



Budget 2018–2019 Head No. 7: Ministry of Employment, Productivity and Industrial Relations

Background

The Ministry of Employment, Productivity and Industrial Relations (‘Ministry’) is responsible for upholding every Fijian’s constitutional right to economic participation, a just minimum wage, humane treatment in the workplace and proper working conditions. The Ministry implements labour reforms that improve relations between workers, employers and Government, while boosting overall productivity.

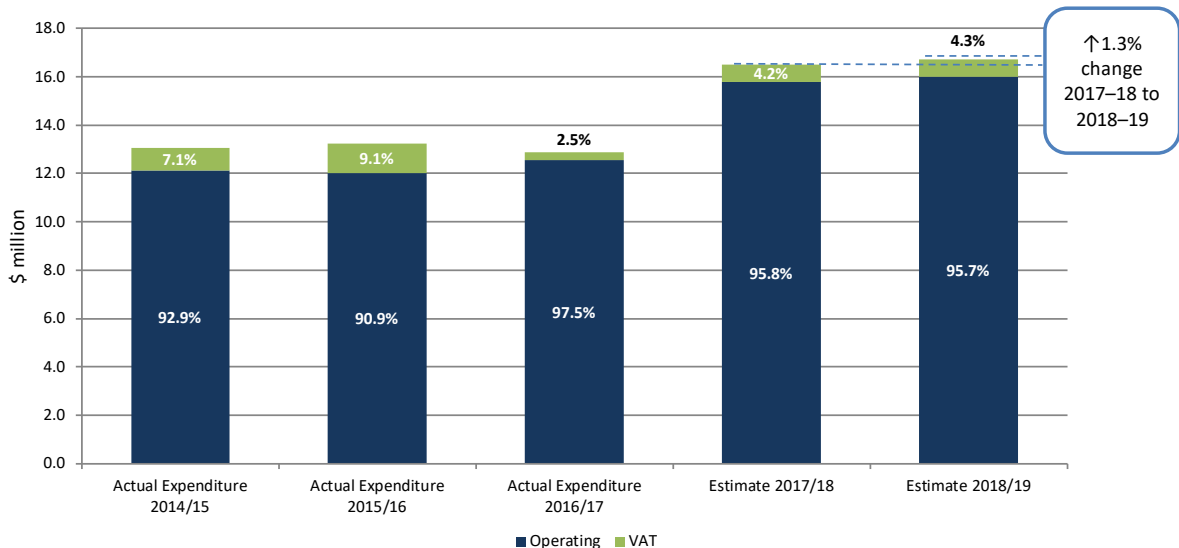
Trends

The Ministry’s allocation in the 2018-2019 Budget totals **\$16.7 million**. This represents an increase of 1.3 per cent from the last financial year, when the Ministry was allocated \$16.5 million. This \$200,000 increase is mainly attributable to:

- An increase in the Seasonal Work Programme (AUS/NZ) for the engagement of Liaison Officers at the Australia and New Zealand Offices;
- Increase in operating expenditure for travel and communications; and
- A decrease in the Workmen’s Compensation Allocation. This is because, effective from 1 January 2019, this programme will be administered by the Accident Compensation Commission of Fiji.

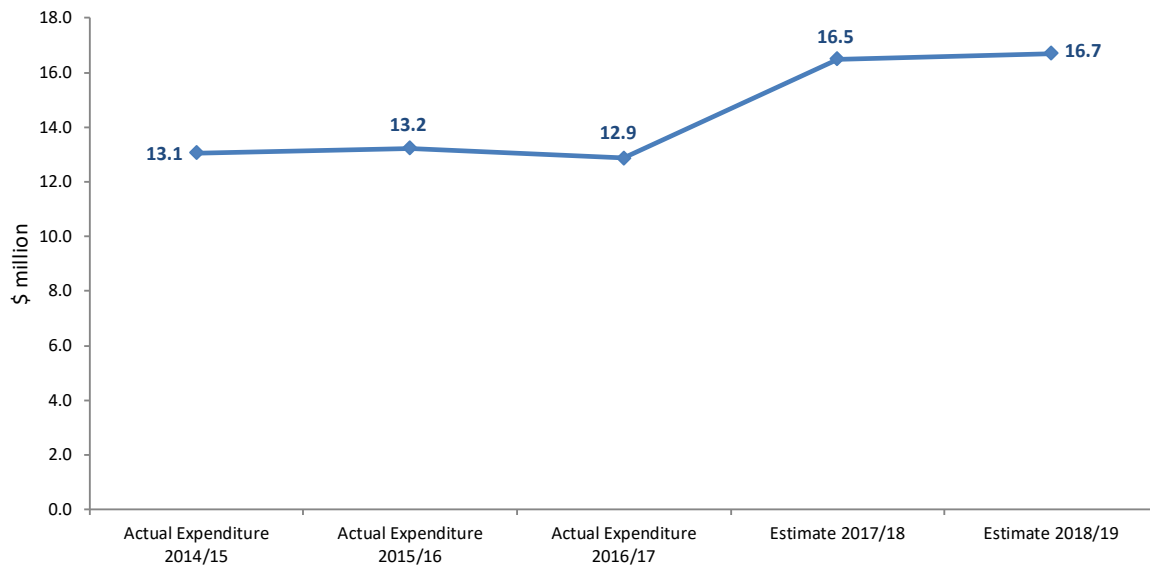
The following graphs show funding trends over the past five years.

Ministry of Employment, Productivity & Industrial Relations expenditure by type, 2014-2015 to 2018-2019





Ministry of Employment, Productivity & Industrial Relations total expenditure, 2014-2015 to 2018-2019



Budget announcements and allocations

Labour Reforms

Progressive implementation of labour reforms over the years has provided the impetus for the review of industrial legislations and the establishment of labour market institutions such as the National Occupational Health and Safety Service, the Labour Standard Service, the Mediation Service and the National Employment Centre.

New Leave Entitlements

The Fijian Government will increase the maternity leave period from 84 days to 98 consecutive days. In addition, five days Paternity Leave and five days Family Care Leave will also be introduced. To encourage greater uptake by employers, a 150 per cent tax deduction will be applicable for wages and salaries paid for these leave entitlements.

Labour Services

\$3.4 million will be given to the Ministry to assist in enforcing the National Minimum Wage, including the ten sector-based minimum wage rates.

Employment Opportunities

- 1) **Apprenticeship – \$400,000** has been allocated for four-year apprenticeships that provide apprentices with technical skills to further their careers
- 2) **Foreign Employment Service Unit – \$882,639** has been allocated to this programme to provide Fijians in rural and maritime areas with the opportunity to work abroad to each cash and develop valuable they can use upon their return to Fiji.
- 3) **Fiji Volunteer Scheme –\$1.2 million** budget allocation has been allocated to this scheme to send retired teachers to neighbouring island states that request assistance.



Gender analysis

The Government has introduced the Employment Relations Bill (Budget Amendment) (Bill No. 21 of 2018), which will amend the *Employment Relations Act 2007* by introducing ‘Family Care leave’ and ‘Parental Leave’¹ entitlements, as well as extending the maternity leave entitlements from 84 to 98 days for women. The change in policy and legislation will have positive impact on both men and women, and families.

Family Care leave allows workers (whether male or female) to provide care and support to immediate family members² and the employee will be entitled to 5 working days in a year and cannot be carried forward to the next year.

Paternity Leave allows fathers of new-borns to take paternity leave if their partners are entitled to maternity leave. The 5-day paternity leave entitlement would assist parents share some of the workload on caring for their newly born child.

Sources

- Fijian Government (2018) *Budget estimates 2018–2019*, Ministry of Economy, 28 June 2018. [Hard copy.]
- Fijian Government (2018) *General administration sector: 2018–2019 Budget kit*. [Hard copy.]

July 2018

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¹ Parental Leaves means Maternity & Paternity Leave (Budget Bill) Bill No. 21 of 2018

² Immediate Family consists of the Worker’s spouse, child, parent and sibling (Budget Bill) Bill No. 21 of 2018