

STANDING COMMITTEE ON NATURAL RESOURCES

2018/2019, 2019/2020 & 2020/2021 MINISTRY OF LANDS & MINERAL RESOURCES ANNUAL REPORT SCRUTINY

FINDINGS/QUESTIONS

***** (Please take note that all references to page numbers in this section will be referring to the 2020-2021 Annual Report unless specifically mentioned otherwise.)***

Q1 Page 6. Vision/Mission & Values – The Committee has noted with appreciation the improvement in the manner in which the Vision, mission and the values have been articulated in the 2020-2021 Report in comparison to the Annual Reports for earlier periods. Can the Ministry please clarify whether there was any review and improvements made recently on its Vision, Mission and Values from what was in place from 2018- 2021?

Reviews for Ministry's Vision, Mission and Values are always conducted during the annual planning workshops whereby discussions are held, and changes are made accordingly.

The Vision, Mission and Values for AR 2018/2019 & 2019/2020 remains the same while the Ministry Vision, Mission and Values had changed e.g. in the AR 2018/2019, the Ministry's Vision was: "Vibrant, Dynamic and Efficient Management of our Land and Minerals for a Sustainable Environment and Economic Future for the benefit of the People of Fiji but in the 2020/2021 FY, the Vision was: "Lands and Mineral for Life" Also, the Ministry's Mission was improved from 8 platforms to only 1, which is "To effectively administer and regulate the land and mineral sector through sustainable and transformative legislations and policies."

Q2 Page 7. Ministry Overview - Can the Ministry provide an overview on the kind of reviews and amendments that have taken place on each of the key Legislations listed in page 7 of the 2020-2021 Annual Report.

The 2020/2021 FY saw the difficulty in the effective execution of the relevant legislation, policies and SOPs due to the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic. Nevertheless, the Ministry remains committed to ensure that on-going discussions via zoom meetings, electronic mails and phone calls were undertaken despite the lockdown movement restrictions and the 'Work from Home' operation.

In the 2020/2021 FY, Cabinet approved the Review of the Mining Act and the Mineral Policy. The first Phase of the Review has been completed and report and related documentations have been sent to the consultant, the IGF, for their feedback. The review is still on-going.

The actual review for the State Lands Act did not eventuate but the Ministry focused on strengthening its monitoring mechanism for illegal gravel extraction operators. This resulted in the execution of the MOU between the Ministry and Fiji Police Force.

Also, the Ministry submitted a Cabinet Memorandum for the amendment of the Surveyors Regulations which was approved by Cabinet towards the end of 2021.

All these work (1 Act, 1 Regulation and 1 policy and MOU) were the main achievements of the Ministry.

Overall, a total of 8/10 Cabinet Decisions were received during the 2020/2021 FY.

Q3 Can the Ministry provide an overview of the Ministry performance during the period between 2018 to 2021, specifying in particular, what you see as the.

- **Greatest Ministry performances improved upon or achieved?**
 - Review of Standard Operating Procedures throughout the ministry with consultation with FNU and Digitalization
 - Upgrade of Geodetic Datum – The project ensures a strong and well-maintained network of mapping coordinates. This is vital for reliable cadastral survey and the establishment of accurate Fijian land boundaries. This includes the Construction of pillars and huts, Construction & Installation of 8 CORS etc.
 - Successful Installation of Seismic VSAT Station - The entire VSAT seismic system upgrade to Libra II. This is to ensure sustainable 24/7 earthquake monitoring. The upgrade will improve service deliveries, assessment and monitoring of seismic events.
 - Vanua GIS - Ministry assisted the MoH during the COVID-19 outbreak regarding the mapping and monitoring of affected areas through the creation of a Dashboard. The dashboard provided information that assisted the public and people working to help with reducing the spread of the virus. Which areas had the highest cases and which areas were cleared, etc.
 - Launching of online lease payments through MPaisa.
 - Online MyLease Info platform - Contribute to Government initiative of 'ease of doing business' where lessees have access to their lease information online through their own login when they register, view and Print Lease Statement Invoice.
 - Opening of the Rakiraki and Nadi office – Ease of doing business where lessees from Sigatoka and Ba don't have to travel right to the Lautoka office for any queries or follow-ups they may have about their lease.
- **Greatest shortcomings and challenges?**
 - **Shortcoming**
 1. Registration of Valuers
 2. Breakdown of drilling equipment – delay in work and non-availability of spare parts (locally).
 3. Absence of internal record management system, and storage of data/records within each division/section.
 - **Challenge**
 1. Delay in the procurement process or RIE – which delays commencement of work to meet targeted timelines.

2. Ad-hoc requests – The Ministry then diverts funds when such requests are received. Diversion of funds resulting in some targets not met.
 3. COVID-19 pandemic – Greatly affected the ministry work performance given that it's a technical based Ministry whereby significant number of technical divisions have planned field projects which were not supported due to COVID restrictions.
 4. Work from Home – WFH was not planned and anticipated so the Ministry was not prepared with relevant resources (equipment, transportation, data accessibility etc.) to maximize the work from home strategy.
- Changes you have made to ensure that the shortcomings do not reoccur.
 1. Senior Valuer Position requirement is registration under the Valuers Registration Board. Condition for confirmed senior level position for valuation is to be a registered valuer. Capacity building continues in the Ministry and mentoring for current Valuers to complete the prescribed number of projects for registration.
 2. The inclusion of 2 new Drill Rigs and Compressors will be an added boost to the Drilling Fleet. This is enhanced by the recruitment of an additional plumber to assist in reticulation works.
 3. Training in administrative duties for staff to ensure proper record keeping and data management, for future reference.
 4. As most staff who were not in the field assisting the Ministry of Health some had to be provided with lap-tops and access zoom meetings so that work could continue.
 - How did the Ministry mitigate those challenges?
 1. Proper planning – This is to ensure timely release of funds from Ministry of Finance and obtaining approval from Tender Board. Groundwork for projects has been moved from the new FY to the end of current FY to ensure that all is in order and ready to start once the funds are allocated to the Ministry. Also, maintenance of equipment and machinery is undertaken at the end of the current FY to ensure efficiency of work.
 2. Prioritization – Deployment of resources is encouraged whereby managers are tasked to manage work completion by prioritizing of activities. Prioritization may be according to needs; funds availability; location of project site – well planned to endure effectiveness and efficiency of work. Also, an understanding was approved by the ministry where no ad-hoc request was to be entertained by the Ministry as it adversely impacts other planned work...
 3. Innovative - The staff were motivated to think of innovative ways in doing their work. This led to the in-house establishment of My Lease Info platform that allowed lessees to access their lease information considering the movement restriction across the country.
 4. Multi-tasking – Staffs were encouraged to multi-task for continuity of service delivery.
 - Changes made to consolidate improvements made.

- Implementation of the way forward for both the shortcoming and the challenges listed above.

Q4 The Committee has noted that there have been significant delays in a number of subdivisions that the Ministry has been involved in such as Vakamasisuasua, Field 40, Yako and Legalega.

How does the Ministry intend to eliminate these problems, and is the Ministry considering completely outsourcing such developments, while maintaining an oversight role?

- The Ministry is now in its final phase of development. It has been a challenging experience but in future, proper systematic appraisal and feasibility study will be conducted. Projects need to be designed and planned well and also staff should have the capability to evaluate and monitor such work which is outside the scope of the Ministry. Staff have been trained in Project Management, Project Design, Project Evaluation and Monitoring to help the ministry in resolving these issues.
- Vakamasisuasua Industrial Subdivision
 - The subdivision civil works is expected to be completed before the end of July 2024.
- Field 40 Subdivision
 - The contractor is currently installing the sewer pump which is the final scope of works left in the contract.
 - Ministry will not be engaging into subdivision development due to the problems faced with these two projects and have made a resolution that it will not undertake land development works but tender out such work to developers.

Q5 a) Page 55 Auditors Report - The Committee noted that the unreconciled variance increased from \$1,305,978 million in 2018 – 2019 Annual Report to \$2,970,822 million in the 2020 – 2021 Annual Report. The Committee would like to know if this matter has now been resolved.

b) Page 55 – Auditors Report - The Committee also noted that the Auditor was not able to verify the accuracy of the Land and Property Rent balance of \$14.14 million. How has the Ministry resolved this issue?

The Ministry has strengthened its internal processes through daily verification and reconciliation of revenue received together with Cash Analysis against the CLLS (Crown Land Lease System) revenue records.

The variance was due to the expired leases not updated to the CLLS for those agencies that make one-off payments for large listings of lessees such as FSC, Post Fiji and Housing Authority. Payment was received in bulk from FSC but upon updating this payment to the individual account (Oracle System) it shows that their lease has been expired.

- The inconsistency in the timeframe for processing the renewal of leases.

Way Forward

- Activate expired leases accounts in CLLS for the purpose of receipting and deactivate them at the end of the process.

- Review of SOPs to ensure consistent and timely renewal of leases.

Q6 Page 8 – 51 - The Committee noted with appreciation the improvement in the manner in which Performance Assessments have been carried out and reported from 2018 to 2021

- Does the Ministry propose a system to determine an annual overall score against Costed Operational Plan (COP) and Business Plan (BP) for each Department and Division and also for the whole Ministry? The ministry has a team that monitors the progress of the work done on the BP for the respective divisions and the COP. Quarterly verifications are conducted by the monitoring team and outputs are quantified and attributed to work performance ratings.
- Does the Ministry provide an assessment of how well the Ministry performed in 2021 against the targets established in the 2017 National Development Plan (NDP)? Yes, Since the priorities and targets are derived from the NDP and further specified to the performance measures in the COP and BP which is the Quality, Quantity and Timeline. Withing these three financial years, the ministry has achieved 80% – 90% in performance.

Q7. Given Fiji's 2036 Nationally Determined Contributions (NDC) targets on Renewable Electricity, can the Ministry update the Committee whether there have been any further developments on the potential sites for Geothermal Energy that were assessed in 2020? The project development objective is to inform the Government of Fiji's decision to progress to exploration, and subject to viability, development of geothermal resources based on a least cost approach. The purpose of carrying out further exploration on the resource is we anticipate that sites for exploration well(s) will be identified, leading to a pilot project for development.

According to the Cabinet Paper of February 2020, the recommendations noted that based on the least cost options assessment, the geothermal power is not the least cost option for generation in Vanua Levu; and that the results and reports be classified as "Official Use Only" as requested by the World Bank dated 20 December 2019 implying that the results and the reports will not be disclosed publicly as confidential data that was used for the least cost options assessment.

Q8. The Committee has noted with appreciation the importance with which the Ministry has been involved in up skilling the qualifications, competencies and professional registration of its staff. Given the severe skill shortages now impacting Fiji, does the Ministry have any Staff Retention Plans to address the likelihood of losing qualified people to the private sector and other countries? Regularization exercise has allowed the Ministry to issue contracts to up to 80 officers who had been on acting and temporary appointments. In addition, there were some officers who had been given a step increment in view of the Job Evaluation Exercise. Where their training, completion. Completion of studies, or registration etc. assisted with this.

Q9 Does the Ministry consider developing a system whereby it can keep its staff who do not have the required academic qualifications, but do possess the required competencies so that they are not lost from the Ministry i.e. developing a system that promotes equivalency of experience and degree qualified officers (officers with 20 years of experience is equivalent to officers with qualification? *Equivalency is considered during the recruitment process of vacant positions in the Ministry. This is captured in the job descriptions of positions in the Ministry that is in line with the ministry of civil service policies of recruitment.*

Q10 Please provide the Committee with an update on lease arrears and how these arrears are being recovered.

- The Ministry is also concerned on the amount of lease arrears. The pandemic had also played a great role in the slow recovery of these lease arrears.
- The ministry had prepared and introduced a Waiver of Interest exercise in financial year 2020/2021 to at least assist our lessees. Also progress has been made in digitizing all our lease files and uploading on a digital format that is compatible with the FMIS system. This is being built through our online processes. The ministry also assisted the Ministry of Finance through verifying applicants who applied for relevant assistance.
- The Ministry is working tirelessly to ensure that arrears are collected, and notices issued to rent defaulters.

Q11 Please provide an update on the status of the Geodetic datum? The ministry has completed the formulation of the roadmap to guide the processing of the data. The roadmap was endorsed by the ministry and send to SPC and Geoscience Australia (GA). Completed the Preliminary processing of the data and results was sent to SPC for onward submission to Geoscience Australia. Ministry delegation will be travelling to Geoscience Australia from 15 – 19th April to meet with the GA team to discuss the detail work plan for the final processing of the data. Project is earmarked for completion this financial year.

Q12 Water is a key resource for Fiji and we would like to know if the Ministry has now developed a comprehensive survey of all ground waters in Fiji.

- Is the Ministry working with the Ministry of Public Works to manage both surface and ground water effectively in the best interests of Fiji? The Ministry works closely with the Ministry of Public Works through the Department of Water and Sewerage. This close partnership has been the key to the development of the Rural Water and Sanitation Policy, the Groundwater Resources Development and Management Policy and the National Water Resources and Sanitation Policy, to name a few.
- Is there any National Ground Water Plan, Policy or Framework of the Ministry? The Ministry has formulated the Groundwater Resources Development and Management Policy in 2011 which had undergone major scrutiny through 5 stakeholders' consultations and several thematic group meetings. The Policy was endorsed by Cabinet in January 2024 and the Ministry is now in the process of putting together a framework for its implementation which includes the Development of a Groundwater Legislation. A project for Water Inventory Stock Take is proposed to ensure sustainable management of resource.

Q13 How well is the Ministry ensuring the productivity of State Lands?

- Is there a master plan for all state lands for the whole of Fiji and is being used in the best interest of all Fijians? There is a project team in place that is working on a State Land Use Master Plan. They have completed the work on the greater western division and are currently working on the greater northern division for this financial year 2023 / 2024. This project will continue (with the provision of budget) to cover the whole of State Land in the country. The team is working

closely with TLTB in complementing their Land Use Master Plan and with the endorsement of DTCP.

- What is the status to all crown freehold lands in Fiji? Almost all Crown Freehold have been leased out to various lessees for various uses. Their tenure remains as Crown under the administration of the Director of Lands.
- Should the Ministry of Lands be responsible overall for optimal use of all lands in Fiji? The Ministry is legislated only for the administration of State Land just as TLTB is mandated by law to look after iTaukei Land. On the other hand, all land zoning come under the Ministry of Local Government. The responsibility for the optimal use of all lands in Fiji can be driven by a committee consisting of the above stakeholders. The Ministry is collaborating with other agencies in trying to improve land use and development in Fiji.

Q14 We have noticed there are often differences between LOUs and the mining sector, as seen in the sentiments expressed in Namosi over the years. How does the Ministry intend to keep the LOU's happy and also create wealth out of mining?

- In the case of Namosi, the issues were mainly due to outstanding traditional differences within the landowning units. This has affected the renewal of the exploration licence.
 - Mineral exploration licence is not mining. It is the search for minerals which includes basic prospecting such as picking samples including advance exploration such as digging pits, trenches and drilling.
 - During mineral exploration, the landowners retain the right to use the land and for any interest, they are notified for land access.
 - The Mineral Resources Department have a process dictating the grant and renewal of exploration licenses. As required in the Mining Act 1965, the tenement holders are required to notify the landowners for land access. However, a full consultation is conducted through the respective provincial office which is also verified by the Mining Division Community Unit.
 - Further, the Department have established a community consultation unit whose responsibility is to ensure that landowners are updated on the proposed program the tenement holder will be undertaking, ensure that compensation agreements are in place prior to exploration and any grievances by the landowners are dealt with accordingly.

Q15 Can the Ministry please provide the Committee the gender analysis of staff involved in various programs and projects of the Ministry? The figures provided below is inclusive of established, unestablished and project officers. Slight variation in data due to vacancies in positions.

Head No	Programme	Activity	Males	Females	Total
33-1-1	Policy and Administration	General Administration	2	4	6
33-2-1	Mineral Resources	Geological and Mineral Investigation	70	31	101
33-2-2	Mineral Resources	Oil and Mines Acts Administration	11	6	17
33-3-1	Land Management	State Land Administration	24	36	60
33-3-2	Land Management	Surveys and Geospatial Information Management	49	29	78
33-3-3	Land Management	Valuation	7	8	15

33-3-4	Land Management	State Land Planning and Development	5	6	11
33-3-5	Land Management	Land Use Division	16	9	25
33-3-6	Land Management	Divisional Lands Office – Central Eastern	31	16	47
33-3-7	Land Management	Divisional Lands Office – Western	30	22	52
33-3-8	Land Management	Divisional Lands Office – Northern	17	13	30
		TOTAL	262	180	442

Q16 Can the Ministry identify its relevant SDG's and how has the Ministry considered implementing those SDGs in its programs and projects to be in line with the National Development Plan? Tabulated below are some of the SDG's aligned to the NDP and Ministry programs:

SDG	NDP	Ministry Programs
8 Decent Work and Economic Growth 10 Reduced Inequalities	NDP 2.4 Structural Reform	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Structural Realignment • Implement Public Sector Reform
3 Good Health and Well Being 6 Clean Water and Sanitation	NDP 3.11 Water and Sanitation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> i. Groundwater Assessment for Large and Small Islands ii. Investigations, Drilling and Reticulations iii. Groundwater for water bottling plants iv. Monthly survey and monitoring of selected idle bore holes v. Analysis of groundwater and geochemical samples vi. Community Awareness and consultations
8 Decent Work and Economic Growth 10 Reduced Inequalities 11 Sustainable Cities and Communities 13 Climate Action 14 Life Below Water 15 Life on Land	NDP 3.2.5 Modernising Business Regulatory Environment NDP 3.2.9 Sustainable Cities and Towns	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> i. Review of Legislations, Information and Discussion Papers to Cabinet ii. Registration of Surveyors and Valuers iii. State Lease Administration iv. Administration of State Leases on iTaukei Land v. Acquisition of Land for public purposes vi. Municipal Valuations vii. Addressing complaints viii. Maintenance of Existing Subdivisions ix. Digitising of Geological Map sheets x. Land Use Master Planning xi. Awareness to Foreshore Communities xii. Land Reform xiii. Geo tech and geo engineering surveys

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> xiv. Purchase of Seismic Network Equipment xv. Digitisation of Fiji's Geological Information
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 11 Sustainable Cities and Communities 13 Climate Action 14 Life Below Water 15 Life on Land 	3.2.5 Mining	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> i. Geo-hazard and geological assessments ii. Earthquake monitoring iii. Mineral exploration licence and projects iv. Quarterly inspections on monitoring for compliance to environmental laws, licence conditions in Mines, Quarries, and use of Explosives magazines
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 8 Decent Work and Economic Growth 9 Industry, Innovation and Infrastructure 15 Life on Land 	NDP Information Technology	3.2.18 and <ul style="list-style-type: none"> i. State Land Application Portal – online lease administration. ii. MyLeaseInfo iii. Online application for vacant state land iv. Enhanced database for geospatial data v. Software licences, procurements for data management and upgrade vi. Document Management System – scanning of Lands Files
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 8 Decent Work and Economic Growth 9 Industry, Innovation and Infrastructure 15 Life on Land 	NDP 4.0 Monitoring and Evaluation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> i. Rental Arrears ii. State Leases through onsite verification under the Harmonisation Project iii. Internal audits iv. Community visitations on mineral exploration, verification and distribution of mineral royalty, foreshore development, sand and gravel extraction v. Monitoring of seismic activities vi. Awareness on impacts of earthquakes and tsunamis vii. Monthly monitoring and survey of idle bore holes viii. Environmental Monitoring of Mines and Quarries

STANDING COMMITTEE ON NATURAL RESOURCES

2018/2019, 2019/2020 & 2020/2021 MINISTRY OF LANDS & MINERAL RESOURCES ANNUAL REPORT SCRUTINY

Q15. Gender Composition (2019 – 2021)

Year	Category	Female	Male	Comments
2018 – 2019	Executive (PS/DS/DMD/DL)	1	3	
	SMB	5	8	Members of the SMB PRO, MF, PSO & MCS not included
	Middle			Can be Principles and Senior not included in the SMB listing
	Others			All other staff
2019 - 2020	Executive (PS/DS/DMD/DL)	2	2	
	SMB	10	5	Members of the SMB MF & MCS not included
	Middle			Gender – Female representation higher
	Others			
2020-2021	Executive (PS/DS/DMD/DL)	2	2	
	SMB	10	5	Gender – Female representation higher
	Middle			
	Others			

ANNEXURE 2

VERBATIM

[VERBATIM REPORT]

STANDING COMMITTEE ON NATURAL RESOURCES

**ANNUAL REPORT - MINISTRY OF LANDS
AND MINERAL RESOURCES 2018-2019,
2019-2020 AND 2020-2021**

**SUBMITTEE: Ministry of Lands and Mineral
Resources**

VENUE: Big Committee Room, Parliament

DATE: Tuesday, 9th April, 2024

**VERBATIM NOTES OF THE MEETING OF THE STANDING COMMITTEE ON
NATURAL RESOURCES HELD AT THE COMMITTEE ROOM (EAST/WEST
WING), PARLIAMENT PRECINCTS, GOVERNMENT BUILDINGS ON TUESDAY,
9TH APRIL, 2024 AT 10.12.A.M.**

Interviewee/Submittee: **Ministry of Lands and Mineral Resources**

In Attendance:

- | | | |
|---------------------------|---|-------------------------------|
| 1. Mrs. Raijieli Taga | - | Permanent Secretary |
| 2. Mr. Timoci Samisoni | - | Deputy Secretary |
| 3. Mr. Josefa Vuniamatana | - | Director Lands |
| 4. Mr. Apete Soro | - | Director Minerals Development |
| 5. Mr. Marika Qalo | - | Manager Finance |
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MR. CHAIRMAN.- Honourable Members, Permanent Secretary and the team from the Ministry of Lands and Mineral Resources, members of the media and the public, secretariat, dear viewers, ladies and gentlemen, a very good morning to you all. It is a pleasure to welcome everyone, especially to the viewers who are watching this session. I am privileged to Chair this first submission meeting of the Standing Committee on Natural Resources which is being aired live on Parliament's Channel through the *Walesi* platform and livestreamed through Parliament's *Facebook* page.

At the outset, for information purposes, pursuant to the Standing Orders of Parliament, specifically Standing Order 111, all Committee meetings are to be open to the public, therefore, this submission meeting is open to the public and media and will also be aired live, as I had earlier mentioned. However, 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;
2. Third party confidential information;
3. Personnel or human resources; and
4. Meetings, whereby the Committee deliberates on all issues before it and develop its recommendations and reports.

I wish to remind honourable Members and our invited submittees that all comments and questions asked are to be addressed through the Chair. 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 is covered for under Parliamentary Powers and Privileges Act and the Standing Order of Parliament. Please note that the Committee does not condone libel or slander on any allegation against any individual that is not present today to defend themselves.

In terms of the protocol of this Committee meeting, please be advised that whilst the meeting is in progress, movements within the meeting room will be restricted, there should be minimum usage of mobile phones, whereby, answering of phones should be done outside of this room, and all mobile phones to be on silent mode.

(Introduction of Members of the Committee)

MR. CHAIRMAN.- With us this morning, we have the representatives from the Ministry of Lands and Mineral Resources who have been requested to provide their submission on the Ministry of Lands and Mineral Resources 2018-2019, 2019-2020 and 2020-2021 Annual Report. Now I take this opportunity to invite our submission guests to introduce themselves before we proceed with the submission. Please, note that if there are questions, the honourable Members of the Committee will wait until the end of the presentation.

MRS. R. TAGA.- Mr. Chairman, on behalf of the honourable Minister for Lands and Mineral Resources, I would like to thank you for calling us in this morning to clarify and also explain on some of the questions that have been raised. Before that, I would like to take this opportunity to introduce the team that I have brought in this morning.

(Introduction of representatives from the Ministry of Lands and Mineral Resources)

MR. CHAIRMAN.- We will proceed and we had thought that if we could use 30 minutes on answering these questions, and then we will have time to have supplementary questions, or we might want to add to the answers that have already been submitted through your response. We will still have time if we devote the first 30 minutes just to cover the questions that was put through to you.

MRS. R. TAGA.- Mr. Chairman, Sir, the first question that was raised in terms of the vision, mission and values of the Ministry relevant to the Annual Reports of 2018-2019, 2019-2020 and 2020-2021 which are being questioned in this meeting. Mr. Chairman, Sir, we would like to report that the Ministry's vision, mission and values were reviewed in 2020. We would like to thank honourable Jone Usamate, who is present with us in this Committee meeting who led the review of the mission, vision and values of the Ministry.

It was changed from a long version of the vision, mission and also the values to a shorter version which is currently being used which is "Lands and Minerals for Life." It was reviewed and changed through consultation with the staff members and also with the senior management of the Ministry. The objective was to ensure that the vision and mission was understood by each and every staff of the Ministry and was the strategic focus of all the planning that was undertaken in the Ministry. So, it was an easier version for us to remember, easier version for us to understand and also easier version for us to plan for the projects in the Ministry with that strategic focus of "Lands and Minerals for Life".

MR. CHAIRMAN.- We continue until we come to the end. If there are supplementary questions, we will ask.

Question No. 2 - Can the Ministry provide an overview on the kind of reviews and amendments that have taken place on each of the key legislations listed in the report of 2020-2021?

MRS. R. TAGA.- The 2020-2021 financial year was difficult in the effective execution of the relevant legislation, policies and SOPs due to the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic. Nevertheless, the Ministry remained committed to ensure that ongoing discussions via zoom

meetings, electronic mails and phone calls were undertaken despite the lockdown movement restrictions and the Work From Home (WFH) operation.

In the 2020-2021 Financial Year, Cabinet approved the review of the Mining Act and the Mineral Policy. The first phase of the review has been completed and the report and related documentations have been sent to the consultant which was the intergovernmental forum on mining for their feedback. Mr. Chairman, Sir, we would like to update the forum this morning that the review is still ongoing.

Thirdly, the actual review for the State Lands Act did not eventuate but the Ministry focused on strengthening its monitoring mechanism for illegal gravel extraction operators. This resulted in the execution of the Memorandum of Understanding between the Ministry and the Fiji Police Force.

Fourthly, the Ministry also submitted a Cabinet Memorandum for the Amendment of the Surveyors Regulations which was approved by Cabinet towards the end of 2021.

All these work (one Act, one Regulation, one Policy and the Memorandum of Understanding) were the main achievements of the Ministry in the year 2020-2021. Overall, a total of eight Cabinet Decisions were received during the same year.

Question No. 3 - Can the Ministry provide an overview of the Ministry performance during the period between 2018 to 2021, specifying in particular what you see as the greatest Ministry performances improved upon or achieved?

- Review of Standard Operating Procedures through the Ministry in consultation with the Fiji National University. The digitization and digitilisation of all our data including maps and the relevant information;
- Upgrade of Geodetic Datum - the project ensures a strong and well-maintained network of mapping coordinates. This is vital for reliable cadastral survey and the establishment of accurate Fijian land boundaries;
- Successful installation of Seismic VSAT Station - the entire VSAT Seismic System upgrade to Libra II and this is to ensure sustainable 24/7 earthquake monitoring. The upgrade will improve service deliveries, assessment and monitoring of seismic events;
- Vanua GIS - The Ministry assisted the Ministry of Health during the COVID-19 outbreak regarding the mapping and monitoring of affected areas through the creation of a Dashboard. The dashboard provided information that assisted the public and people working to help with reducing the spread of the virus - which areas had the highest cases and which areas were cleared.

The Ministry would like to share with the forum this morning, Mr. Chairman, the Ministry was one of the core team in the COVID response in terms of providing geospatial data;

- Launching of online lease payment through MPAiSA. That was undertaken in 2020-2021 to ease the methods of payments for lessees;
- Online MyLeaseInfo platform which is an app which was created in-house during the COVID pandemic to help the lessees review their statements and also

- update on payments. It contributed to Government initiative of ease of doing business where lessees have access to their lease information online through their own login when they register, view and print Lease Statement Invoices;
- Opening of the Rakiraki and Nadi Office - Ease of doing business where lessees from Sigatoka and Ba do not have to travel right to the Lautoka Office for any queries or follow-ups as they may be able to access that information in the Rakiraki and Nadi Offices. The quick pay which the Mineral Resources Department uses which is a platform for the payment of mineral royalties and that is in regard to the fair share of the mineral royalty payments.

The qualification of reports: this is in regards to our geological technical reports which is being peer reviewed by a consultant which is engaged. It is just to upgrade the standard and improve the standard of reporting which is geological data which is used in geohazards and other seismic events response.

- How did the Ministry mitigate the challenges? Proper planning.

Mr. Chairman, we would like to share with the forum this morning that proper planning was to ensure timely release of funds from the Ministry of Finance and obtaining approval from the Tender Board. Groundwork for projects has been moved from the new financial year to the end of the current financial year to ensure that all is in order and ready to start once the funds are allocated to the Ministry. Also maintenance of equipment and machinery is undertaken at the end of the current financial year to ensure efficiency of work.

My apologies, Sir. The greatest shortcomings and challenges. Mr. Chairman, I would like to invite the Deputy Secretary to invite the Deputy Secretary to update the Committee this morning on the greatest shortcomings and challenges which was faced by the Ministry in the year 2020 to 2021.

HON. J. USAMATE.- The challenges we are looking at is for the whole period of 2018 to 2021.

MR. T. SAMISONI.- Mr. Chairman, as alluded to by the Deputy Chairman, the shortcomings and challenges that is for the period of 2018 to 2021.

In terms of shortcomings:

1. Collection and payment of arrears;
2. Compatibility of the Crown Land Lease System;
3. Delay in registration of valuers;
4. Success rate was not 100 percent in terms of borehole development; and
5. Absence of internal record management systems and storage of data/records in each division/section.

Mr. Chairman, the challenges are:

1. Delay in the procurement process or RIE which delays the commencement of work to meet targeted timelines;
2. Ad-hoc requests – The Ministry had to divert funds when such requests were received. Diversion of funds resulting in some targets not met;

3. COVID-19 pandemic – Greatly affected the Ministry work performance given that it is a technical-based Ministry whereby significant numbers of technical divisions have planned field projects which were not supported due to COVID-19 restrictions;
4. Work from Home was not planned and anticipated so the Ministry was not prepared with relevant resources (equipment, transportation, data accessibility etc.) to maximise the work from home strategy;
5. Outdated legislation which prohibits the effective and execution of task; and
6. Unable to achieve targeted outputs, breakdown of drilling equipment, delays in work and non-availability of spare parts. This is basically for rigs that is used for drilling bore holes in the Department of Mineral Resources.

The changes that have been made to ensure that the shortcomings do not reoccur:

1. Collection of payment and arrears was the waiver of interest. This was an initiative that was facilitated by the Ministry to assist our lessees to do their payments of leases to assist them in terms of the Ministry waiving the interest if they are willing to pay the principal amount.
2. Improvement of FLIP and Building of the State Land application; that is done in-house.
3. Capacity building, the Ministry continues to implement in the Ministry and also carrying out mentoring for current valuers to complete the prescribed number of projects for registration. That is in alignment to the delay in the registration of valuers.
4. In line to the success rate of 100 percent, the inclusion of two new drill rigs and compressors that goes to the drilling fleet. This is enhanced also by the recruitment of additional plumbers to assist in the reticulation work that has been carried out by the Ministry. The Ministry does not only carry out drilling boreholes but also does the reticulation to ensure water is supplied to the village or to every household.
5. Strengthening of in-house training on administrative duties for staff to ensure proper record keeping and data management for future reference. That is in response to the absence of internal reports management system.

Mr. Chairman, that is the way forward to address the shortcomings faced by the Ministry.

In terms of challenges and how the Ministry mitigates those challenges, these are:

1. Proper planning. This is to ensure timely release of funds from the Ministry of Finance and obtaining approval from the Government Tender Board. The groundwork for projects has been moved from the new Financial Year to the end of the current Financial Year to ensure that all is in order, and ready to start once the funds are allocated to the Ministry. Also, maintenance of equipment and machinery is undertaken at the end of the current Financial Year to ensure the efficiency of work.
2. Prioritisation was one of the way forward to mitigate the challenges. Deployment of resources is encouraged whereby managers are tasked to manage work completion by prioritising of activities. Prioritisation may be according to needs; funds availability; location of project site - well planned to ensure effectiveness

- and efficiency of work. Also, an understanding was approved by the Ministry where no ad-hoc request was to be entertained by the Ministry as it adversely impacts other planned activities.
3. Innovative was also one of the way forward. The staff were motivated to think of innovative ways in doing their work. This led to the in-house establishment of MyLeaseInfo platform that had allowed lessees to access their lease information considering the movement restrictions across the country during the COVID-19 pandemic.
 4. Multitasking- staff were encouraged to multi-task for continuity of service delivery.
 5. As most staff who were not in the field were assisting the Ministry of Health, some had to be provided with laptops and access zoom meetings so that work continued.

On what the Ministry has embarked on is to review relevant legislations.

Changes made to consolidate improvements made, implementation of the way forward for both the shortcomings and the challenges as alluded to, and participatory approach, meetings, consultations and creating awareness and revision of work plan. This was one of the way forward that had been engaged by the Ministry to ensure that we are able to continue the provision of the service and also meet the target that have been set by the Ministry. The last one is, change of approach. That is another way forward that had been considered by the Ministry to mitigate those challenges.

Question No. 4 - The Committee has noted that there had been significant delays in a number of subdivisions that the Ministry has been involved in, such as Vakamasisuasua, Field 40, Yako and Legalega. How does the Ministry intend to eliminate these problems, and is the Ministry considering completely outsourcing such developments while maintaining an oversight role?

The Ministry is now in its final phase of development. It had been a challenging experience, but in future, proper systematic appraisals and feasibility studies will be conducted. Projects need to be designed and planned well and also staff should have the capability to evaluate and monitor such work, which is outside the scope of the Ministry. Staff have been trained in Project Management, Project Design, Project Evaluation and Monitoring to help the Ministry in resolving these issues. For Vakamasisuasua Industrial Subdivision, the subdivision civil works is expected to be completed before the end of July this financial year; likewise for Field 40, work too is expected to be completed before the end of this financial year and likewise for Legalega.

Mr. Chairman, as a way forward, the Ministry will not be engaging into subdivision development due to the problems faced with these three projects that we are about to complete, and have made a resolution that it will not undertake any land development works but tender out such work to developers. That is one of the way forward that the Ministry is looking at where we encourage working with private and other businesses in partnership, so that we can develop land. Mostly what the Director of Lands and the team are looking at is encouraging the issuance of development lease to develop land where we engage private sectors and other stakeholders to be part of the Ministry in developing State lands that needs to be developed.

MRS. R. TAGA.- Mr. Chairman, I would like to request if the Manager Finance can present on Question No. 5.

The Committee noted that the unreconciled variance increased from \$1.3 million in 2018-2019 Annual Report to \$2.9 million in the 2020-2021 Annual Report. The Committee would like to know if this matter has now been resolved.

(b) The Committee also noted that the auditor was not able to verify the accuracy of the Land and Property Rent balance of \$14.14 million. How has the Ministry resolved this issue?

MR. M. QALO.- For these questions, the Ministry has strengthened its internal processes through the daily verification and reconciliation of revenue received together with Cash Analysis against the Crown Land Lease System (CLLS) which is the system that is used by the Ministry.

The variance was due to payments that are normally received online. As we have noted that due to the number of awareness that we carried out throughout Fiji in terms of our lessees to make payments online, it turned out that most of our lessees when doing payments online, they never put a proper narration to their payments. When those payments are reflected in the bank statements, what the Ministry of Finance always does is, they always pass all the payments for Crown lease to the Ministry and from there when we receive those credit charges being made by the Ministry of Finance, what we normally do is, we put those payments since it has been credited to the passing account, we throw it into our land rent allocations.

But for us we do not know the details of those lessees that make those payments. In that case, the balance on the FMIS is reflecting a true balance of the revenue received but on our CLLS, it is not capturing the same balance because we cannot update into the CCLS of the individual accounts because we do not have the proper details of our lessees. That is one of the leading factors of the variance that was raised on these issues.

The way forward to tackle the issues, for those payments that were received on the expired leases, we always tend to activate those leases and update the payment that was received and then we close the lease again. We are also reviewing the SOPs to ensure the consistent and timely renewal of leases.

MRS. R. TAGA.- Mr. Chairman, Sir, for Question No. 6 in regards to Performance Assessment, the Committee noted with appreciation the improvement in the manner in which Performance Assessments have been carried out and reported from 2018 to 2021.

Does the Ministry propose a system to determine an annual overall score against Costed Operational Plan (COP) and Business Plan (BP) for each Department and Division and also for the whole Ministry?

A team monitors the progress of the work done on the Business Plan for the respective divisions and the Costed Operational Plan. Quarterly verifications are conducted by the monitoring team and outputs are quantified and attributed to work performance ratings.

Does the Ministry provide an assessment of how well the Ministry performed in 2021 against the targets established in the 2017 National Development Plan (NDP)?

Yes, since the priorities and targets are derived from the National Development Plan and further specified to the performance measures in the COP and BP which is the Quality, Quantity and Timeline. During the three financial years, the Ministry has achieved 80 percent to 90 percent in work performance.

Question No. 7 - Given Fiji's 2036 Nationally Determined Contributions (NDC) targets on renewable electricity, can the Ministry update the Committee whether there have been any further developments on the potential sites for Geothermal Energy that were assessed in 2020?

Mr. Chairman, we would like to request that the Director Mineral Resources, Doctor Apete Soro present the Ministry's response in this regard.

DR. A. SORO.- Mr. Chairman, with regards to the geothermal project that was conducted by the Department in 2020, the project development objective is to inform the Government of Fiji's decision to progress to exploration, and subject to viability, development of geothermal resources based on a least cost approach. The purpose of carrying out further exploration on the resource is, we anticipate that sites for exploration will be identified, leading to a pilot project for development.

According to the Cabinet Paper of February 2020, the recommendations noted that based on the least cost options assessment, the geothermal power is not the least cost option for generation in Vanua Levu and that the results and reports be classified as "Official Use Only" as requested by the World Bank dated 20th December, 2019 implying that the results and the reports will not be disclosed publicly as confidential data that was used for the least cost options assessment.

Question No. 8 - The Committee has noted with appreciation the importance with which the Ministry has been involved in upskilling qualifications, competencies and professional registration of its staff. Given the severe skill shortages now impacting Fiji, does the Ministry have any Staff Retention Plans to address the likelihood of losing qualified people to the private sector and other countries?

MRS. R. TAGA.- Mr. Chairman, we would like to share with the forum this morning that from the Ministry, the first monthly rewards and recognition programme for staff, capacity building local and overseas training opportunities are encouraged. We had approached the different scholarship agencies that have provided technical scholarships for the staff of the Ministry. Specialised technical and studies through scholarship through JICA, AusAID and the NZ Aid.

Work attachment for technical staff. There has been MOUs signed between the Ministry and for example, the mining companies where our mining staff are attached or seconded for work. Recently there has been request for secondment through SPC of our staff so that continues till today.

Employee Engagement in Programmes which involves teamwork and brainstorming. This is in consultation with other Ministries like the Ministry of Agriculture, Department of Town and Country Planning and iTaukei Land Trust Board. This is just to help us address the gaps in the qualifications and skills that we may not have, that the other agencies may have and could contribute to the work and our achievements.

Also the regularization of appointment. As of recently, we had regularized the appointment of 80 officers in the Ministry.

The Wellness Programme - this is just to promote wellness of staff in terms of health, wellbeing, quality of our mental capabilities and also to promote teamwork and team bonding within the Ministry.

Question No. 9 - Does the Ministry consider developing a system whereby it can keep its staff who do not have the required academic qualifications, but do possess the required experience or competencies so that they are not lost from the Ministry?

The Ministry has developed an equivalency rating which is considered during the recruitment process of vacant positions in the Ministry. This is captured in the Job Descriptions of positions in the Ministry that is in line with the Ministry of Civil Service policies of recruitment.

Sir, may we ask the Director of Lands to present on Question Nos. 10 and 11.

Question No. 10 - Please provide the Committee with an update on lease arrears and how these arrears are being recovered?

MR. J. VUNIAMATANA.- As listed in the table before you the various means the Ministry has been dealing with the issue. One of which is the issuance of rental notices which is required by law.

Secondly, the facilitation of undertaking agreements for rental defaulters. This is one way in which the Ministry has been assisting our lessees that walk into the Ministry with applications for consent to process the lease but they have rental arrears with us. We have entered into an undertaking so that we can process those applications simultaneously while they enter into an undertaking to do periodical payments with the Ministry on their rental arrears.

Thirdly, the field deployment, house to house visits that the three divisional offices has carried out to visit our lessees and encourage them to visit our offices and clear their rental arrears. One other way we have been addressing this issue is through the introduction of a waiver of interest periods whereby the lessees are encouraged to visit the offices and clear their arrears with the waiver of interest subject to the approval by the relevant Ministry.

Also with media visibility, just getting clarification of the media and making announcements to the lessees to visit offices on the need to clear their rental arrears, great assistance through the Ministry of Finance also have been addressed through the MyLeaseInfo application. Our team is also, at the moment, pursuing through legal actions through the Office of the Solicitor-General on how we can pursue with the rental defaulters through those legal means.

Mode of payments, the introduction of the various modes of payment that has been alluded to earlier on, reinforcement of lease conditions, consent process and the review of the State Lands Act is something that the Ministry is currently embarking on.

Question No. 11 - Please provide an update on the status of the Geodetic datum?

The Ministry has completed the formulation of the roadmap to guide the processing of the data. The roadmap was endorsed by the Ministry and sent to SPC and Geoscience Australia (GA). Completed the preliminary processing of the data and the result was sent to SPC for onward submission to Geoscience Australia. The Ministry delegation will be travelling to Australia later this week to finalise the processing of this and the project is earmarked for completion this financial year.

MRS. R. TAGA.- Mr. Chairman, we would like to request Director Minerals to respond to Question No. 12.

Water is a key resource for Fiji and we would like to know if the Ministry has now developed a comprehensive survey of all ground waters in Fiji. Is the Ministry working with the Ministry of Public Works to manage both surface and ground water effectively in the best interests of Fiji?

MR. A. SORO.- Mr. Chairman, the Ministry works closely with the Ministry of Public Works through the Department of Water and Sewerage. This close partnership has been the key to the development of the Rural Water and Sanitation Policy, the Groundwater Resources Development and Management Policy and the National Water Resources and Sanitation Policy, to name a few.

Is there any National Ground Water Plan, policy or framework of the Ministry?

The Ministry has formulated the Groundwater Resources Development and Management Policy way back in 2011 which had undergone major scrutiny through five stakeholders' consultations and several thematic group meetings. The Policy was endorsed by Cabinet in January 2024, and the Ministry is now in the process of putting together a framework for its implementation, which includes the Development of a Groundwater Legislation. A project for Water Inventory Stock Take is proposed to ensure sustainable management of resource. The endorsed copy had been sent to the Ministry of Finance for inclusion to the National Development Plan.

Question No. 13 - How well is the Ministry ensuring the productivity of State Lands? Is there a master plan for all State lands for the whole of Fiji and is being used in the best interest of all Fijians?

MR. J. VUNIAMATANA.- Mr. Chairman, for the information of the forum, since 2021, with the availability of budget, there has been a project team in place working on a Land Use Master Plan of all State lands in Fiji. They have completed the greater Western Division, and in this financial year are working on the greater Northern Division. With the availability of budget in the next Financial Year, they should be able to complete the other Divisions. This is formulated in the interest of making more coordinated approach with regards to providing approvals for land development of State land. We are working together with iTLTB, we understand that the Board is also working on a master plan for all *iTaukei* lands in Fiji, so our master plan is being collated together to complement the master plan done by iTLTB, and also through the approvals of the relevant authorities, like Department of Town and Country Planning (DTCP).

The second question is: *What is the status to all Crown freehold land in Fiji?* All Crown Freehold land in Fiji have been leased out to various lessees for various uses. Their tenure remains as Crown under the administration of the Director of Lands.

Thirdly, should the Ministry be responsible overall for optimal use of all the lands in Fiji? Mr. Chairman, you may understand that the Ministry is mandated by law to look after all State lands in Fiji, just as iTLTB is mandated by law to look after all *iTaukei* lands in Fiji. We have other relevant authorities, like DTCP, approving authorities over all uses of land in Fiji, be it State, be it *iTaukei* or freehold. We understand that to carry on the responsibility or the optimal use of all lands in Fiji is something that can be coordinated through a Steering Committee involving all stakeholders, as I have mentioned before, to ensure the optimal use of all the lands in Fiji.

Question No.14 – The Committee noticed that there are often differences between Land Owning Units and the mining sector, as seen in the sentiments expressed in Namosi over the years. How does the Ministry intend to keep the landowners happy and also create wealth out of mining?

DR. A. SORO.- Mr. Chairman, in the case of Namosi, our experience is that the issues were mainly due to outstanding traditional differences within the landowning units. This has somehow affected the renewal of the exploration licence over the years. Mineral exploration licence is not mining. It is the search for minerals which includes basic prospecting such as picking samples, including advance exploration such as digging pits, trenches and exploration drilling. During mineral explorations, the landowners retain the right to use the land, and for any interest, they are notified for land access. I would like to clarify this point again, there is a difference between exploration licences and mining leases. Under exploration licences, the right to the land remains with the landowners, only the areas where the interest of the investor or the exploration company that needs to be informed to the landowners for access to their land for the company to carry out or conduct mineral exploration. With regards to mining lease, under the lease condition, the right of landowners is forfeited. I think that is the main difference between exploration licenses and mining lease. The Mineral Resources Department has a process dictating the grant of renewal or exploration licenses as required under the Mining Act 1965, the tenement holders are required to notify the landowners for land access. However, a full consultation is conducted through respective provincial office which is also verified by the Mining Division Community Unit.

Again, I would like to emphasise on this, with exploration licenses, the Ministry or the Department legally does not need consent. It only needs to advise the landowners that the investor will be entering their land for the purpose of conducting mineral explorations. If the investor disturbed the land while conducting mineral exploration, that investor needs to compensate the landowners for those disturbances. I think this is one of the main issues that has been misinterpreted or miscommunication with regards to how the Department carries out this legislative role.

Around the sectors within the public there has been a move of Free Prior Improved Consent, legally under the Mining Act that approach is illegal to be instituted on acquiring exploration licenses because the legal requirement under the Mining Act, the mining companies only need to inform the landowners that they are entering. We would like to ask why? My thinking is that it is because the mineral is owned by the State. The State has the legal right to enter, access and to extract and that is where the legislation rests as for now.

The Mining review is currently ongoing, maybe that will be an issue that will be, but as for now, that remains as is. The landowners or the mineral exploration companies do not necessarily need consent for mineral exploration activities to enter landowners land. I think that is an issue that needs to be clarified.

Just lastly, Mr. Chairman, the Department have established a community consultation unit whose responsibility is to ensure that landowners are updated on the proposed programme the tenement holder will be undertaking, to ensure that compensation agreements are in place prior to exploration and any grievances by the landowners are dealt with accordingly.

Question No. 15 - Can the Ministry please provide the Committee the gender analysis of staff involved in various programmes and projects of the Ministry?

Head No	Programme	Activity	Males	Females	Total
33-1-1	Policy and Administration	General Administration	2	4	6
33-2-1	Mineral Resources	Geological and Mineral Investigation	70	31	101
33-2-2	Mineral Resources	Oil and Mines Acts Administration	11	6	17
33-3-1	Land Management	State Land Administration	24	36	60
33-3-2	Land Management	Surveys and Geospatial Information Management	49	29	78
33-3-3	Land Management	Valuation	7	8	15
33-3-4	Land Management	State Land Planning and Development	5	6	11
33-3-5	Land Management	Land Use Division	16	9	25
33-3-6	Land Management	Divisional Lands Office – Central Eastern	31	16	47
33-3-7	Land Management	Divisional Lands Office – Western	30	22	52
33-3-8	Land Management	Divisional Lands Office – Northern	17	13	30
TOTAL			262	180	442

Question No. 16 - Can the Ministry identify its relevant SDG's and how has the Ministry considered implementing those SDGs in its programs and projects to be in line with the National Development Plan? Tabulated below are some of the SDG's aligned to the NDP and Ministry programmes:

SDG	NDP	Ministry Programmes
8 - Decent Work and Economic Growth 10 - Reduced Inequalities	NDP 2.4 Structural Reform	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Structural Realignment • Implement Public Sector Reform
3 – Good Health and Well Being 6 – Clean Water and Sanitation	NDP3.11 Water and Sanitation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Groundwater Assessment for Large and Small Islands • Investigations, Drilling and Reticulations • Groundwater for water bottling plants • Monthly survey and monitoring of selected idle boreholes

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Analysis of groundwater and geochemical samples • Community Awareness and consultations
<p>8 – Decent Work and Economic Growth</p> <p>10 – Reduced Inequalities</p> <p>11 – Sustainable Cities and Communities</p> <p>13 – Climate Action</p> <p>14 – Life Below Water</p> <p>15 – Life on Land</p>	<p>NDP 3.2.5 Modernising Business Regulatory Environment</p> <p>NDP 3.2.9 Sustainable Cities and Towns</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Review of Legislations, Information and Discussion Papers to Cabinet • Registration of Surveyors and Valuers • State Lease Administration • Administration of State Leases on iTaukei Land • Acquisition of Land for public purposes • Municipal Valuations • Addressing complaints • Maintenance of Existing Subdivisions • Digitising of Geological Map Sheets • Land Use Master Planning • Awareness to Foreshort Communities • Land Reform • Geotech and Geo Engineering Surveys • Purchase of Seismic network equipment • Digitisation of Fiji's geological information
<p>11 – Sustainable Cities and Communities</p> <p>13 – Climate Action</p> <p>14 – Life Below Water</p> <p>15 – Lfe and Land</p>	<p>NDP 3.2.5 Mining</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Geo-hazard and geological assessments • Earthquake monitoring • Mineral exploration licence and projects • Quarterly inspections on monitoring for compliance to environmental laws, licence conditions in mines, quarries and use of explosive magazines.
<p>8 – Decent Work and Economic Growth</p> <p>9 – Industry, Innovation and Infrastructure</p>	<p>NDP 3.2.18 Information and Technology</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • State Land Application Portal online lease administration • MyLeaseInfo • Online application for vacant State land • Enhanced database for geospatial data • Software licences, procurements for data management and upgrade

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Document Management System – scanning of land files
8 - Decent Work and Economic Growth 9 – Industry, Innovation and Infrastructure 15 – Lfe and Land	NDP 4.0 Monitoring and Evaluation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Rental Arrears • State Leases through onsite verification under Harmonisation Project • Internal Audits • Community Visitations on mineral exploration, verification and distribution of mineral royalty, foreshore development, sand and gravel extraction • Monitoring of seismic activities • Awareness on impacts of earthquakes and tsunamis • Monthly monitoring and survey of idle boreholes • Environmental Monitoring of Mines and Quarries.

MRS. R. TAGA.- Thank you, Mr. Chairman, I think that brings us to the end of the list of questions that we were asked to respond to.

MR. CHAIRMAN.- Thank you, PS and your team. I note the work that has been put into answering the questions that was forwarded to your Ministry. I will just give a few minutes for some questions if there are pressing questions from the honourable Members otherwise because of time limitation, we will probably discuss more after this session. But I just want to start off by asking, you have a policy on retention of staff. I know the Ministry of Lands has got a lot of very highly technically trained staff, most of whom have demands from other sectors, not only locally but overseas and with the policies that you have, how have you managed to retain your staff?

MRS. R. TAGA.- Mr. Chairman, movement of staff is inevitable because of their qualifications, their experience, they are bound to move to the private sector and other greener pastures. But for our retention plans and our succession planning, we are in the Ministry trying to improve in terms of salary as much as we can within the guidelines by the Civil Service. But for succession planning, we try to encourage the staff to get high qualification and get the specialised technical training so that we can be ready if those that are experienced move out of the Ministry, we have the staff to continue delivering the work that we have tried to deliver.

MR. CHAIRMAN.- Honourable Members do you have questions?

HON. J. USAMATE.- Mr. Chairman, just a few questions, was there any changes to the State Lands Act last year?

MR. J. VUNIAMATANA.- Mr. Chairman, the State Lands Act currently is under review.

HON. J. USAMATE.- Was there an amendment?

MR. J. VUNIAMATANA.- Mr. Chairman, amendments that was made to the earlier Bill, to bring back the status quo of the Act.

HON. J. USAMATE.- Mr. Chairman, another question in relation to the illegal sand and gravel. I have noticed in some of the earlier reports talking about developing a new legislation. What you have got now is you have done the MOU with the Police. I am just wondering is there any other progress on looking at legislation penalties and so forth because I have noticed that in some of the earlier reports.

MRS. R. TAGA.- Mr. Chairman, in response to that, the Ministry is looking at reviewing the schedule of fees and also other penalties that is imposed on illegal extractors and that is currently under review as well.

HON. J. USAMATE.- Mr. Chairman, and for the monitoring of illegal sand and gravel extraction, rather than just follow up with Police, is there anything to work with the public at large – *Turaga ni Koro, Mata ni Tikina*, is there any approach like that because they are the people on the ground and they know who are stealing all these stuff?

MRS. R. TAGA.- Mr. Chairman, the Ministry works with the provincial officers where the community teams go and inform the landowners that they also have a duty to inform and report and not to engage in the illegal activities of extracting gravel without a licence. There are reminders for the landowners that the resource is there for them to utilise and for their generations to come. It is their duty to ensure that that resource is sustainably managed, because money will not last forever, but the resource is there for their generations to come. It is for them to ensure that the resource is sustainably managed and developed.

HON. J. USAMATE.- Mr. Chairman, I think the interesting thing there, sometimes the very landowners themselves are the culprits. They work in cahoots with some of these illegal extractors. I am thinking the penalty clause, is it just on the person extracting or also the landowners themselves who go around and bend the rules. How do you deal with that?

MRS. R. TAGA.- Mr. Chairman, as for gravel and sand extraction, the legal authority that issues the licence is the Director of Lands. Legally, the ownership of those resources rests with the Director of Lands. We are working with the Office of the Solicitor-General, and the Fiji Police Force in reviewing the penalties that we issue for all, including the landowners who breach those rules.

HON. J. USAMATE.- One of the things you mentioned was the incompatibility of the Crown Lease System. I did not understand that, can you just explain if there are some incompatibilities and what is being done about it to make sure that we have compatibility, whatever it is?

MRS. R. TAGA.- Mr. Chairman, we would like to ask Deputy Secretary to respond to that question.

MR. T. SAMISONI.- Mr. Chairman, one of the challenges that we are currently facing with the Crown Lease System is that it is really an outdated system. One of the issues that we are facing is that there is a lot of work we want to do to develop the system, to improve some

of the processes, but, unfortunately, the Crown Lease System is old. So that is the way forward that we are currently doing is where the Ministry is trying to come up with a process where we are able to maintain the data that are being stored in the system. On the same note, as a way forward, we have been requesting to have a new Crown Lease System altogether. We have been seeking financial assistance through the budget submission, but this had not been considered.

One way forward is, we have the auditors come in, and recently they have conducted an audit of the system, as alluded to Manager Finance in terms of the record we have with FMIS, this system cannot be compatible with FMIS or any other system. It is a standalone system. That is something we are trying to do, to have an updated system that is compatible with FMIS and other systems that we have that can work together. Unfortunately, as I mentioned earlier, given that it is a very old system, there is a need to have a new system altogether. A lot of issues had been raised by the auditors. That is the reason why the auditors have come in to audit the system itself on how compatible it is because of the importance of the information that is stored in the system itself.

HON. J. USAMATE.- Mr. Chairman, I would just like to say that information, cleanliness and the accuracy of the information is absolutely fundamental. From a parliamentary point of view, we regard that as something that needs to be fixed, I do not know how are you going to get it because you obviously have to ask for money from the Ministry of Finance. I am glad to see that you are getting two new drill rigs. Is that already in place? Do you have the equipment? How have you been requesting?

MRS. R. TAGA.- Mr. Chairman, Sir, we have had those drill rigs purchased but we are requesting for another one in the next financial year.

HON. J. USAMATE.- I noticed that you said that there will be no more *ad hoc* requests. What if the Prime Minister asks? What will you do?

MR. T. SAMISONI.- Mr. Chairman, Sir, the *ad hoc* requests are delaying the implementation of some of our priority projects and that is the reason why we have stopped accepting *ad hoc* requests. However, in cases where we see that it is a priority to government, that is where the executive management makes the decision to see that those are being considered but otherwise we are trying to minimise.

At the start of the Financial Year, we normally carry our consultations with the respective departments and ministries. If they think that that project is to be considered by the Minister, that is something that we take up, but not half-way through the Financial Year and then they trying to push through some of their projects. That is definitely going to have an impact on the Ministry to facilitate their own project but in terms of the question raised, if it is something of national interest, definitely the Ministry will consider implementing those.

HON. J. USAMATE.- I think the DS has the makings of a good diplomat. The Legalega, is it complete?

MRS. R. TAGA.- Mr. Chairman, Sir, Legalega is in its final phase and we anticipate that it will be completed in this financial year.

HON. J. USAMATE.- And you sell the lots this year and get the money.

MRS. R. TAGA.- Yes.

HON. J. USAMATE.- On Ministry of Finance, I can see the problem that you have is the compatibility of your Crown Lease System to FMIS. So, if you cannot fix that, then you will have this variance for ever and ever. Are we putting in a timeline to make sure because you know every Minister wants an unqualified opinion. How are you going to make sure that this happens? Because you have to go back to your CLLS, how are you going to fix it to make sure that you do not have that qualified opinion?

MRS. R. TAGA.- Mr. Chairman, just for the information of this forum, the last audit report was unqualified so we are working towards getting an unqualified audit report.

HON. J. USAMATE.- (Inaudible)

MRS. R. TAGA.- Yes, Sir.

HON. J. USAMATE.- Congratulations, because I know it has been there for a long time.

HON. I.S. VANAWALU.- Mr. Chairman, by looking at your Land Administration Division in terms of your achievement, your assigned activities, targets and achievements, if you look at the figures, to me it is confusing where your target is 1,200 and your achievement is 1,745. Can the Ministry clarify further on this - page 8?

MRS. R. TAGA.- Mr. Chairman, may we just have clarification on that question?

HON. I.S. VANAWALU.- Annual Report 2020-2021, page 8. The target was 1,200, the achievement was 1,745. So, in a nutshell, we probably look at our targets as that is your way moving forward, in this case your achievement was more. Can the Ministry clarify that?

MRS. R. TAGA.- Mr. Chairman, Sir, the targets are usually set from the previous years' achievements, so for that one it was 1,200 but then during the year we managed to have more total number of leases and approval notices issued. Then that would be the benchmark for the following year. Our benchmark or our targets are set with the achievement of previous years.

HON. I.S. VANAWALU.- Mr. Chairman, my second question is more like a general one. If you look at the Crown Lease under the housing scheme, I am talking about 4 miles. They are under approved notice leases for the last 30 years and I was approached by one of the tenants. How long does the Ministry reactivate this to be given the proper lease so that they can develop their land where they are staying in, at least to give them more development in terms of when they go to the bank for a loan, et cetera? They were stopped because they are still under approved notice for the last 30 years.

MR. J. VUNIAMATANA.- Mr. Chairman, you will understand that for an approval notice to graduate to a proper lease, we need to go through a process of proper survey. When we issue approval notice, it is issued on the understanding that it will be subject to survey. So, for our lessees that wish to have proper leases, there is nothing stopping them if they wish to engage private surveyors and have those leases surveyed, produce the approved survey plan with the Ministry then we will be able to issue them a registered lease based on the balance term of the approval notice.

HON. I.S. VANAWALU.- Mr. Chairman, my last general question. I was in Taveuni for the Cakaudrove Provincial meeting last week. The honourable Minister did say the Ministry is planning on giving back to the landowners all these State land. Can the Ministry elaborate more on that?

MR. J. VUNIAMATANA.- Mr. Chairman, probably on that question, I understand one of those questions was in our report today that the current status of all State Freehold Lands as they are now, if there will need to be any reversal done as mentioned by the honourable Minister, then that is something that will require exploration of the current lots that we have and decisions to be made by higher authorities through Cabinet.

MR. CHAIRMAN.- Is there any other question from Members?

HON. J.N. NAND.- Mr. Chairman, first of all I would like to thank the Permanent Secretary for setting out two new offices, that is, in Nadi and Rakiraki. As you said before, it is ease of doing business.

The second point related to that is, people come to us as Members of Parliament and sometimes I do take them because they do not have transport. When we reach the office, they said the file is in Suva; Suva is a very big place We do not know who the designated officer is. Sometimes when people call, the landline number is given. My suggestion is, if I go back in my tenure as an Assistant Minister for Education, we set up a three-member panel in the Ministry who takes the complaints and then after some time reverts. The problem now is when people visit offices two or three times then they lose interest because as soon as they reach the office, they say, "Your file is in Suva" and as you know it is a long pipeline. The problem is that people get frustrated. My suggestion is if in the Ministry you have two to three designated officers who receive complaints; note the numbers and do the follow-up. Nowadays too whenever they visit Nadi Office or Lautoka Office, they are told that it is still in process. I have so many cases here - rezoning in 2011, some land leases dating back to 2008. I understand there may be some other factors, perhaps legal issues challenging them but people do not understand all those things, what people want is a proper feedback.

Secondly, I declare my interest, I am a citizen of Sigatoka. If an office could be open there because it is 61 kilometres from Nadi to Sigatoka and we have iTaukei office there. For example, if a person comes from Nadrala and goes back to Nadi, it is about 80 kilometres. This is just a suggestion and a request from the people of Nadroga.

HON. J. USAMATE.- One of the things that we have seen in some annual reports, they gave us an update, we use 90 percent of our budget, we achieve 88 percent of our deliverables. The way that you have done your report, we do not get that. We do not get an overall score of how well the Ministry has done as the Ministry as a whole. You get the targets for each of the indicators, so that is one of the suggestions that we had. We were asking, should you be looking also at a target for each division, have they achieved 100 percent of their targets or 60 percent? We do not get that overall picture, how it may be suggested we can look into this, an overall assessment of where we are. The ones that we are looking at now is the Ministry of Forestry, they are telling us, we did this amount of deliverables, we achieved 80 percent, we have 90 percent of the target. So hopefully that is something that we can look to developing so we can get some measure.

I want to congratulate the Ministry for coming up with this equivalence, recognising people's competence, they might not have a Master's Degree but they can do the writing, they can do the research, you recognise that. I hope this model that the rest of Government will take up. It is basically something called recognition of current competence. This is something that we use in terms of technical training. I want to congratulate the Ministry for doing that and I hope the rest of the Civil Service looks into doing the same approach. I think sometimes there is too much of dependence on academic performance. What you need is performance on the ground and you recognise that through the competence that people have.

In relation to the geothermal, I am wondering, probably geothermal energy is probably not the best least cost operation in generating energy. But has there been exploration of using it for other things - spas, hot water into homes and so forth. Has there been any assessment of that side of use because I know geothermal energy for electricity is a very expensive business. Has there been any focus of that sort of thing?

MR. A. SORO.- Mr. Chairman, honourable Member to answer straight up, "no". There has not been any further exploration apart from transiting of geothermal to generating electricity, but there have been cases like in Savusavu, they are currently using it for spas in the hotels. So maybe that is an avenue to explore. We have been exposed to how Iceland uses their geothermal, it is not only for power generation but it is for food processing. They used the geothermal energy for those purposes, house heating and even to generate refrigeration from those powers. So maybe that is an area or avenue that we can explore alternative use from geothermal apart from electricity.

HON. J. USAMATE.- Sir, for lease arrears at one time I know it was \$20 million, has it gone down, is it continuing to go up, what is the trend around that figure?

MRS. R. TAGA.- Mr. Chairman, yes, the outstanding arrears still remains around more than \$20 million. Our current rent is usually \$16 million as of now, our total due is around \$40 million which is inclusive of the current rental.

HON. J. USAMATE.- Do you have a specific target to bring this number down to zero and how will you do it because this has revenue that Government needs for the things that it needs to do?

MRS. R. TAGA.- Mr. Chairman, I think over the years we have been working towards reducing these outstanding arrears. We have explored ways of trying to collect these outstanding arrears but there are some factors that we need to also consider in terms of humanitarian grounds during COVID-19, disasters and also when the State issues grants or waiver of interest. This is just to alleviate the payments that is burdened on the lessees. But from the Ministry, we try and aspire to collect all outstanding arrears and that is what has led us to taking some of the defaulters to court and that is in process.

HON. J. USAMATE.- Mr. Chairman, I recognise the fact that iTLTB looks after *iTaukei* land and the State looks after State land and I recognise the suggestion that we should have a Committee to have a holistic view at the whole land situation. One of the things that you find now, civil servants live in squatter settlements. They cannot afford land. I am just thinking, if we do not do this in totality, iTLTB, Ministry of Lands, et cetera, we need to have a situation where land is affordable for our own citizens. We cannot do that if we are doing it in isolation. I know that you have your meetings with iTLTB. Is this sort of an agenda item that you are

looking at? How can we make do some kind of polices so we can have our own, even civil servants to be able to afford land somehow? Do you have some sort of overall mechanism that looks at it in totality? Permanent Secretary, your thoughts on that?

MRS. R. TAGA.- Mr. Chairman, the Ministry is looking at valuation of land and is working towards introducing or formulating a Valuation Act where valuation of the land is controlled. The cluster meetings that we have had with iTLTB, we have introduced the Town Country Planning, we have also introduced other key stakeholders, like, Department of Environment so that as has been mentioned, the provision of these land is undertaken with a holistic approach where all stakeholders and even landowners are consulted. The Ministry is changing its approach in not sitting back and just receiving applications and allocating land. We are inviting end users of our product, which is land lease to also be involved in the planning and reviewing of the processes so that we are able to deliver our services that is quality and timely.

MR. CHAIRMAN.- I will have to address here the time limitations that we have for this session. There is quite a lot of other things that we would like to probably get more information on from the PS and her team. I say this because the discussion is going into areas of a lot of interest, not only to us as Members of the Standing Committee, but also as part of what a lot of people want us to ask from the Committee. At this point in time, I wish to sincerely thank you all for availing yourselves for this submission meeting. We thank you for your time and hope that you will be able to avail yourselves if the Committee in future would want to request for more discussions whether on air or through normal consultations.

We would want to hold you back after the submission just to have some more clarification or you might want to present more on the areas that you think will enable us to present the report the way you would want us to present the report to Parliament. It is intended to inform Parliament and we would be also recommending to Parliament for approval the changes that we feel is needed for the Ministry. This is one of the main reasons why we have this kind of consultation and why we normally scrutinise a report, and it is for the benefit for the Ministry for future undertakings of the activities that are normally undertaken. Once again, thank you very much and we look forward to meeting you again in our next session.

The Committee adjourned at 11.40 a.m.

ANNEXTURE 3

SITE VISIT REPORT



Parliament Standing Committee on Natural Resources



Site Visit Report

From	Standing Committee on Natural Resources
To	Hon. Speaker , Committee Members

Type of Activity	1 week of site visit from Monday 06 th May – Friday 10 th May, 2024 for; 1) Ministry of Lands & Mineral Resources and 2) Ministry of Forestry
Starting Date	Monday 06 th May
End Date	10 th May, Friday 2024

Brief background:

The Committee currently has the following Annual Reports on which deliberations have commenced;

- a) Ministry of Lands & Mineral Resources Annual Report 2018-2019, 2019- 2020, 2020-2021
- b) Ministry of Forestry 2019 – 2020, 2020- 2021, 2021 – 2022

The Committee, in its meeting held previously in Parliament, agreed to conduct a site visit for both the Ministry of Lands & Mineral Resources and for the Ministry of Forestry in the Central, Western and the Northern Division. The site visit was conducted for a period of 1 week from Monday 06th May to Friday 10th May, 2024.

The Committee then developed a program that allowed them to touch base with the staff and stakeholders in the three (3) major divisions in Fiji. The Team also consisted of the Secreariat Team who supported the Committee Members in terms of providing advice on administrative matters, transportation logistics and hotel accomodation where necessary and in accordance with the agreed program. Whilst deliberating on the annual reports , the Committee throughly anlaysed the conents and noted that there were programs and projects of both the Ministries being neglected for a while where considerable expenses were entailed.

Purpose:

The Committee would be able to verify its findings and suggest ways of improvement for the betterment of the both the Ministries in future.

Secondly, the Committee will be enlightened by the short briefs of staff on the ground on how the Ministries operate at the Executive level and as well as at the districts levels.

Thirdly, the Committee Members will equip themselves with the knowledge about the operations of the Ministry and to be able to contribute constructively towards their final report compilation to Parliament.

For Verification ;

The areas identified by the Committee were highlighted in the annual reports which included the Ministry's areas of achievements, significant programs and projects undertaken and major activities being carried out in the divisions by the Lands and Mineral Resources Departments. These areas were also alluded to by the Senior Officers of the Ministry during their submissions to Parliament. The Committee would be able to verify its findings and suggest ways of improvement for the betterment of the both the Ministries in future.

For Evidence Collection ;

The Committee will ensure that they gather evidences to support their findings in their final report to Parliament.

Committee Members;

The Committee Members were;

- a) Hon. Tomasi Tunabuna (**Chairperson**)
- b) Hon. Jone Usamate (**Deputy Chairperson**)
- c) Ratu Isikeli Tuiwailevu (**Member**)
- d) Hon. Iliesa Vanawalu (**Member**)
- e) Hon. Joseph Nand (**Alternate Member**)

Secretariat :

- a) Akanisi Rumasakea- **Senior Committee Officer**
- b) Alumita Cabealawa – **Deputy Committee Clerk**
- c) Rusiate Semate – **Parliament Driver**
- d) Aisea, **Police Constable**

Schedule/Program:

Date	Time	Sites to be visited
Monday (6.05.24)	8.00am-8.30am	FTG Forestry, Nasinu
	8.45 am-9.30am	Depart for Coloi Suva – Briefing
	9.45am- 10.15 am	Depart for MRD, Nabua – Briefing
	9.25am-10.10am	Depart for Takayawa Building – Briefing
	10.15am-10.35am	Depart for Mineral Resources Department, HQ, Nasese
	10.35am-11.15am	Ministry of Forestry, Vunimaqo(Lomary)
	11.15am- 1.30pm	Arrive at Navua Sawmill – Yarawa
	2.30pm – 3.10 pm	Sigatoka to MLMR Office
	4.30pm-5.00 pm	Exploration site at Kulukulu – Magmar (Apete Soko)
	5.00pm	Depart for Nadi- (Dinner at Semo)

	7.00pm	Check In – GrandWest , Nadi
Tuesday (7.05.24)	8.00 am	Check Out for Mulomulo
	8.10 am – 8.30 am	Depart for Mulomulo (sites of latest frequent illegal extractions)
	9.40am-10.40am	Depart for Legalega, (Lands Subdivision, Land Bank) Nadi- Briefing
	10.40am-11.55am	Depart for Tuvatu Mines, Sabeto ,Nadi- Briefing
	11.55am-12.45pm	Depart for Mosi in Nadi (sites of latest frequent illegal extractions)
	12.45am-2.00pm	Depart for MLMR in Lautoka - Briefing
	2.00pm-2.25pm	Lunch
	2.25pm-3.25pm	Departs for Flame Tree Saru, Lautoka
	3.25pm -4.15pm	Tropic Woods in Drasa, Lautoka
	4.15pm-4.35pm	Sleep in Vatukoula Guest House
Wednesday (8.05.24)	8.00am	Depart for Vatukoula Mines
	8.10 am – 12.00pm	Visit the Vatukoula Mines- Briefing
	12.30pm-1.00pm	Depart for Fiji Water – quick briefing (Mr Apete)
	1.00pm-2.00pm	
	2.00pm-3.00pm	Committee visit the MLMR Rakiraki n Forestry Office
	3.30pm	Depart for Ellington
	4.00pm -5.00pm	Board the Boat from Ellington Wharf to Nabouwalu
	10.30pm	Arrival at Nabouwalu and Check-in at the Lote's accomodation
Thursday (9.5.24)	8.00am	Meet with MLMR North and Forestry Official and Depart for Nawailevu Bauxite, Bua
	8.30am-9.00am	Nawailevu Bauxite , Bua n Reforestation site
	9.00 am –9.15am	Depart for Nasorowaqa Exploration site, Bua
	10.00am	Depart for Kashmir Quarry, Seaqqa
	11.00 am	Depart for Korovatu, Nagigi, Labasa (Current sites of schedule A and B reversion)
	1.00 pm	Depart for MLMR Labasa Office, Valebosoga Quarry and Bahdur Sawmill(ply) Lunch at Valebasoga
	2.00 pm	Depart for Savudrodoro in Savusavu
	4.30 pm	Check in at Savusavu HotSpring
Friday (10.5.24)	5.00am	Depart for Vatuyalewa (Reporting time at 6am) Vatuyalewa
	7.30 am	Depart for Taveuni
	9.30am	Depart for VSAT Site in Mua, Taveuni
	11.00am-11.45am	Site visit to freehold buy back Mua , Taveuni

	12.00 pm	Lunch (Hon.Tomasi Tunabuna)
	2.00pm	Depart Taveuni
	4.00 pm	Arrive at Vatuyalewa
	8.00 pm	Arrive at Lote's Inn, Bua
Saturday (11.5.24)	10.00am	Depart Nabouwalu
	1.00pm	Arrive at Natovi – Team proceed to their residences
END PROGRAM		

Summary of Findings

STANDING COMMITTEE ON NATURAL RESOURCES

SITE VISIT FINDINGS

06th May – 10th May, 2024

Day 1

Forestry Research and Training Nasinu 9 miles

- 14 mahogany stations—they try to make use of their residues
- They deal only with those whose forests are licensed to be harvested
- 2024 –48% sawmill recovery from 41% in 2019
- Looking to build a Mahogany town at junction form Labasa, Savusavu and Seaqaqa
- GWE's are trained to be expertise in the technical fields.
- Research staff lacks technical expertise

Forestry Research Unit—Colo I suva

- Difficult to get good people
- Research is not up to par — including lab facilities—so that they are not able to achieve their level of potential
- I need to visit this station again
- To construct a Research Lab in Coloi- Suva (Recommendation for MOF)
- Mahogany and Pine needs to be strengthened – more planting
- There are 81.9 % of natural forest and 1.1 million hectares

MRD Nabua

- Very well qualified staff
- When they send someone to do Masters level programs—they do not get good replacements
- Specialist training and qualifications are done overseas
- They do not have MLMR office in other stations such as in Taveuni, Savusavu and Labasa.
- Mining Act is under review by the Ministry
- Vacant Positions- A high number of vacant posts means there are essential roles within the department that are currently unfilled. This shortage of personnel can severely impact the department's ability to function efficiently and effectively, leading to delays in completing tasks and achieving objectives.
- No Mining Engineer: The absence of a Mining Engineer within the department means there's a crucial expertise gap in a field essential to the department's operations.

- They are looking to apply for a Mining lease in 6 months time—MRD staff say that they had been saying this from August 20023
- There is a challenge that the owners of the 2 freehold lots want to start making money from their property and are getting impatient
- Proposal to Reduce Exclusive Zone- Magma Mines is suggesting a reduction in the size or boundaries of an exclusive zone.

Day 2

Yavuna in Nadi

- Illegal sand and gravel extraction
- Selling it at around \$7 per cubic metre—could be going at anything between \$40 to \$80 per cubic metre

Mulomulo in Nadi

- Clearing of vaivai by contractors
- So that Nawaka landowners who have leased their own land can plant crops
- Have started a demonstration project planting kawai, uvi and tavioka
- Agriculture wants to create a cluster in the area, together with a processing plant to process uvi for export.

Legalega

- Project started in 2012
- Still going
- Still have an issue with WAF, and WAF is getting them to sign a MOU where land will still be responsible for the sewer line after they have put it in place
- \$200k has been given to the landowner

Tuvatu Lion 1

- They have spent \$230m and raised around \$5m
- Issue they have is lack of staff who know how to operate the kind of machines they use
- Many workers are former Vaukoula—but stope mining they use is different from the Vaukoula system of drilling
- 1 lady land owner

LMR Lautoka

- 80% of budget used at end of 3rd quarter and 80% of outputs
- \$50% digitization accomplished
- 10 person teams established in Nadi and Rakiraki
- Reduction in complaints
- Foreshore issues better addressed now
- **Staffing**- The need to fill vacant positions arises from the necessity to meet the demands of the job effectively
- **Lautoka Officers**- These officers are stationed in Lautoka and are tasked with supporting the sub-regional offices in various activities such as monitoring. Their role likely involves aiding, resources, or expertise to ensure that monitoring activities are conducted effectively and in accordance with regulations and standards.

- Highly Skilled Ministry with Lacking Areas. While the ministry overall may possess a high level of skill and expertise, there are specific areas where it lacks sufficient proficiency or knowledge.
- Staffing in Technical Fields: Certain technical fields within the department require qualified personnel to fill vacant positions.

LMR HQ

- Send questions to PS

MINISTRY OF FORESTRY, TAKAYAWA BUILDING

- 23fo3 staff
- Forest reserves- conditions of the forest, state forest, forest reserves needs assessment
- Community to receive direct fees from investors
- Government funds be issued to LOU's

Vunimaqo Forestry Station

- Are contractors getting away with harvesting native trees in Mahogany forests and not paying the stumpage, royalty and payments to government
- We need to look into Mahogany Industry legislation, policy and its implementation
- Noted fining of people who have broken the law—the two people involved were actually working in tandem with some individual landowners
- **Staffing Issues on the Ground** - This indicates a shortage of personnel physically present in the field to conduct monitoring activities. Insufficient staff on the ground can hinder the department's ability to oversee operations effectively, leading to potential gaps in monitoring compliance with regulations or addressing environmental concerns.
- **Concern Raised by the Forester:** The Forester has expressed worries regarding the monitoring of native trees, particularly in the mahogany field designated for Fiji Hardwood. The primary concern revolves around the alleged non-payment of stump rate, royalty, and associated fees. This raises issues of compliance with financial obligations and potentially signifies a breach of contractual or regulatory agreements.

Magma

- Prospecting has been taking place since around 2007—going full swing around 2012
- Between \$8 -\$10 m has been spent
- Company was accused of destroying the environment in its mining back around 2018—when the actual damage was done by river dredging
- Difficulty faced is around the exclusion zone set up by the Fiji Museum
- Another difficulty is that Environment now requires them to do a full EIA even though they are just doing prospecting
- They have reported their archeological findings which they found—and Fiji Musuem has come down to look at it.
- They faced difficulties after Government changes—when Government Department changed Ministries
- They suggest there is lack of unity and cohesive directions in the way Government has operated

Forestry Office Rakiraki

- 2 staff only
- They used to have only 1 license for harvesting. Currently there are none—but 1 is being processed.
- These licenses are for indigenous timber
- 1 vehicle in the office
- They feel staffing level is adequate
- They have the highest amount of seedlings produced by the communities in Ra
- **Landowners Not Consulting Ministry on License Issuing and Procedures** -This indicates a lack of communication or collaboration between landowners and the ministry responsible for issuing licenses and regulating procedures.
- **Awareness on the Impact of Illegal Activities**- This refers to efforts aimed at educating communities and stakeholders about the negative consequences of engaging in illegal activities.

LMR office Rakiraki

- 9 staff altogether—1 SLO, 1 estate officer—2 admin staff- 4 surveying staff
- Significant drop in complaints with the establishment of this bigger team in Rakiraki
- They look after just below 3,00 leases—2k lease in Tavua and 1k leases in Rakiraki – this is bigger than Vanua Levu
- **Internet issues affecting access of work files**- Problems with internet connectivity can hinder access to important work files stored online or on cloud-based platforms, impacting productivity and collaboration among team members.
- **Inadequate office space:** When there's not enough office space, it can lead to overcrowding, discomfort, and decreased productivity among employees
- **Continuous power failure:** Frequent power outages disrupt workflow and can lead to data loss, equipment damage, and delays in completing tasks
- **Illegal extraction of sand and gravel:** This refers to the unauthorized removal of sand and gravel from natural habitats.
- **Contractor's non-compliance:** When contractors fail to comply with the terms of their agreements or legal regulations
-

Day 4

Nawailevu bauxite

- 7 year old trees seen on Nawailevu
- Originally this has been Pine forests—landowners benefited by money from the harvesting of the pine, money from Bauxite—and now they have \$6 m worth of tress on the land
- Under the Minig Act, Aurum is required to rehabilitate the land
- On the current Minig lease, they are now planting Eucalyptus and Acacia trees—which mature faster and which they will use as raw materials into their ,mills.
- The company made around \$30m from the bauxite and this has been reinvested into Fiji purchase of Hot springs hotel , purchase of valavala Estate, 2 sawmills, planned development of hotel and commercial centre in Lautoka

- **Community Awareness of Illegal Extraction** - the purpose of this awareness campaign is likely to educate these community leaders about the negative impacts of illegal gravel extraction on the environment, local communities, and regulatory compliance.

Achievements - 81% target achieved with 80 % budget utilized

Amex office

- \$360m spent with \$20 m revenues achieved
- They need their Port to be used by others –speak with Assistant Minister Tubuna
-

Fiji Pines ltd.

- Fiji Pine is owned 99+ % by the Fiji Government
- Less than 1% shareholding by the landowners of land provided for planting pine—the Pine Trust
- Dividends are paid only to landowners
- Landowners get money from stumpage, landowners 5.5%, plus 2 other measures
- Biggest problem now is lack of raw material
- Tropic Woods is owned by Fiji One Ltd
- Fiji Pine ltd almost went bankrupt in post 2000
- At that time Tropic had to basically run Fiji Pine
- It has now recovered
- Major payments were made during the Bainimarama and Fiji First Government time—that rescued this industry
- Nowadays, they do not have enough logs on Viti Levu to run Tropik so they are sourcing form Vanua Levu—and looking to get raw materials form the maritime zone.
- **No Matured Forest in Viti Levu.** This situation arises because there was no planting of trees twenty years ago. As a result, there's a lack of mature forests on Viti Levu, Fiji's largest island, which could have provided a sustainable timber resource.
- **Plantations in Viti Levu Unable to Meet Mill Demands-** Despite existing plantations in Viti Levu, they are insufficient to meet the demands of the mill.
- **Saw Logs in Viti Levu Unable to Sustain Mills-** The saw logs available in Viti Levu are inadequate to sustain the operations of the mills.
- **Setting up Carriage Sawmill and Harvesting Other Species-** In response to the challenges, the company is considering establishing a carriage sawmill and harvesting other species of trees.

Day 3

Vatukoula Gold Mine

- 1,200 employees with salary of \$20m per annum
- Company has not made profits for 12 years
- Ore bodies are now smaller and weaker
- They requested concessions for the amount of fuel they purchase to power their power plants—they are not getting electricity form EFL
- They have lost significant workers to other companies in Fiji and to other countries

- They are now looking at lease land to plant eucalyptus and acacia to provide raw materials for the sawmills—this is a big request
- They are now culturing acacia and eucalyptus in a land—this is the forest of its kind in Fiji. “They are able to select to clone the strongest and best of the Acacia and Eucalyptus that they have already grown—and replicate this.
- In the past they collected seedlings—but they found the success rate of this is between 70 to 80%
- Under this cloning system they expect to have above 95% success rates
- The cloned plants grow in a container in which all the elements are controlled for 1 month—they the seedlings are taken to the nursery for another 2 months –before being Planted—they need land to plant these seedlings

Kashmir Quarry

- Kashmir started in the 1990s doing small jobs
- In 2017 they build their quarry business
- They have significant investment in amount of new machinery
- They were sub-contractors to fair deal construction and also do work for Agriculture and cane access roads
- They say last year was a bad year for them, as they were not able to get many sub-contracting jobs
- This year they have received their first direct contract from FRA
- FRA says they have a contract for Rip and remake across Vanua levu
- Their biggest request is to get contracts so that they can get their full workforce working—at least 40 hours a week
- They feel Government should support local companies and that profits stay in Fiji

Nagigi Schedule A and B reversion

- Completion of survey for this area where there has been done ... has now been accomplished
- Old State land lots that had been awarded included State land and also SSA and SSB integrated into the same lot.
- They have had to resort to files from Archives, and with the assistance of the NLFC they have been able to demarcate which portion of the old state land leases are actual state land and which portions are SSA and SSB
- The SSA and SSB portion can now be turned over the TLTB
- They are continuing similar work in 2 other areas in Vanua Levu—and expect to complete the reversion in the next financial year.
- Most lots where SSA and SSB were incorporated into state land was in vanua Levu
- The development is for Tourism

MLMR Labasa office

- At end of 3rd quarter they are hitting 85% of budget usage and 80% of targets achieved
- In vanua levu only 2 % of land is state land
- Vakamasiasua—is now in its last phase with \$500,000 k budget

- **Poor internet connection:** A weak or unreliable internet connection hampers efficient online activities such as accessing websites, sending emails, or streaming content.
- **Illegal extraction of gravel and sand - contractors liaise directly with landowners:** This situation involves contractors bypassing legal procedures and directly negotiating with landowners to extract gravel and sand.
- **Illegal extraction of gravel and sand - contractors liaise directly with landowners:** This situation involves contractors bypassing legal procedures and directly negotiating with landowners to extract gravel and sand.
- **Insufficient support for the office-** When the office lacks adequate support, it can mean a shortage of resources, personnel, or infrastructure needed to maintain smooth operations.
-

Valebasoga Ply wood mill – Kashmir

- Production has declined over the years for a number of reasons including access to raw materials, weather and other issues
- Their biggest concern now is access to raw materials
- LTA heavy fines on their loading vehicles

Valebasoga Quarry

- Quarry has been functioning for 30 years—a very good and large resources
- Machinery is quite old
- Company also dud road works—but have not had much contracts,
- A lot of their machinery is quite old
- A number of issues were raise during the talanoa session including
- They says the weights allowed for trucks bearing pine to be taken to Drasa are more than that for their trucks taking raw materials to their mills
- They request review of the limitations impose on their trucks carrying the raw materials
- The request review of the LTA system whereby they have to lark their vehicles until all the files have been paid off—they want a system where the trucks can still run to help pay off the fines that they have incurred
- **Delay in the issuing of gravel and sand extraction license:** This refers to the prolonged waiting period for obtaining the necessary license to extract gravel and sand.
- **Delay in process of application due to inadequate staffing at the Department of Environment** servicing CBM:
- Request for local contractors to be considered to ensure that money stays in the country: There's a plea to prioritize local contractors for gravel and sand extraction projects.

DAY 5

Mua VSAT Station

- One of 6 such stations across Fiji
- All 6 were recently upgraded at a cost of \$600k

- 2) Discussions/ debrief to be held after every visit upon return where Members contribute. Secretariat to note and prepare draft reports at the same time

Recommendations for improvement of service from the Secretariat:

The Committee Members acknowledged the office of the Hon. Speaker for giving the green light to conduct the site visit.

The Committee is Thankful to the Executive of the Ministry of Lands and Mineral Resources, the Permanent Secretary, Dr. Taga and the Team for their overwhelming support.

Secondly, a big Vinaka Vakalevu to the staff of the Ministry of Lands and Mineral Resources in the Central, Western and Northern Divisions for their wonderful support in terms of the technical expertise that travelled with the delegation to Taveuni and back. The Senior Technical Officers in Nabua who travelled with the Committee to the Central and to the Northern division.

Thirdly, to the relevant stakeholders for both Ministries, your presence on the site is appreciated and commendable.

Way Forward :

The Committee looks forward to more visits and collaborations between the Ministry of Lands and Mineral Resources and the Ministry of Forestry and the Committee in terms of improving the services provided for the sectors and suggesting recommendations to Parliament for implementation.

Commendations:

Overall, the site visit was a Successful one even with the challenges stated.

- The stations pick up signals from the ground and transmit via satellite to the Nabua MRD office
- Data from the different offices and from other countries in the region are used to pinpoint the exact location, depth and strength of earthquakes
- They need readings from at least 3 stations to pinpoint the exact location and depth of earthquakes
- Earthquakes at a depth of around 15km in the sea can cause Tsunami
- 2 officers on shift per night
- Awareness- MRD working with MO Education – earthquakes to be instilled

Mua Freehold Buy Back

- Land has been purchased
- Naselesele villagers are planting on some of the land
- Other lots will be leased out to other not from Naselesele
- They paid \$80k to get this land back
- Great issue will be having a good access road to the site itself

Forest Guard in Taveuni Peni Bari

- No forest harvesting is taking place in Taveuni
- Big project going on now is the reforestation in Bouma—where each mataqali is planting 2k trees
- They are looking to get more yavusa and mataqali involved in then replanting of trees
- He talked about the Bluer Line—which is the line which demarcate the place which tree felling should stop
- Hon. Vanawalu expressed concern about the effect of cutting too many trees which could have a negative impact on the ecology and the water in the area

Challenges faced by the Ministry of Lands and Mineral Resources:

- 1) Vast areas of operations – needed more resources such as technical expertise in the outer stations, transportation and staff quarters
- 2) Old Machinery – needs new machinery to ease work load
- 3) Lack of technical expertise for both Departments, Lands and Minerals
- 4) Old Acts – needs to be fast track and be reviewed
- 5) Disputes by LOU's and investors needs to be sought out by MLMR
- 6) Awareness on the fully utilization of funds for LOU's
- 7) Department of Environment needs to speed up their role to assist investors and LOU's and the MLMR

Any other important admin comments for the site visit

Challenges:

- 1) Engagement of twin cabs/ 4 wheel drives for future site visits. This is considering the condition of the road that is very poor. NRC travelled so any times on

Committee Members;



**Hon. Jone Usamate
Deputy Chairperson, Opposition MP**



**Hon. Isikeli Tuiwailevu
Government MP**



**Hon. Iliesa Vanawalu
Government MP**



**Hon. Joseph Nand
Opposition MP**

ANNEXURE 4

RESEARCH PAPERS



Information Brief – Standing Committee on Natural Resources

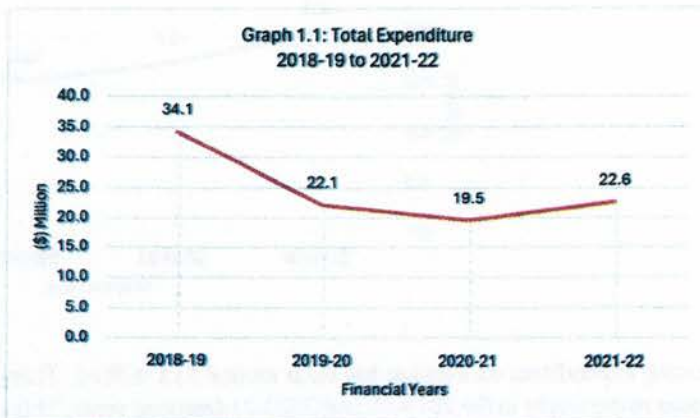
Financial Trends

Ministry of Lands & Mineral Resources Annual Reports 2018-19 – 2021-22

This information brief contains selected trend analysis of financial information as contained in the Ministry of Lands & Mineral Resources’ annual reports (AR) for the financial years from 2018-19 to 2021-22. It also includes some data from the national budget estimates for these four financial years. Note that some of these trends had been discussed in the Auditor-General’s reports for each of the financial years.

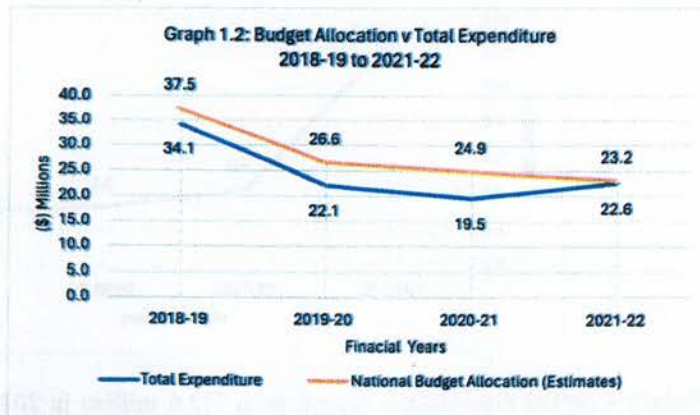
1.0 Expenditure

1.1 Expenditure Trend, 2018-19 – 2021-2022



There is a downward trend in total expenditure for over the four-year financial period, while in 2021-22 expenditure increased by about 15.7 percent. As the line graph shows, there was a huge decrease in 2019-20 compared to 2018-19 (35.2 percent). This drop is attributable to the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic. As noted in the Permanent Secretary’s overview (2019-20 AR), the impact of the pandemic led to a halt in daily operations as Government reduced the Ministry’s budget allocation under the national effort to address the pandemic.

1.2 Total Expenditure against Budget Allocation

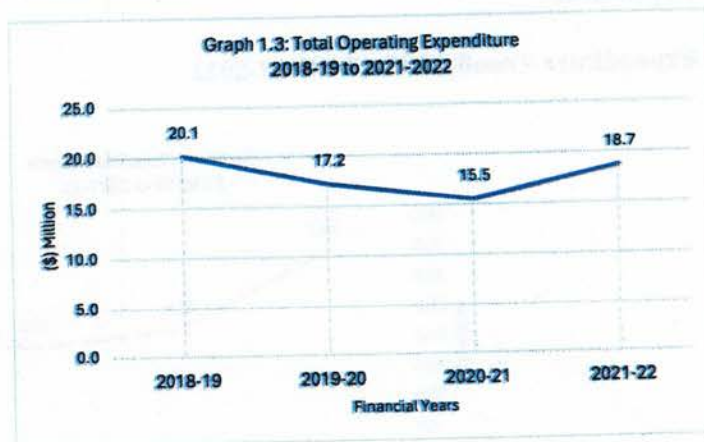


Graph 1.2 illustrates the difference between budget allocation and actual Ministry expenditure for the period. There is a consistent under-spending (negative variance) of allocated budget by the Ministry from 2018 to 2021, while in 2021-22 there was only a 2.5 percent difference. Underspensing generally can occur



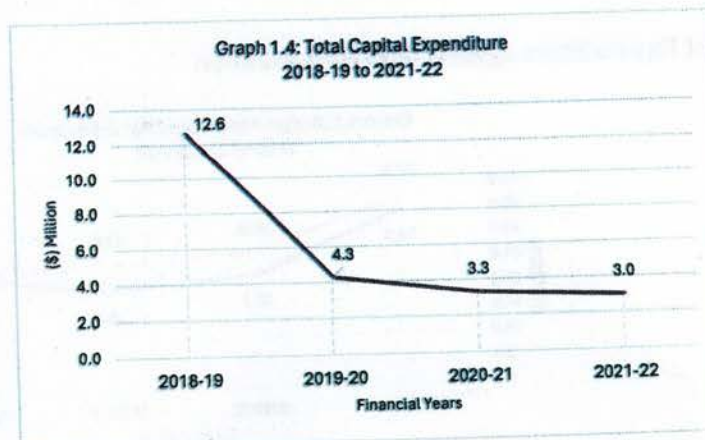
for a variety of reasons: unforeseen challenges, natural disasters (cyclones, pandemics); inefficiencies and bureaucracy hindering project implementation; lack of capacity (skills, competencies) to execute planned/budgeted activities and programmes; and so forth. Similar reasons can contribute to overspending including unanticipated inflation, lack of budget controls, personnel costs etc. [Questions about budget deviations are an important part of parliamentary committee oversight.]

1.3 Operating Expenditure



Operating expenditure on average has been around \$18 million. There was a 14.6 percent and 9.9 percent decrease respectively in the 2019-20 and 2020-21 financial years. This may have to do with reduced budgets and reduced operations due to the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic. There was a 20.6 percent increase (\$15.5m to 18.7m) in operating expenditure in 2021-22 compared to the previous financial year.

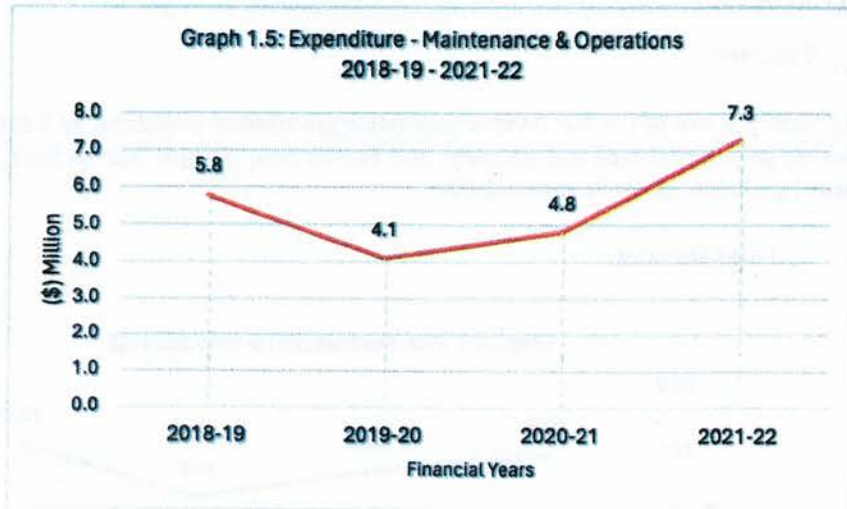
1.4 Capital Expenditure



The Ministry's capital expenditures ranged from \$12.6 million in 2018-19 to \$3.0 million in 2021-22. Capital expenditures decreased by 66.3 percent in 2019-20 compared to the previous financial year. There were decreases of 22.7 percent and 9.3 percent respectively for 2020-21 and 2021-22.

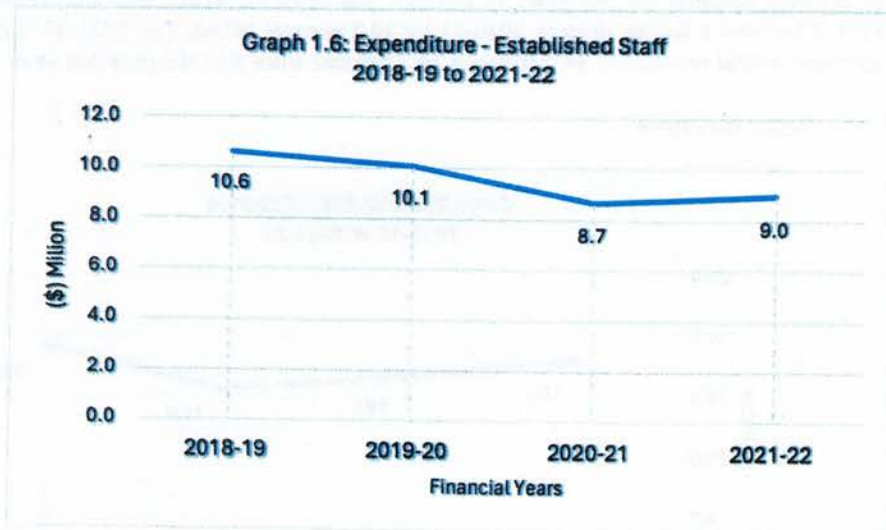


1.5 Expenditure on Maintenance and Operations



Graph 1.5 illustrates the trend in expenditures on maintenance and operations for the Ministry. There was an increase in this expenditure in 2020-21 by 17.5 percent and again in 2021-22 by 50.5 percent. As noted earlier the pandemic that affect the country beginning in March 2020 had a big impact on budgets across Government operations. This downward flex in the line graph reflects this decrease in expenditure for the Ministry.

1.6 Expenditure on Established Staff



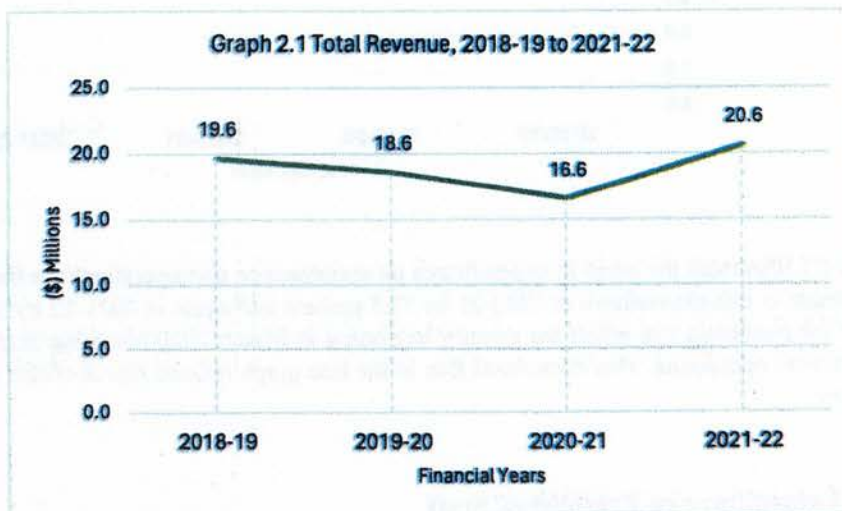
Graph 1.6 shows the trend in expenditure on established staff. Expenditure on established staff ranged from \$10.6 million to \$9.0 million. This expenditure decreased by 5.1 percent in 2019-20, from approximately \$10.6 million to \$10.1 million. It dropped again in 2020-21 by 13.7%, while it increased from around \$8.7 million to \$9.0 million (by 3.4 percent) in 2021-22. [The reasons for the decrease in 2020-21 are not discussed in the annual report]



2.0 Revenue

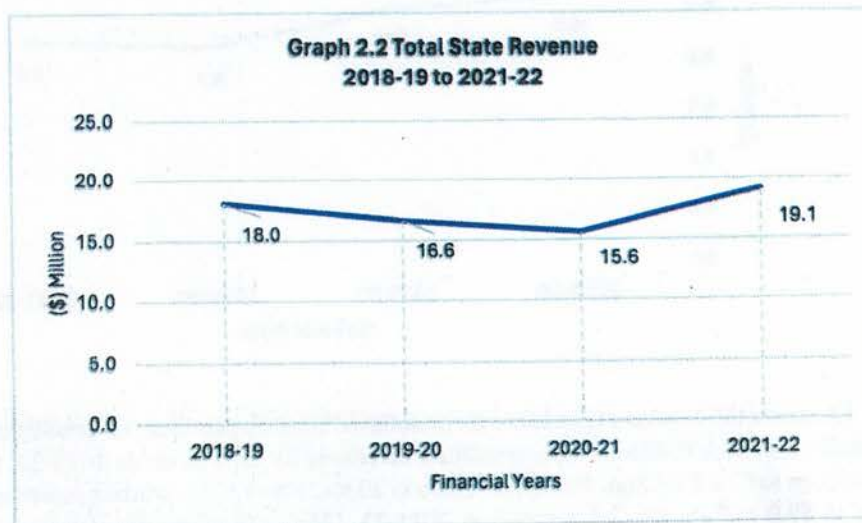
The Ministry is one of the few revenue-generating government ministries, as it manages the collection of leases on government land and property, and license fees, charges, and so forth as it is required under various legislation¹ under its responsibility.

2.1 Total Revenue



Total revenue dropped for two years in 2019-20 and 2020-21. There was a decrease in 2019-20 by 5.3 percent (\$1m) and a further drop in 2020-21 by 10.8 percent (\$2m). The 2021-22 financial year recorded an increase in total revenue of \$4 million or 24.2 percent more than the previous year.

2.2 State Revenue

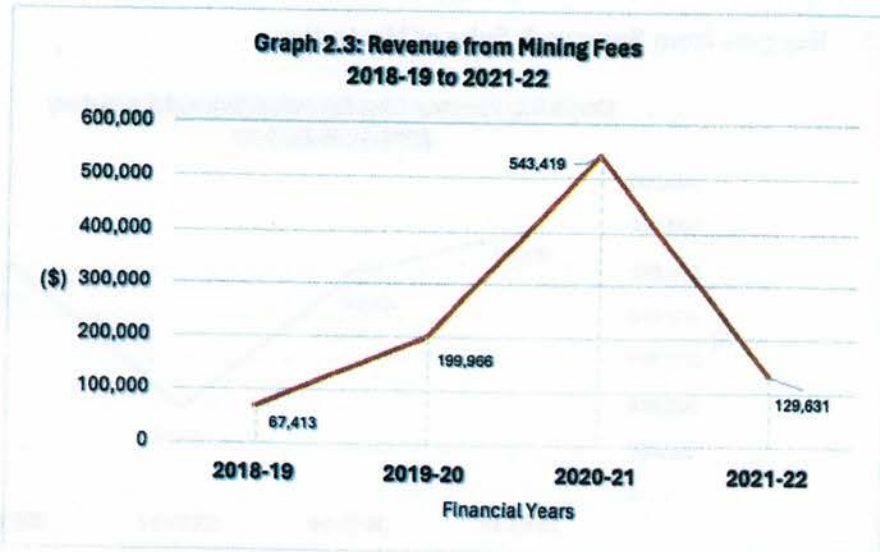


State revenue ranged from \$18.0 million to \$19.1 million over the 2018-19 – 2021-22 financial years. Revenue dropped by about 5.1% in 2019-20 compared to the previous financial year. This further decreased in 2020-21 from \$16.6 million to \$15.6 million (13.9 percent).

¹ Laws such as the *State Lands Act 1945*, *Mining Act 1965*, *Explosives Act 1937*, *Petroleum Act 1938*, *State Acquisition of Lands Act 1940*, etc.

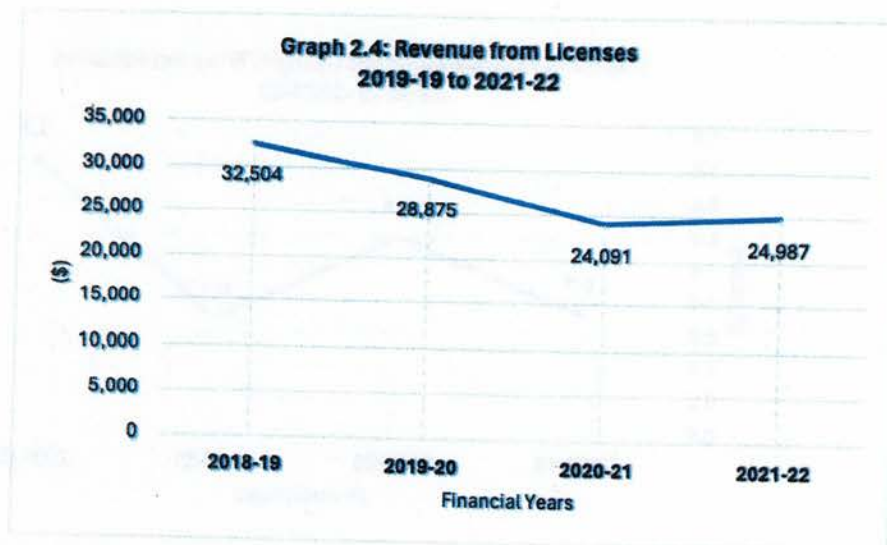


2.3 Revenue from Mining Fees



As Graph 2.3 illustrates there were massive increases in revenue from mining fees for the 2019-20 and 2020-21 financial years. In 2019-20, these fees increased by 196.6 percent, while in 2020-21 it was by 171.8 percent. It dropped by 76.1 percent in the 2021-22 financial year. [Note that in addition to 'Mining' fees, the Ministry also collects 'Explosive' fees, as it is empowered to do so under the Explosives Act 1937. In the annual reports' revenue and expenditure statements 'mining fees' exclude 'explosive fees', although they are discussed together (see. AR 2020-2021, p.28)]

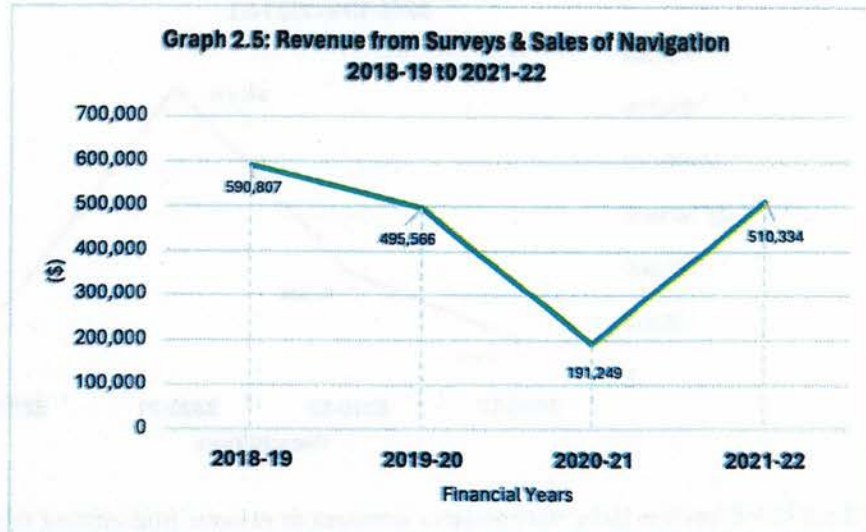
2.4 Revenue from Licenses



Graph 2.4 shows the revenue amounts from licenses. Between 2018-19 and 2021-22, the license revenue dropped by 23.1 percent (from \$32,504 to \$24,987). There were reductions in license revenue for 2019-20 (by 11.2 percent) and 2020-21 (by 16.6 percent). There was a small increase of 3.7 percent in 2021-22. The level of revenue for 2019-20 to 2021-22 remained below \$30,000.

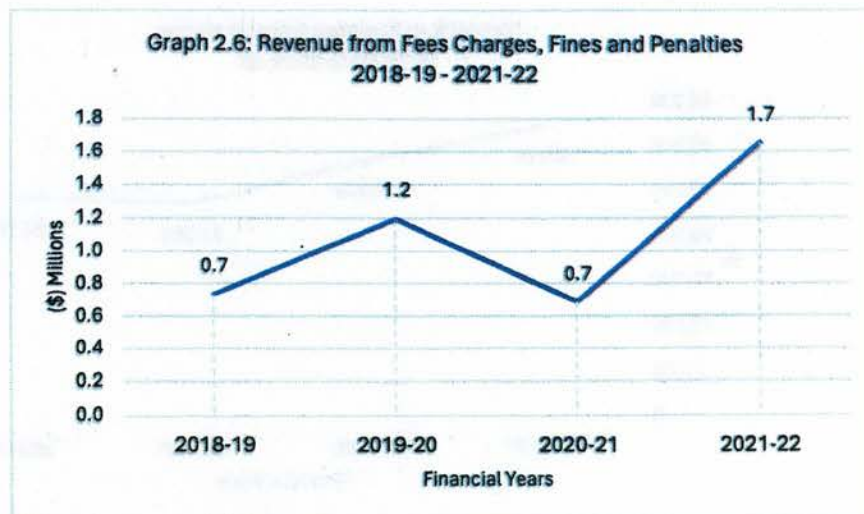


2.5 Revenue from Surveys & Sales of Navigation



The Ministry had a total revenue from surveys and sales of navigation of approximately \$1.8 million for the four financial years from 2018-19 to 2021-22. This revenue is derived from calibration of survey instruments, registered surveyors practicing fees, survey instruction fees, and so forth.

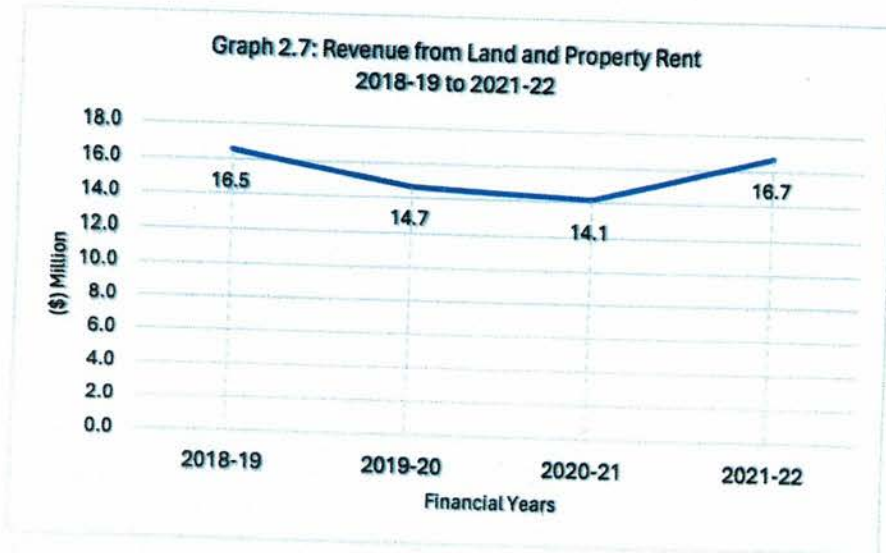
2.6 Revenue from Fees, Charges, Fines and Penalties



Graph 2.6 shows the trend in revenue collected from fees, charges, fines, and penalties. The Ministry collected approximately \$4.3 million in fees, charges, fines, and penalties. There was an increase of about 62.5 percent for the 2019-20 financial year. In 2021-22, this revenue increased from \$0.7 million to \$1.7 million, 140.4 percent more than the previous year's collection. The Ministry attributed this large increase to a high number of lessees who were penalised for failing to adhere to the terms and conditions of their leases [see 2021-2022 AR].



2.7 Revenue from Land and Property Rent



Graph 2.7 shows the trend in rental revenue from land and property. This is the largest component of the Ministry's revenue stream, comprising on average of more than 80 percent of total revenue. In 2018-19 it comprised 84.2 percent of total revenue, 78.8 percent in 2019-20, 85.3 percent in 2020-21 and 81.2 percent in 2021-22. This revenue decreased by 11.3 and 3.5 percent respectively for the two financial years of 2019-20 and 2020-21. It increased by 18.3 percent (from approximately \$14.1 million to \$16.7 million in 2021-22).

[NOTE: A MS-Excel spreadsheet on revenue and expenditure for the Ministry's annual reports has been created for the benefit of future analysis. This accompanies this brief for the Standing Committee's use.]

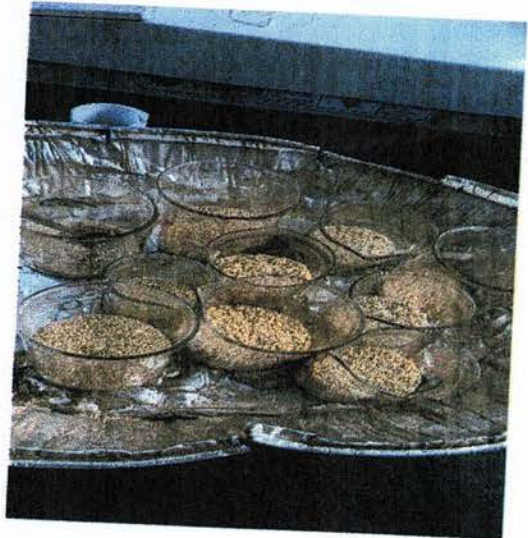
9 May 2024

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ANNEXURE 5

PHOTOS

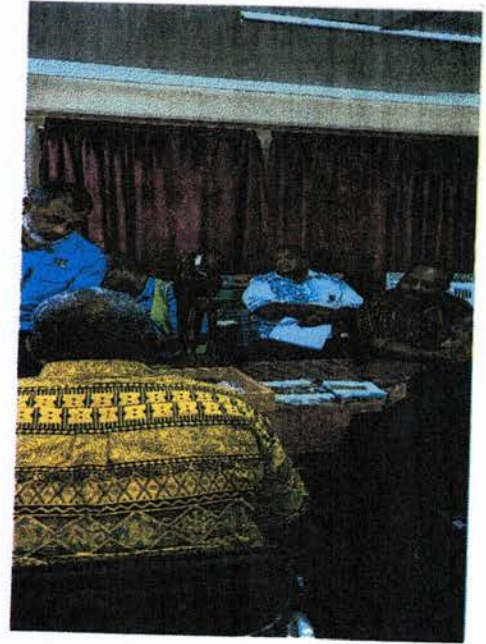
**FORESTRY TRAINING
RESEARCH
LABORATORY**



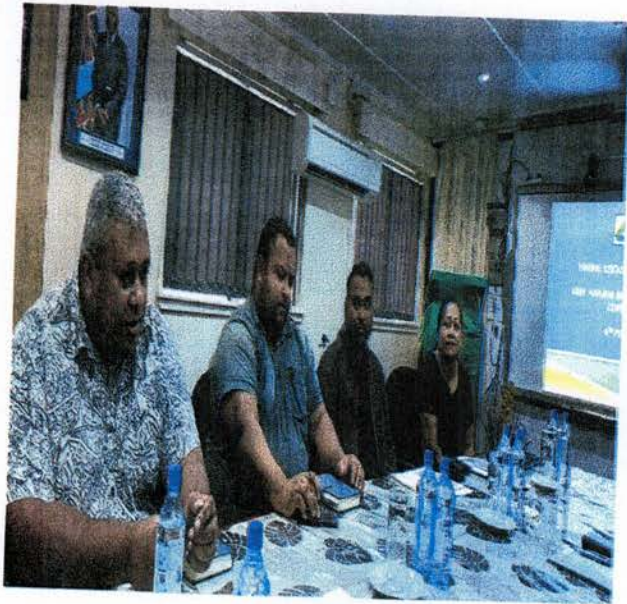
COMMITTEE MEMBERS WITH THE FORESTRY DEPARTMENT AT THE FORESTRY TRAINING RESEARCH, 9 MILES, NASINU.

FORESTRY COLOI- SUVA

Research Lab



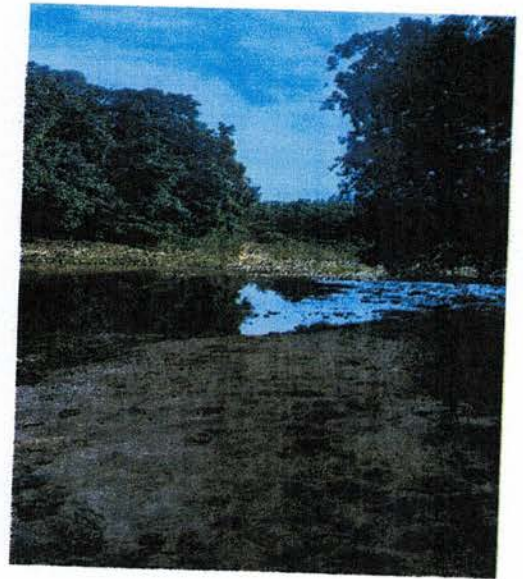
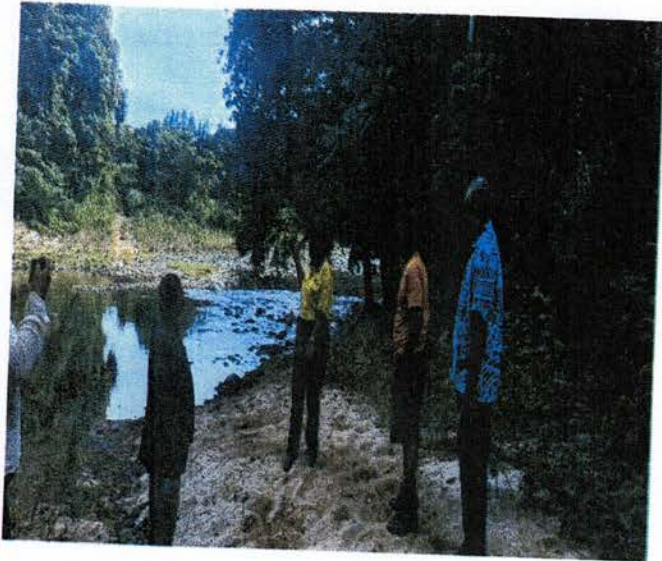
DEPARTMENT OF MINERALS



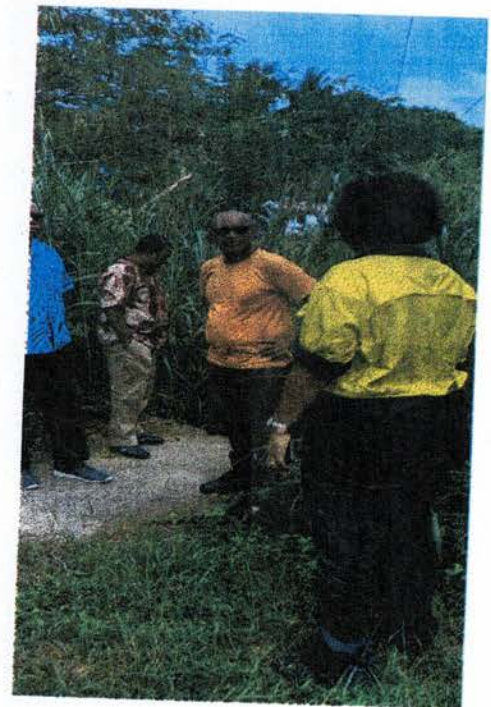
MAGMA, SIGATOKA



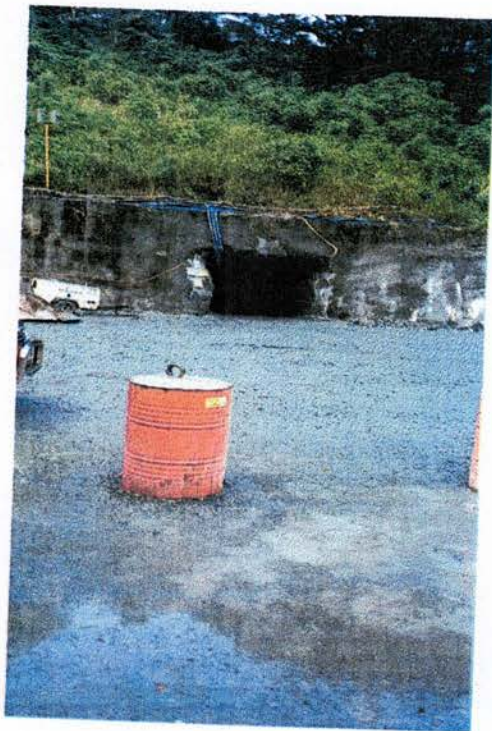
YAVUNA GRAVEL EXTRACTION, NADI



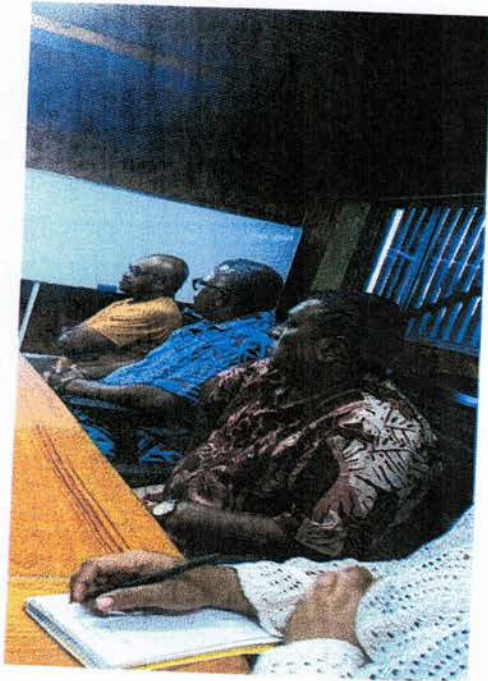
LEGALEGA PROJECT SINCE 2012- ISSUES WITH WAF



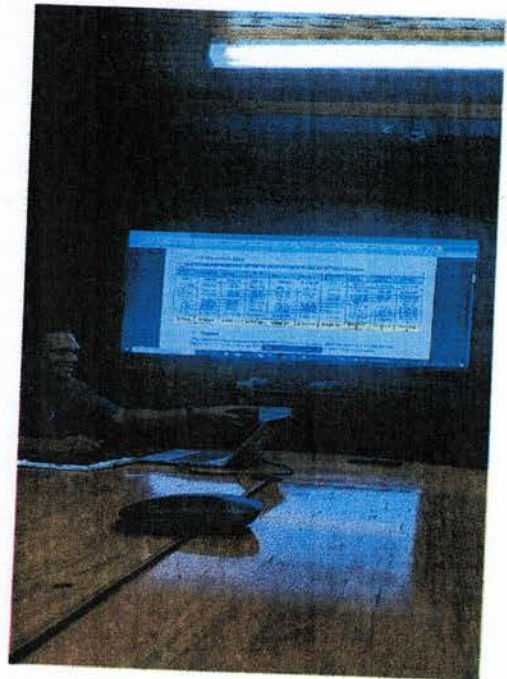
TUVATU MINES



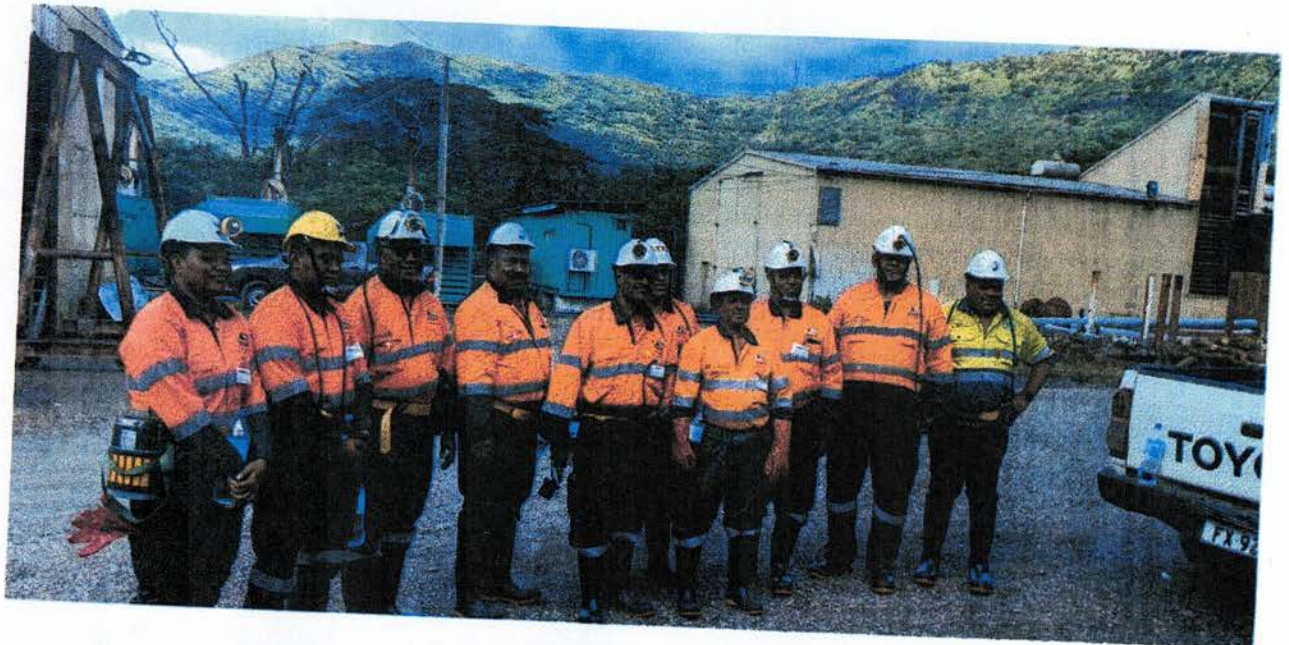
AMEX, LAUTOKA
(Amex needed its Port to be used by others)



Fiji Pine Ltd, Lautoka
Insufficient supply of raw materials to meet the demands of the mill in Viti Levu



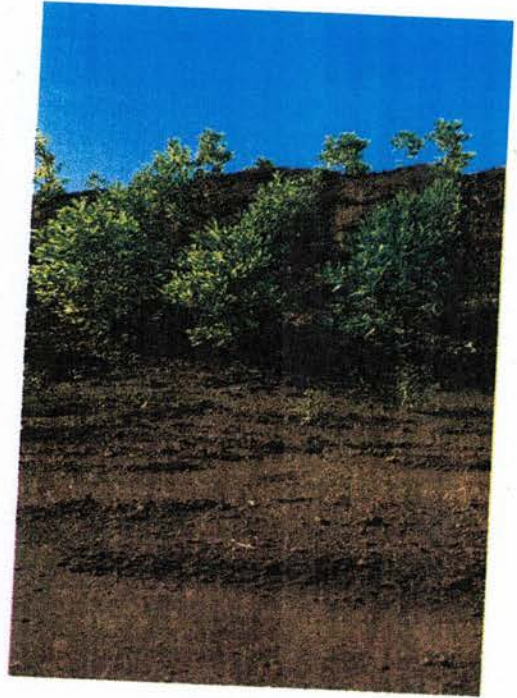
Committee Members with the staff of the Vatukoula Gold Mine



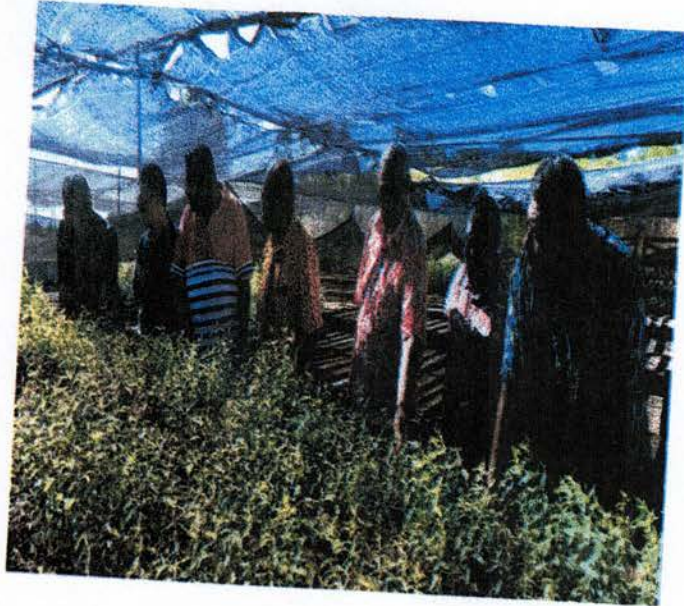
Staff of the Ministry of Lands in Rakiraki briefing the Members on the operations on ground



Eucalyptus and Acacia trees in Nawailevu



Cauturing acacia and eucalyptus in Nawailevu



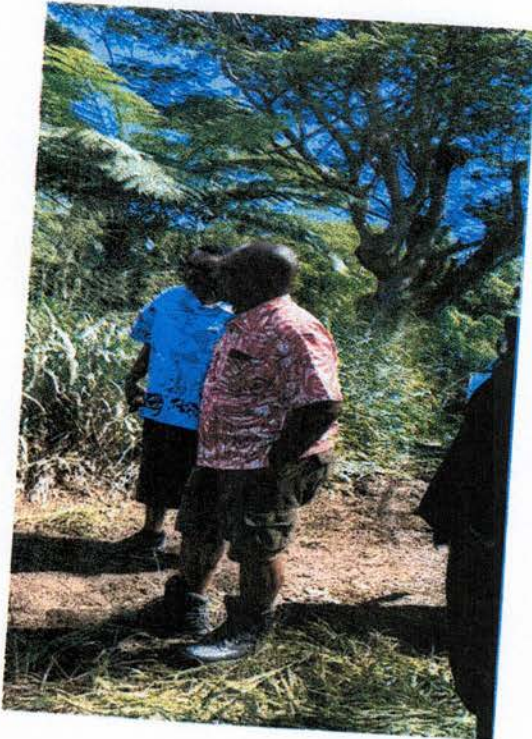
Cloned plants in a container



Mua VSAT Station



Mua Freehold Buy Back, Taveuni



Team Departs Taveuni for Savusavu

