



**HONOURABLE ALITIA VAKATAI BAVOU CIRIKIYASAWA
BAINIVALU**

MINISTER FOR FISHERIES AND FORESTRY

**WRITTEN RESPONSE 215/2026
UPDATE OF PINE SALES IN LAKEBA, LAU**

29th SEPTEMBER, 2026

WRITTEN QUESTION

Can the Minister inform Parliament of the following –

- a) revenue earned by each Yavusa from pine sales over the past three years arising from the pine plantation on Lakeba in Lau;***
- b) an overview of how different Yavusa's in Lakeba will benefit from harvest of pine over the next 5 years; and***
- c) an overview of how profits from pine proceeds will be shared amongst the various Yavusa of Lakeba.***

RESPONSE

I thank the Honorable Member for raising the three questions on the update of Pine Sales in Lakeba.

- a) Revenue earned by each Yavusa from pine sales over the past three years arising from the pine plantation on Lakeba in Lau;**

The commercial pine harvesting on Lakeba in the Lau Group had just commenced in June 2026. This represents an important milestone for the landowners and communities of Lakeba.

The harvesting operation for that matter is still in its early stages. However, the necessary commercial, governance, infrastructure and benefit-sharing arrangements are being established to ensure that the benefits arising from the pine resource are returned equitably to the landowners and communities of Lakeba, including all eight villages and Yavusas.

Accordingly, no revenue from commercial pine sales was earned by any of the Yavusas of Lakeba during 2023, 2024 or 2025. Prior to 2026, the mature pine resource on Lakeba remained largely unharvested due to the absence of the necessary commercial entity, logistical infrastructure and governance arrangements.

The foundation for commercial harvesting was established through several key developments:

- Lakeba Nexus Holdings Pte Ltd was formally registered as the commercial arm of the Tikina;
- Logging machinery was handed over on 30 May 2026 by the Ministry of Forestry and the Fiji Pine Trust;
- A portable sawmill, valued at approximately \$60,000, was handed over on 18 June 2026 by the Ministry of Rural and Maritime Development; and
- Commercial deliveries commenced on 22 June 2026.

Actual Deliveries from Lakeba Pine Operations (22 June – 18 September 2026)

Since operations commenced, the following deliveries have been recorded:

NO.	DATE	VOLUME (M³)	LOG COUNT	COMMENTS
1	22 June 2026	32.866	451	Pine Peeled Post
2	2 July 2026	39.612	39	Raw Sawlog
3	16 July 2026	49.072	78	Raw Sawlog
4	1 August 2026	32.020	147	Saw logs and Post
5	16 August 2026	42.162	618	Saw logs and Post
6	6 September 2026	19.082	397	Post
7	18 September 2026	28.222	571	Post
TOTAL		283.036 m³	2,301 logs	

Estimated Overall Cost (based on \$750 per m³):

$$\bullet \quad 283.036 \text{ m}^3 \times \$750 = \$212,277$$

This confirms that the operation is now active and delivering logs for processing and sale.

At the applicable royalty rate of **\$30 per cubic metre**, approximately **\$8,491 in royalties** had accrued to the Lakeba Trust from these deliveries.

It is important to clarify that these operations are only at the commencement stage and, therefore, there is not yet a three-year history of commercial revenue available for distribution among the individual Yavusas.

b) How the different Yavusas in Lakeba will benefit from pine harvesting over the next five years

The benefits from the Lakeba pine resource over the 2026–2030 period will be delivered through a number of mechanisms.

First, royalty payments. A royalty of \$30 per cubic metre is payable to the Lakeba Trust on pine supplied to Tropik Wood Industries Limited and the Wainiyabia Sawmill. Based on current projections, approximately \$4.6 million in royalties could accrue to the Lakeba Trust over five years.

Second, employment and wages. The operation is creating employment for logging crews, sawmill operators, transport workers and administrative staff. Salaries and wages for the core operational team are budgeted at approximately \$400,000 per annum.

Third, community enterprise development. Support will include training in financial literacy, business planning and forestry operations, together with support for women- and youth-led enterprises linked to the pine value chain.

Fourth, infrastructure development. Government and its partners are supporting infrastructure that will enable the pine

industry to operate more efficiently and generate greater returns for Lakeba. This includes:

- the Wainiyabia Jetty, with \$2 million allocated in the 2026–2027 National Budget, which will improve transport and market access;
- a 14-kilometre forward road to facilitate systematic harvesting and extraction;
- renovation of the Wainiyabia Sawmill; and
- improvements including staff housing at Ratu Mara College.

Fifth, dividends from the commercial operation. Subject to approval of the Dividend Policy, 25 percent of net profits for 2027–2029 and 30 percent from 2030 is proposed to be paid to the Lakeba Trust for distribution to the eight villages.

Sixth, dual management arrangement. Approximately 30 percent of the total pine volume will be managed under the Fiji Pine Limited agreement, ensuring alignment with national forestry standards, while 70 percent will be operated by Lakeba Nexus Holdings, which will oversee harvesting, processing and local value-chain development.

c) How profits from pine proceeds will be shared amongst the various Yavusas of Lakeba

The sharing of benefits from the pine resource is to be governed through a formal institutional and trust framework designed to protect landowner interests and provide for equitable distribution.

The Board of Trustees represents the collective interests of the Tikina and safeguards the rights of the landowners.

The Lakeba Nexus Holdings Board of Directors is responsible for the commercial operations and strategic decisions of the company, including consideration and approval of the Dividend Policy.

Once approved, the Dividend Policy will establish the basis for the distribution of net profits to the Lakeba Trust. The current proposed dividend arrangement is 25 percent of net profits for 2027–2029 and 30 percent from 2030.

The Lakeba Trust will then distribute benefits to the eight villages and Yavusas in accordance with its Trust Policy and Manual, taking into account land ownership and customary rights.

In addition, under the Fiji Pine Trust framework, **85 percent** of royalties and premiums are returned to the proprietary unit or landowning group, with the remaining portion distributed to traditional leaders in accordance with the applicable land trust arrangements.

Government Support and Infrastructure

To date, Government's total investment in Lakeba pine infrastructure — comprising the logging machinery, portable sawmill and related support — is approximately **\$500,000**, in addition to the **\$2 million** allocated for the Wainiyabia Jetty under the 2026–2027 National Budget.

Comparison: Kadavu Harvesting

For context, the **Kadavu and Gau Maritime Pine Project** commenced earlier and has since paid approximately **\$1.53 million** in direct benefits to about **1,500 landowners**. These funds have been used for housing, school fees, small businesses and village infrastructure.

This demonstrates that once full-scale logging is established with reliable transport, processing facilities and market linkages, landowners can expect meaningful and sustained returns. Lakeba is now on the same trajectory, with harvesting underway and the enabling infrastructure being put in place.

Lakeba's commercial pine harvesting has only recently commenced. Therefore, there was no commercial pine revenue to distribute among the Yavusas during 2023–2025.

Since the commencement of operations in June 2026, **283.036 cubic metres of pine, comprising 2,301 logs**, have been delivered, with approximately **\$8,491 in royalties** accrued to the Lakeba Trust.

As harvesting scales up, the benefits to the people of Lakeba will come through royalties, employment and wages, dividends,

community enterprise development, infrastructure investment and reinvestment into the local value chain.

The Government's objective is to ensure that the development of the Lakeba pine resource provides sustainable economic opportunities while respecting the rights, interests and customary ownership of the landowners, and ensuring that the benefits are shared through the established Lakeba Trust and governance arrangements.