



STANDING COMMITTEE ON NATURAL RESOURCES

Review Report of the Ministry of Waterways 2017 – 2018 Annual Report



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Chair's Foreword



As the Chairperson of the Standing Committee on Natural Resources, I hereby present the Standing Committee's review report on the Ministry of Water Ways 2017 – 2018.

The Committee has undertaken its scrutiny of the Ministry's annual report for the period under review and noted the Ministry's achievements.

The reporting period was transformative and a challenging one for the Ministry. The existence of outdated or backdated reports reflects the challenges posed by staff turnover and the need for accurate record-keeping.

The Committee noted the lack of direction for the Ministry in its engagement with the divisions in terms of its programs and projects. The Ministry of Waterways encountered several significant challenges that impacted its operations and program deliveries. Addressing these challenges required sound executive directives, innovative solutions, robust planning, and collaborative efforts.

In addition to the above, the Committee noted that there was a lack of collaboration with other Government Ministries and other relevant partners. Working in isolation affected their program delivery.

The Committee noted the Ministry's inability to utilise the budgeted funds which considerably affected the works carried out during the year, 2017 – 2018.

The Committee noted a significant number of unfilled positions within the Ministry and identified inconsistencies in the reporting of staff numbers.

I wish to extend my appreciation to the former Executive and Staff of the Ministry of Waterways for their effort and dedication.

At this juncture, I take this opportunity to thank the Honourable Members who were involved in the production of this bipartisan report namely Hon. Taito Rokomatu (Deputy Chairperson), Hon. Isikeli Tuiwailevu, Hon. Kalaveti Ravu and Hon. Sachida Nand.

I commend this Report to Parliament.



.....

Hon. Tomasi Tunabuna
Chairperson
Standing Committee on Natural Resources

ACRONYMS/GLOSSARY

MP	Member of Parliament
SDGs	Sustainable Development Goals
SO	Standing Order of Parliament

OVERALL RECOMMENDATION

The Standing Committee on Natural Resources has conducted the review of the Ministry of Waterways 2017 – 2018 and recommends that Parliament take note of its recommendations as stated in the report.

Introduction

The following Standing Orders of Parliament specify the role of the Standing Committee on Natural Resources.

- SO, 109 (c) that the mandate of the Committee is to look into matters that relates to agriculture, forests, fisheries, land, minerals, environment, water and marine services.
- SO, 110 (1) (c) further authorizes the Standing Committee to scrutinize the government departments with responsibility within the committee's subject area, including by investigating, inquiring into, and making recommendations relating to any aspect of such a department's administration, legislation or proposed legislative program, budget, rationalization, restructuring, functioning, organization, structure, and policy formulation.

This annual report details the performances and commitments in areas of focus during the 2017-2018 financial years. It also attempts to provide data and examples that highlight the progress and describe the approach and achievements. The Report has been prepared in line with the Financial Management Act and Section 14 of the Amended Public Service Act 1999. This report includes the following:

- The Organization Structure of the Ministry
- Outlines the contribution of the respective Units/ Programme outcomes, outputs, and Key Performance Indicators, and,
- Highlights the achievements and results for the Ministry of Waterways.

Committee Remit and Composition



Hon. Tomasi Tunabuna
Chairperson
Assistant Minister for Agriculture
Government MP



Hon. Taito Rokomatu
Deputy Chairperson
Opposition MP



Hon. Ratu Isikeli Tuiwailevu
Government MP



Hon. Kalaveti Vodo Ravu
Government MP



Hon. Sachida Nand
Opposition MP

1.1 Procedure and Program

The Committee met on Tuesday 20th August 2024 to discuss and agree on its Work plan for Quarter 3 which included an invitation to the Ministry of Agriculture and Waterways to present its submissions to the Committee. The Committee then reviewed the 2017 – 2018 Report and formulated questions which were submitted to the Ministry for their response.

The Ministry of Agriculture and Waterways Senior Officials presented their submissions to the Committee in person on Wednesday 11th September 2024 in Parliament.

The Committee drafted its report after reviewing all information made available and then completed the report after hearing submissions from the Senior Officials from the Ministry of Agriculture and Waterways. The Committee received the support of the Parliament Research Unit who provided analysis and key findings to the Committee for its final report to Parliament.

Copies of written and oral submissions were received from the Ministry of Agriculture and Waterways officials.

1.2 Evidence and Advice Received - Please Refer to Annexures 1 – 4

2.0 Committee Deliberation and Analysis

2.1 Committee Findings

- 2.1.1** The Committee noted with concern the delay in submission of the Ministry's annual reports.
- 2.1.2** The Committee noted that the annual report failed to identify the key physical targets of the Ministry for the period under review.
- 2.1.3** The Committee noted the low utilization of the budgeted funds.
- 2.1.4** The Committee noted that apart from the program activities, the Ministry undertook other activities funded by external sources.
- 2.1.5** The Committee noted the broad array of SDG indicators, including SDGs 1, 2, 3, 11, 13, and 15, which did not necessarily reflect the actual activities undertaken during the reporting period.
- 2.1.6** The Committee noted with concern the lack of information provided in the annual report, which was also poorly collated and presented.
- 2.1.7** The Committee noted the Ministry's inability to provide holistic information on the acquisition of land for the development of the vetiver project.
- 2.1.8** The Committee noted that the Drainage Boards were dissolved, and its staff and assets were transferred to the Ministry of Waterways.

2.1.9 The Committee noted the concern raised by the Auditor General on the Board of Survey.

3.0 COMMITTEE'S RECOMMENDATIONS

RECOMMENDATION 1

The Committee recommends that the Ministry review its reporting standard to effectively disseminate holistic information.

RECOMMENDATION 2

The Committee recommends that the Ministry strengthen its information management system.

RECOMMENDATION 3

The Committee highly recommends that the Ministry strictly adheres to the Government systems and processors in place, in particular to the Financial and Operational Procedures.

RECOMMENDATION 4

The Committee recommends that the Ministry submit its annual reports on time.

RECOMMENDATION 5

The Committee recommends that the Ministry continually improve its Human Resources Development Plan.

RECOMMENDATION 6

The Committee recommends that the Ministry of Waterways improve its programs and reporting against the relevant SDGs.

4.0 Gender Analysis

The Committee noted that the report lacked clear gender analysis and further recommended that the Ministry of Waterways strengthen its commitment towards gender equality by reflecting it in its policies and activities.

5.0 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)

The Committee noted that the Ministry was guided by the following SDGs.

- 1) SDG 1 - No Poverty
- 2) SDG 2 - Zero Hunger
- 3) SDG 3 - Good Health and Well-Being
- 4) SDG 11 – Sustainable Cities and Communities
- 5) SDG 13 – Climate Action
- 6) SDG 14 – Life Below Water
- 7) SDG 15 – Life on Land

However, the report failed to identify how the activities clearly addressed the SDGs indicated.

6.0 Conclusion

The Committee concludes that whilst the Ministry may have successfully implemented some of its programs during the reporting period, it has failed to adequately report this in the annual report.

Members Signature:

We, as Members of the Standing Committee on Natural Resources do concur with the content of this report.



Hon. Tomasi Tunabuna
Chairperson
Assistant Minister for Agriculture

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Hon. Taito Rokomatu
Deputy Chairperson
Opposition MP

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Hon. Ratu Isikeli Tuwailevu
Assistant Minister for i Taukei Affairs
Government MP

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Hon. Kalaveti Vodo
Government MP

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Hon. Sachida Nand
Opposition MP

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APPENDICES

1) WRITTEN SUBMISSION BY MWW

2) VERBATIM REPORT MWW

3) RESEARCH PAPERS – MWW

4) PHOTOS

APPENDICES

Appendix 1

Written Submission by the
Ministry of Waterways for the
2017 – 2018 Annual Report

QUESTIONS

1. Can the Ministry please explain how the Mission and the Vision is related to the role of the Ministry?

Vision for Waterways: Sustainable Water Resources and Waterways Management for Fiji.

Mission: To steward and protect Fiji's environment as a prized fortune for all Fijians and their future generations.

Increase resilience to waterways related hazards through effective and sustainable management of waterways in Fiji.

The mission highlights the Ministry's commitment to protecting Fiji's natural environment, which includes not only conserving water resources but also ensuring their efficient use.

By increasing resilience to hazards such as floods and erosion, the Ministry actively contributes to safeguarding the environment and communities from the impacts of climate change.

Financial Management and Budget Allocation

2. a) What was the total budget allocated to the Ministry of Waterways for the fiscal year 2017-2018, and how was this budget allocated across different projects and divisions?

Head No. 42 MINISTRY OF WATERWAYS

SUMMARY OF TOTAL EXPENDITURE

	\$000					
1. Established Staff	0.0	0.0	2,105.9	2,105.9	0.0	0.0
2. Government Wage Earners	0.0	0.0	1,251.6	1,251.6	0.0	0.0
3. Travel and Communications	0.0	0.0	76.9	76.9	0.0	0.0
4. Maintenance and Operations	0.0	0.0	301.2	301.2	0.0	0.0
5. Purchase of Goods and Services ..	0.0	0.0	41.8	41.8	0.0	0.0
6. Operating Grants and Transfers ..	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
7. Special Expenditures	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
TOTAL OPERATING	0.0	0.0	3,777.4	3,777.4	0.0	0.0
8. Capital Construction	0.0	0.0	9,900.0	9,900.0	0.0	0.0
9. Capital Purchase	0.0	0.0	3,000.0	3,000.0	(3,000.0)	(3,000.0)
10. Capital Grants and Transfers	0.0	0.0	6,323.8	6,323.8	0.0	0.0
TOTAL CAPITAL	0.0	0.0	19,223.8	19,223.8	(3,000.0)	(3,000.0)
13. Value Added Tax	0.0	0.0	1,198.8	1,198.8	(270.0)	(270.0)
TOTAL EXPENDITURE	0.0	0.0	24,200.0	24,200.0	(3,270.0)	(3,270.0)

Table 1: Funds Utilization for Financial Year 2017-2018

Program	Provision	Released	Commitment	Utilization
Drainage & Flood Protection	\$7,000,000	\$6,772,384	\$2,829,913.26	42%
Irrigation Services (maintenance of irrigation schemes)	\$1,500,000	\$520,320	\$271,736.20	52%
Purchase of Dredger	\$3,000,000	\$0	\$0	0%
Watershed Management	\$1,400,000	\$402,000	\$351,338.66	87%
Drainage Subsidy (Maintenance of drainage schemes)	\$3,000,000	\$3,000,000	\$3,000,000	100%
Maintenance of Drainage (municipal councils)	\$1,323,798	\$1,322,993	\$1,322,992	100%
Infield Drainage for Sugarcane Farms	\$2,000,000	\$2,000,000	\$2,000,000	100%
Total	\$19,223,798	\$14,017,697	\$9,775,980.12	69.74%

3. Were there any significant changes or reallocations in the budget during the year, and if so, what were the reasons and impacts?

- The delay in the Tender Processes limited the Ministry from utilizing the full budget causing roll-over of activities into the next Fiscal Year, this affected the work plan.
- Major reallocation was approved by cabinet (Cabinet 18/5/18) to cater for emergency works under the 'Care for Fiji Program'
- **Impact:** some of the planned works were not implemented

4. How effectively did the Ministry utilize the allocated funds, and were there any notable variances between the budgeted and actual expenditures?

- The long procurement processes delayed the implementation of work and utilisation of funds.
- The variances were due to under-utilisation of funds.

5. The Northern Division was allocated \$1.5m. How was the budget utilized when most of the work was funded by Chinese Aid? Can the Ministry please explain?

- The \$1.5 Million dollars was for both the Central and Northern Divisions
- Chinese Aid: (Provision of Machines only – In-Kind Contribution) only part of the drainage network, but the Ministry maintained the whole drainage schemes with its infrastructure.

6. Page 24 - \$647,855 VIP that was released to the Western Drainage Board does not tally with the figures from Tables 12 to 16.

- The amount of \$647,855 were grants that were released to the Western Drainage board, while tables 12-16 shows the total grants committed including emergency drainage works for TC Ken and TC Josie, that's the likely reason why the values do not tally (\$810,632.50) pg 24

Project Implementation and Outcomes

7. What were the key projects undertaken by the Ministry in 2017-2018, and what were their objectives?

- Mosi River Flood Retention Dam No. 3, Nadi Watershed
- Vunibau River Bank Protection.
- Dredging of the Qawa River
- Dredging of the Labasa River
- Dredging of Rewa River

8. How successful were these projects in meeting their stated objectives, and what were the measurable outcomes or impacts?

- Implementation of the Mosi River Flood Retention Dam, Nadi 25% completed
- Vunibau River Bank Protection works, Navua – 80% completed
- Qawa River (100%)
- Labasa River (100%)
- Rewa River (100%)

9. Were there any projects that faced significant delays or challenges, and how did the Ministry address those issues?

- A significant cause of delays was the Tender process thus the Ministry requested for a roll-over of the project.
- Inhouse limited capacity (motivate, refresher training)

10. How did the Ministry ensure that the projects were executed efficiently and in line with the planned timelines and budgets?

- Align implementation of work programmes to the AWP
- Standardise work processes with timelines

Infrastructure and Capacity Building

11. What were the major infrastructure developments or upgrades completed during the year, and how have they contributed to improved water management and flood control?

- Qawa/Labasa river maintenance dredging – 23,657.25 m³
- Rewa river maintenance dredging – 10,290 m³
- Vunibau Bank Protection Works in Navua River is in progress up-to end of July 80% has been completed
- Up to end of July 2018, 25% completed for Mosi-3, Flood Mitigation Dam in Nadi Catchment

12. What initiatives were undertaken to enhance the Ministry's capacity, including training for staff and the development of new technical skills?

- In-house Training - Boat Master Training (all survey staff)
- 1 Overseas short course trainings through MCS - Sustainable Marine Resources: Enhancing Biodiversity in Coastal Waterways” in Singapore.
- Now we are restructuring the Division of Waterways

13. How did the Ministry engage with local communities and stakeholders in the planning and execution of its projects? How effective were the negotiations with the landowners in community projects?

- Engaged in community consultations: worked closely with the Ministry of Itaukei Affairs who played the leading role in our community outreach and awareness programs.

14. What measures did the Ministry implement to address environmental concerns related to its projects, and how effective were these measures?

- The Ministry of Waterways addresses environmental concerns through several key strategies:
 - By managing watersheds, the Ministry ensured that land and water resources were used sustainably, which helped maintain ecological balance and reduced environmental degradation.
 - Activities like dredging, desilting, and flood retention dams constructions were carried out with intention to minimise their environmental impact.
 - Proper planning and execution of interventions prevented adverse effects on local ecosystems.
 - Measures such as coastal protection and tidal gates installation were designed to protect coastal areas from erosion and flooding, which helped preserve coastal habitats and reduces the risk of habitat loss.

- The Environment Unit within the Ministry focused on assessing and mitigating the environmental impacts of various projects. This unit evaluated project proposals and monitored their implementation to ensure compliance with environmental standards.

15. How did the Ministry's activities in 2017-2018 align with broader environmental and sustainability goals?

- Linked SDG, 3, 11, 13,14 and 15
- All the Ministry's programs were subjected to relevant legislations such as the Environment Management Act 2005, Rivers and Streams Act, State Lands Act, Drainage Act, and the Irrigation Act.
- The Broader Environment and Sustainability goals were achieved through collaborating with relevant statutory Authorities such as the Ministry of Environment, and the Ministry of Lands and Mineral Resources.



- Flood Mitigation: By focusing on flood mitigation through projects like dredging and coastal protection, the Ministry contributed to reducing flood risks, which aligned with the sustainability goals related to disaster risk reduction and climate resilience.
- Watershed and Coastal Management: The emphasis on watershed management and coastal protection supported sustainable land and water use, helping to protect natural resources and maintain ecological health.
- Environmental Oversight: The role of the Environment Unit in ensuring that projects meet environmental standards were in line with the global sustainability goals, including environmental protection and sustainable development.
- Research and Policy: The Ministry's Research and Policy Unit contributed to the formulation of policies that incorporated environmental considerations, aligning to

the broader sustainability goals by promoting informed decision-making and evidence-based practices.

16. What feedback or concerns did local communities have about the Ministry's projects and how were these addressed?

- Feedback was received through community consultation, correspondence from District and Provincial Meetings, and through the Ministry's participation in public events.
- Concerns raised were addressed through scoping and submission for PSIPs approval
- Helpline, ph: 1523, email: Agrihelp@govnet.gov.fj

Performance Evaluation and Accountability

17. What Mechanisms were in place for monitoring and evaluating the performance of the Ministry Projects and how were these used to assess effectiveness?

- We monitored our work based on the budget utilization of funds for each program.
- These were achieved through quarterly meeting reports, monthly reports and weekly reports of all technical staff.

18. Were there any audits or evaluations conducted on the Ministry's activities during this period, and what were the key findings and recommendations?

- An audit was carried out by officers from the Office of the Auditor General, however, there was no report which could guide the Ministry to learn from the lessons of the past (we could locate a report).

19. How did the Ministry handle any issues of accountability or transparency related to its projects and financial management?

- Projects undertaken with communities are based on needs
- Proper financial processes were followed with the necessary monitoring and evaluation

20. Table 6 – is inconsistent in terms of the figures provided. e.g., total works. Can the Ministry explain?

- Table 6 showed the actual expenditure amounts for each scheme in the Northern division, but did not have costs total all the costs.

21. Page 30 – Can the Ministry please explain on the number of policies being finalized on table 22 and were they implemented? How effective were the policies?

- The period 2017-2018 was when the Waterways Ministry was established and the policies in pg 30 were finalised however more work was needed to fine tune them.

22. Permanent Secretary's Statement - Staffing – Can the Ministry provide the Gender breakdown of staff?

- In the FY 2017/2018 the Ministry had 147 staff positions, however only 96 positions were filled, where 73% were Males and 27% were females).

23. Permanent Secretary's Statement – Executive Summary – Can the Ministry elaborate more on the need for EIA for Dredging of rivers?

- All major river dredging works by the Ministry required a full EIA process
- EIA for dredging rivers was essential for understanding and mitigating environmental impacts, ensuring regulatory compliance, and promoting sustainable and responsible management of river ecosystems.

24. Can the Ministry please explain why there was low utilization of capital funds during the years under review?

- Having to form a new Ministry was a challenge. Major spending was on Operating rather than on Capital projects.
- The plan to procure a dredger did not eventuate
- The then Minister for Waterways highlighted the need to outsource dredging works rather than procurement of a new dredger
- Delays in securing relevant approvals from stakeholders and the Tender processes time frame

25. Can the Ministry explain why was there no reporting on the preventative measures to mitigate soil erosion and silting? How did the Ministry link its work with other Ministries?

- The Ministry have pamphlets and fliers available showcasing projects implemented and services provided
- There was no report, however, Community Consultations and awareness were carried out by the Ministry
- Projects that required joint interventions were carried out through a collaborative effort with relevant stakeholders such as MRD, the Lands Department, the Department of Environment, and Ministry of Itaukei Affairs.
- Moving forward there was an urgent need for proper documentation of every completed project for public awareness purposes.

Appendix 2

Verbatim Report

[VERBATIM REPORT]

STANDING COMMITTEE ON NATURAL RESOURCES

2017-2018 MINISTRY OF WATERWAYS ANNUAL REPORT (PP NO. 51 OF 2021)

SUBMITTEE: Ministry of Waterways

VENUE: Big Committee Room, Parliament

DATE: Wednesday, 11th September, 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 WEDNESDAY, 11TH SEPTEMBER, 2024, AT 10.40 A.M.

Interviewee/Submittee: **Ministry Agriculture and Waterways**

In Attendance:

- | | | |
|-------------------------|---|---------------------|
| 1) Mr. Andrew Tukana | - | Permanent Secretary |
| 2) Mr. Sikeli Baleisuva | - | Director Finance |
| 3) Mr. Marau Vuli | - | Director Waterways |
| 4) Mr. Livai Takali | - | Principal Engineer |
-

MR. CHAIRMAN.- Honourable Members, 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 our viewers that are tuning in to this session. I am privileged to chair this second submission meeting of the Standing Committee for Natural Resources, which is being aired live on Parliament's Channel through the Walesi platform and livestreamed through the Parliament's *Facebook* page.

At the outset for information purposes, pursuant to Standing Order 111 of Parliament, all Committee meetings are to be open to the public, therefore, this submission meeting is open to the public and the media and 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 includes:

- (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 develops its recommendations and reports.

I wish to remind honourable Members and our invited submittees that all comments and questions are to be asked and 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 the 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 other protocols of this Committee meeting, please be advised that whilst the meeting is in progress, movements within the meeting room will be restricted and 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 Committee Members)

MR. CHAIRMAN.- With us this morning, we have the representatives from the Ministry of Waterways who have been requested to provide a submission on the Ministry of Waterways 2017-2018 Annual Report and they are part of the Ministry of Agriculture. Now, I take this opportunity to invite our submission guests to introduce themselves before we proceed with the submission. Please note that if there is any question by the honourable Members of the Committee, they may interject or will wait until the end of the presentation to ask the questions.

(Introduction of representatives from the Ministry of Agriculture and Waterways)

MR. CHAIRMAN.- I now request the Permanent Secretary for his presentation.

MR. A. TUKANA.- Mr. Chairman, we are glad to be given this opportunity to come and respond to the queries we have been given for the 2017-2018 Annual Report for the Ministry of Waterways. Before I respond, maybe just a little bit of background. The Waterways Ministry used to be with the Ministry of Agriculture in the past, but in 2017 it was set up as a new Ministry on its own and they had this annual report that was written up which we are coming here today to respond on. But since 2023, they have been moved back to the Ministry of Agriculture and now Waterways and they have become one of the divisions under the Ministry of Agriculture and Waterways.

With that, we have been doing a lot of work behind the scenes to get them re-established. One of the things that we have done recently was to re-establish the Drainage Board, so some work is going to that now at the moment in order to try and improve and address all the issues that they are currently facing in Fiji in terms of drainage, flooding and all those issues around embankments, stabilisation and soil erosion. So that is most of the work we are doing, but for us here today, we are just addressing queries and we are glad to be given the opportunity to do so because I feel that this is an area that we really need to improve on, for the annual reports that come after this which we will be working on very hard to address those.

For the queries that we were given, we have 25 questions or queries in total. If I may, Mr. Chairman through you start off with the first one where I will read up the question and then I will respond.

Question No. 1: Can the Ministry please explain, (so when we say Ministry in terms of 2017 and 2018, you are referring to the Ministry of Waterways) how the Mission and Vision is related to the role of the Ministry?

The vision for Waterways is sustainable water resources and waterways management in Fiji. This is something that we find that is critical and very important at the moment.

The mission is to be the steward and to protect Fiji's environment as a prized fortune for all Fijians and for their future generations. We need to do this by increasing the resilience of waterways relating to hazards through effective and sustainable management of waterways in Fiji.

The mission, Mr. Chairman, highlights the Ministry's commitment to protecting Fiji's national environment which includes not only conserving water resources, but also ensuring their efficient use. By increasing resilience to hazards such as floods and erosion, the Ministry actively contributes to safeguarding the environment and communities from the impacts of climate change.

Mr. Chairman, that is the response to the first part, if you have any questions?

MR. CHAIRMAN.- Honourable Members, as I earlier alluded to that we will have questions when they arise, simply to have questions while they are still fresh. I think in terms of visions and missions, I do understand that there was a Strategic Plan that was derived much later after 2017, and there had been some discussion on how the Ministry was guided to go through the activities of Waterways. I am quite sure that you will probably have some indication of how the strategies and objectives were formulated before the Strategic Development Plan back in 2020. Would you want to highlight some of the guiding documents to the work of the Waterways in relation to the mission?

MR. A. TUKANA.- Mr. Chairman, as you have correctly indicated there was a Strategic Development Plan for the Ministry of Waterways that was developed in 2020 to 2024, but that has since expired. Since they rejoined in 2023, we have included them into the Strategic Development Plan for our Ministry, Waterways and Agriculture now for the next five years, which was launched towards the end of last year, and will be valid for the next five years. Nevertheless, we will be reviewing them on an annual basis. They have joined us now in our Strategic Development Plan. In terms of the mission and vision, I think there are also outputs and outcomes that we have listed in our Strategic Development Plan which now includes them. I think in terms of on a yearly basis, they would be reviewing their outputs according to what is listed in our combined Strategic Development Plan that we have for the next five years.

MR. CHAIRMAN.- Since we are discussing 2017-2018 Report, some concern was around the reporting against no clear indicators or targets. As I mentioned, was there some form of plans that highlighted the achievements to be achieved before 2020? Were there documents that had those targets?

MR. A. TUKANA.- Mr. Chairman, perhaps if I could just ask Livai who was around at that time, if he could just elaborate. I know he might have developed some work plans in those years, just to guide you on the work that you were supposed to be carrying out in those years.

MR. L. TAKALI.- Mr. Chairman, through you may I answer your for the 2017-2018, our works had been carried out by the Ministry of Waterways, the report was documented. We were established in August 2017 or for the financial year that we are currently dealing with. But, for our works, we mainly documented on a quarterly basis and it was collected through the annual report for the financial year for the work that we carried out, especially we were focusing on monitoring of the activities that we carried out. For the plan, there was no proper plan as we were established in August 2017.

MR. CHAIRMAN.- Any supplementary questions from Members?

MR. A. TUKANA.- Mr. Chairman, I will move onto the second question which is around Financial Management and Budget Allocation.

Question No. 2: What was the total budget allocated to the Ministry of Waterways for the fiscal year 2017-2018, and how was this budget allocated across different projects and divisions?

I think we might have it up there on the screen but basically the budget that was approved for that financial year was \$24.2 million, if you can see there on the screen, I think you might have copies there with you. Mr. Chairman, out of this \$3.7 million was for operating expenditure and the remaining was for capital projects which amounted to around \$19.2 million and then with the Value Added Tax (VAT) component to that. But this budget, Mr. Chairman, was changed again sometimes down the line, and I think it was reduced to something like a little bit in excess of \$20 million and this was due to the redeployment of funds for cyclone rehabilitation work as well as for Care Fiji Programme.

I think we have a little bit of elaboration on that somewhere down the line in that query, but basically the next part of this is in terms of funds utilisation for that financial year. If you can see on the next table below this, the provision that was given for capital projects was \$19.2 million. The funds that were released in excess of \$14 million and the funds that were utilised was \$9.7 million which accounted to be 69.74 percent utilisation. So, that is basically the breakdown of how those funds were utilised. Thank you, Mr. Chairman, if there is any question or queries from the Members?

HON. S. NAND.- Mr. Chairman, through you, thank you for the explanation on the budget. I believe the first table that is shown in the response, I would have loved to see subheadings on each row or column so that it is easy to understand. It was left to us to assume what was happening and I would have

loved to get some more details on the redeployment of funds within this table so we know exactly in a nutshell what is happening.

On the second table, I see that the utilisation is measured against the funds released. Why was it not measured against the total budget provided? That would have shown really how much budget was provided and out of the total budget, what amount was utilised and what was left.

MR. A. TUKANA.- Mr. Chairman, for the subheading, we again note that point and we will improve on this in future. For the redeployment, I think even though we had not specifically put it in here, but I think there is some information on that in the Annual Report. So, that is basically where we will get information as well to respond because most of the information particularly is quite difficult to locate and bring. This has happened about few years ago but those points are noted, honourable Member.

MR. CHAIRMAN.- I will request PS to go onto Question No.3, I think it is very much related to Question No.2.

MR. A. TUKANA.-

Question No. 3: Were there any significant changes or relocations in the budget during the year, and if so, what were the reasons and impacts?

As I had alluded to earlier there were some redeployment of funds and basically these were to cover to do rehabilitation work around the impacts of cyclone. This obviously impacted the rest of the work that was planned and were not being implemented. This relocation came through a Cabinet approval which was Cabinet decision 18/5/18. Some of the money went to the Care for Fiji Programme.

MR. CHAIRMAN.- I will request that you go on to Question Nos. 4, 5 and 6 simply because they cover the budget component.

MR. A. TUKANA.-

Question No. 4: How effectively did the Ministry utilise the allocated funds and were there any notable variances between the budgeted and actual expenditure?

I think some of that is reflected in the second table in terms of the effectiveness of the utilisation of funds. The point has been noted, we will be referring or comparing that to the total budget rather than just to the capital expenditure programmes. The variations notably were just due to the under-utilisation of funds, so what was provided was not fully utilised.

Question No. 5: The Northern Division was allocated \$1.5 million. How was the budget utilised when most of the work was funded by Chinese Aid? Can the Ministry please explain?

The \$1.5 million was for both the Central and Northern Divisions so some of the money went to the Central Division for some of the works there and the Chinese Aid Project Programme were for only the provision of machines and only for part of the drainage works. So, some of the money also went for the maintenance of the other drainage schemes and its infrastructure.

Question No. 6: Page 24 - \$647,855 was released to the Western Drainage Board and it does not tally with the figures from Tables 12 to 16.

Mr. Chairman, the amount of \$647,855 were through grants that were released to the Western Division while tables 12 to 16 shows the total grants committed including emergency drainage works for *TC Ken* and *TC Josie*, and that is the likely reason why the values do not tally because some of the money stated is a bit more than what is stated here. So, some of the money luckily came from the redeployment of funds under the Fiji Care Programme. I think some of that information is detailed in the Annual Report as well.

Mr. Chairman, that is response for Questions Nos. 4 to 6, so if there are any queries from the honourable Members?

MR. CHAIRMAN.- Thank you PS for the explanation. Now it gives some light as to how the allocated amount of \$647,855 which was allocated to the Western Division received or had more in the actual table that was shown from tables 12 to 16. As I have mentioned, that the clear identification of where extra funding is coming from is essential, simply for the fact that it needs to be reported back, and that is where or how utilisations are normally determined on how we can ways in which we can effectively carry out activities and also efficiently use the money that has been allocated to each allocation and also to the work that is required to be done by the Ministry.

HON. S. NAND.- Mr. Chairman, please note that we are not holding this particular team responsible for the Annual Report because that is quite an old Annual Report. Just for future Annual Reports, the narrative in the Annual Report and the tables shown should tally so it is easier for the Members, easier for the people reading the report to understand what is happening and all these redeployment should have been captured in the table so that the narrative of the report and the table match and it is easier to understand. So, just for future reports, please ensure that these are all included.

MR. CHAIRMAN.- I will now request the PS to continue with the questions related to Project Implementation and Outcomes from Question Nos. 7 to 10.

MR. A. TUKANA.- First of all, I would like to acknowledge those comments from the honourable Member. Those comments are noted and we will certainly improve that in future annual reports.

Question No. 7: What were the key projects undertaken by the Ministry in 2017-2018 and what were their objectives?

As you can see, Mr. Chairman and honourable Members, we have listed down five of them there and these basically were the major works that were carried out in that period. The first one was the Mosi River Flood Retention Dam No. 3 which is under the Watershed area in Nadi. Then we have the Vunibau River Bank Protection works that were done in Navua. Then we have the dredging of the Qawa River in the North as well as the dredging of the Labasa River in the North and the dredging of the Rewa River in the Central Division.

Question No. 8: How successful were these projects in meeting their stated objectives and what were the measurable outcomes or impacts?

In relation to the ones that I have listed above in Question No. 7, the implementation of the Mosi River Flood Retention Dam was completed in 2017- 2018, the 25 percent. The Vunibau River Bank Protection works were completed at 80 percent in that year and the Qawa River, Labasa River and Rewa River were all completed 100 percent. The ones that were incomplete were supposed to be rolled over to the next fiscal and financial year for 2018 – 2019.

Question No. 9: Were there any projects that faced significant delays or challenges, and how did the Ministry address those issues?

Mr. Chairman, a significant cause of delays was the tender process and I think these were happening at that time and it is still happening now. One of the things that I had mentioned yesterday at the Public Accounts Committee sitting, because we are trying to improve in all our processes, in-house first, before we can go out. At the moment we have identified so many bottlenecks and they are working on those. We are currently re-organising our organisational structure in trying to put the right people in the right places. We are trying to review the job descriptions to see that they match and they know what they are doing. So these are in addition to the tender processes and all the red tapes. These are some things that we are also working on - the in-house limited capacities that we have.

Question No. 10: How did the Ministry ensure that the projects were executed efficiently and in line with the planned timelines and budgets?

So, one of the things that was done, I think and we are also done in 2017-2018 was to align the implementation of the work programmes to the Annual Work Programmes. This is something that we are still facing now at the moment. Though we have an annual work programme, but then in some of the divisions are just doing things *ad hoc*. They should be aligning that to the work programmes and also in relation to the amount of money that they have to spend because if not, then they will think, there is no control and we cannot implement effectively, we cannot monitor and evaluate. As I have alluded to earlier, they had been doing it at that time but it needs more improvement, we need to standardise all our work processes and to have definite timelines.

Mr. Chairman, those are the responses from Question Nos. 7 to 10, and if there is any questions or queries?

MR. CHAIRMAN.- I wish to thank PS for the answers to the questions that has been raised and I have seen that the delays in the process had been one of the main factors affecting the low utilisation, but also, I think in terms of how some of the work has been affected by natural disasters and other things during the year, that the division had been facing some of the problems which had been highlighted in these questions.

I will now request PS if he can continue from Question No. 11 through, if there is no other question?

HON. S. NAND.- Mr. Chairman, I must acknowledge the Ministry for its dredging works in the Qawa River and Labasa River; thank you for doing that for the people of Vanua Levu. I see the problem still persists, the flooding is still there and the farms along the Qawa River do get affected by floods. Was the Ministry during that time working with the Ministry of Agriculture and Ministry of Forestry in identifying the root causes of those problems? I believe the agricultural practices and deforestation, et cetera were playing part in siltation of the rivers. Was the Ministry at that time working with the stakeholders? What are the programmes in place that sees avoiding siltation of our rivers so the chance of floodings and disasters can be eliminated? Is there any programme that currently the Ministry or the Department is working on?

MR. A. TUKANA.- Mr. Chairman, prior to coming here this morning, I had a discussion with the team from the Waterways and I also asked the same question. Since the Ministry of Waterways used to be with the Ministry of Agriculture and they moved to the Ministry of Environment, I asked them specifically this morning whether they had also consulted with the Ministry of Agriculture? Apparently, it did not happen that way. One of the things that also happened with the Ministry of Agriculture at that time, we have soil erosion and those works under the Land-Use Resource and Planning Division, but they were also shelved, shelved within the Ministry, they were just put on one side. Since coming back, we

have re-established that Division with their Director, so we are happy to say that they are here now to support most of these works.

In terms of the persistence of flooding in those rivers that you mentioned, honourable Member, I think the idea was for the Waterways Division, they do the scoping, carry out the new works, and the Drainage Board was supposed to be doing the maintenance. Unfortunately, they were also put aside and they did not have any budget to work after this period 2017-2018. So that could have been the cause why some of the maintenance works were not done. Now with the re-establishment, we are giving that role back to them, to do this dredging while we work on the new ones that we need to develop and establish.

MR. CHAIRMAN.- I now request the PS to continue with answering questions related to Infrastructure and Capacity Building from Question Nos. 11 to 16.

MR. A. TUKANA.-

Question No. 11: What were the major infrastructure developments or upgrades completed during the 2017-2018 year, and how have they contributed to improve to water management and flood control?

As indicated before, Qawa/Labasa River maintenance and dredging contributed to 23,657.25 cubic metres of silt being removed from the rivers. The Rewa River contributed to 10,290 cubic metres of silt removed; the Vunibau Bank Protection Works in Navua was in progress at that time with 30 percent of the work completed, and the rest was supposed to be done in the next year (2018-2019). Up to the end of 2018, 25 percent of the work was completed for the Mosi-3, Flood Mitigation Dam in the Nadi watershed or catchment area.

Question No. 12: What initiatives were undertaken to enhance the Ministry's capacity, including training for staff and the development of new technical skills?

The trainings were in terms of inhouse capacity building. There was a boat-master training for all the staff who were doing surveys out in the fields. There was also an overseas training for the staff through the Ministry of Civil Services on sustainable marine resources. Now with restructure of our Division of Waterways, we are strengthening this component. We are getting in new staff to mentor existing staff that we have, as well as to train them and build the capacity so that they can do effective work out in the field.

Question No. 13: How did the Ministry engage with local communities and stakeholders in the planning and execution of its project? How effective were the negotiations with the landowners in community projects?

The Ministry of Waterways engaged at that time in community consultations and worked closely with the Ministry of iTaukei Affairs who played the leading role in the community outreach and awareness programmes.

Question No. 14: What measures did the Ministry implement to address environmental concerns related to its projects and how effective were these measures?

The Ministry of Waterways addressed those environmental concerns through several areas or strategies:

- (1) By managing watersheds, through this the Ministry ensured that land and water resources were being used sustainably which helped maintain ecological balance and reduced the risks or potential of environmental degradation;
- (2) The activities such as dredging, desilting and flood retention dams constructions were carried out with intension to minimise the impact of flooding on the environment;
- (3) There was also proper planning and execution done for interventions to prevent adverse effects on our ecosystems;
- (4) There were measures such as coastal protection and tidal gates installation that were designed to protect coastal areas from erosion and flooding. This helped preserve coastal habitats and reduced risks of habitat loss; and
- (5) The Environment Unit that we are strengthening now at the moment within the Division of Waterways at that time focussed on accessing and mitigating the environmental impacts of various projects. This unit evaluated project proposals and monitored the implementation to ensure compliance with the environmental standards were followed. But that Unit as I mentioned is still a bit weak and we are working on strengthening them at the moment now.

Question No. 15: How did the Ministry activities in 2017-2018 align with broader environmental and sustainable goals?

They are linked to UNSDGs 3, 11, 13, 14 and 15. In addition, all the Ministries programmes were subjected to relevant legislations such as the Environment Management Act 2005, Rivers and Streams Act, State Lands Act, Drainage Act and Irrigation Act. The Broader Environment and Sustainable Goals were achieved through collaborating with relevant statutory authorities such as the Ministry of Environment and the Ministry of Lands and Mineral Resources.

Mr. Chairman, for flood mitigation, they had focussed on flood mitigation through projects like dredging and coastal protection. The Ministry has contributed to reducing flood risks which were aligned with the sustainability goals related to disaster risk reduction and climate resilience. They also did work around watershed and coastal management and the emphasis of watershed management and coastal protection supported sustainable land and water use, helping to protect natural resources and maintain ecological health.

For the environmental oversight, the role of the Environment Unit was to ensure that projects met environmental standards, that they were in line with the global sustainable goals including environmental protection and sustainable development.

Research and Policy, the Ministry's Research and Policy Unit contributed to the formulation of policies and incorporated environmental considerations aligning to the broader sustainability goals by promoting informed decision-making and evidence-based practices.

Question No. 16: What feedback or concerns did local communities have about the Ministry's projects and how were these addressed?

The feedback Mr. Chairman, as we all know, many times it comes through a phone call. So at that time, we had a helpline within the Ministry of Agriculture but unfortunately the Division of Waterways had moved to the Ministry of Environment so they obviously would had an email process or phone calls that they could receive complaints on. Normally the concerns would come in where someone would be able to address that and give a feedback to the person raising an issue or complaint.

Normally, I think what is important and what we are facing now is, when we get a feedback we see that it is addressed within a certain timeframe and we give a feedback to the party that is raising an issue or complaint. If we do not, I think one of the things we see now is it can go right up to the ministerial level and it will come down very hard on everyone down the line. So, we just need to work hard on that and that is something that we are doing now in terms of trying to receive and address these issues and complaints as best as we can.

MR. CHAIRMAN.- Thank you PS for those answers. I have one reminder, I think Question No. 15 on SDGs. A lot of ministries we have been reminding them on gender representation in our analysis and not only that we are addressing gender equality in the reports, but actually we would want to be seen doing it in terms of the physical work and the benefits that benefits the community. I would want to remind our Ministry staff that we would be thankful if future reports are also reported on the basis of gender equality.

Are there questions from the Members of the Committee? Let us continue on Performance Evaluation and Accountability from Question Nos 17 through to 25.

MR. A. TUKANA.- Mr. Chairman, I will move on now to the Performance and Evaluation and Accountability category.

Question No. 17: What mechanisms were in place for monitoring and evaluating the performance of the Ministry Projects and how were these used to assess effectiveness?

According to the team and also to the Annual Report at that time for 2017-2018, we had monitored their work based on the budget utilisation as well as their work programmes because as mentioned earlier, they really did not have that guiding document. With that, we had mentioned that they had developed their Strategic Development Plan a few years later which was in 2020. So, basically they were just using the annual work plans or programmes to monitor the work and also monitor the works that were carried out in relation to the budget utilisation. Some of this information was coming out as mentioned earlier in the quarterly meeting reports, monthly reports and also the weekly reports that the technical staff were using to guide them in the work that they were doing on a daily basis.

Question No. 18: Were there any audits or evaluations conducted on the Ministry's activities during this period, and what were the key findings and recommendations?

According to the Annual Report and information gathered, there was an audit that was carried out by the Office of the Auditor-General. However, there was no report that we could gather to be able to gauge whether there were any areas that they needed to improve on or for any lessons from that period.

Question No. 19: How did the Ministry handle any issues of accountability or transparency related to its projects and financial management?

Mr. Chairman, the projects were undertaken with the communities and were based on the needs at that time. However, they were just using the financial management guidelines and processes for the necessary processing and monitoring and evaluation of those projects at that time.

Question No. 20: Table 6 - is inconsistent in terms of the figures provided, that is, the total works. Can the Ministry explain?

Table 6 showed the actual expenditure amounts for each scheme in the Northern Division. However, I did not have all the costs totalled up, so I think that could have been the query.

Question No. 21: Can the Ministry explain on the number of policies being finalised in table 22 and were they implemented? How effective were those policies?

Mr. Chairman, this is something that we are working very hard on, I think not only for the Waterways Division now, but also for the other divisions within the Ministry of Agriculture. There are so many internal policies that we need to refine and re-document. There are so many policies that are word-by-mouth and obviously that was the same case with the Ministry of Waterways back in 2017. You can see in the annual report that there is a whole list of policies listed, but to get documentation, if they were stored in hard copies, we do not know where they have gone to now. So obviously something we are trying to do now is to digitise them, re-document them, refine them and install them digitally. That is something that we are working on at the moment, so in terms of effectiveness, I know they were just using that at that time, if monitoring and evaluation was poor, then it was quite difficult to collect information on that.

Question No. 22: The Permanent Secretary's statement on staffing.

In the fiscal year or financial year of 2017-2018 for the Ministry of Waterways, there were a total of 147 staff positions, however only 96 were filled. From that 96, 73 percent were males and 27 were females. Mr. Chairman, I guess this is something that is also backing us from that time until now, not only for this Division but also for the Ministry of Agriculture and the divisions that exist within it. We still have so many vacant positions, and at the same time we are working very hard in trying to recruit, people are also resigning. We are trying all our best to work within the Ministry of Civil Service processes and the Ministry of Finance processes, but it will take a bit of time. So this is something that will also impact the utilisation of the funds and also the implementation of the programmes.

Question No. 23: The Permanent Secretary's statement - Executive Summary. Can the Ministry elaborate on the need for Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) for the dredging of rivers?

Our responses here, Mr. Chairman, EIA is still very much part of the process, it is very important. There are two issues, we would like to see what the impact of these works will do to the environment and also the EIA will spell out the boundaries or the areas that we need to work within and not abuse or go over. But the only issue is that, we need to be working closely with the line Ministry to ensure that the processes to carry out this EIA is done in a quick or short time. I think that is the only issue for us at the moment, but we are working very closely with them and trying to see how we can speed up and shorten some of the processes that are involved to be able to get this work done.

Question No. 24: Can the Ministry please explain why there was low utilisation of capital funds during the years under review (2017-2018)?

Some of the issues that came from that time was, we just heard from Livai that they were being formed sometimes in August 2017. It was already half of the year, and most of the funds also went on operating expenditure to try and set up the office space, equipment et cetera. They also planned to procure a dredger but that did not happen. The then administration for Waterways highlighted the need to outsource dredging works, so they did not do any maintenance on the existing machines or dredger that they had at that time. The delays were also in terms of securing relevant approvals from stakeholders and the tender processes timeframe.

Question No. 25: Can the Ministry explain why there was no reporting on the preventative measures to mitigate soil erosion and silting and how did the Ministry link its work with other Ministries?

I think this is something that I had already alluded to. They were communicating or collaborating with the Department of Mineral Resources (MRD), the Department of Lands, Ministry of Environment and the Ministry of iTaukei as well as the communities in terms of the work that they were trying to implement in the field. Moving forward, an important point, the last bullet point, there is an urgent need, and we can see this evident in the way the Annual Report was put together for the year 2017-2018. But there is an urgent need going forward in terms of how we improve this reporting and the need for proper documentations so we have information that we can include in our Annual Reports. At the moment, this is the message I am also sending out to the team at the Ministry of Agriculture and Waterways now. Our Annual Reports need to go beyond the normal ones that we used to submit, it needs to go beyond to collect the other information that we need so that we can report back to this Standing Committee. With that, Mr. Chairman, those are our responses for that category.

MR. CHAIRMAN.- Thank you PS. I will now request the team if they have supplementary questions to the answers that had been given. I would want to express my deep appreciation in terms of how you have handled answering the questions that had been forwarded to your office, PS. You have made some very clear revelations and admissions to what had happened during the period in review. I say this because, an organisation that goes through transition, when some of the questions that had been posed or reports figures or data that had been reported, it would have been done without proper documentation. I thank your team for providing the answers to the questions that had been forwarded to your office. I know there had been some issues on delays in EIAs, which I think for some time had been given out to consultants who normally provide EIAs. The understanding of how EIAs would be conducted by other parties, even though everyone knows that Waterways is the best to do the work, and why requirements are there in terms of procedures that it has to be done by consultants. Who pays for consultants and how long the timeline would be to achieve the targets of the work that is normally required from EIA consultants. Thank you very much for raising those points.

I do note the lack of staff and also the difficulty in replacing staff and that is why we have a very high number of posts that were not been filled at that time. I am hopeful that this will be addressed sooner than later. I know there are procedures that need some reviews in terms of how we can address the urgency in recruiting people through vacant positions we currently have.

I would also want to remind you and your team that there have been some concern on the documents that were prepared well before you and those included our concern in documents that were presented that were not signed off by the Minister, PS and people who were supposed to be signing off documents. I raised this because they become a public document; a document that will be used in one way or the other. Sometimes it can be a document to be referred to in case of some legal actions and it might be used against those who are there but looking at the positive, it is something that we can refer to in terms of selling the work that we do, in terms of requesting for assistance, in terms of resources and it is always good that we have the documents signed so that they become valid.

Any other comments from the honourable Members.

HON. S. NAND.- Mr. Chairman, just three quick comments. Let me put a disclaimer again that this is not addressed to the current team because this is something that happened in 2017 and 2018. When the executive decision was made not to procure the dredger and to outsource the dredging works, the funds

allocated for dredger should have been redeployed to the outsource allocation. This was not done and reported directly that because we could not buy the dredger, we could not use that allocation. If the executive decision was made not to purchase then that fund should be reallocated and this was not done.

Second is, you may have some people in the Ministry who were involved in this annual report writing. Please convey our message that this report was very poorly written. It lacks substance and information and for future reports, can this be looked into.

Third one is, I just wanted to know your comments. By creating a separate Ministry of Waterways, what additional benefits has the Ministry given to the public or citizens of Fiji which the old Drainage and Irrigation and Land Use Division could not? I mean this is food for thought. When the Ministry was created, what benefit did it give to the Fijians? I see it is the continuation of old D&I and Land Use Division work but if you can enlighten me with something that additionally has benefited our people, I will be very grateful.

MR. A. TUKANA.- Mr. Chairman, through you, if I could response so you are talking about the Ministry of Waterways that was created in 2017?

HON. S. NAND.- Yes.

MR. A. TUKANA.- That is a very good and difficult question as well to answer. What we can see now with them coming back to the Ministry of Agriculture and re-establishing the Drainage Board, we can see that it will lighten their workload because the Drainage Board will go back and maintain the existing drainage schemes which will certainly lighten their work. But in terms of your question of what benefits at that time, that is quite a difficult question for me to answer. There might have been some logic behind that at that time that I am not aware of, but certainly becoming a Ministry on its own, it will take a bit of time for them to establish something that is properly running as a Ministry on its own. Very good question, quite difficult for me to answer because I would not know what the logic was at that time, but now I see more benefits with them coming back and being one of the divisions under the Ministry of Agriculture.

MR. CHAIRMAN.- This will be my final comment again on presentation of annual reports. We would really want to see Annual Reports as very informative in terms of facts and figures. We had mentioned to a few other ministries that presentation does not really need to be in a form of a magazine or a promotion type of format where you have a lot of flashy pages with just one single picture, it may not really represent the outcome of the Ministry's work. This may not be for this particular report, but it has been noted in other reports that are presented but as I have said, we would really want to see in the report references where you might refer us to other documents that are relevant and may not be in the report. The mention of where we can find operational procedures for some of the reports or even the guiding document on how you make your policies, so you can refer our scrutiny into those other documents. I know you would already be working on that with the experiences that you have gone through in the difficulties of trying to obtain all the information that will guide you and your Ministry forward, and I am appreciative of the fact that you are doing a lot of work in trying to restructure your Ministry, together with the Division of Waterways coming back and also land is also back into position.

I know there will be a lot of coordination in the work that you do and that will be well reflected in the Annual Reports that are currently due. I would also want to state here for record that we would want to really see current Annual Reports presented so that we work on current affairs and address issues that are current rather than having to look back into the old reports that may not well represent what is actually

happening now. The current reports or the very new reports will be able to address the future needs for Agriculture and Waterways.

Having said that, I again wish to sincerely thank you all for availing yourselves for this submission meeting. We thank you for your time and hope that you will avail yourself if the Committee has any further queries to make and we also wish to request the Permanent Secretary if you could also extend to your Ministry our appreciation for the work that has been done this year and we look forward for more meetings in the future.

MR. A. TUKANA.- Mr. Chairman, if I could also say a few remarks before we finish off. I take this opportunity on behalf of the Ministry of Agriculture and Waterways and our team here for inviting us to come and present. I think this is a good opportunity for us to practice and also to make improvements in future Annual Reports. As you mentioned, we totally agree that we also need to be also discussing the current Annual Reports that we are working on at the moment. So, with that being said, Mr. Chairman, honourable Members and the Secretariat, thank you very much for listening to us today.

The Committee adjourned at 11.44 a.m.

Appendix 3

Research Papers



Annual Report Summary – Standing Committee on Natural Resources

Ministry of Waterways 2017-2018 Annual Report

1.0 Introduction

This brief is provided to the Standing Committee on Natural Resources (“SC-NR” or “Committee”) as requested through its secretariat. This comparative analysis is a summary of some of the key issues in the Ministry of Waterways annual reports (“AR”) for the financial year 2017-2018. The summary is designed to assist Honourable Members of the Committee undertake their comparisons and related analysis of the Ministry’s performance as outlined in the annual report (“AR”). The narrative provided here is only intended to assist the Committee with its appraisal of the reports and does not aim to provide in-depth oversight on the Ministry’s performance.

2.0 Review of Ministry of Waterways Annual Report

Activities	Ministry of Waterways 2017-2018 Annual Report Summary
Vision	Sustainable Water Resources and Waterways Management for Fiji.
Mission	To steward and protect Fiji’s environment as a prized fortune for all Fijians and their future generations. Increase resilience to waterways related hazards through effective and sustainable management of waterways in Fiji.
Values	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Innovative - Support and encourage innovation in our approach to meet our evolving needs 2. Integrity - Honesty, and transparency in our operation 3. Equity - Impartial and just in our actions 4. Respect - Create positive relationships through mutual respect between staff and stakeholders 5. Responsive - Receptive and pro-active to requests to empower performance and achieve
Ministry Background	<p>The Ministry aims to provide all Fijians with: a high quality living environment, mitigation of socio-economic impacts of flood and coastal erosion; provisions for drainage planning; flood risk management; flood mitigation; water and; resources management. It recognizes that reducing flood risks and improving agricultural land boosts economic growth; and that effective waterways policies, regulations, and institutions are essential to guide these efforts.</p> <p>The Ministry Is focused on achieving environmental sustainability and resilience for communities.</p> <p>The Ministry stated that it is committed to promoting a more sustainable Fiji and enhance its contribution across all the Sustainable Development Goals (“SDGs”) while demonstrating leadership for:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> i. SDG 6 – Clean water and sanitation, ii. SDG 11 – Sustainable cities and communities, iii. SDG 13 – Climate Action,



	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> iv. SDG 15 – Life on Land, and v. SDG 14 – Life below water.
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Highlights – Key Performance Indicators	
Major Activities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 4 rivers planned for dredging for the 2017-2018 financial year (“FY 2017-2018”) were Sigatoka, Penang, Rewa/Waidamu River, and Labasa/Qawa River.
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Monitoring and/or Site Inspections have been completed for Sigatoka River. <p>Note: Watershed Management Plan for 2017/2018 consists of rehabilitation works for Namosi 4 Flood Retention Dam/ Weir and water resource mapping of drought- affected areas.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Northern Division: Seven (7) irrigation schemes maintained, ➤ Central Division: One irrigation scheme maintained. <p>Note: Maintenance works include drainage maintenance and infrastructure rehabilitation works.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Major work undertaken in the North: Tausa Bua, Korokadi and Vunivau Irrigation schemes. Rehabilitation of tower gate, structure, and rehabilitation of existing irrigation and drainage structures was undertaken in the northern division. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Central Division Irrigation work started in mid-June 2018 with a duration of 90 calendar days. • Under the Drainage Subsidy Programme ninety-two (92) drainage schemes were maintained. The Central Division Drainage Board maintained forty (40) schemes, the Labasa Drainage Board had twelve (12) schemes, and the Western Division Drainage Board sustained forty (40) schemes.
Human Resources	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Ministry had total staff of 147: 56 established staff, 14 established vacant, 40 unestablished staff and 37 unestablished. 30 positions were advertised. • A reviewed organisational structure saw 38 percent vacant established positions • 1 staff resignation and 1 retirement reported for FY 2017-2018 <p><i>[Note: No gender or other disaggregated data for staff in the report].</i></p>



Finance																																														
	<p>The Finance Division was allocated a total of \$19.2 million capital works. Total funds released for the year was \$14,017,997 and had an expenditure of \$7,185,457 distributed in the table below. Total utilisation was 69.7 percent.</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Table 1: Funds Utilization for Financial Year 2017-2018</p> <table border="1" style="width: 100%; border-collapse: collapse;"> <thead> <tr style="background-color: #4CAF50; color: white;"> <th>Programs</th> <th>Provision</th> <th>Released</th> <th>Commitment</th> <th>Utilization</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>Drainage & Flood Protection</td> <td>\$7,000,000</td> <td>\$6,772,384</td> <td>\$2,829,913.26</td> <td>42%</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Irrigation Services (Maintenance of irrigation schemes)</td> <td>\$1,500,000</td> <td>\$520,320</td> <td>\$271,736.20</td> <td>52%</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Purchase of Dredger</td> <td>\$3,000,000</td> <td>\$0</td> <td>\$0</td> <td>0%</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Watershed Management</td> <td>\$1,400,000</td> <td>\$402,000</td> <td>\$351,338.66</td> <td>87%</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Drainage Subsidy (Maintenance of drainage schemes)</td> <td>\$3,000,000</td> <td>\$3,000,000</td> <td>\$3,000,000</td> <td>100%</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Maintenance of Drainage (Municipal councils)</td> <td>\$1,323,798</td> <td>\$1,322,993</td> <td>\$1,322,992</td> <td>100%</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Infield Drainage for Sugarcane Farms</td> <td>\$2,000,000</td> <td>\$2,000,000</td> <td>\$2,000,000</td> <td>100%</td> </tr> <tr style="font-weight: bold;"> <td>Total</td> <td>\$19,223,798</td> <td>\$14,017,697</td> <td>\$9,775,980.12</td> <td>69.74%</td> </tr> </tbody> </table> <p><i>[Note: In the AR, there are no detailed reasons provided for the 69.7 percent utilization. A positive budget variance of 30.26% (actual spending is 30.26% less than allocation, generally requires some detailed explanations to ensure transparency and accountability)].</i></p>	Programs	Provision	Released	Commitment	Utilization	Drainage & Flood Protection	\$7,000,000	\$6,772,384	\$2,829,913.26	42%	Irrigation Services (Maintenance of irrigation schemes)	\$1,500,000	\$520,320	\$271,736.20	52%	Purchase of Dredger	\$3,000,000	\$0	\$0	0%	Watershed Management	\$1,400,000	\$402,000	\$351,338.66	87%	Drainage Subsidy (Maintenance of drainage schemes)	\$3,000,000	\$3,000,000	\$3,000,000	100%	Maintenance of Drainage (Municipal councils)	\$1,323,798	\$1,322,993	\$1,322,992	100%	Infield Drainage for Sugarcane Farms	\$2,000,000	\$2,000,000	\$2,000,000	100%	Total	\$19,223,798	\$14,017,697	\$9,775,980.12	69.74%
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Program Summary																																														
	<p>To reduce the vulnerability and risk of flooding through the provision of</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> (i) Dredging of major rivers, (ii) Desilting of creeks to allow for maximum conveyance during peak flows, (iii) Riverbank stabilisation structures to safeguard communities. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Total Amount Received \$6,772,384.00 • Work Done \$2,829,913.26 (42 percent budget utilisation) • Balance Available \$3,942,470.74 																																													
	<p>Apart from the entire financial year, the following activities were carried out in the final quarter - May 2018 to July 2018:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> i. Qawa/Labasa river maintenance dredging – 23,657.25 m3 ii. Rewa river maintenance dredging – 10,290 m3 iii. Outsource Sigatoka River Dredging 2nd phase – 186,730 m3 iv. Vunibau Bank Protection Works in Navua River was in progress up to the end of July 14% has been completed v. Up to the end of July 2018, 25% has been completed for Namosi-3, Flood Mitigation Dam in Nadi Catchment vi. Nasivi River Dredging EIA quotations have been sent to 5 Registered EIA consultants on 30/07/18 vii. Regular maintenance and repair work for dredgers, tugboats, outboards, vehicles and minor equipment has been done in all cost centers 																																													



Dredging Activities

Table 2: Dredging Activities for FY 2017-2018 are summarised below:

No	River Name	Dredging Activities
1	Qawa River Dredging	A total volume of 23,657.25m ³ dredged has been completed for Qawa River and commenced with Labasa River mouth channel per single shift.
2.	Rewa River Dredging	A total of 10,290 m ³ has been dredged at Rewa River and Nasali River confluence.
3.	Sigatoka River Dredging (2nd Phase)	<p>The Sigatoka River dredging works were awarded to China Railway First Group (CRFG) on 16/04/18.</p> <p>CRFG provided Performance Bond on 09/05/18 and mobilized to dredge site on 02/06/18.</p> <p>A total of 20 days of dredging works was stopped due to the unavailability of dumpsites at Kulukulu Island.</p> <p>Dredging works resumed after a stopped period and dredge material dump on Nayawa dumpsite as per consent given and provided by Nayawa Chief.</p> <p>At the end of July 2018, a total of 186,730m³ has been dredged which is 24.89% of the contract volume of 750,000m³.</p> <p>The total length of the dredged channel is 572.49m.</p>

Investigation & Design

The Site Investigation/Scoping is usually done based on the request from other government agencies on issues like coastal erosion, riverbank erosion, and flooding. The site investigation conducted is listed in table 3 below:

Table 3: List of Site Investigation

Division	Locality - Issue	Status/Progress
Central Division	Assemblies of God Secondary School Compound - drainage issue.	Site investigation report submitted. Proposed for 2018/2019 financial year
	Dokanaisuva Settlement – soil erosion.	Site investigation report submitted. Proposed for 2018/2019 financial year
	Naigani Island – coastal erosion.	Site investigation report submitted. Proposed for 2018/2019 financial year
	Namuka Village – Coastal flooding	Site investigation report submitted. Proposed for 2018/2019 financial year
	Ovea Village – Coastal flooding	Site investigation report submitted. Proposed for 2018/2019 financial year.
	Qoma Island – Coastal erosion.	Site investigation report submitted. Proposed for 2018/2019 financial year
	Silana Village –flooding due to poor drainage.	Site investigation report submitted. Proposed for 2018/2019 financial year
	Wainiyabia Village – flooding due to poor drainage.	Site investigation report submitted. Proposed for 2018/2019 financial year
Eastern Division	Namalata Village – drainage issue.	Detail survey was submitted. Proposed for 2018/2019 financial year
	Tabua Village – Coastal erosion.	Detail survey was submitted. Proposed for 2018/2019 financial year
	Nasau/Daviqeke Village –flooding due to poor drainage.	Detail survey was submitted. Proposed for 2018/2019 financial year
Western Division	Nabouwalu Settlement – riverbank erosion.	Site investigation report submitted. Proposed for 2018/2019 financial year
	Namatakula Village – Coastal Erosion.	Site investigation report submitted. Proposed for 2018/2019 financial year



<p>Environment & Hydrology</p>	<p>The following summarises the unit work progress on Environmental Impact Assessment from August (2017) to July (2018):</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> i. Nasivi River Dredging: Reportedly TOR and contract documents were ready and awaiting conceptual design to advertising for tender. Site inspection with TO (Surveyor) and Waisea (Ba) was carried out on the total blockage in the river. ii. Penang River Dredging: Waiver of fishing rights was waived. EIA Study Screening and EIA Processing Fees and Forms submitted to Department of Environment on 30/07/18 and was awaiting TOR. iii. Namosi 4 Flood Retention: Dam/Weir EIA Quotations was sent to 5 Registered EIA consultants on 30/07/18 with a 13 August as submission deadline. iv. Waidamu River Dredging: Screening would have been conducted on 03/08/18. Waiver of EIA was sought Department of Environment (“DOE”) for emergency dredging of Waidamu river mouth.
<p>Management of River Improvement Works</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> i. Sigatoka River Dredging: The dredging contract was awarded to China Railway 1st Company Ltd. Reported that monitoring of the development of dredging works was in progress. Dredging works remained under control; wastewater was channeled back to the river system. The next dumpsite was inspected, marked and cofferdam (bund) prepared. The first Dumpsite at Nayawa was inspected and was given 4 acres to dump dredged spoils. The Nakere dumpsite was inspected marked. Cofferdam (bund) was erected 20m from the Sigatoka Riverbank and clearing done along with the Kulukulu Bank. Inspect was done by STA Survey, Ba Survey Section and DOE. Due to some land disagreement between the landowners and the Ministry, the work at Nakere was halted. It was recommended to shift the work at Nayawa dumpsite as necessary consent was approved. Management was yet to decide to compensate for damages at the Vunavutu site. Water Authority of Fiji (“WAF”) allocated an extra land between the sewage plants to be used as dumpsite as this would similarly benefit the plant to enforce the bund around the whole sewage plant.
	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> ii. Rewa River Dredging: The Ministry reported that it was Awaiting final confirmation from Director Fisheries regarding the presence of hammered head sharks from the river mouth to bridge, and it conducted a stakeholder meeting on a Korean company who wished to dredge Rewa River Mouth. iii. Sand and Gravel Extraction Monitoring: No application was received from Lands Department. iv. Review EIA Report: The following EIA reports were reviewed: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Public Consultation for Navua River Dredging was executed by a private company on 22/09/17. • Review Committee Meeting on EIA Report for Rewa River Dredging by Chung Construction on 12/06/18 • Review Meeting Proposed Rural Road Construction Works



	<p>for Vunisei, Jioma, Vacale, Kadavu on 13/06/18</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> An Invitation to the EIA Public & Stakeholders Consultation Meeting was attended at Keyasi New Town Development in Navosa on 25/07/18. <p>v. Water Quality Monitoring (WQM): No water quality monitoring was conducted for FY 2017-2018.</p> <p>vi. Vetiver Grass: using green technologies for riverbank stabilisation and coastal protection; a meeting was attended with the Minister, Directors, Consultant (Mr. Robinson Vanoh) and supporting staff. Site visit with Consultant in Navua. Collaboration with the Ministry of Agriculture on seedlings for planting. Pursued Grace Road Company for a piece of land for pilot sites in Navua.</p> <p>vii. Overseas Training: Environment Officer attended training on “Sustainable Marine Resources: Enhancing Biodiversity in Coastal Waterways” in Singapore.</p> <p>viii. Construction: The following were carried out for the Riverbank Protection Works:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Riverbank Protection Works, Vunibau Village, Navua River Contract No. WSC. 23/20189 was awarded to Yandra Viti Investment Limited on 14/06/18 for 150 calendar days. Namosi-3 Flood Mitigation Dam/Weir Namosi River, Nadi Watershed was awarded to Multi Works Limited on 27/06/18 for 240 calendar days.
<p>Watershed Management</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The objectives of this program include (i) reducing vulnerability and risk of flooding through structural measures to regulate peak flows, (ii) reduce flood peaks through controlled release of flood water, (iii) to regulate the stream flow, river discharge and excessive run-off. A total of \$351,337.65 was committed for Watershed Management activities in the final quarter of 2017 [<i>Note: It is assumed this was for the final quarter of the FY 2017-2018</i>]. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Total Amount Received \$1,400,000; Work Done \$351,337.65 (25% utilization) -
<p>Maintenance of Irrigation Schemes</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> A total of eight (8) irrigation schemes are maintained supporting 2,292 hectares for rice cultivation. In Northern Division there were seven (7) schemes and one (1) in Navua Central. In the Central Division, the works undertaken in the Navua irrigation scheme was to support rice investor Grace Road Food Company. The total potential area was 503 hectares. Total Amount Received \$1,500,000 Work Done \$261,170 (17.5 percent utilisation) Balance Available \$1,238,830 Irrigation Schemes Central Division – Navua Irrigation Scheme: The Contract for Maintenance & Rehabilitation of Completed Irrigation Schemes, Central Division – WSC 37/2018 was awarded to Yandra Viti Investments. Work started in mid-June 2018 with a duration of 90 calendar days.



	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Accomplishment as of 31 July 2018 was 50.6 %.
Maintenance of Drainage (Non-Municipal)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The main objectives of this program include (i) maintenance and rehabilitation of existing drainage infrastructure under former drainage board, (ii) promote socioeconomic development by providing a more systematic approach, improved, efficient and effective drainage system. • Total Amount Received \$3,000,000 • Work Done \$2,375,660 (79 percent utilisation)
Drainage for In-field Farms	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The main objectives of this program include (i) providing adequate drainage systems to all farmlands within Fiji, (ii) improve the livelihood of farmers through provision of adequate in-field drainage for optimal agricultural production. • Total Amount Received \$2,000,000 • Work Done \$420,535 (21 percent utilisation)
Maintenance of Drainage – Municipal Councils	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The main objectives of this program include (i) ensure efficient, effective, and transparent grant administration of municipal administration (ii) ensure maintenance, rehabilitation and construction of proper drainage system within the municipal council boundaries. • Total budget provision of the Land Drainage and Flood Protection Programme for maintenance of drainage for municipal councils including normal maintenance, rehabilitation works, and new drains of municipal councils was approved for \$1,323,798 in FY 2017-2018. This project was vital as part of mitigation and adaptation measures to minimize the impacts of flooding for town centers around Fiji.
Research, Policy & Administration	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Please refer to the Ministry of waterways AR, page 30-31 for summaries of the Work for Research & Policy Unit.

3.0 National Budget Allocation

The Ministry was allocated **\$24.2 million** for FY 2017-2018. In FY 2018-2019, the Ministry was allocated around **\$70 million**; the increase was due to a substantial increase in capital expenditure allocation and the merging of the Ministry with Environment. In FY 2023-2024, the Ministry was relocated to Agriculture. For the current financial year, the Waterways programme under the Ministry of Agriculture and Waterways has an allocation of **\$22.1 million** with a focus on “sustainable waterways” to address flood mitigation, agriculture production and productivity and climate change mitigation.

**Sources:**

- Ministry of Waterways 2017-2018 Annual Report, Accessed on 27 August 2024;
<https://www.parliament.gov.fj/wp-content/uploads/2022/08/Ministry-of-Waterways-Annual-Report-2017%E2%80%932018.pdf>
- Ministry of Economy, Budget Estimates
 - FY 2017-2018. Available on: <https://bit.ly/4gqTX2R>
 - FY 2018-2019. Available on: <https://bit.ly/3Bb2VBc>

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Disclaimer

This Annual Report Summary was prepared to assist the Standing Committee on Natural Resources in its review of the Ministry of Waterways 2017-2018 Annual Report. This summary should not be relied on as a substitute for specific advice. Other sources and information should be consulted. Whilst every effort has been made to ensure that the information is accurate, the Parliament of the Republic of Fiji will not accept any liability for any loss or damage which may be incurred by any person acting in reliance upon the information. The Parliament of the Republic of Fiji accepts no responsibility for any references or links to, or the content of, information maintained by third parties. For further information please email: Siteri Gaunalomani on email siteri.gaunalomani@parliament.gov.fj or siteri.gaunalomani@legislature.gov.fj

Appendix 4

Photos from Submission

