



# **STANDING COMMITTEE ON FOREIGN AFFAIRS AND DEFENCE**

## **Review Report of the Biosecurity Authority of Fiji 2011-2013 Annual Report**



**PARLIAMENT OF THE REPUBLIC OF FIJI**  
Parliamentary Paper No. 27 of 2025

*March 2025*  
*Published and Printed by the Department of Legislature, Parliament House, SUVA*

## Table of Contents

<b>Acronyms</b> .....	<b>3</b>
<b>Chairperson’s Foreword</b> .....	<b>4</b>
<b>1.0 Committee Remit and Composition</b> .....	<b>7</b>
1.1 Committee Secretariat Team.....	8
<b>2.0 Background and Terms of Reference</b> .....	<b>8</b>
<b>3.0 Committee Deliberation and Analysis</b> .....	<b>9</b>
3.1 Introduction .....	9
3.2 Summary of the Biosecurity Authority, Fiji 2011-2013 Annual Report .....	9
3.3 Committee Findings .....	15
<b>4.0 Sustainable Development Goals</b> .....	<b>23</b>
4.1 Gender Equality in Parliamentary Scrutiny .....	24
<b>5.0 Conclusion</b> .....	<b>25</b>
<b>6.0 Committee Members’ Signatures</b> .....	<b>26</b>
<b>7.0 Annexure</b> .....	<b>27</b>

## Acronyms

AST	- Asian Subterranean Termites
BAF	- Biosecurity Authority of Fiji
BQA	- Bilateral Quarantine Agreement
QID	- Quarantine and Inspection Department
PEQ	- Post Entry Quarantine
GII	- Giant Invasive Iguana
BQA	- Bilateral Quarantine Agreement
KRA	- Key Result Areas
SWOT	- Strengths Weaknesses Opportunities and Threat
WTO	- World Trade Organisation
IPPC	- International Plant Protection Convention
SOPs	- Standard Operating Procedures
NCOs	- Non-Commercial Obligations
NGOs	- Non-Governmental Organisation
MCTT	- Ministry of Commerce, Trade and Tourism
MOFA	- Ministry of Foreign Affairs
GAS	- Giant African Snails
MOT	- Ministry of Tourism
FAL	- Fiji Airports Limited

## Chairperson's Foreword

The Standing Committee on Foreign Affairs and Defence (Committee) hereby submits to Parliament the Review Report of the Biosecurity Authority, Fiji 2011-2013 Annual Report.

The Biosecurity Authority of Fiji (BAF) was established under the Biosecurity Act of 2008, transitioning from the Quarantine and Inspection Department (QID) to a statutory body. The period 2011–2013 marked its formative years, during which BAF focused on protecting Fiji's biodiversity, preventing biosecurity risks, and facilitating international trade. Despite challenges with system modernization, financial reporting, and public perception, BAF implemented key projects, improved service delivery, and developed strategic partnerships locally and internationally. This report outlines BAF's achievements, financial progress, and ongoing commitment to safeguarding Fiji's economy, environment, and public health.

The report captures the various activities reported within the two (2) reporting periods from 2011 to 2013. As part of our responsibilities under Standing Orders 110, the Committee undertook site visits to BAF installations in the Central, Western, and Northern Divisions, where we engaged with local stakeholders and observed firsthand the challenges faced in these Divisions. During these visits, several key concerns were highlighted, ranging from resource limitations to operational inefficiencies and specific regional issues that need attention.

Our report thoroughly documents these concerns, providing a detailed analysis of each issue and offering actionable recommendations aimed at improving the situation. These recommendations are designed to address the identified gaps, improve service delivery, and enhance the overall effectiveness of the operations in these divisions.

I would like to extend my sincere thanks to the Biosecurity Authority of Fiji for compiling and submitting its Annual Reports for the years 2011 to 2013. I also wish to express our gratitude to the Board Chairman, Mr. Waibuta, Acting CEO Mr. Surend Pratap, and the entire BAF staff for their support in facilitating productive and insightful site visits.

I thank the members of the Standing Committee on Foreign Affairs and Defence for compiling this bipartisan report and also thank the Secretariat for their invaluable support.

On behalf of the Standing Committee on Foreign Affairs and Defence, I submit this report to  
Parliament



**Hon. Lenora Qereqeretabua**  
Chairperson

## Recommendations

- 1.0 The Committee recommends that the review of fees and charges be undertaken so as to cater for the increasing demands on BAF operations, ensuring sufficient funding to support growing responsibilities, improve service delivery, enhance biosecurity measures and to conduct job evaluation exercise. Additionally, updating the revenue and charges framework will enable BAF to remain sustainable and responsive to emerging biosecurity threads and become sustainable as commercial statutory authority (*refer to paragraph 3.3.1*).
- 2.0 The Committee recommends that BAF continues as a semi-autonomous entity in ensuring that biosecurity decisions are made without conflict of interest, balancing Fiji's economic growth with the imperative of protecting Fiji's unique biodiversity and facilitating trade to and from Fiji (*refer to paragraph 3.3.2*).
- 3.0 After careful consideration, the Committee notes that in terms of baiting, the most effective termite management strategy may involve a combination of both approaches, utilizing in-ground baiting for broader, more sustainable control and above-ground baiting for immediate containment in infested areas. Additionally, BAF to be provided further funding to continue with;
  - i. ***Tree injection or flooding*** that involves injecting or pouring large volumes of liquid insecticide into pre-drilled tree trunks, effectively targeting termites in the nest, including the reproductive and brood. This method provides a rapid solution, potentially eliminating the colony within days.
  - ii. ***Trap-and-treat baiting*** that relies on bait stations filled with insecticide-laced cellulose materials. Termites consume the bait and transfer it to the colony

The Committee further recommends that in terms of long-term management and containment plans, that surveys be conducted to determine areas of spread and addressing Asian Subterranean Termites (AST) by setting bait stations along the outer boundaries (alert and buffer zones) and gradually moving inward. This technique will drive the termites toward the central infestation area, thereby reducing their spread to wider regions. The Committee strongly recommends that financial assistance be given to the most affected households as a priority and not on a first-come-first-served basis (*refer to paragraph 3.3.3*).

- 4.0 The Committee recognizes the extremely serious consequences for Fiji, if the invasive GII becomes established. The Committee recommends that Fiji implements a national approach by convening a GII Eradication Taskforce to oversee the eradication plans. The Committee also recommends that those involved in this eradication should be provided with the proper tools and remuneration (*refer to paragraph 3.3.4*).

- 5.0 The Committee was informed that BAF has requested the Office of the Solicitor General to use the Infested Biosecurity Controlled Areas order instead of the Biosecurity Emergency Declaration and they are awaiting an outcome. The Committee recommends that given the importance of maintaining and controlling infestations that due consideration be given to this request (*refer to paragraph 3.3.5*).
- 6.0 The Committee recommends the improvement in the efficiency of legislative processes currently in place for implementation and amendments of our laws. This facilitation will greatly assist in seeing crucial legislation such as the AIS be implemented. Such implementation ensures that our maritime laws in Fiji fully address the activation and use of AIS on ships to enhance safety and compliance (*refer to paragraph 3.3.6*).
- 7.0 The Committee recommends allocating appropriate funding to BAF to enhance drug detection at ports, strengthen surveillance capabilities, improve service sustainability, and ensure better coordination with Customs and the Police for more effective enforcement (*refer to paragraph 3.3.9*).
- 8.0 It is recommended that the BAF work with relevant authorities to introduce sniffer dogs at key border points, including Nadi, to assist in detecting organic material. The Committee also recommends that Government supports BAF in procuring at least one new X-ray machine at international arrivals as breakdowns affect the flow of passengers (*refer to paragraph 3.3.10*).
- 9.0 The Committee recommends that the BAF should develop a formal, comprehensive training program for all shipping and airline crews to ensure they are fully aware of biosecurity protocols. This training should be mandatory and cover topics such as prohibited and restricted items, the risks of biosecurity breaches, and the proper procedures for declaring and inspecting goods. Regular refresher courses and updates should be provided to keep crews informed about evolving biosecurity threats and standards (*refer to paragraph 3.3.11*).
- 10.0 Given the challenge of retention, BAF should prioritize the development of retention strategies that focus on non-financial incentives, such as career development opportunities, recognition programs, professional growth, flexible working arrangements, and enhanced job security. Mentorship programs could also be introduced to help new staff integrate into the organization and develop career pathways within BAF, providing them with growth opportunities within the organization (*refer to paragraph 3.3.12*).
- 11.0 The Committee recommends that adequate funding be provided to cater for more awareness in the infested areas and other parts of Fiji. These campaigns should focus on educating the public about the risks, prevention methods, and the importance of early detection and reporting to mitigate the spread of these pests and diseases (*refer to paragraph 3.3.13*).

## 1.0 Committee Remit and Composition

Pursuant to Standing Order 109(2)(e) the Standing Committee on Foreign Affairs and Defence is mandated to look into matters related to Fiji's relations with other countries, development aid, foreign direct investment, oversight of the military, and relations with multi-lateral organizations. The members of the Standing Committee on Foreign Affairs and Defence are as follows:



**Hon. Lenora Qereqeretabua**  
**Chairperson**  
*Deputy Speaker of Parliament*  
*Assistant Minister for Foreign Affairs*



**Hon. Rinesh Sharma**  
**Deputy Chairperson**



**Hon. Ratu Isikeli Tuiwailevu**  
**Member**  
*Assistant Minister for iTaukei Affairs, Heritage and Arts*



**Hon. Penioni Ravunawa**  
**Member**  
*Assistant Minister for Health and Medical Services*



**Hon. Virendra Lal**  
**Member**

## **1.1 Committee Secretariat Team**

Supporting the Committee in its work is a group of dedicated Parliament Officers serving as the Committee Secretariat. These officers are appointed and delegated by the Secretary-General to Parliament by Standing Order 15(3)(i). The Secretariat officers are as follows:

- Mrs. Susana Korovou – Senior Committee Clerk
- Mrs. Elesi Tabuyaqona – Deputy Committee Clerk

## **2.0 Background and Terms of Reference**

In relation to Standing Order 111 (1), the Committee is committed to upholding public trust in Parliament, by ensuring that there is public participation and that all such participation is given due consideration. The Committee called for a face-to-face public submission from the Biosecurity Authority of Fiji on 13 January 2025. This session was not aired live due to technical issues however, it was later aired on the Walesi Parliament Television Channel.

A summary of the submission is provided in a later part of this report, under the heading ‘Committee’s Deliberation and Analysis’. Copies of the written submission and the verbatim from the meeting can be obtained from the online Appendices of this report, which can be accessed from the Parliament website: [www.parliament.gov.fj](http://www.parliament.gov.fj).



## **3.0 Committee Deliberation and Analysis**

### **3.1 Introduction**

The Biosecurity Authority of Fiji (BAF) was established under the Biosecurity Act of 2008, transitioning from the Quarantine and Inspection Department (QID) to a statutory body. The period 2011–2013 marked its formative years, during which BAF focused on protecting Fiji's biodiversity, preventing biosecurity risks, and facilitating international trade. Despite challenges with system modernization, financial reporting, and public perception, BAF implemented key projects, improved service delivery, and developed strategic partnerships locally and internationally. This report outlines BAF's achievements, financial progress, and ongoing commitment to safeguarding Fiji's economy, environment, and public health.

### **3.2 Summary of the Biosecurity Authority, Fiji 2011-2013 Annual Report**

This Annual Report highlights the Authority's key achievements of BAF for the period 2011-2013 with the intention to communicate its major activities, achievements and financials in a transparent and accountable manner. The Report is also compiled in compliance with the requirements of the Public Enterprise Act, 1996.

During the three-year period, BAF commenced and successfully completed work on some major developments to improve operational efficiency. These include:

- a) New Post Entry Quarantine (PEQ) facility at Legalega;
- b) Upgraded pest diagnostics and laboratory facilities;
- c) Commencement of the three-year Giant Invasive Iguana (GII) eradication project;
- d) Regional programmes – training and continued engagement;
- e) Trade and Market access – Bilateral talks for Bilateral Quarantine Agreement (BQA) – approved commodities, standardisation of protocols, new markets;
- f) Establishment of new incinerator at PEQ, Koronivia;
- g) Procurement of a boat for the Northern Division;
- h) Setup of Management Information System;
- i) Purchase of an in-house Server; and
- j) Installed x-ray machines at major entry points and enhanced monitoring systems using GPS mapping;

#### **3.2.1 Financial Performance**

Following implementation of the fees and charges for its services, the annual revenue for BAF in 2011 was approximately \$2.7 million, \$5.4 million in 2012 and \$5.5 million in 2013.

#### **3.2.2 Staff Establishment**

Within the 2011-2012 period, BAF employed 130 people. Total number staff employed in 2013 was 133 from which 123 were permanent employees, 6 were temporary staff and 4 were on attachment.

### 3.2.3 BAF-focused Strategies

BAF focused Strategies in six (6) Key Result Areas (KRA): People, Governance, Strategic, Finance, Customer and Operations. The KRA were developed after undertaking an extensive and detailed Strengths Weaknesses Opportunities and Threat (SWOT) analysis and consultations with management. These KRAs were used to plan, prioritize and measure performance. BAF managed to achieve its planned activities for the years in terms of increased monitoring and surveillance, improved border control, better trade facilitation and increased awareness.

It is worth noting that BAF, in its initial phase of establishment, encountered issues with its systems and processes. Effective changes were implemented to address these problems leading to elevated service level delivery. BAF continually strives to ensure compliance with the necessary administrative, financial and technical reporting requirements.

### 3.2.4 Role and Functions

BAF was established via the enactment of the Biosecurity Act 2008. Formerly known as Quarantine and Inspection Department (QID), BAF is one of the newly established statutory bodies under the Fijian Government's public sector reform policy. Under the Biosecurity Act 2008 BAF is mandated to:

- a) protect Fiji against the entry of regulated pests and diseases affecting animals, plants, human beings and the environment;
- b) carry out surveillance and monitoring of pests and diseases in Fiji and assess the status of regulated pests and diseases;
- c) prevent the establishment and spread of regulated pests and diseases and the release of organisms that might adversely affect animals, plants, human beings and the environment in Fiji;
- d) eradicate, contain or control the movement of regulated pests and diseases that are already present in Fiji;
- e) prevent the introduction and spread of regulated pests and diseases not already present in Fiji;
- f) facilitate the safe importation of animals and plants and their products, and related equipment and technology;
- g) facilitate the export of animals and plants and their products in accordance with the biosecurity requirements of the receiving countries; and
- h) facilitate international cooperation to prevent the spread of pests and diseases affecting plants, animals, human beings and the environment.

3.2.4.1 The Biosecurity Act 2008 is the primary legislation that provides for the regulation and control of the movement of animal and plants into, out of and within Fiji. Inherent in this primary legislation are the powers to give effect to the relevant conventions of the World Trade Organisation (WTO), International Plant Protection Convention (IPPC) and World Organisation for Animal Health (Office international des epizooties) OIE, the provision of land and buildings for quarantine purposes, and the power to make Regulations.

### 3.2.5 Organisational Highlights

#### 3.2.5.1 Sustainability

While BAF is a non-profit entity, achieving operational sustainability is essential. The organization appreciates the Fijian Government's ongoing support in its establishment, implementation of critical projects, and overall operations. Continued support from the government and stakeholders remains crucial for future success.

#### 3.2.5.2 Improving Customer Services

Since transitioning from QID, BAF has worked to improve customer service, addressing early perceptions of inadequacy. Efforts included participating in the 2012 Fiji Host Programme to enhance customer interaction and adopting Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs) for consistent service. Additionally, staff motivation and training programs, both local and international, were initiated to further improve service quality.

#### 3.2.5.3 Asset Upgrades

BAF inherited mostly obsolete and degraded assets from the previous QID. To address this, it implemented a strategy for proper maintenance, servicing, and accurate record-keeping of assets.

#### 3.2.5.4 Non-Commercial Obligations

Administering state obligations poses a challenge to sustainable commercial development. BAF carries out several Non-Commercial Obligations (NCOs) with support from the Fijian Government, including monitoring, surveillance, AST containment, the GII eradication project, and trade facilitation. BAF appreciates the government's grants, which help fund these essential activities.

#### 3.2.5.5 Strengthened Management Team/Career Progression for all

BAF acknowledges the importance of providing its management team with short-term strategic management training to effectively implement corporate and medium-term strategic plans. As department leaders, it is crucial for them to possess the skills and competence to plan, commit, and execute their responsibilities. Adequate training has been given to the management team to equip them for leading future strategies.

#### 3.2.5.6 Government Relationship

The Government has consistently supported BAF's operations and provided essential funding, enabling the completion of projects vital to Fiji's economy. BAF maintains an effective relationship with the Government, keeping it

informed about strategic operations and consulting on policy matters as needed. BAF is committed to meeting all reporting requirements under the Biosecurity Act 2008 and Public Enterprises Act 2019 and recognizes the need for enhanced awareness of its roles, responsibilities, and SOPs, which will be addressed through additional training and outreach initiatives.

#### 3.2.5.7 Alliances with Relevant Agencies

Strengthening relationships with local, regional, and international agencies is crucial for BAF to effectively deliver its services. Collaboration with stakeholders, including the Ministry of Agriculture, Department of Environment, Ministry of Health, and NGOs, is essential. BAF plans to expand these partnerships as many agencies provide financial support, expertise, and capacity-building opportunities.

#### 3.2.5.8 Trade Facilitation

Securing market access is a key focus for BAF, supporting increased exports and economic growth. BAF collaborates with the Ministry of Commerce, Trade and Tourism (MCTT) and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MOFA) to ensure trade facilitation aligns with government policies. To strengthen this, BAF enhanced its Standards team by recruiting scientists and specialized personnel and upgraded its laboratories for better risk analysis. Additionally, stakeholder engagement, industry consultations, and training programs were vital in facilitating market access.

#### 3.2.5.9 Animal and Plant Health

Safeguarding Fiji's animal and plant health status to maintain overseas markets and protect the economy and environment from the impact of exotic pests and diseases remains the focus of the organisation. The Operational Division undertook major programmes to ensure Fiji's biodiversity is protected.

#### 3.2.5.10 Monitoring and Surveillance

The objective of this programme is to facilitate safe trade resulting in the protection of Fiji's economy and its environment from the impacts of unwanted pests and diseases through the safe movement of animals, plants and their products, including people and cargo. It involves risk analysis, inspection and release of all import commodities, supervision of Biosecurity treatments for imported cargo, boarding and clearance of aircraft and vessels, general surveillance for illegal importation of regulated products and the surveillance and monitoring of exotic pests and diseases at the ports of entry.

3.2.5.10.1 BAF has been continuously striving to improve its monitoring, surveillance systems and processes. It has been actively undertaking and delivering its roles and responsibilities particularly at the borders. In doing so, BAF managed to achieve the following by the year 2013:

- a) Termite Operations – Following the conclusion of “Operation Kadivuka” in mid-2011, BAF took over the responsibility for Asian Subterranean Termites (AST) containment and risk management. In 2013, BAF received 747 incident reports from property owners in the Lautoka District, treating 644 houses and 57 trees, and monitoring 33 additional houses for AST presence. Four reports from the Nadi area were investigated, but all were confirmed to be local termites. BAF continues to raise awareness about AST through face-to-face interactions, community outreach, and media publications in both English and local languages.
- b) Interception of Giant African Snails (GAS) – Twenty-three (23) GAS were intercepted at the Suva port in 2013 alone. Follow up surveillance/ monitoring confirmed that no other snail was found.
- c) Drug Interception – In 2013, BAF officers at Nadi Airport detected powder-like substance which resulted in a major drug interception with a total street value of approximately \$9.7million.
- d) Installation of the x-ray machine in Nausori – The installation was done at the Nausori Airport in 2013. The machine is effective in elevating operational efficiency and promoting better collaboration with relevant agencies. In 2013 BAF officers alerted FRCS regarding one of the baggage screened which resulted in the interception of illegal currency of approximately FJD \$42,000.
- e) Memorandums of Understanding (MOUs) Signed:
  - Between BAF and the Maritime Safety Authority of Fiji (MSAF);
  - Between BAF and Vuda Marina; and
  - Between BAF, Fiji Airports Limited (FAL), and Fiji Revenue and Customs Service (FRCS) for the installation and operation of the new L3 X-Ray machines.
- f) Bilateral Quarantine Agreement – The program aims to maintain and enhance Fiji’s international market access. This involves meeting market entry requirements through the inspection and certification of export produce, animals, plants, and related products, overseeing pre-shipment quarantine treatments, and monitoring fruit-fly traps nationwide. Additionally, the program focuses on containing existing pests

and ensuring pest-free status during the movement of domestic vessels and aircraft.

- g) Giant Invasive Iguana (GII) Containment – As at December 2013, the GII remained contained in Qamea which is critical to the eradication programme.
- h) GPS Plotting – Plotting of GPS points of all fruit fly trap sites in Fiji were completed. This is essential so that all the trap sites are known and in the unlikely event of an incursion, an emergency response can be easily drawn up and buffer zones identified.
- i) Biosecurity Awareness – The Biosecurity Awareness program aims to educate customers, stakeholders, partners, and the public about BAF's role in Fiji's economy and general biosecurity issues. It provides a platform for public queries and emphasizes collaboration with regional organizations, government ministries, and NGOs to ensure effective service delivery and adherence to BAF's mandates.

### **3.3 Committee Findings**

#### **3.3.1 Review of Fees and Charges**

The review of revenue and charges is crucial, particularly as some services are not currently reflected in the fees and charges structure. By conducting this review, the Biosecurity Authority of Fiji (BAF) can ensure that all services provided are appropriately charged to reflect their value and the costs associated with them. The Committee recommends that this review be undertaken as soon as practicable to cater for the increasing demands on BAF operations, ensuring sufficient funding to support growing responsibilities, improve service delivery, enhance biosecurity measures and to conduct a job evaluation exercise. Additionally, updating the revenue and charges framework will enable BAF to remain sustainable and responsive to emerging biosecurity threats and become sustainable as a commercial statutory authority.

#### **3.3.2 Separation of Authorities – Ministry of Agriculture and BAF**

The Biosecurity Authority of Fiji (BAF) was established under the Biosecurity Act of December 2008. It is a Commercial Statutory Authority under the Public Enterprise Act 2019.

In January 2025, the Cabinet approved the reorganization of the Biosecurity Authority of Fiji (BAF).

1. Endorsed the delisting of the Biosecurity Authority of Fiji as a Public Enterprise from the Public Enterprises Act 2019; and
2. Agreed that the Biosecurity Authority of Fiji be reassigned as a statutory body reporting to the Minister responsible for Agriculture.

The Committee notes that while BAF management was not consulted prior to reorganization, the reason given for re-organization is to improve efficiency, intended to improve resource use, stakeholder collaboration, and outbreak response.

The Committee notes that BAF is to remain as a statutory body with the only change being the Minister responsible. BAF should continue to execute its functions independently and ensure Fiji is safe from exotic pests and diseases which can enter our borders.

The Ministry of Agriculture promotes agricultural development, while BAF acts as a regulator. This could present a conflict of interest when both the regulatory (biosecurity) and promotional (agricultural development) roles are managed by the same Ministry. Keeping a distinct independence by the decision makers in the Ministry will allow the biosecurity decisions to be impartial and not influenced by agricultural production priorities.

The Ministry of Agriculture has an essential role in promoting agriculture and maximizing output. However, these priorities may at times conflict with the stringent regulations and enforcement actions required for biosecurity. For example, promoting agricultural exports might be at odds with strict quarantine measures that protect against pest invasions.

The Committee recommends that BAF continues as a semi-autonomous entity in ensuring that biosecurity decisions are made without conflict of interest, balancing Fiji's economic growth with the imperative of protecting Fiji's unique biodiversity and facilitating trade to and from Fiji.

### 3.3.3 Termite Operations

BAF as the mandated authority under the Biosecurity Act of 2008 to manage pests and diseases that threaten agricultural production, biodiversity, and the economy. This includes controlling the AST and objectives for the program include:

1. Reduce the long-term spread and impact of termites.
2. Protect key economic sectors such as agriculture and forestry.

The Termite Taskforce is a multi-stakeholder committee consisting of the Government, private sector entities including BAF and stakeholders that focus on:

1. Immediate containment of termite outbreaks to minimize their economic impact and reduce damage to households.
2. Assist affected homeowners through provision of subsidies and grants.

BAF has been engaged with the Termite Taskforce, providing updates on termite distribution, infestation severity, and population data.

Under the Termite Control Assistance Program (TCAP), BAF has received 4,077 applications, all of which undergo verification to confirm AST infestations. To date, 775 verified applicants have received grants and have undergone baiting treatment by Flick Hygiene.

Termite baits are used as both curative and preventative measures against subterranean termites and have been shown to eliminate colonies. The active ingredients of most termite baits are Insect Growth Inhibitors (IGR) which cause mortality in the workers when they return to the nest to molt and spread through the colony through trophallaxis. Over time, the colony collapses and is presumed eliminated.



<b>Aspect</b>	<b>In-Ground Termite Bait BAF (Trelona and Sentricon)</b>	<b>Above-Ground Termite Bait Termites Taskforce (Chlorfluazuron - Exterminex)</b>
<b>Placement</b>	Installed below ground level, typically around the structure or property.	Placed directly on active termite galleries or infested surfaces.
<b>Target Area</b>	Effective for intercepting subterranean termites traveling through soil.	Targets termites already active in a specific area above ground.
<b>Installation</b>	Requires digging and placement in soil, often along a perimeter.	Directly attached to areas with visible termite activity.
<b>Effectiveness</b>	Proactive, intercepting termites before they reach the structure.	Reactive, directly impacting known infestations.
<b>Time to Impact</b>	May take longer to attract termites as it relies on foraging behaviour.	Immediate exposure to termites present in the infestation zone.
<b>Usage Environment</b>	Suitable for areas with high termite foraging activity in the soil.	Ideal for indoor or above-ground infestations in accessible locations.
<b>Durability</b>	Can withstand environmental conditions like moisture and heat for longer periods.	More prone to environmental factors like heat, humidity, and physical damage.
<b>Application Objective</b>	Preventative and long-term management.	Curative, targeting immediate infestations.

Both the strategies complement each other well, with BAF providing long-term, preventive control and Termites Taskforce offering rapid intervention for active infestations.

During the national budget announcement, the Termite Taskforce was allocated a \$3 million grant for the 2023–2024 financial year. This funding was initially targeted for homeowner rehabilitation grants, offering \$2,000 to households with a combined income of \$30,000–\$50,000 and \$5,000 to those earning less than \$30,000 annually. However, recognizing the necessity for a more comprehensive approach, the budget was later adjusted to include funding for awareness campaigns and baiting.

During the 2024–2025 financial year, the Termite Taskforce was allocated an additional \$2 million grant to further support the homeowner assistance program. This funding aimed to build on the progress made in baiting and rehabilitation.

BAF was allocated \$300,000 in the 2023–2024 financial year, supplemented by \$361,918 for the Termite Control Assistance Program (TCAP) and an additional \$345,000 in the

2024-25 financial year. Funds have been used to procure baits, recruit personnel, and cover operational costs.

After careful consideration, the Committee notes that in terms of baiting, the most effective termite management strategy may involve a combination of both approaches, utilizing in-ground baiting for broader, more sustainable control and above-ground baiting for immediate containment in infested areas. Additionally, BAF to be provided further funding to continue with:

- iii. ***Tree injection or flooding*** that involves injecting or pouring large volumes of liquid insecticide into pre-drilled tree trunks, effectively targeting termites in the nest, including the reproductive and brood. This method provides a rapid solution, potentially eliminating the colony within days.
- iv. ***Trap-and-treat baiting*** that relies on bait stations filled with insecticide-laced cellulose materials. Termites consume the bait and transfer it to the colony

The Committee further recommends that in terms of long-term management and containment plans, that surveys be conducted to determine areas of spread and addressing Asian Subterranean Termites (AST) by setting bait stations along the outer boundaries (alert and buffer zones) and gradually moving inward. This technique will drive the termites toward the central infestation area, thereby reducing their spread to wider regions. The Committee strongly recommends that financial assistance be given to the most affected households as a priority and not on first-come-first-served basis.

#### 3.3.4 Infestation of Giant Invasive Iguana (GII)

BAF is facing significant challenges with a variety of national issues. The eradication of the Giant Invasive Iguana (GII), for which there is no successful precedent is an additional challenge. BAF has no example in other affected countries to learn from and needs to commence an effective well-coordinated program immediately if it is to be successful.

GII is an invasive species in Fiji which is found island-wide on Qamea and Matagi and have been found in isolated incidents on Taveuni. The negative impacts of GII in the country exist and include the decline of native lizards, defoliation of trees and shrubs, undermining of roads and levees through burrowing activities, power outages, etc. Because the GII is encroaching on farms they are posing a danger to agricultural crops including yaqona and taro.

BAF under its Global Environment Facility (GEF-6) Project undertakes the GII eradication programme in areas where it is found. The period April – July is critical for the eradication team as this is the breeding season of the GII. As such, special focus is maintained on Qamea, Matagi and nearby islands during such period. With each passing breeding season, the GII is expanding its population at an exponential rate, and the ability to eradicate it will

commensurately become more difficult each year. BAF urgently needs the assistance of people living in the affected islands to also be on the lookout for the GII and promptly report any sightings of it.

The Committee recognizes the extremely serious consequences for Fiji, if the invasive GII becomes established. The Committee recommends that Fiji implements a national approach by convening a GII Eradication Taskforce to oversee the eradication plans. The Committee also recommends that those involved in this eradication should be provided with the proper tools and remuneration.

### 3.3.5 Emergency Declarations and Infested Biosecurity Controlled Areas Declarations

The Committee notes the domestic quarantine is a serious issue and there is a risk of spreading pests and diseases that already exists in some parts of Fiji to other regions in the country. Under the Biosecurity Promulgation 2008 the Minister responsible had declared the biosecurity emergency declaration for Asian Subterranean Termites, American Iguana, Taro Beetle, and Fruit Flies. BAF uses emergency declarations in order to reduce the spread of animal and plant pest/diseases such as AST, Brucellosis, Tuberculosis, Fruit flies, and American Foulbrood etc. The Emergency Declarations limits the movement of these pest and host materials from infested area to non-infested areas. The validity of Emergency Declarations is for a period of 6 months after which it requires further extension for another 6 months. On the other hand, Infested Biosecurity Controlled Areas are regulated by Section 70 and 71 of the Biosecurity Act 2008.

Infested Biosecurity Controlled Areas will be used for long term management and containment efforts compared to Biosecurity Emergency Declarations which is only effective for a period of 6 months.

Using Infested Biosecurity Controlled Areas Orders, movement controls will be in place until the same is revoked. Thus, the risk of movement occurring during a lapse in the Biosecurity Emergency Declarations will not be an issue.

BAF has realized that AST are present in certain parts of Viti Levu, and Labasa; Fruitfly (Kirki) present in Rotuma; and Taro Beetle present in Viti Levu, and Koro Islands thus the need to move to long term management under the *Infested Biosecurity Controlled Areas* declaration.

The Committee was informed that BAF has requested the Office of the Solicitor General to use the *Infested Biosecurity Controlled Areas* order instead of the *Biosecurity Emergency Declaration* and they are awaiting an outcome. The Committee recommends that given the importance of maintaining and controlling infestations that due consideration be given to this request.

### 3.3.6 Enforcement of the Automatic Identification System (AIS) in Fiji Waters

In Fiji, the current maritime laws (Maritime Transport Act 2013 and Ship Registration Act 2013) do not expressly address the Automated Identification System (AIS) or require its activation on ships. The Maritime (Fiji Maritime Code) Regulations 2014 briefly mention AIS but do not provide a full framework. The Maritime Safety Authority of Fiji (MSAF) indicated that a draft AIS regulation and its framework were submitted to the Ministry of Public Works, Meteorological Services, and Transport in 2022 for onward process to the Office of the Solicitor General however, they are still pending to date.

AIS is an automatic tracking system used on ships for identifying and locating ships by electronically exchanging data with other nearby ships, land-based AIS base stations, and satellites as a primary means for collision avoidance and assist in situational awareness. The International Maritime Organization and other management bodies require large ships, including many commercial fishing vessels and small crafts, to broadcast their position with AIS.

The Republic of Fiji Navy and MSAF have land-based AIS devices to track the movement of international vessels in Fiji's waters. However, the Committee was informed that tracking certain vessels becomes challenging, as ships are not required to activate their AIS, making navigation more difficult. The Committee recommends the improvement in the efficiency of legislative processes currently in place for implementation and amendments of our laws. This facilitation will greatly assist in seeing crucial legislation such as the AIS be implemented. Such implementation ensures that our maritime laws in Fiji fully address the activation and use of AIS on ships to enhance safety and compliance.

### 3.3.7 Commodities approved for Export

The Committee inquired on the 52 approved commodities for export to New Zealand, with only 22 currently being exported. It was explained that gaining market access approval for certain commodities is a lengthy process that involves coordination with importing countries. Once market access is secured, exporters can proceed with exports when ready.

### 3.3.8 New Diseases and Pests being detected

The Committee inquired about the procedure followed when a new disease or pest is detected, including the time and cost involved. The Committee also asked whether necessary facilities or upgrades are required including worker safety. It was explained that the authority has developed emergency response plans, conducts monitoring and surveillance, and has diagnostic capabilities in its laboratories. If a new pest or disease is detected, immediate action is taken to examine, contain, and eradicate appropriately. Regarding safety, personal protective equipment (PPE) is provided based on the specific pest or disease, with special measures for zoonotic diseases.

### 3.3.9 Measures in place to detect drugs

The Committee inquired about the measures in place to detect drugs at ports of entry, and it was explained that while drug detection is not a core responsibility of BAF, the authority coordinates with other border agencies. All imported items are marked for inspection, and if drugs are suspected, the matter is referred to Customs and the police. BAF also uses an x-ray machine operated by security personnel to detect potential drugs, and any suspicions are immediately handed over to Customs for further action. The Committee recommends allocating appropriate funding to BAF to enhance drug detection at ports, strengthen surveillance capabilities, improve service sustainability, and ensure better coordination with Customs and the Police for more effective enforcement.

### 3.3.10 The need for more X-Ray Machines

The Committee raised concerns about the possible lack of x-ray machines at the Nadi border in the event of a breakdown. It also noted the absence of sniffer dogs for BAF use. The canines working at Nadi airport are trained to detect only drugs. In response, BAF informed the Committee that in case of a breakdown, parts from other machines would be used in a short term while new parts were ordered.

It is recommended that the BAF work with relevant authorities to introduce sniffer dogs at key border points, including Nadi, to assist in detecting organic material. The Committee also recommends that Government supports BAF in procuring at least one new X-ray machine at international arrivals as breakdowns affect the flow of passengers.

### 3.3.11 Inspection Processes

The Committee raised concerns about the inspection process for host material including wooden furniture, fruit and root crops being transported domestically by private citizens by sea and air. In response, it was explained that BAF requires clearance for the transportation of materials, and has officers stationed at strategic locations to monitor compliance. While there is no formal training program for crew members, they are occasionally advised on biosecurity protocols, and airline crews receive orientation that includes BAF presentations. Additionally, the issue of domestic travel, where no declaration forms are required, was noted as an important concern, especially regarding potential biosecurity risks when transporting host material.

The Committee recommends that the BAF should develop a formal, comprehensive training program for all shipping and airline crews to ensure they are fully aware of biosecurity protocols. This training should be mandatory and cover topics such as prohibited and restricted items, the risks of biosecurity breaches, and the proper procedures for declaring

and inspecting goods. Regular refresher courses and updates should be provided to keep crews informed about evolving biosecurity threats and standards.

### 3.3.12 Human Resources

The Committee addressed BAF's staffing situation, with questions about staff shortages, ideal headcount, and areas where HR is lacking. In response, it was clarified that BAF has over 290 staff, operating at more than 90% capacity for ground operations, with an intake exceeding the planned number for 2024. While BAF has made efforts to address understaffing, retention remains a challenge due to limited financial resources for incentives. Additionally, it was mentioned that many staff members leave for organizations like the Fiji Revenue & Customs Service (FRCS) due to better incentives. On the topic of grants, BAF acknowledged a decrease in government grants compared to previous years, with the allocation of only \$1 million for the 2024-2025 period, and emphasized the need for an increase hence the request from BAF to raise fees and charges.

Given the challenge of retention, BAF should prioritize the development of retention strategies that focus on non-financial incentives, such as career development opportunities, recognition programs, professional growth, flexible working arrangements, and enhanced job security.

Mentorship programs could also be introduced to help new staff integrate into the organization and develop career pathways within BAF, providing them with growth opportunities within the organization.

### 3.3.13 Awareness Programmes

The Committee was informed that during the periods under review, BAF utilised allocated funds for awareness exercises about termites and GII infestations. The Committee recommends that adequate funding be provided to cater for more awareness in the infested areas and other parts of Fiji. These campaigns should focus on educating the public about the risks, prevention methods, and the importance of early detection and reporting to mitigate the spread of these pests and diseases.

## 4.0 Sustainable Development Goals

### a) **SDG 1 - No Poverty**

Biosecurity is integral to maintaining stable trade and protecting key economic sectors, including agriculture, forestry, and fisheries, from pests and diseases. By ensuring a biosecure environment, BAF helps sustain trade confidence and contributes to economic stability by preventing costly outbreaks that can affect agriculture sector and disrupt key industries. BAF continues to strengthen biosecurity surveillance and monitoring systems to prevent incursions of exotic pests and diseases that could affect Fiji's economic stability and promote confidence with international trade partners.

### b) **SDG 2 - Zero Hunger**

One of the core functions of Biosecurity is to protect Fiji from incursion of pest and disease that can affect agriculture sector and food security. Biosecurity facilitates trade of agricultural products to and from Fiji.

### c) **SDG 3 - Good Health and Well-being**

Biosecurity protects introduction and spread of Zoonotic diseases which can affect both Animal and Human Being. By controlling spread of pest and disease into and within Fiji promotes less usage of pesticides by farmers.

### d) **SDG 5 - Gender Equality**

In 2011 gender balance in BAF was 85% male to 15% female however currently we have 51% female and only 49% male staff.

### e) **SDG 8 - Decent work and Economic growth**

Provides safe working environment and equal opportunities for everyone.

### f) **SDG 13 - Climate Action**

Extreme weather events will affect food security, the adoptability and survival/dispersal of pest disease will immensely affect biodiversity.

### g) **SDG 17 - Partnerships for the Goals**

BAF is instrumental in meeting international biosecurity standards, directly supporting Fiji's trade agreements and relationships. By collaborating with regional and international bodies, facilitates market access for Fijian agricultural produce. BAF continues to strengthen partnerships with international organizations such as the World Trade Organization (WTO), Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO), International Plant Protection Conventions (IPPC) and regional bodies like the Pacific Plant Protection Organization (PPPO) to ensure compliance with global and regional biosecurity standards, thereby fostering international and regional cooperation.

#### **4.1 Gender Equality in Parliamentary Scrutiny**

The Parliament of Fiji Standing Orders 110 (2) requires the Committee to give full consideration to the principle of gender equality to ensure all matters are considered about the impact and benefit on both men and women. The Biosecurity Authority of Fiji in 2011 reported on having 60 percent male to 40 percent female however, currently it has 51 percent female and only 49 percent male staff. The Committee noted that for the years 2012 and 2013, 12 percent of women held managerial positions and suggests that in future reports, an indication of gender information be provided. In future reports, BAF should ensure that gender-disaggregated data is provided, including detailed information about the gender composition of staff across various levels, including managerial positions. This data should also reflect trends over time, highlighting any progress or gaps in achieving gender parity.

The reports should also include information on recruitment practices, promotions, training, and retention rates by gender, to offer a clearer picture of the organization's commitment to gender equality.



## **5.0 Conclusion**

The Standing Committee on Foreign Affairs and Defence has conducted a thorough review of the Biosecurity Authority of Fiji 2011-2013 Annual Report. Following the site visits undertaken and key concerns raised, the Committee report is bi-partisan and has eleven (11) recommendations for consideration. The Committee is grateful and commends the Biosecurity Authority of Fiji for their invaluable contribution.

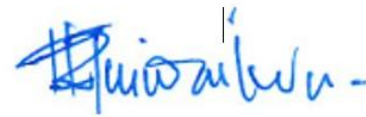
## 6.0 Committee Members' Signatures



Hon. Lenora Qereqeretabua  
**Chairperson**



Hon. Rinesh Sharma  
**Deputy Chairperson**



Hon. Ratu Isikeli Tuiwailevu  
**Member**



Hon. Penioni Ravunawa  
**Member**



Hon. Virendra Lal  
**Member**

## **7.0 Annexure**

### **Published evidence**

---

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