>Finding: Communities should receive regular updates on the status of their applications, funding approvals and project timelines to improve transparency and manage expectations.</li> <li>Finding: A national review of long-pending rural electrification projects should be undertaken to identify projects requiring urgent funding and implementation support.</li> </ul> |  |
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| 4 September 2026 (Friday) | Meeting with Labasa Cane Growers at FSC Training Room. |  <b>Sugar Industry Remains Important but Faces Significant Challenges</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Farmers strongly emphasised that the sugar industry remains a critical contributor to Fiji's economy and rural livelihoods.</li> </ul>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                            |  |

# ECONOMIC AFFAIRS COMMITTEE

## NORTHERN DIVISION SITE VISIT SUMMARY

Monday 31 August 2026 – Friday 4 September 2026

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|  |  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• The industry continues to support thousands of farmers, workers, transport operators and businesses.</li><li>• Stakeholders agreed that the industry should be sustained but requires urgent reform to address declining productivity and profitability.</li><li>• Concerns were raised regarding the ongoing financial challenges faced by Fiji Sugar Corporation (FSC) and its continued reliance on Government support.</li><li>• Farmers expressed concern that cane production has continued to decline across many farming districts.</li></ul> <p> <b>Ministry of Sugar Industry</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Farmers strongly supported retaining a dedicated Ministry of Sugar Industry.</li><li>• Concerns were raised that the sugar industry requires specialised attention and should not lose priority within Government.</li><li>• Farmers stressed that industry leadership should possess practical knowledge and experience of the sugar sector.</li><li>• Questions were raised regarding the effectiveness of the Ministry's oversight and coordination role.</li></ul> |  |
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# ECONOMIC AFFAIRS COMMITTEE

## NORTHERN DIVISION SITE VISIT SUMMARY

Monday 31 August 2026 – Friday 4 September 2026

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|  |  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Stakeholders called for stronger monitoring of industry agencies and programmes.</li><li>• Farmers requested more regular engagement and consultations between the Ministry and sugarcane growers.</li></ul> <p> <b>Rising Costs and Low Farmer Returns</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Farmers advised that cane prices have not increased proportionately with rising production costs.</li><li>• Major cost pressures identified included:<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>○ Harvesting costs;</li><li>○ Transportation costs;</li><li>○ Labour shortages;</li><li>○ Fertiliser costs;</li><li>○ Farm input costs;</li><li>○ Fuel costs;</li><li>○ Machinery costs; and</li><li>○ Land lease expenses.</li></ul></li><li>• Many farmers stated that current returns are insufficient to make farming financially sustainable.</li></ul> |  |
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# ECONOMIC AFFAIRS COMMITTEE

## NORTHERN DIVISION SITE VISIT SUMMARY

Monday 31 August 2026 – Friday 4 September 2026

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|  |  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Some farmers indicated that profit margins continue to decline despite increases in production efforts.</li></ul> <p> <b>Sugar Pricing Transparency</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Farmers repeatedly raised concerns regarding a lack of transparency in the cane payment system.</li><li>• Concerns included:<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>○ Cane payment calculations;</li><li>○ Sugar pricing formulas;</li><li>○ Revenue distribution mechanisms; and</li><li>○ FSC operational costs.</li></ul></li><li>• Farmers requested regular disclosure of:<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>○ Sugar sale prices;</li><li>○ Export earnings;</li><li>○ Market performance;</li><li>○ Revenue received; and</li><li>○ How proceeds are distributed within the industry.</li></ul></li><li>• Stakeholders stressed that increased transparency would improve trust and confidence in the industry.</li></ul> |  |
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# ECONOMIC AFFAIRS COMMITTEE

## NORTHERN DIVISION SITE VISIT SUMMARY

### Monday 31 August 2026 – Friday 4 September 2026

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|  |  | <p> <b>Sugar Industry Tribunal (SIT)</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Farmers expressed strong dissatisfaction regarding the effectiveness of the Sugar Industry Tribunal (SIT).</li><li>• Concerns raised included:<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>○ Slow dispute resolution processes;</li><li>○ Delays in addressing farmer complaints;</li><li>○ Inadequate mediation services; and</li><li>○ Limited responsiveness to industry disputes.</li></ul></li><li>• Farmers indicated that disputes involving harvesters, contractors and growers often remain unresolved for extended periods.</li><li>• Questions were raised regarding whether the Tribunal remains fit for purpose under its current structure.</li><li>• Stakeholders called for a comprehensive review of the Tribunal's functions and performance.</li><li>• Farmers emphasised the importance of maintaining an effective and independent dispute resolution mechanism.</li></ul> <p> <b>Sugar Cane Growers Fund (SCGF)</b></p> |  |
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# ECONOMIC AFFAIRS COMMITTEE

## NORTHERN DIVISION SITE VISIT SUMMARY

Monday 31 August 2026 – Friday 4 September 2026

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|  |  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Farmers acknowledged the important role of the Sugar Cane Growers Fund (SCGF) in supporting growers.</li><li>• Concerns were raised regarding:<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>○ Loan interest rates;</li><li>○ Accessibility of financing;</li><li>○ Lending conditions; and</li><li>○ Processing requirements.</li></ul></li><li>• Some farmers perceived that the Fund had become more focused on revenue generation than farmer support.</li><li>• Farmers requested:<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>○ Reduced interest rates;</li><li>○ Increased loan ceilings;</li><li>○ More flexible repayment arrangements; and</li><li>○ Greater support for diversification activities.</li></ul></li><li>• Participants encouraged the Fund to expand assistance programmes that support farm development and mechanisation.</li></ul> |  |
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 **Land Issues and Lease Security**

**ECONOMIC AFFAIRS COMMITTEE**

**NORTHERN DIVISION SITE VISIT SUMMARY**

**Monday 31 August 2026 – Friday 4 September 2026**

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|  |  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Land tenure uncertainty remains a major concern for farmers.</li><li>• Issues raised included:<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>○ Rising lease premiums;</li><li>○ Lease renewal delays;</li><li>○ Uncertainty over long-term access to agricultural land; and</li><li>○ Limited engagement with landowners.</li></ul></li><li>• Farmers stressed that secure land tenure is critical for long-term investment and sustainable production.</li><li>• Stakeholders called for greater involvement of landowners in future industry planning processes.</li></ul> <p> <b>Weak Coordination Among Sugar Institutions</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Concerns were raised regarding duplication of roles among:<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>○ Ministry of Sugar Industry;</li><li>○ Sugar Industry Tribunal;</li><li>○ Sugar Cane Growers Fund;</li><li>○ Sugar Cane Growers Council; and</li><li>○ Fiji Sugar Corporation.</li></ul></li></ul> |  |
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# ECONOMIC AFFAIRS COMMITTEE

## NORTHERN DIVISION SITE VISIT SUMMARY

Monday 31 August 2026 – Friday 4 September 2026

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|  |  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Farmers noted a lack of coordination among industry institutions.</li><li>• Participants stated that poor coordination contributes to inefficiencies and delays in service delivery.</li><li>• Calls were made for better collaboration and information-sharing across all industry stakeholders.</li></ul> <p> <b>Sugar Research and Extension Services</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Farmers questioned the effectiveness of the Sugar Research Institute of Fiji (SRIF).</li><li>• Many farmers reported limited awareness of research findings and improved cane varieties.</li><li>• Concerns were raised regarding the gap between research activities and practical benefits reaching growers.</li><li>• <b>Farmers requested stronger extension services and farmer outreach programmes.</b></li></ul> <p> <b>Youth Participation and Labour Challenges</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Farmers expressed concern that young people are increasingly reluctant to enter the sugar industry.</li><li>• Factors contributing to declining youth participation include:<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>○ Low profitability;</li></ul></li></ul> |  |
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**ECONOMIC AFFAIRS COMMITTEE**

**NORTHERN DIVISION SITE VISIT SUMMARY**

**Monday 31 August 2026 – Friday 4 September 2026**

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|  |  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>○ High operating costs;</li><li>○ Labour-intensive farming practices; and</li><li>○ Uncertainty about the future of the industry.</li><li>• Stakeholders suggested targeted incentives to encourage youth participation in agriculture.</li></ul> <p> <b>Mechanisation and Modernisation</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Greater mechanisation was identified as a priority for industry sustainability.</li><li>• Farmers requested increased support for:<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>○ Harvesters;</li><li>○ Planters;</li><li>○ Tractors;</li><li>○ Fertiliser applicators; and</li><li>○ Other modern farming equipment.</li></ul></li><li>• Mechanisation was viewed as essential to addressing labour shortages and improving productivity.</li></ul> <p> <b>Diversification and Industry Development</b></p> |  |
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# ECONOMIC AFFAIRS COMMITTEE

## NORTHERN DIVISION SITE VISIT SUMMARY

Monday 31 August 2026 – Friday 4 September 2026

- Farmers supported diversification opportunities but stressed that any alternative crop production must be market-driven.
- Participants cautioned against encouraging crop substitution without secure markets.
- Diversification opportunities discussed included:
  - Ethanol production;
  - Renewable energy;
  - Value-added sugar products; and
  - Other cane-based industries.

### Committee Findings

- Finding: The sugar industry remains a critical sector but requires significant structural and institutional reforms.
- Finding: Farmers strongly support retaining a dedicated Ministry of Sugar Industry.
- Finding: Greater transparency is required in cane payment calculations, sugar pricing and revenue distribution.
- Finding: The effectiveness and relevance of the Sugar Industry Tribunal should be reviewed.

# ECONOMIC AFFAIRS COMMITTEE

## NORTHERN DIVISION SITE VISIT SUMMARY

### Monday 31 August 2026 – Friday 4 September 2026

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|                              |                                                                          | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Finding: Lending policies and interest rates under the Sugar Cane Growers Fund should be reassessed to better support farmers.</li> <li>Finding: Weak coordination among sugar sector institutions is affecting service delivery and farmer confidence.</li> <li>Finding: Research findings and extension services must reach farmers more effectively.</li> <li>Finding: Mechanisation and technological improvements are essential to address labour shortages and improve productivity.</li> <li>Finding: Land tenure and lease security continue to be major barriers to industry growth.</li> <li>Finding: A long-term industry strategy focusing on profitability, efficiency, investment, sustainability and youth participation is required to secure the future of Fiji's sugar industry.</li> </ul> |  |
| 4 September 2026<br>(Friday) | <b>Rural Electrification</b> LAB17-18<br>– Navakuru & Suweni Settlements | <b>Project Status and Progress</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The Parliamentary Committee conducted a site visit to assess the implementation progress of the Navakuru Rural Electrification Project.</li> </ul>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                         |  |

# ECONOMIC AFFAIRS COMMITTEE

## NORTHERN DIVISION SITE VISIT SUMMARY

Monday 31 August 2026 – Friday 4 September 2026

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|  |  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Discussions focused on project completion, electrical safety, contractor performance, and community concerns.</li><li>• Significant progress has been made towards project completion.</li><li>• Residents expressed strong support for the project and welcomed the prospect of receiving electricity services.</li><li>• Community members emphasized the importance of timely completion, given the lengthy wait for electrification services.</li></ul> <p> <b>Electrical Safety Concerns</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Committee Members observed that a number of electricity meter boxes had been installed at relatively low heights.</li><li>• Concerns were raised that the positioning of some meter boxes may present safety risks, particularly for children.</li><li>• Questions were raised regarding compliance with electrical safety standards and approved installation specifications.</li><li>• Officials advised that the Electrical Inspector would undertake inspections before final commissioning.</li><li>• Any installations found to be non-compliant would be required to be rectified before final approval is granted.</li></ul> |  |
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# ECONOMIC AFFAIRS COMMITTEE

## NORTHERN DIVISION SITE VISIT SUMMARY

Monday 31 August 2026 – Friday 4 September 2026

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|  |  | <div> <b>Contractor Performance and Accountability</b></div> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Community members raised concerns regarding the quality of some installations completed by the contractor, Macuata Electrical.</li><li>• Members stressed that all defects and non-compliant work should be rectified prior to project handover.</li><li>• Concerns were raised regarding the need for stronger supervision and monitoring of contractors throughout project implementation.</li><li>• The Committee highlighted that contractors should be held accountable for ensuring that all works meet required technical and safety standards.</li><li>• Quality assurance mechanisms should be strengthened to ensure public funds deliver quality infrastructure outcomes.</li></ul> <div> <b>Project Completion Timeline</b></div> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Residents sought clarification on when electricity services would become operational.</li><li>• Project representatives advised that works are expected to be completed before Christmas.</li><li>• Community members requested confirmation of final connection dates and commissioning schedules.</li></ul> |  |
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# ECONOMIC AFFAIRS COMMITTEE

## NORTHERN DIVISION SITE VISIT SUMMARY

Monday 31 August 2026 – Friday 4 September 2026

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|  |  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• The Committee emphasized the importance of meeting the committed timeline to maintain public confidence in Government-funded projects.</li></ul> <p> <b>Community Benefits and Expectations</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Residents expressed appreciation for the project and recognised its potential benefits to the community.</li><li>• Access to electricity is expected to:<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>○ Improve household living conditions;</li><li>○ Enhance safety and security;</li><li>○ Support educational activities for students;</li><li>○ Improve communication and access to information; and</li><li>○ Contribute to community development and economic opportunities.</li></ul></li><li>• Beneficiaries expressed anticipation towards receiving reliable electricity services after many years of waiting.</li></ul> <p> <b>Communication and Community Engagement</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Residents requested more frequent communication regarding project progress and implementation schedules.</li></ul> |  |
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# ECONOMIC AFFAIRS COMMITTEE

## NORTHERN DIVISION SITE VISIT SUMMARY

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|  |  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Concerns were raised regarding limited information on outstanding works and expected connection dates.</li><li>• Community members indicated that regular updates would assist in managing expectations and improving public confidence.</li><li>• The Committee stressed the importance of maintaining transparency throughout project implementation.</li></ul> <p> <b>Committee Findings</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Finding: The Navakuru Rural Electrification Project is nearing completion and has received strong community support.</li><li>• Finding: Electrical safety concerns relating to meter box installations require immediate inspection and rectification.</li><li>• Finding: Some meter boxes may not comply with recommended installation standards and should be reviewed by the Electrical Inspector.</li><li>• Finding: Stronger contractor supervision and quality assurance measures are necessary to ensure compliance with technical specifications.</li><li>• Finding: All defective works should be rectified before final certification and project handover.</li></ul> |  |
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# ECONOMIC AFFAIRS COMMITTEE

## NORTHERN DIVISION SITE VISIT SUMMARY

**Monday 31 August 2026 – Friday 4 September 2026**

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|  |  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Finding: Improved communication between contractors, implementing agencies and beneficiaries is required throughout project implementation.</li><li>• Finding: The project completion deadline should be strictly adhered to in order to maintain public confidence and deliver intended benefits to households.</li><li>• Finding: A post-project evaluation should be conducted to assess community satisfaction, safety compliance and project outcomes.</li><li>• Finding: Rural electrification projects continue to play a significant role in improving living standards and supporting rural development objectives.</li></ul> |  |
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