



STANDING COMMITTEE ON SOCIAL AFFAIRS

Review Report on the 2020 Tavua Town Council Annual Report



PARLIAMENT OF THE REPUBLIC OF FIJI
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CHAIRPERSON’S FOREWORD

I am pleased to present the Standing Committee on Social Affairs report on *the Review of the 2020 Tavua Town Council Annual Report*.

The Committee conducted a comprehensive examination of the operations, governance, financial performance and service delivery of the Tavua Town Council during the reporting period. Through its deliberations and engagement with Council officials, the Committee gained valuable insights into the achievements, challenges and opportunities facing the municipality.

The review highlighted several important issues requiring attention, including the need to regularise fees and charges, improve the sustainability of solid waste management services, address sewerage and environmental concerns, progress key capital infrastructure projects, resolve persistent drainage, flooding issues and strengthen financial management practices.

The Committee also acknowledges the Council’s efforts in pursuing sustainable development initiatives and supporting community wellbeing despite the operational and financial challenges encountered during the reporting period. These efforts demonstrate the important role local authorities play in advancing economic, social and environmental outcomes for their communities.

On behalf of the Committee, I express my sincere appreciation to the Acting Chief Executive Officer and staff of the Tavua Town Council for their cooperation, professionalism and valuable contributions throughout the review process.

I also extend my gratitude to the Honourable Members of the Committee, Hon. Ratu Rakuita Vakalalabure, Hon. Alipate Tuicolo, Hon. Viam Pillay, Hon. Alikia Bia and Hon. Parveen Bala for their invaluable contribution and support. Further I extend my appreciation to Hon Ketan Lal as an alternate member of the Committee.

I acknowledge the dedicated efforts of the Committee Secretariat in facilitating the review and compiling of this report.

I commend this report to Parliament and trust that its findings and recommendations will contribute to stronger local governance, improved municipal services and sustainable development for the people of Tavua.



.....
Hon. Iliesa Vanawalu
Chairperson

ACRONYMS

FRA	Fiji Roads Authority
SO	Standing Order
TTC	Tavua Town Council
WAF	Water Authority of Fiji

COMMITTEE MEMBERS

The Standing Committee on Social Affairs (**‘Committee’**) is established under Section 70 of the Constitution of the Republic of Fiji and Standing Order 109. The Committee’s mandate and functions are provided under SO 109 (2) and 110 (1) (a)-(d) & (f).

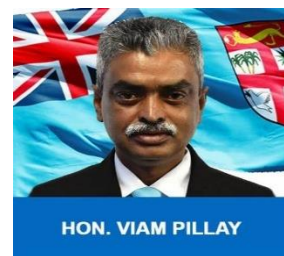
The Members of Committee are:



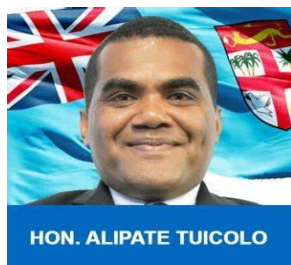
Chairperson



Deputy Chairperson



Member



Member



Member



Member

1.0 INTRODUCTION

The 2020 Tavua Town Council Annual Report was tabled in Parliament on 17th July 2026 and was referred to the Standing Committee on Social Affairs pursuant to Standing Order 109(2)(b).

Standing Order 109(2)(b) empowers the Standing Committee on Social Affairs to examine matters related to health, education, social services, labour, aviation, culture and media.

1.1 Committee Procedures

Deliberations on the 2020 Tavua Town Council annual report commenced in September 2026. The Committee reviewed the report, prepared questions and sought clarifications on key issues of interest from Tavua Town Council.

The Committee held Public Submission with the Executives of Tavua Town Council on 17th September 2026.

Upon receipt of all pertinent information addressing the Committee's queries, the report was finalised and subsequently endorsed on 24th September 2026.

Responses from Tavua Town Council can be accessed via the following link:
<https://www.parliament.gov.fj/committees/standing-committee-on-social-affairs/>

2.0 Background of Tavua Town Council

- 2.1** Tavua was formally declared a town on 27th April 1992. The declaration was made by the then Minister responsible for Local Government, Housing and Urban Development, Ratu Ovini Bokini. The town was subsequently administered under Fiji's local government framework and the Local Government Act 1972.

With the election of its first Mayor, Mr. Iliesa Vula from Tavualevu village, the development of Tavua as an urban centre was influenced significantly by sugarcane, agriculture, commercial activities and the nearby Vatukoula gold-mining industry. Tavua also became an important service and trading centre for surrounding communities with a long history as an agricultural and commercial centre in the western part of Viti Levu. The area was administered by Tavua Rural Local Authority before it became a municipality.

3.0 KEY FINDINGS

The Committee conducted its review of the 2020 Tavua Town Council Annual Report and identified the following key findings:

- 3.1 The Committee noted that the Tavua Town Council continues to levy unauthorised fees that have not been formally gazetted.
- 3.2 The Committee noted that solid-waste collection is financially unsustainable.
- 3.3 The Committee noted that sewerage seepage and inadequate treatment arrangements is a major health and environmental risk.
- 3.4 The Committee noted that the major capital projects remain on hold due to funding constraints.
- 3.5 The Committee noted that the drainage and flooding in Tavualevu village remains unresolved.
- 3.6 The Committee noted the high audit fees arrears accumulated by the Tavua Town Council.

4.0 RECOMMENDATIONS

The Committee recommends the following:

- 4.1 The Tavua Town Council must charge fees which is authorised and gazetted.
- 4.2 The Tavua Town Council must develop a sustainable solid-waste funding mode.
- 4.3 The Tavua Town Council must prioritise a permanent sewerage solution and work closely with stakeholders and the line ministry.
 - 4.3.1 The Council must immediately work closely with Ministry of Health to address any major health risk within the municipality.
- 4.4 The Tavua Town Council must work with the line ministry in securing funding to complete all major capital projects.
- 4.5 The Tavua Town Council must work closely with the line ministry in securing funding to address the ongoing drainage issues within their municipal boundary.
- 4.6 The Tavua Town Council must seek assistance from the Ministry of Local Government to clear its unpaid audit fees.
 - 4.6.1 The Tavua Town Council must employ qualified technical staff to complete its financial report on a timely basis.

5.0 SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOALS AND GENDER ANALYSIS

(Provided by the Tavua Town Council)

5.1 Goal 3 of the Strategic Plan 2020 – 2025 and SDGs 3, 6 & 14

Goal 3 of Tavua’s Strategic Plans 2020 – 2025 looks at a “Sustainable Environment and Infrastructure”. The Goal links with the Sustainable Development Goal 3 (Good Health and Well-being), Goal 6 (Clean Water and Sanitation) and Goal 14 (Life below Water) which is essential because human health relies directly on the quality of water harvested for daily consumption. The balance ultimately drains off into Tavua’s traditional fishing grounds.

The outward flow of the drainage and river systems into the sea affects Goal 14 and could have drastic consequences on the mangrove and foreshore ecosystem that the native and other communities in Tavua depend on for their daily consumption and commercial activities. The solution lies in the treatment of waste and sewer water on land where the ultimate aim is to protect aquatic ecosystems and prevent human exposure to disease.

Tavua Town currently does not have a reticulated central public sewerage system. Because there is no central public sewer network operating throughout the municipality, local waste and wastewater management relies primarily on localized setups. Majority of households and commercial businesses in Tavua utilize private, localized septic tanks to process sewer water (blackwater).

Greywater & Runoff: General wastewater from sinks, showers and commercial premises discharges into the Council’s stormwater drains. The Tavua Town Council handles regular clearing and maintenance of these drains to prevent stagnation. Greywater and runoffs eventually make their way into the coastal environment.

Tavua clings to the hope that Water Authority of Fiji (WAF) guided by the Water and Wastewater Strategy, specifically, Chapter 7.3 of the National Development Plan 2025-2029 Vision 2050, will persist in prioritising the municipality for future reticulated public sewerage infrastructure development.

Goals 2, 4 and 5 of the Council’s Strategy Plan 2020 -2025 and SDGs 3 and 11

Strategic Goal 2 being Safe and Flourishing Neighbourhoods, Goal 4 – Effective and Efficient Services and Goal 5 – People Strategy were employed in conjunction with SDG 3 – Good Health and Well-being and SDG 11 – Sustainable Cities and Communities to manage the effects of COVID 19.

Strategic Plan 4 & 5 of the Strategy Plan 2020-2025 and Sustainable Development Goals 4, 8 & 10

The Council was proud to work with the Global Girit Institute in the establishment of the Pacific Polytech Tavua campus in 2021. In accomplishing that milestone, the Council met Goal 4 (Effective and Efficient Services) and Goal 5 (People Strategy) of its Strategic Plan 2020-2025. The Council through that also enabled the rise in Quality Education (SDG 4) that led to Decent Work and Economic Growth (SDG 8) and Reduced Inequalities (SDG 10) for Tavua and its surrounding areas.

Strategic Plan 3 of the Council's Strategy Plan 2020-2025 relative to Sustainable Development Goals 9, 11 and 13

COVID 19 re-emerged as the greatest obstacle under this head in 2020. The Strategic Plan's Goal 3 dealt with "Sustainable and Infrastructure" which related closely to SDG 9 (Industry, Innovation and Infrastructure) and SDG 11 (Sustainable Cities and Communities).

This was evident in that the Council issued a single Completion Certificate worth \$3,500.00 during the review period compared to three worth \$200,850.00 in 2019. Again, the contraction of the review period to seven months may have also been a major factor behind the drop experienced on this matter.

It was and still is a major challenge for Tavua to have sustainable development to the east of the central business district due to the effects of the flood, now experienced at regular intervals, of the Nasivi River. Dredging may be the answer: the townspeople and the villagers of Tavualevu and Nabuna can only wait for Government's assistance on this matter. Expansion of the town boundary to the west is the only practical solution and work on that is currently in progress.

The 1998 Scheme Plan for Tavua focussed on expanding the town boundary southward towards Vatukoula. The intention was to save the flat plains on the west for sugar cane farming. The new 10-year Lome IV protocol had just been formalised thus the need at that time for reserving the best arable land for sugar cane cropping.

It is now time to review that and the Council, the iTaukei Land Trust Board, Department of Town and Country Planning and other stakeholders are seriously reviewing the possibility of extending the town boundary westwards along a two-kilometre radius on either side of the Kings Road to Tagitagi. This is to ensure proper zoning and better coordinated placement of infrastructural development.

Strategic Plan 4 and 5: SDG 17 – Partnerships for the Goals

- (a) Collaboration with Government departments, Tavua Hospital, National Fire Authority, Red Cross, Golden Water Carnival Committee, Vatukoula Gold Mining Co. Ltd and other stakeholders. During the COVID-19 pandemic, Tavua Town Council worked closely in partnership with various stakeholders to support the Government's efforts in preventing and controlling the spread of the virus within the Tavua community.

- (b) The Council works with Government agencies and other stakeholders to improve service delivery and implement priority projects. Government grant funding has supported key initiatives such as the Tavualevu Village drainage upgrade, drainage maintenance and extended boundary waste collection.

5.2 Gender Analysis

The number of staff as per the table below

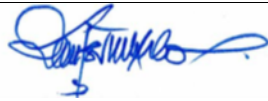
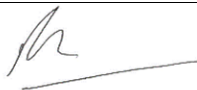
YEAR	MALE	FEMALE	TOTAL
2020	17	3	20
2021	16	4	20
2022	18	4	22
2023	17	5	22
2024	17	4	21
2025	17	4	21

6.0 CONCLUSION

The Committee's review identified several key issues requiring immediate and urgent attention, including the regularisation of fees and charges, the financial sustainability of waste management services, sewerage and environmental concerns, delays in major infrastructure projects, unresolved drainage, flooding problems, timely completion of financial reporting and audit requirements, thus addressing these matters is essential to strengthening governance, accountability and public confidence in municipal administration.

COMMITTEE MEMBERS' SIGNATURE

We, the Members of the Standing Committee on Social Affairs, hereby agree with the contents of this report:

Committee Member	E-Signature
Hon. Iliesa Vanawalu Chairperson	
Hon. Ratu Rakuita Vakalalabure Deputy Chairperson	
Hon. Alipate Tuicolo Member	
Hon. Viam Pillay Member	
Hon. Parveen Bala Member	
Hon Aliko Bia Member	
Date: 24th September, 2026	

ANNEXURE

Published evidence

Written evidence, transcripts, and supporting documents can be viewed on the Parliament website at the following link: <https://www.parliament.gov.fj/committees/standing-committee-on-social-affairs/>

STANDING COMMITTEE ON SOCIAL AFFAIRS

Tavua Town Council 2020 Annual Report

SUBMITTEE : Tavua Town Council
VENUE: Big Committee Room, Parliament
DATE: Thursday, 17th September 2026

VERBATIM NOTES OF THE MEETING OF THE STANDING COMMITTEE ON SOCIAL AFFAIRS HELD AT THE BIG COMMITTEE ROOM ON THURSDAY, 17TH SEPTEMBER 2026 AT 2.06 P.M.

Present

Hon. I.S. Vanawalu	-	Chairman
Hon. V. Pillay	-	Member
Hon. A. Bia	-	Member
Hon. P.K. Bala	-	Member

Submittees

Tavua Town Council

Mr. Rajendra Raglu	-	Special Administrator
Ms. Pravin Lata Prakash	-	Corporate Manager
Mr. Sireli Korovulavula	-	Acting Chief Executive Officer

MR. CHAIRMAN.- Honourable Members, members of the public, Secretariat, dear viewers, ladies and gentlemen. A very good afternoon to you all and it is a pleasure to welcome everyone here this afternoon, especially the viewers that are watching this public hearing session live. At the outset, for information purpose, pursuant to Standing Order 111 of the Standing Order of Parliament, all committee meetings are to be open to the public. Therefore, please note that this submission is open to the public and the media and it is also being aired via the *Walesi* platform and streamlined live on Parliament website and social media platform. For any sensitive information concerning the matter before us this afternoon that cannot be disclosed in public, this can be provided to the Committee either in private or in writing.

However, please be advised that Standing Order 111 in the following circumstances permit the non-disclosure of information. These are:

- national security matters;
- third-party confidential information;
- personal or human resources matters; and
- Committee's deliberation and development of the Committee's recommendation based on this report.

This is a parliamentary meeting and all information gathered is covered under the Parliamentary Powers and Privileges Act of 1965. Please bear in mind that we do not condone slander or label of any sort. Any information brought before this committee should be based on facts. In terms of protocol of this Committee meeting, please minimize the usage of mobile phones and all mobile phones are to be on silent mode while the meeting is in progress.

I wish to also remind honourable Members and our guests that all information to be asked are to be addressed through the Chairperson. I would like the members of the Committee to introduce themselves.

(Introduction of Committee Members)

MR. CHAIRMAN.- Today, the Committee will be hearing submission from the Tavua Town Council. This is in relation to the Tavua Town Council 2018 annual report. Before us we have the representative from the council, and I would like to thank them for availing themselves to appear to this hearing. Due to the essence of time, you may give brief responses and that Members will intervene with their supplementary questions. And now I invite officials to introduce themselves and then begin with their presentation.

(Introduction of Tavua Town Council officials)

MR. S. KOROVULAVULA.- With your indulgence, Mr. Chairman, I will be taking the mic on behalf of the council and I will be assisted by Ms. Praveen Lata and she was actually the acting CEO and manager corporate, if I am correct, at that time. She should be more conversable, more fully aware of the situation there. And Mr. Raglu, our special administrator, will also be telling us whenever there is a need to raise the issues that he is aware of.

For our responses to the report, I understand that you have them with you, the hard copy, and then we will touch on the slides after that. Is that the correct procedure, sir?

HON. P.K. BALA.- Mr. Chairman, may I intervene? Likewise, what has been said before about the report itself, 2018 or 2019, I see here that it was reported as 2020. And even when I turn the pages, I also see in many areas talks about 2020. My concern is that response is for 2018 or 2020?

MR. S. KOROVULAVULA.- 2020, sir.

On the first question, Mr. Chairman, the details of the key revenue streams and major expenditures for Tavua for that year, I know that all of us are fully aware of the impact that COVID-19 had on our country in that year and If I can ask you to follow our response here, the impact of COVID-19 during the period in review had a major effect on the council's revenue. This is reflected in the reduction of the average income rate of the following revenue sources.

HON. P.K. BALA.- Mr. Chairman, through you, if I may ask Tavua Town Council just to go through the response because we have gone through the report.

MR. S. KOROVULAVULA.- We are still trying to get the thing on screen because there has been change for one of the slides which I sent in this morning. I think Mr Dutt has already copied the hard copies and given it. Just a few more details are there. Yes, it is. This is an update for the Tavua Town Council. A presentation in support of our answers to the questions that was posed to us. The second slide would just be an intro on what is in the in our presentation. And it is Tavua at a glance, cost of garbage collection, sewerage problem, and the new market site.

This is Tavua in general, for you honourable Members. What we have in the colour is the current town boundary with all those schemes. The one with the light blue on top is the election boundary for the local government. You will see that it now covers Tavualevu Village and Nabuna. Tavua was established and declared as a town way back in 1992, and we had been operating as a town since then. The current administrators were appointed in 2023 and in that appointment, it split the administration of Tavua and Rakiraki to be governed by their own set of special administrators.

On the next slide, the hard copy was distributed this morning. The amendment to this is the cost of collection of garbage waste. That is one of the issues that we are facing in Tavua on a daily basis, the cost of collecting solid waste and depositing it. Now, if you do not mind, can I just take you through? Okay, you will see on the columns.

HON. P.K. BALA.- Mr. Chairman, can I intervene? You are saying that this is the cost of collection of waste every day. What do you want to tell us? You want to tell us that this is the difficulty or the challenges that you face? What is the real issue that you want to tell the Committee?

MR. S. KOROVULAVULA.- It is both. But the issue that we want resolved as early as possible, is the charging. The charges that need to be seriously looked at for collecting of solid waste.

HON. A. BIA.- Mr. Chairman through you, so these are charges charged to ratepayers?

MR. S. KOROVULAVULA.- Yes, ratepayers.

HON. P.K. BALA.- Mr. Chairman through you, here in the response you are saying that the Solicitor-General be asked to prioritise the gazetting of changes to the present. Is this what you mean?

MR. S. KOROVULAVULA.- Yes.

HON. P.K. BALA.- So in question two, you are saying here that please note that the current fees and charges have been there for the past 20 years. Is that true?

MR. S. KOROVLAVULA.- Yes.

HON. P.K. BALA.- So that is why you are asking Committee to see if these fees and charges can be sorted out quickly in terms of increase.

MR. S. KOROVLAVULA.- It is becoming critical and we are desperate for this.

HON. A. BIA.- In other words, the cost that has been there for the past 20 years does not match the operational cost that is currently existing.

MR. S. KOROVLAVULA.- No, it does not.

MR. S. KOROVLAVULA.- If you look at the chart, you will see that on the annual fees, the one at the bottom on your right, indicated that the annual fees \$36, and that is for domestic per year. Annual fee \$36 is for domestic, and \$148.80 is for commercial, but this has not been gazetted yet. As of now, we do not charge domestic. For commercial, there is a range of fees that are paid according to the size of the business, which is yet to be gazetted, but it has been charged. If you look at the total fees that are calculated there on the right, the total fees, if we have to collect the amount that is waiting for gazetting, which is \$36 and \$148.80, the total amount that we can get at the end of the year is \$22,900, but the actual cost of collecting the solid waste is \$83,000. If you can look at this, we are subsidising by \$60,000, \$60,500, and it is a credit to our finance team.

HON. P.K. BALA.- Mr. Chairman, may I intervene, where do you get that \$60,000 from?

MR. S. KOROVLAVULA.- We have been setting aside some budget to cover other projects.

HON. V. PILLAY.- Mr. Chairman through you, CEO earlier on you have mentioned about the fees and charges and he also said that it is not gazetted. Yet you are charging those fees to the ratepayers and the people of Tavua.

MR. S. KOROVLAVULA.- It is only for the business houses.

HON. V. PILLAY.- But it is not gazetted. That is what you have mentioned.

MR. S. KOROVLAVULA.- Yes.

HON. P.K. BALA.- Let us put it this way. You are collecting the new fees. The charges are new, and at the same time you are saying it is not been gazetted?

MR. S. KOROVLAVULA.- Not yet.

HON. P.K. BALA.- Is it legal?

MR. S. KOROVLAVULA.- No, I do not think it is legal.

HON. P.K. BALA.- Then why are you doing that?

MR. S. KOROVLAVULA.- This has been the practise.

HON. P.K. BALA.- Well, we will find it out right then.

MR. S. KOROVLAVULA.- Like I said before, we just really like this thing to be gazetted. This is another issue that is really affecting Tavua. Black water - this is the sewerage seepage. It is coming to a stage where we really need the sewage...

HON. P.K. BALA.- Mr. Chairman, may I intervene. In the last consultation, you people gave us assurance that you are working very closely with Water Authority of Fiji and there is a plan to carry out this sewerage project in Tavua. How far you people have gone into it? Now you are saying that at this stage, it is a serious issue. Let us put it that way. If you can update the Committee on that.

MR. S. KOROVULAVULA.- It is serious and it is critical. The Water Authority of Fiji had submitted in their PSIP for the last national budget, something regarding the feasibility study to be done in the new financial year for the Government. But this was not taken up by Ministry of Finance because of the other issues that were affecting us.

HON. V. PILLAY.- Mr. Chairman through you, like the CEO is saying this is at a critical stage. When was this submission made to Water Authority or Ministry of Finance for the issue to be rectified or to be addressed. When was the submissions made?

MR. S. KOROVULAVULA.- When we came in 2023, I am not too sure before 2023, but what I am sure is 2023, we really did involve Water Authority of Fiji to try and get this thing done.

HON. V. PILLAY.- Thank you CEO. It is sad to know that the situation is at a critical stage, and we all know about the situation about sewer. We will need some more information as far as the submissions that has been made. We want this to be addressed as soon as possible because this is concerning in regards to the people of Tavua, the ratepayers and all. We cannot be living at whatever level is there. That needs to be improved and attended to. If you can advise, give us more information and Committee can also assist and see what we can recommend.

MR. S. KOROVULAVULA.- Mr. Chairman, we would love to assist the Committee on this. If you can just give us what other information that you want us to give, which we may not be aware of, so that we can have this thing. It is going to be a priority for us if you give us that.

This is the new site for the market and new public service vehicle bases. I am pretty sure the honourable Members are aware of this site. If not, this is on the Ba approaching the Tavua on your land side.

HON. P.K. BALA.- Mr. Chairman, may I interview? I think this subject matter was discussed even in the last consultation and there was a request from Tavua Town Council not to release the information at that point in time which we did not do that because we respected your views at that point in time but what I see now, there has been some development into that. How far have you people gone? Whether the land has been transferred to Tavua Town Council? What is the status on that?

MR. S. KOROVULAVULA.-Mr. Chairman, this is the sub-lease from Housing Authority. It is a 2-hectare piece of land, and Housing Authority has given us an offer. We had submitted that, and it was part of our PSIP to the Ministry for further submission to Finance. But like the sewerage one, it was not given that go ahead because of the restrictions, I understand, there was in the Finance sector. But what we can tell the Committee, Mr. Chairman, we have no issue about releasing any information on that now. Firstly, because we have been given the offer and secondly, the rezoning has been approved by the Director of Town and Country Planning.

HON. P.K. BALA.- Mr. Chairman through you. I mean, it is good news because this thing has been going on for quite a while. I just want to know, as a matter of interest, what is the size of the land you said?

MR. S. KOROVULAVULA.- It is two hectares similar to five hectares.

HON. P.K. BALA.- The market that you people have right now has been there for ages. Now you are going to relocate your market, bus stand, taxi, carrier stand. Do you think that, that particular area that you have mentioned, the size of the land, will accommodate all those activities and for the future expansion? Is that viable?

MR. S. KOROVULAVULA.- I have a lot of confidence that it will for the next probably 10 plus years. If you look at the Laqere market. The Laqere market is probably the size that we want in Tavua and it is sitting on a 8,000-meter

squared land which is less than one hectare. We have two hectares. There is an opportunity to develop the other land apart from having those PSV bases, developing the commercial...

HON. P.K. BALA.- Mr. Chairman through you, it is not that easy to relocate market, taxi, carrier stand in wherever you want because that must be at the CBD area. Right? I mean, what do you expect by moving that to the corner of the town? The only business those people can do, the carrier taxis, with the market, those who comes to the market. What happens to the CBD area? Have you people thought on that?

What we are looking at, we already in serious discussions with the Taukei Land Trust Board, the Town & Country Planning and the Lands Department for an extension of town boundary towards the western, towards the area. We are looking at really big developments on that side of Tavua. We are pretty sure that commercial interests are already hovering around that area because Housing Authority has got 119 lot development that is just ready for sale or once they finish whatever infrastructure that they still need to do.

HON. P.K. BALA.- What about the business community? Are they happy with the relocation? Is there any consultation done with the business owners?

MR. S. KOROVLAVULA.- We have not gone that far, sir.

HON. P.K. BALA.- When you went ahead and approved that process when you need to do the consultation phase, right or wrong? Let us not forget Tavua is a very small town and it is run by the business community. I think it is very important to liaise with the business community.

MR. S. KOROVLAVULA.- I understand where you coming from sir. We will look into that.

HON. V. PILLAY.- Mr. Chairman through you, CEO and the team, in our previous site visits and the presentation, we were told about the initial discussions beside the market we have, the land around that and the discussion with landowners and all that. This is very important. The development has been held for so many years. And it is not only for the ratepayers of Tavua or the people of Tavua. It is also for the traveling people crossing into Tavua, going towards Rakiraki and Suva and all that places. What happened to the initial discussion? You are informing the Committee, like it has failed. You have lost so many thousands of dollars in the discussions and the consultation over the years.

MR. S. KOROVLAVULA.- Mr. Chairman, if I am correct, you are referring to the land behind the market. That land is native land. It is reserved land. There is an ALTA lease there, and that land is exclusively owned by Mataqali Tilivasewa. Tilivasewa comprises of three Tokatokas. One Tokatoka has Nadula which has 600 members. I think 400 or probably 300 are over 18 that needs to sign the consent for the reservation. And you have another Tokatoka has 300 members. Probably 150 needs to sign that and then the smallest one has about 50 members. Again, we need about 20 members. We know how difficult that is to get those signatories. They are not all in Tavua because they are scattered all around Fiji, the world and to get their signatures will be an issue.

The other issue that we have is an Intra LOU issue. The tussle between these members is about the negotiation or this attempt to release the grant started when Ratu Ovini Bokini was minister for local government, I suppose, and...

HON. P.K. BALA.- Mr. Chairman, may I intervene? What we want to know is, that the area that you have identified fits well with your development, but there are other areas that can be taken into account for expansion. That is what we want to know, as a committee. Basically you are moving the CBD area. So, we are happy that this thing is happening. We do not have anything against this proposal. What we are saying is that, do you have enough space for further development, for example, doing a mall, getting the business people to build that site. This is what I am asking, whether you have that type of land there. If you have, we do not have any issues with that.

MR. S. KOROVLAVULA.- In fact, Mr. Chairman, we have a lot of land out there, and it is good flat land for further development. That basically is our presentation this afternoon.

HON. V. PILLAY.- Mr. Chairman through you, my concern is so many years of consultation has failed there and now you have got a place where you will be doing the development of the market and all that. The information provided by the CEO in regards to the mataqali and the signing part and all that, should have come out before so that this development could have been taken place.

In regards to what honourable Bala had said, you need to have more land. If you have decided to go on the other side, towards Ba, and for future development, you need to acquire more land. So that if the business community also moves, then you need to have the space there.

HON. P.K. BALA.- Mr. Chairman if I may intervene, I need to be fair with the Tavua Town Council. I am very much aware of this issue that you have raised. There is really an issue that is within the landowning units. We also at one point in time, we did 99 percent of the work, but at the end of the day, this matter went to court. If you people have the space where you want to do the development, the only concern that we had as a Committee that there should be enough land for further expansion in terms of getting buildings done there, malls, and shopping centres. That is what we need. I mean, if Tavua is growing fine, we do not have any issues.

MR. S. KOROVULAVULA.- Mr. Chairman, I can assure the Committee that there is land. There is land and there is landowning unit in that area is quite **commuting**. And the other thing is for the land that we were talking about, there is still a case at High Court right now that is not yet resolved. And before we moved to that land, we are now talking about it, we had tried all our best to meet them, to try and resolve these issues. It came to a point when we were at TLTB Ba, trying to get this issue discussed when the actual guy leasing the land, taking the cases to court called. And he told the council to move away from there, do not touch that. That was when we felt that we had hit the brick wall since there was nowhere else to go. But we need to have this development done.

HON. A. BIA.- Mr. Chairman through you, last month we were having consultations in Tavua village. One of the major complaints that was faced by villagers of Tavua was in terms of drainage. I believe that there is a drain running alongside the village that is causing flooding when there is heavy rain. I can see it in your report in 2020, you have mentioned it in question number six that one of the projects that we have undertaken in 2020 was working with the Tavualevu Village to improve drainage and reduce flood mitigation which is causing flooding to the villages of Tavualevu. What is the progress currently? Because just last month we were in Tavua Village and they continued to raise this issue.

MR. R. RAGLU.- Mr. Chairman, that drain is basically just beside the village and most of the stormwaters from the town boundary runs through that drain. That is the only way out for the stormwater from the central business and the ratepayers' areas to run through. But unfortunately, during flooding time, it washes away most of the debris and the rubbish that is being collected.

Currently, we are addressing that issue now. Yesterday we also received a call, and we have asked our team to work on that, our health department is working on that as well. Basically, most of the drainage is concrete to some distance. And after that, it is a duct drain, and that is mostly silted when the water washes down. So that silts, and that is the time when it gets flooded. Time and again, it needs desilting of the drain right up to the mouth. This is what we are trying to do now. We are looking into that very seriously.

HON. V. PILLAY.- Mr. Chairman through you, Tavua Town Council still receives the grant that previously used to be given by Ministry of Waterways to look after all these trades.

MS. P.L. PRAKASH.- No, we do not receive any. No more grants. The only grants we receive are the sales salary and extended area waste collection.

HON. V. PILLAY.- So fund is an issue also.

MS. P.L. PRAKASH.- Fund is also an issue.

MR. CHAIRMAN.- Thank you very much honourable Members. Just a question on your extended boundaries. Apart from those who pay the rate at municipalities, what are some of the challenges that you face on a daily basis? I mean

how well you serve them in terms of your infrastructure, talk about your development within the municipality, likewise the grant that was used to be given by the Government or the Ministry of Waterways. Are these two still coming to the council in order for you to provide this service to your boundaries outside of the council?

MS. P.L. PRAKASH.- The last grant which we received with regards to the drainage was in 2019. At present, council does not receive any grant for any maintenance or upgrade of town area. The only grant that we receive is the CEO salary and the extended area waste collection. That extended area waste collection is for a specific project and that we do it outside town boundary cleaner. So, we use only on that boundary.

MR. CHAIRMAN.- The last one from me. When you talk about report, this was 2020 annual reports. What is your future plan for the municipality in 2026? This is an old report that we are discussing. From the perspective of the honourable Members, we believe there is a lot that has been done so far to date. Only if you update your annual reports, come to us, we will be able to help you out in forms of development and look at other areas that need to be addressed within the municipality. That can be looked into, so that we are on par when we talk about projects. We talk about development; we talk about the current situation that we are in. That will give the Committee an edge when you submit a report to Parliament, will help you, the Council, as well as to update your work that you are currently doing. Just an observation.

MS. P.L. PRAKASH.- At present, we have completed our financial reports till financial year 2020, 2022, 2023 and we are facing financial challenges with regards to the completion of our financial records and annual reports because for the update of audit reports, it costs substantial finances to update because we do not have technical staff who can complete our records with regards to the IFRS standard. We outsourced our preparation of financial statements, which cost us substantial amount of money. With regards to the audit, the auditor's office charges us at least approximately \$9,000 per year for the audit of accounts.

At present we owe about approximately \$80,000 to the Auditor-General's office for the audit of our accounts till financial year 2022-2023. That is also a challenge for us in completing our annual reports. Also we have submitted our proposal to the Ministry for the increase in fees and charges. Our fees and charges are quite outdated, and the cost of the materials, tools and labour has increased, and our fees and charges are backdated to more than 19 to 20 years which has not increased. We have submitted the proposal and it has gone through all the processes and it is with the Solicitor-General's office but it has still not been gazetted.

Council is waiting for the gazette, so we can implement the new fees and charges which will increase our revenue and that will help us in upgrading our projects and annual reports.

HON. A. BIA.- Mr. Chairman through you, in terms of sources of revenue, one of your revenue sources is earning through parking meters. And according to Tavua town history, parking meters were installed in 2004. And during the year of this report in 2020, only eight were working. So currently, what is the progress in terms of parking meters in Tavua town?

MS. P.L. PRAKASH.- Currently we have installed new nine parking meters. In 2004, those parking meters which were installed is now not functional. And the parts are not available in Fiji or in overseas countries. And now we have installed new pay and display parking meters this year, which is generating some income from the council.

HON. P.K. BALA.- Mr. Chairman through you, we all understand the difficulties that you have. And by going through this report and knowing Tavua, I think Tavua Town Council can only meet the operational cost. Do you think that the Government should reintroduce the challenge fund so that through the challenge fund you can access funding for the capital projects? What is your view on that?

MR. R. RAGLU.- Mr. Chairman through you, I think that is what we require now. Like similar small municipalities, Tavua it is very difficult and I strongly agree with what our honourable Member had just said. We are only able to meet our operations, that is all, because of that very small revenue base. That is why we are very much requesting for the gazetting of the increased fees and charges. I think which had already gone through Cabinet, and it is sitting with the Solicitor-General's office.

Secondly, we are trying to generate our income through other sources that is from hiring of our parks the grounds Gavi Park and the whole so that really supplements us to meet our operational cost otherwise we will be going into red. I think the challenge fund is very much needed for capital developments. We are so thankful to Fiji Water Foundation for coming on board as a donor agency and they assisted us with our children's park. Currently, they are assisting us in the construction and development of our senior citizen's park. So again, substantial amount of grant, approximately \$40,000 plus is coming from Water Foundation. We are very grateful that to that and I think the challenge fund is very much needed, and Government assistance is very much needed for the small municipalities like Tavua.

HON. A. BIA.- Mr. Chairman, last two questions from me. First one, just recently there have been concerns raised in terms of the safety standard of Gavi Park in Tavua. Is there any update in terms of any development plans? This because secondary school students, school children are using playground and as well rugby and soccer teams also use Gavi Park for weekly matches.

MR. R. RAGLU.- Thank you honourable Member, I think that issue came up in the last Fiji Secondary School quarterfinals or semi-finals. It was very unfortunate but otherwise that ground was in use for all the years. The surface eroded because of the drought and the grass dried out and that rock was exposed. But we never knew that it was such a rock stone underneath the ground. Only the small part of it was exposed. So, when we started digging, then we saw that it was a big one. We removed immediately and we addressed.

Definitely yes, we are very much looking into it. We want to develop that again. That is what we are saying. The financial constraint is the biggest challenge for whatever money that is coming from the use of our Gavi Park, hiring of parks, is used in our operational costs. And unfortunately, we are not able to put that money back in the further development. Our plan is to redevelop the surface again to the OHS standard and make it very playable and injury free for all our users.

HON. A. BIA.- Mr. Chairman, I have noticed that in the report, the period in review 2020, you started a strategic plan up until last year 2025. Currently, looking back at the strategic plan, what are some of the key indicators, achievements you have achieved through that strategic plan from 2020 to 2035?

MR. S. KOROVULAVULA.- Mr. Chairman, I think we have addressed some of those in answer to some of the questions that was given us. I think it is question nine. Goal three is tied up with sustainable development goals, three, six and 14 that we also dealt with in our in our slides.

HON. V. PILLAY.- Mr. Chairman through you. My real concern once again is in regards to the sewer system. As mentioned by the CEO, it is at a critical level. Maybe the damages need to be repaired or maybe there is an overflow and this can be a real health issue for the people of Tavua, the business community and the surrounding areas. It is really sad to see the authorities not responding to address this issue. That is my real concern to Tavua Town Council, I would like just to ask what steps have been taken and what are the immediate resources or financial assistance that is needed to address that because that is very important. It is a real health issue and as the CEO has mentioned, it is at a critical level. We need to address that. What are some of the measures or steps that have gone through Ministry of Local Government? We have made submissions for immediate funding. We have met Water Authority of Fiji. What is happening to address that?

MR. S. KOROVULAVULA.- Mr. Chairman, we have met Water Authority of Fiji on numerous occasions. I think way back in 2024, we continued to do that. And that is why they have raised it as one of their priority areas as well, leading them to make a submission, PSIP for the feasibility study to be done. This should have been done this new financial year, but it was not set aside.

The other thing is the Asia Development Bank who is using Tavua for a pilot project to do an assessment of the septic tanks. I am not too sure about the details, but what I know is that they are funding this project with Water Authority of Fiji. That might come up with something that give us a solution to this, but it is going to be a bandage solution. The main thing is either we have package treatment plants for sewer systems, or we have fatal sludge treatment plants.

The Government's focus is to have a central point somewhere and then we, the small towns, we link up to that. And to us, that is major development and major cost too. I am not too sure how that works, but I think what we should be

concentrating on is give us these treatment plans for the small towns, sorry, to work up their situations they are currently facing.

MR. CHAIRMAN.- Thank you very much honourable Members and the team from Tavua Town Council. At this juncture, I wish to sincerely thank you all for availing yourself for this public hearing session. We thank you for your time and hope that you will avail yourself for any further queries should the Committee see fit to have it on today's submission. On that note, I declare this meeting closed.

The Committee adjourned at 2.58 p.m.

RESPONSE TO QUESTIONS ON TAVUA TOWN COUNCIL ANNUAL REPORT 2020

The following are responses to the questions raised in relation to Tavua Town Council Annual Report for the year ended 31 July 2020.

Financial Performance

1. Provide details of key revenue streams and major expenditure for Tavua Town Council and how it has impacted your operations during the review period? Provide details of key revenue streams

The impact of COVID 19 during the period in review had a major effect on the Council's revenue. This is reflected in the reduction of the average income rate of the following revenue sources:

Jan – July 2020			2019		
Source	Collected	Mthly Av	Collected	Mthly Av	
Building Fee	\$ 964.00	\$ 137.71	\$ 2,827.00	\$ 235.58	42%
Rates	\$27,439.00	\$3,919.86	\$61,440.00	\$5,120.00	23%
Market Fees & Charges	\$38,226.00	\$5,460.86	\$8,3540.00	\$6,961.67	22%

Ports closed on 16th March 2020 and Nadi Airport followed on 26th March 2020. Government imposed a national curfew, restricted large gatherings and closed down schools and non-essential services. Lockdowns occurred in urban centres as the fight to limit exposure to the coronavirus intensified during the year.

The building fees and town rates, which depended largely on the earning capacity of the ratepayer, took direct hits. The stand-downs, redundancies and termination of employment caused by COVID 19 was a major factor in the reduction of revenue as displayed in the table above.

A set of new fees was submitted to the Ministry a few years ago and the latest information received at Council was that gazettal was being held up at the office of the Solicitor General.

Recommendation:

- (i) Tavua respectfully recommends that the due date of the Town Rate be on the first day of the new financial year instead of the whole year as is currently the case.
- (ii) That the Solicitor General be urged to prioritise the gazetting of changes to the fees and charges especially for Tavua.

The Council implemented Government and Ministry of Health requirements within the Tavua municipal area. At the market:

- (i) wearing of face masks became mandatory;
- (ii) operating hours were reduced;
- (iii) dedicated entry and exit points were established;
- (iv) only 20 customers were permitted to enter at a time;
- (v) vendors were positioned approximately two metres apart; and,
- (vi) social distancing measures were enforced.

These measures affected normal Council operations and revenue generation but were necessary to protect the community and maintain essential services.

2. Can you provide details of properties in which TTC has generated revenue from?

Tavua Town Council generates revenue from the use, rental and hiring of a number of Council-owned properties and facilities. The main revenue-generating properties include:

(a) Tavua Market – About 12.5 percent (12.5%) of the revenue for 2020 was generated from the fees and charges levied against rental of market stalls and other applicable market fees and charges paid by vendors. Please note the current fees and charges have been there for the past 20 years.

(c) Revenue generated from the hire of Garvey Park, Multi-purpose Sports Courts, Multi-purpose Hall and the Council Rental Shops accounted for about seven percent (7%) of the Council's revenue for the period under review.

3. What are some of the special community projects undertaken by the Council during 2020?

The major community-oriented activities undertaken by the Council during 2020 were largely associated with public health, environmental sanitation and the COVID-19 response.

Key initiatives included:

- (a) Establishment of an isolation centre at the Multipurpose Hall at Garvey Park with provision of beds, mattresses, fans, tables, chairs and other essential equipment for the isolation centre.
- (b) Assistance to the Ministry of Health in establishing a fever clinic at the Multipurpose Sports Courts.
- (c) Regular disinfection of markets, shelters, seating areas and other public places.
- (d) Distribution of masks to market vendors.

- (e) Provision of soap and hand sanitiser at the market.
- (f) Public awareness on COVID-19 prevention and social distancing.
- (g) Clean-up campaign following Tropical Cyclone Harold.
- (h) Clean-up campaign in response to leptospirosis, typhoid and dengue outbreaks.
- (i) House-to-house awareness activities relating to public health and sanitation.

The isolation centre was established through cooperation between the Council, Government departments and other stakeholders. Contributions were received from GoldnWater Carnival Committee, Tavua Red Cross, Vatukoula Gold Mining Co. Ltd, Rattans Civil Works and Tavua Town Council. Provision for soap, and hand sanitizers were from UNWomen.

Policy and Regulatory Changes

4. What were some of the major changes in policy that were implemented during the review period, and how did they impact on service delivery?

The Local Government (Budget) (Amendment) Act of 2019 and the Business Licensing (Repeal) Act of 2020 had profound impact on the revenue earning capacity of the Council.

The former effectively contracted the reporting period for 2020 to seven months instead of the 12 months of the previous years. The latter, was more profound in that it wiped-off five months of predictable revenue from the Council's balance sheet.

Until its cessation in August 2020, the revenue from the issue of business licenses drew in a substantial income for Tavua. In fact, it accounted for about 17 percent (17%) of the Council's revenue for the period in review.

It cannot be emphasised enough that municipalities require businesses operating within their boundaries to pay for business licenses. Business Licence is critical to Tavua and other municipalities for the following reasons:

- i. **Revenue Generation:** Business licenses are a source of revenue for municipalities. Funds to support local services, infrastructure, public safety, and community programs, helping to maintain and improve the quality of life for residents
- ii. **Enforcement and Regulation:** Licensing helps municipalities regulate businesses to ensure they comply with local laws, zoning regulations, health and safety standards, and other requirements. This enforcement is crucial for maintaining order and protecting the welfare of the community.

- iii. **Data Collection and Statistics:** Business licenses provide municipalities with valuable data about the local economy, including the number and types of businesses operating in the area. This information can be used for economic development planning, resource allocation, and understanding market trends.
 - iv. **Realignment of Services:** Licensing helps municipalities assess the needs for services and infrastructure in their communities. By understanding the business landscape, municipalities can realign resources and services to better support local businesses and enhance economic growth.
 - v. **Business Variations and Compliance:** Licensing allows municipalities to track businesses that may operate under different conditions or variations (e.g., food trucks, home-based businesses). This tracking ensures that all businesses adhere to local regulations, promoting fairness and compliance.
 - vi. **Promotions and Economic Development:** Municipalities often use business licenses as a tool to promote local businesses through programs, grants, or marketing initiatives. They can support local economic development efforts by identifying and highlighting businesses that contribute to the community.
 - vii. **Community Standards and Quality Control:** Licensing establishes a standard for businesses, ensuring they meet minimum operational and safety criteria. This helps maintain the quality of services and products available to residents and fosters a positive business environment.
5. **Can you update on complaints received from ratepayers (not highlighted in TTC Annual Report – 2020) and how it has resolved.**

Tavua Town Council received complaints and requests from ratepayers concerning municipal infrastructure and services. Some of these complaints were not specifically highlighted in the 2020 Annual Report. The main complaints related to **defective streetlights and the condition of footpaths and roads.**

(a) **Inactive Streetlights**

Council received complaints from ratepayers regarding streetlights that were not functioning and required repairs. These complaints were referred to FRA for their further action.

(b) **Footpaths and Roads**

Council also received complaints concerning the condition of certain roads and footpaths, including damaged surfaces, potholes and areas requiring maintenance. These were also referred to FRA for their further action.

Infrastructure Development

6. What were the key infrastructure projects /capital works undertaken in 2020?

- installation of **10 industrial fans** at the Tavua Market to improve ventilation and address heat;
- maintenance and upgrading of Garvey Park facilities;
- beautification works involving road curbs, gardens and shelters;
- Tavua Town Council undertook the upgrading of the drainage system at Tavualevu Village. The project was funded through a **Government grant** provided to support the improvement of drainage infrastructure. The drainage upgrade was undertaken to improve stormwater flow, address drainage-related issues and reduce the risk of flooding and water accumulation within the affected area.

7. Can you update on the number of parking meters installed as highlighted on Page 14 of the Annual Report?

The Annual Report confirms that the parking meters in Tavua were originally installed in **2004**. At the time of the 2020 Annual Report, there were **eight parking meters in operation**. The Council reported that maintaining the meters was a challenge because they had become outdated and Council was unable to locate suppliers for spare parts.

8. How have market vendors benefitted from the UN Women workshop on Cashflow management and budgeting?

UN Women conducted training for Tavua Market vendors covering **cash- flow management and budgeting**.

The workshop was beneficial in improving vendors' understanding of managing daily business cash flow, budgeting and planning their income and expenditure; and improving the sustainability of their small businesses. The Council did not carry out a quantitative assessment of its outcomes or the number of vendors who subsequently improved their financial performance.

9. How well has the TTC achieved its Sustainable Development Goals? (Please specify each goal)

Goal 3 of the Strategic Plan 2020 – 2025 and SDGs 3, 6 & 14

Goal 3 of Tavua's Strategic Plans 2020 – 2025 looks at a "Sustainable Environment and Infrastructure". The Goal's link with Sustainable Development Goals 3 (Good Health and Well-being), Goal 6 (Clean Water and Sanitation), and Goal 14 (Life below Water) is essential because human health relies directly

on the quality of water harvested for daily consumption. The balance ultimately drains off into Tavua's traditional fishing grounds.

The outward flow of the drainage and river systems into the sea affects Goal 14 and could have drastic consequences on the mangrove and foreshore ecosystem that the native and other communities in Tavua depend on for their daily consumption and commercial activities. The solution lies in the treatment of waste and sewer water on land where the ultimate aim is to protect aquatic ecosystems and prevent human exposure to disease.

Tavua Town currently does not have a reticulated central public sewerage system. Because there is no central public sewer network operating throughout the municipality, local waste and wastewater management relies primarily on localized setups. The majority of households and commercial businesses in Tavua utilize private, localized septic tanks to process sewer water (blackwater).

Greywater & Runoff: General wastewater from sinks, showers, and commercial premises discharges into the Council's stormwater drains. The Tavua Town Council handles regular clearing and maintenance of these drains to prevent stagnation. Greywater and runoffs eventually make their way into the coastal environment.

Tavua clings to the hope that Water Authority of Fiji (WAF) guided by the Water and Waste Water Strategy, specifically, Chapter 7.3 of the National Development Plan 2025-2029 Vision 2050, will persist in prioritising the municipality for future reticulated public sewerage infrastructure development.

Goals 2, 4 and 5 of the Council's Strategy Plan 2020 -2025 and SDGs 3 and 11

Strategic Goal 2 being Safe and Flourishing Neighbourhoods, Goal 4 – Effective and Efficient Services and Goal 5 – People Strategy were employed in conjunction with SDG 3 – Good Health and Well-being and SDG 11 – Sustainable Cities and Communities to manage the effects of COVID 19 as discussed in Q3 above.

Strategic Plan 4 & 5 of the Strategy Plan 2020-2025 and Sustainable Development Goals 4, 8 & 10

The Council was proud to work with the Global Girit Institute in the establishment of the Pacific Polytech Tavua campus in 2021. In accomplishing that milestone, the Council met Goal 4 (Effective and Efficient Services) and Goal 5 (People Strategy) of its Strategic Plan 2020-2025. The Council through that also enabled the rise in **Quality Education** (SDG 4) that led to **Decent Work and Economic Growth** (SDG 8) and **Reduced Inequalities** (SDG 10) for Tavua and its surrounding areas.

Strategic Plan 3 of the Council's Strategy Plan 2020-2025 relative to Sustainable Development Goals 9, 11 and 13

COVID 19 re-emerged as the greatest obstacle under this head in 2020. The Strategic Plan's Goal 3 dealt with "Sustainable and Infrastructure" which related

closely to SDG 9 (Industry, Innovation and Infrastructure) and SDG 11 (Sustainable Cities and Communities).

This was evident in that the Council issued a single Completion Certificate worth \$3,500.00 during the review period compared to three worth \$200,850.00 in 2019. Again, the contraction of the review period to seven months may have also been a major factor behind the drop experienced on this matter.

It was and still is a major challenge for Tavua to have sustainable development to the east of the central business district due to the effects of the flood, now experienced at regular intervals, of the Nasivi River. Dredging may be the answer: the townspeople and the villagers of Tavualevu and Nabuna can only wait for Government's assistance on this matter. Expansion of the town boundary to the west is the only practical solution and work on that is currently in progress.

The 1998 Scheme Plan for Tavua focussed on expanding the town boundary southward towards Vatukoula. The intention was to save the flat plains on the west for sugar cane farming. The new 10 year Lome IV protocol had just been formalised thus the need at that time for reserving the best arable land for sugar cane cropping.

It is now time to review that and the Council, the iTaukei Land Trust Board, Department of Town and Country Planning and other stakeholders are seriously reviewing the possibility of extending the town boundary westwards along a two kilometre radius on either side of the Kings Road to Tagitagi. This is to ensure proper zoning and better coordinated placement of infrastructural development.

Strategic Plan 4 and 5: SDG 17 – Partnerships for the Goals

- (a) Collaboration with Government departments, Tavua Hospital, National Fire Authority, Red Cross, GoldnWater Carnival Committee, Vatukoula Gold Mining Co. Ltd and other stakeholders. During the COVID-19 pandemic, Tavua Town Council worked closely in partnership with various stakeholders to support the Government's efforts in preventing and controlling the spread of the virus within the Tavua community.
- (b) The Council works with Government agencies and other stakeholders to improve service delivery and implement priority projects. Government grant funding has supported key initiatives such as the **Tavualevu Village drainage upgrade**, drainage maintenance and extended boundary waste collection.

Gender equality

10. Please provide the number of staff as per the table below for Tavua Town Council Staff.

YEAR	MALE	FEMALE	TOTAL
2020	17	3	20
2021	16	4	20
2022	18	4	22
2023	17	5	22
2024	17	4	21
2025	17	4	21

Although females consisted of 15 percent (15%) of the total staff numbers during the period under review, they made up 100% of the Finance and Administration department. The 17 males comprised those who were involved with heavy manual work.

11) Please highlight the achievement of TTC after implementing 5-year Strategic Plans.

Overall Strategic Performance Assessment

Based on the available evidence, **Tavua Town Council performed satisfactorily against its strategic priorities in 2020**, particularly considering the extraordinary circumstances created by the COVID-19 pandemic.

The strongest areas of achievement were:

- a) COVID-19 preparedness and response;
- b) Continuity of municipal services;
- c) Financial management;
- d) Market management and revenue generation;
- e) Public health and environmental sanitation;
- f) Town planning and development control;
- g) Business licensing and economic regulation;
- h) Community partnerships and stakeholder engagement;
- i) Maintenance of parks and recreational facilities; and,
- j) Solid waste management in extended service areas

The principal area requiring improvement was **parking-meter management**, where outdated equipment resulted in expenditure exceeding revenue. The Council has successfully addressed this key operational challenge identified

and rectified by installation of nine Pay and Display parking meters. This investment represents a significant achievement under the Council's strategic objective of modernizing municipal infrastructure, improving traffic and parking management, strengthening revenue collection, and enhancing service delivery to the public.

Overall Achievement Rating

A suitable overall assessment for the report would be:

Overall Strategic Plan Achievement: SATISFACTORY / SUBSTANTIALLY ACHIEVED

This assessment recognizes that the Council maintained its core functions and delivered several significant strategic outcomes despite COVID-19, Cyclone Harold, reduced operating conditions and financial pressures.

Key Strategic Achievements to Highlight

The six major achievements:

- (a) Maintained essential municipal services during COVID-19.
- (b) Established and equipped an isolation centre at Garvey Park.
- (c) Generated a recurrent surplus.
- (d) Maintained market operations while implementing COVID-19 safety measures.
- (e) Continued public health, environmental sanitation and solid waste services.
- (f) Strengthened partnerships with Government, NGOs, businesses and community stakeholders.

These achievements demonstrate that Tavua Town Council remained operational, responsive and resilient while contributing to the health, safety, economic activity and overall wellbeing of the Tavua community during 2020.

12) Please provide the brief administrative history of the Tavua Town Council

Tavua has a long history as an agricultural and commercial centre in the western part of Viti Levu. Before becoming a municipality, the area was administered by Tavua Rural Local Authority.

The development of Tavua as an urban centre was influenced significantly by sugarcane agriculture, commercial activities and the nearby Vatukoula gold-mining industry. Tavua also became an important service and trading centre for surrounding communities.

Establishment as a Town

Tavua was formally declared a town on 27 April 1992. The declaration was made by the then Minister responsible for Local Government, Housing and Urban Development, Ratu Ovini Bokini. The town was subsequently administered under Fiji's local government framework and the Local Government Act 1972.

Tavua Town By-Laws 1993 were subsequently established under the Local Government Act framework, providing regulatory provisions for municipal activities within Tavua.

Municipal Governance

Under the traditional municipal system, elected councillors, with the councillors selecting a Mayor from among themselves, governed Tavua Town Council. Tavua's first Mayor following its incorporation was Councillor Iliesa Vula of Tavualevu.

A significant change occurred in 2009, when the interim Government dismissed Fiji's municipal councils and appointed Special Administrators to oversee the administration of urban local authorities. Tavua subsequently operated under the Special Administrator system rather than an elected municipal council.