



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

## **Review Report of the Fiji National Sports Commission**

**August 2022 - July 2023 Annual Report**



**PARLIAMENT OF THE REPUBLIC OF FIJI**  
Parliamentary Paper No. 26 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>
2.1 Procedure and Program .....	8
<b>3.0 Committee Deliberation and Analysis</b> .....	<b>9</b>
3.1 Introduction .....	9
3.2 Summary of the FNSC August 2022 – July 2023 Annual Report .....	9
3.3 Committee Findings .....	14
<b>4.0 Sustainable Development Goals</b> .....	<b>20</b>
4.1 Gender Equality in Parliamentary Scrutiny .....	20
<b>5.0 Conclusion</b> .....	<b>21</b>
<b>6.0 Committee Members’ Signatures</b> .....	<b>22</b>
<b>7.0 Annexure</b> .....	<b>23</b>

## Acronyms

FNSC	- Fiji National Sports Commission
KPI	- Key Performance Indicators
NSO	- National Sporting Organisation
NSODs	- National Sporting Organisations for People with Disability
FTRA	- Fiji Teachers Registration Authority
SOL	- Solomon Islands
AGM	- Annual General Meeting
USD	- United States Dollar
WADA	- World Anti-Doping Agency
FASANOC	- Fiji Association of Sports and National Olympic Committee
FRU	- Fiji Rugby Union
TAFISA	- The Association For International Sport for All
FNPF	- Fiji National Provident Fund

## **Chairperson's Foreword**

The Standing Committee on Foreign Affairs and Defence (Committee) hereby submits to Parliament the Review Report of the Fiji National Sports Commission August 2022 – July 2023 Annual Report.

The Committee was referred the Fiji National Sports Commission August 2022 - July 2023 Annual Report on 02 December 2024. The referral of the Annual Report was done in accordance with SO 38(2), whereby the Committee was assigned to investigate the contents of the report and provide a report to Parliament at a future Sitting. This report is outside the usual mandate of the Committee, but the referral was made to help ease the workload of the other Standing Committees.

The Fiji National Sports Commission (FNSC) is the Fiji Government agency responsible for supporting and investing in sports. It was established in 2013 under the Fiji National Sports Commission Decree 5 of 2013 (FNSC Act) and operates in a corporate body governed by a Board of Commissioners appointed by the Minister for Sports.

The FNSC annual report analyses the Objectives and Functions as set out in the Sports Commission Act looking at KPI's and achievements. None of these could have been achieved without the assistance and partnership with their National Sports Organisations, the Government, their international sports partners and their sporting communities throughout Fiji.

The FNSC would continue to contribute over the next ten (10) years to the growth and development of sports, the success of the athletes, and to the health of the nation, but they cannot do this alone. Sports is all about teamwork and the FNSC wishes to include all those who have partnered with them in the last ten (10) years, including, the NSO's, Government, their international partners and the community.

The Committee has twelve (12) recommendations for consideration. On that note, I wish to thank the Fiji National Sports Commission (FNSC) for compiling and submitting its Annual Report from August 2022 - July 2023.

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. I also would like to acknowledge the immense participation and contributions of Hon. Joseph Nand and Hon. Alipate Tuicolo who both sat as alternate members during the deliberation of this review report.

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



**Hon. Lenora Qereqeretabua**  
**Chairperson**

## Recommendations

- 1.0 The Committee recommends that the Commission be adequately funded in order to be the independent driver of sports in Fiji by looking at the development of sports and assisting in the funding of its National Sporting Organisations (NSOs) (*refer to paragraph 3.3.1*).
- 2.0 The Committee is of the view that the Commission closely collaborates with the Fiji Sports Council to identify sports facilities needing upgrades and maintenance and there should be considerable efforts in getting assistance from donor partners for the provision of specialized sports equipment (*refer to paragraph 3.3.2*).
- 3.0 The Committee was briefed that one of the areas that remains a significant challenge is the ability to effectively reach remote and maritime areas to promote sports participation. The Committee feels that the Commission should also consider using its social media platforms to promote sports participation and awareness. Increasing FNCS efforts to engage communities and foster a culture of sports participation across all demographics. Encouraging all Community age groups to actively participate in regular Wellness programs to work towards a healthier nation (*refer to paragraph 3.3.3*).
- 4.0 The Committee urges the Ministry of Youth and Sports to collaborate closely with the Fiji National Sports Commission, Fiji Sports Council and Fiji Association of Sports and National Olympic Committee (FASANOC) in making significant strides towards settling the stage for Fijian sports success (*refer to paragraph 3.3.4*).
- 5.0 The Committee suggests that the Commission collaborates with Community Police, the Ministry of Health and Medical Services and the Ministry of Education on how physical sports could be re-introduced in our society (*refer to paragraph 3.3.5*).
- 6.0 The Committee recommends that in order to retain these professional and talented athletes, Fiji has to grow in its domestic successes by providing a platform setup for athletes and sports people to compete professionally and at the same time provide rewards (*refer to paragraph 3.3.7*).
- 7.0 The Committee recommends that the Ministry of Youth and Sports does not interfere in the operations of the Commission (*refer to paragraph 3.3.8*).
- 8.0 The Committee suggests that the Ministry of Education reconsiders the importance of teacher colleges to start training PE teachers. A key recommendation to consider is reinstating regular sports periods, similar to the past when afternoons were dedicated to sports and physical activity. This approach has successfully promoted better health and encourage youth to return to school by motivating them with the opportunity to participate in sports. Since Fiji is a sporting nation, the Committee recommends that Fiji look at introducing PE training as a core subject at Primary and Secondary schools (*refer to paragraph 3.3.10*).

- 9.0 The Committee recommends that Fiji establish its own drug testing laboratory for sports locally. The Committee recommends the enforcement of random drug testing be more consistent and stringent (*refer to paragraph 3.3.11*).
- 10.0 The Committee supports the Commission's efforts in addressing abuse and sexual harassment in the workplace and further recommends policies be strengthened to address such issues (*refer to paragraph 3.3.14*).
- 11.0 The Committee recommends that educational and technical support be provided to local coaches in order to attain international accreditation (*refer to paragraph 3.3.15*).
- 12.0 The Committee strongly recommends that life skills such as financial literacy and leadership be integrated into youth development programs for both amateur and professional sports (*refer to paragraph 3.3.16*).

## 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

The Standing Committee on Foreign Affairs and Defence (the Committee), was referred the Fiji National Sports Commission August 2022 - July 2023 Annual Report on 02 December 2024. The referral of the Annual Report was done in accordance with SO 38(2), whereby the Committee was assigned to investigate the contents of the report and provide a report to Parliament at a future Sitting. This report is outside the usual mandate of the Committee, but the referral was made to help ease the workload of the other Standing Committees.

### 2.1 Procedure and Program

#### I. Public Submission (written submission and oral submission)

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 had called for an oral public submission from the Fiji National Sports Commission on Wednesday 15<sup>th</sup> January 2025. The Committee ensured that its meetings were open to the public and media, except during such deliberations and discussions to develop and finalise the Committee's report.

A summary of the submission is provided in a later part of this report, under the heading 'Committee's Deliberation and Analysis' and copies of the written submission 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).

#### II. Oral and Written Evidence Received

The Committee received oral and written submission from the Fiji National Sports Commission as listed in the *Appendices*.



## 3.0 Committee Deliberation and Analysis

### 3.1 Introduction

The Fiji National Sports Commission (FNSC) is the Fiji Government agency responsible for supporting and investing in sports. It was established in 2013 under the Fiji National Sports Commission Decree 5 of 2013 (FNSC Act) and operates in a corporate body governed by a Board of Commissioners appointed by the Minister for Sports.

The FNSC annual report analyses the Objectives and Functions as set out in the Sports Commission Act looking at KPI's and achievements, none of which could have been achieved without the assistance and partnership with their National Sports Organisations, the Government, their international sports partners and their sporting community throughout Fiji.

The FNSC works with the sport sector, other government partners, businesses, and the wider community, to champion the role of sport in engaging every Fijian, regardless of age, race, gender, cultural background, or physical ability.

The Fiji National Sports Commission Staff Locations lies in five (5) divisions: Central Rural Division, Eastern Division (Maritime Islands), Northern Division, Western Division and the Central Urban Division.

The FNSC would continue to contribute over the next ten (10) years to the growth and development of sports, the success of the athletes, and to the health of the nation, but they cannot do this alone.

### 3.2 Summary of the FNSC August 2022 – July 2023 Annual Report

The goal of FNSC is to get more people involved in physical activities, support the growth of sports, and help National Sports Organizations (NSOs) succeed internationally. This includes creating a strong sports sector, providing financial support, and running FNSC effectively.

To achieve this goal, the FNSC strategy for 2019-2024 was centered around 4 strategic pillars:

- 1) **Healthy Nation:** Promote a Healthy Nation by Providing Mass Sports recreational activities and implemented targeted campaigns.
- 2) **Sporting Nation:** To maximize access to sports, recreation and education in every educational institution.
- 3) **Enabling Environment:** To ensure that Fijian Sports and Recreation benefit from strategic National and International Relations.
- 4) **Enriching Nation:** To use sports as a medium to attract tourists to Fiji and Mechanism for achieving economic development.

The FNSC supports NSOs and National Sporting Organisations for People with Disability (NSODs) to increase sports participation and industry growth, aiming for Fijian athletes' success in global events like the Olympics, Paralympics, and Commonwealth Games. By

July 2024, it will establish a strategic vision for the next decade, focusing on the 2027 Pacific Games, a bid for the 2031 Pacific Games, and participation in the 2032 Brisbane Olympics and Paralympics.

### 3.2.1 Organizational Structure

In 2022–2023, the FNCS undertook organisational functional capabilities to help them shape the way they deliver their strategic vision. Their new structure took steps towards creating centers of excellence, enhancing collaboration and minimize duplication across the business.

### 3.2.2 Sports Grants

The Fiji National Sports Commission Annual Report for August 2022–July 2023 outlines the following types of grants:

**1) International Coach Grant 2024:**

This is allocated for the provision and full funding of a recognized and Internationally Accredited Coach for the development and training of the sports, national team, or squad. A sum of \$1,227,492 was allocated for this provision.

**2) Overseas Tour Grant:**

This grant is to assist National Sporting Organisations (NSOs) in sending athletes or teams to international competitions for ranking and qualification purposes. A sum of \$1,912,553 was allocated for this provision.

**3) Hosting International Events Grant:**

Assists the NSOs in the preparation of hosting of International Sports competitions in Fiji. It is in the interest of the nation that their preparations are planned and presented and provides the economic benefits for such programs. This grant is not for local tournaments. A sum of \$2,002,030 was allocated for this provision.

**4) Short-Term Local and International Expert Grant:**

Short Term Experts Grants support National Sporting Organisations (NSOs) by funding overseas coaching assistance, trainers, technical officials, and administrators for up to 2 months. These experts help local athletes, coaches, and teams preparing for regional, international, and world championships. It is more cost-effective to bring experts to Fiji for development programs rather than sending people overseas. Additionally, funding is provided to employ NSO local development officers, trained either locally or overseas, to run local development programs. A sum of \$198,290 was allocated for this provision.

**5) Disability Grant:**

Supports sports programs and development for athletes with disabilities, including hosting tournaments and engaging short-term experts for training. A sum of \$65,035 was allocated for this provision.

**6) Sports Scholarship Grant:**

Allocated for short-term scholarships for elite athletes and sports personnel to receive advanced training and coaching opportunities abroad. A sum of \$72,000 was allocated for this provision.

### 3.2.3 Sports Development

#### 3.2.3.1 Sports Outreach Program

a. Sports In Community Camps

2–5 day sports development programs are conducted in rural areas, villages, and communities, in partnership with National Sporting Organisations (NSOs). It offers participants of various age groups the opportunity to try different sports. The program also serves as a talent identification platform, helping to discover and develop potential athletes for NSO pathways.

b. Train the Trainers Program

The Train the Trainer Program is a 2–5 day follow-up to the Sports in Community Camp, aimed at accrediting and certifying participants as community coaches, referees, umpires, technical officials, sports administrators, and strength and conditioning coaches. It targets individuals identified during the camp, supporting the development of community sports associations through training and upskilling facilitated by National Sports Organizations (NSOs).

c. Educate the Educators Program

The Educate the Educator program is a 2–3 day sports development initiative aimed at upskilling school teachers in identified sports. It seeks to enhance coaching and officiating skills among teachers, enabling them to effectively coach and manage school-level sports teams.

d. Kids in Community Sport Program

This 2–3 hour sports program, run in primary schools and communities for children aged 6 to 14, promotes early participation in sports. The program is delivered by FNSC officers or NSO resource personnel with FTRA certification to deliver programs in schools.

e. Wellness Program

This is a 1-2 hour program aiming to promote fitness and healthy style with regular physical activities in the communities, business house, work place settings and sedentary setting across the country. This is targeted for mass participation and for all age groups and cultural backgrounds.

f. Inclusive Sports Program

This program supports marginalized groups, including individuals with disabilities, the elderly, orphans, and students in special schools or institutions, promoting inclusivity and participation.

g. Talent Identification Program

Grassroots Community Sports Development members, identified by National Sports Organizations, were selected for National Teams for the 2023 SOL Pacific Games.

3.2.4 Our Community Sports Associations

The Fiji National Sports Commission, under the Act 2013, aims to coordinate, direct, and support sports development in Fiji. By establishing community sports associations and committees in rural and urban areas, sports sustainability is ensured. These structures align with existing community frameworks and utilize the tikina-based system in provinces, where village and community issues are discussed and endorsed, promoting a multi-sport approach to community-driven sports.



Table 1: Shows the tikina based structure in the provinces

The Urban Structures do not have the social structural base found in rural communities but are divided in zones with a network structure that facilitates the easy mobilization of sports and physical activities.

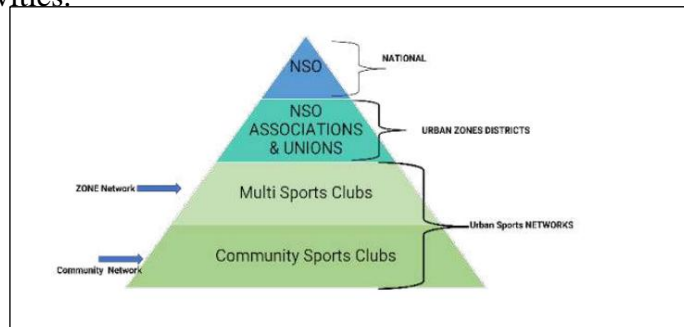


Table 2: Shows the Urban Structure

The Community Sports Associations and Urban Zone Networks are outcomes of the Train the Trainer Program. After interim executives are selected, they manage the associations and are tasked with completing a three-month workplace assessment to demonstrate the competencies of trained coaches, referees, and sports administrators. During this time, executives visit communities to promote the creation of multi-sport clubs. Ongoing follow-ups and retraining ensure these associations become autonomous and recognized as leaders in community sports and physical activities.

At the 2022 Community Sports Association Forum, a toolkit for good governance was introduced to ensure the functionality of Community Sports Associations. The toolkit included requirements such as adopting a constitution, keeping AGM records, obtaining a

Tax Identification number, setting up a bank account, registering with the Fiji National Sports Commission, and creating an Annual Calendar of Events.

In addition to this, a model structure was established to clearly define the demarcation of reporting and how the community sports association would be integrated into a sustainable structure for sports and physical activities in both the urban and rural communities.

### **3.3 Committee Findings**

#### **3.3.1 Resource Limitations**

The Committee was informed that budget constraints for FNCS restricts the expansion of Sports development programs. The current funding for Sports Development and staffing restrictions limit the number of programs that are conducted annually. The Commission operates all of their development programs with an annual budget of \$900,000 in the 2022-2023 budgetary allocation. As highlighted, a portion of the government funding is allocated to cater for salaries of development partners and training officers for around twenty-four (24) sports.

The Commission works within communities, they ensure that they contribute to the local economy by paying for accommodation and meals and compensating everyone involved in their programs. For instance, the Commission covers the costs for villagers travelling to the central area. However, the funding they have for these efforts is far from adequate.

The Committee recommends that the Commission be adequately funded in order to be the independent driver of sports in Fiji by looking at the development of sports and assisting in the funding of its National Sporting Organisations (NSO).

#### **3.3.2 Infrastructure Needs**

Many sports facilities require upgrades and maintenance to meet standards for community sports development. These need good toilets and bathroom and seating facilities for the general public to ensure a safe environment for everyone, especially the children and girls. There is a growing need for increased funding to provide the specialised sports equipment required to grow our sports in Fiji.

The Committee is of the view that the Commission closely collaborates with the Fiji Sports Council to identify sports facilities needing upgrades and maintenance and there are considerable efforts in getting assistance from donor partners for the provision of specialized sports equipment.

#### **3.3.3 Outreach and Engagement**

The Committee was briefed that one of the areas that remains a significant challenge is the ability to effectively reach remote and maritime areas to promote sports participation. The Committee feels that the Commission should also consider using its social media platforms to promote sports participation and awareness.

#### **3.3.4 Country's Expectations for National Sport**

Ideally, the Commission would like the main government funding arm for National Sports Organisations to meet every financial request they make. However, this is simply not feasible. As outlined in their report, while allocations were made for all national sports organisations, the total requests from these sporting bodies exceeded \$50 million. Meeting such demands is an impossibility given the current resources.

The Committee urges the Ministry of Youth and Sports to collaborate closely with the Fiji National Sports Commission, Fiji Sports Council and Fiji Association of Sports and National

Olympic Committee (FASANOC) in making significant strides towards setting the stage for Fijian sports success.

### **3.3.5 Impact of Technology on Physical Activity**

As technology becomes more integrated into daily life, the Commission is already noticing a decline in physical activity among children, who are relying more on their phones for entertainment and engagement. This shift poses a long-term challenge for fostering active lifestyles and maintaining participation in sports. This trend is increasingly being recognized worldwide as a significant issue for the future.

The Committee suggests that the Commission collaborates with Community Police, the Ministry of Health and Medical Services and the Ministry of Education on how physical sports could be re-introduced in our society.

### **3.3.6 Youth Migration from Rural to Urban Areas**

This movement disrupts the continuity of sports programs in rural communities. For instance, the Commission may establish an association in a community, '*tikina*', or on an island, only to find that when they return, most of the population has relocated to urban centers like Suva.

The Commission is also noticing that many island and rural communities are now forming sports associations in urban areas such as Suva and Nadi. To address this, they are working with these groups to ensure inclusivity, particularly by involving women in their programs.

In response to this shifting population, the Commission has set up a new division called the 'Central Urban Division' to complement their existing 'Central Rural Division'. This distinction allows them to better cater to urban-specific needs and ensure that their programs remain relevant and impactful despite these demographic changes.

### **3.3.7 Growth of Professionalised Global Sports**

As sports have become more professionalised globally, the Commission is losing many of its talented athletes to opportunities overseas at an accelerating pace. While this reflects the high caliber of talent that Fiji produces, it also presents challenges for sustaining local programs and maintaining competitive teams within the country. Balancing the development of local sports while supporting athletes pursuing professional opportunities abroad is an ongoing concern.

The Committee recommends that in order to retain these professional and talented athletes, Fiji has to grow in its domestic successes by providing a platform setup for athletes and sports people to compete professionally and at the same time provide rewards.

### **3.3.8 Government's Evolving Vision for Sports**

Another challenge the Commission is currently facing is understanding the government's evolving vision for sports and what it aims to achieve through sports initiatives. The Sports Commission was born out of an extensive consultation process initiated by the Rabuka Government in 1995, involving sports organisations and communities. Although it took until 2013 to be fully established, it was a significant milestone, and the Commission is proud to remain associated with its mission.

However, the Commission now senses that there may be a shift in approach or a potential reversion to earlier practices, which raises questions about the rationale behind its direction. This uncertainty presents a challenge, as the Commission aims to align their efforts with government priorities while continuing to drive forward progress in sports. To address this, the Commission is engaging directly with the Minister for Youth and Sports to discuss concerns and seek clarity on the government's objectives in moving forward.

The Committee recommends that the Ministry of Youth and Sports does not interfere in the operations of the Commission.

### **3.3.9 Drug-related Issues**

The Committee understands that drug-related issues are a pressing concern, and the Commission is addressing it on multiple levels and collaborating wherever possible to mitigate its impact. The Commission extends their gratitude to the Parliament of the Republic of Fiji for passing the 'Drug-Free Sports Act, which has preserved Fiji's reputation on the global stage. The Commission is proud to have been involved in the extensive work leading to its implementation, including contributions through standing committees and submissions.

To tackle this issue effectively, the Commission has established a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with community police and actively collaborates with them on various initiatives. Despite these efforts, the challenge remains significant, and like many others, it is compounded by the overarching issue of limited funding.

### **3.3.10 Lack of Physical Education instructors**

The shortage of qualified physical education (PE) teachers is a significant issue in Fiji. Primary school teachers are generalists and lack specialisation in PE, unlike in other countries where PE is prioritised. In Secondary schools, specialist PE teacher training at Nasinu Teachers College has ceased. The Sports Commission focuses on promoting physical activity in schools and assisting with coaching and officiating accreditation. However, the responsibility for specialised PE teacher training lies with the Ministry of Education. The Sports Commission supports schools by helping train teachers to become effective coaches, while students have opportunities to participate in national competitions like the Coca-Cola Games and Deans competitions.

It is essential to ensure that PE is integrated into the general teacher education curriculum, even for those not pursuing a PE specialization. Teachers should be introduced to the importance of physical activity and how to deliver basic PE lessons effectively as part of their foundational training. This would provide all primary and secondary school teachers with a baseline knowledge of how to incorporate physical education into their teaching practices. Since Fiji is a sporting nation, the Committee recommends that Fiji look at introducing PE training as a core subject at Primary and Secondary schools.

### **3.3.11 Medical Screening and Clearance**

The Committee sought details about the medical screening and clearance processes for boxers before they compete. The Commission clarified that amateur boxing falls under the National Sports Organisation, funded by the Sports Commission. In contrast, professional boxing is overseen by the independently governed Boxing Commission, which is not funded



by the Sports Commission, and its board is appointed by the Minister. While information about amateur boxing is available, details about professional boxing cannot be provided.

The drug testing is mandatory at every international event hosted in Fiji, following international regulations. While no major drug-related issues have emerged, there have been instances of marijuana use in Fiji Football Association matches, leading to suspensions. Each drug test costs around \$500 USD and must be processed in locations like Melbourne, Guam, or Hawaii, making the testing process expensive.

Previously, drug testing was funded through the Oceania drug testing regime. However, following Fiji's rise to a Category 2 nation after Olympic success, Fiji must now fund its own drug-free sports operation. The passing of the Anti-Doping Act was critical to avoid exclusion from international events, as warned by WADA (World Anti-Doping Agency).

The Fiji Association of Sports and National Olympic Committee (FASANOC) oversees both a Medical Commission and a Drug-Free Sports Commission. The government has allocated funds for establishing the Drug-Free Sports operation, and the announcement of the board members for the new commission by the Minister is awaited. Once appointed, the funds will be transferred from the Sports Commission.

The Committee recommends that Fiji establish its own drug testing laboratory for sports locally. The Committee recommends the enforcement of random drug testing be more consistent and stringent.

### 3.3.12 **Youth Representation**

The Committee inquired whether the Fiji Rugby Union (FRU) management board includes any youth rugby players. The Commission stated that in Fiji, youth is defined as anyone under 35. Although there are no specific youth representatives on the FRU management board, there are youth members within the management team. The board includes positions for a players' representative and a women's representative, with two members required to be women. Once the players' association is established, it will have the opportunity to appoint a representative to the board, but the association has not been formed yet.

### 3.3.13 **Financial Reporting**

Clarification was sought on whether the National Sporting Organizations (NSOs) have their accounts audited when submitting their funding request for the next fiscal year. The Commission explained that NSOs are mandated to have their accounts audited if their income exceeds \$100,000. For NSOs with incomes below this threshold, a qualified accountant can verify and prepare their accounts.

The Commission highlighted that the financial statements are up to date, with audited reports for 2022 and 2023 completed. The audit for 2023-2024 concluded in 2023, and they are currently working on the annual report. The Commission adheres to international financial reporting standards and has received very few management letters in the past decade, with none in the last eight years. They prioritize accountability and transparency in the use of public funds, ensuring all acquittals are up to date when audits begin each year. The

Commission expressed gratitude for the government's funding and assured that they will maintain high standards of financial management.

### 3.3.14 **Global Sports Organisation**

The Commission is actively engaged with 'The Association For International Sport for All' (TAFISA), which might not be widely known. The Commission is collaborating with TAFISA to secure additional funding for training women and children. In 2023, the Commission's development officers received international training in specialised coaching programs.

TAFISA, with support from NIKE, organized a program focusing on the safety, coaching, and empowerment of women and girls in sports. In July of 2023, two sports development officials participated in this initiative, training nearly 2,000 women from diverse backgrounds. The program highlighted challenges women face in sports, such as safeguarding issues, and included participants from pre-teens to adulthood.

The Commission worked closely with the Ministry of Women to create mechanisms for reporting abuse and addressing health challenges, especially in male-dominated sports. The program fostered connections with global development officers, particularly from the Caribbean and Africa. The final report was submitted earlier this week, and the Commission is awaiting approval for funding to continue the program this year.

The Commission emphasized the urgent need for improved safeguarding in sports, particularly due to incidents involving coaches and young female athletes in Fiji. There are ongoing court cases related to these issues. The Commission referenced the tragic deaths of young rugby players during training in 2023. Because of the sensitive nature of these cases, details are not publicly shared unless they go to court. The Commission expressed concern about these incidents and noted that international sporting bodies are considering changes to sports regulations to prevent such occurrences. The Commission urges the Parliament to support efforts to address these safeguarding issues.

The Committee supports the Commission's efforts in addressing abuse and sexual harassment in the workplace and further recommends policies be strengthened to address such issues.

### 3.3.15 **Procedure for Hiring International Coaches**

The international coaching grant, established before the Rio Olympics, has been crucial to Fiji's success, including their gold medal victory. National Sports Organizations can apply for internationally qualified coaches, including Fijians with international credentials.

The recruitment process involves:

- i. Advertising the position globally;
- ii. Verifying qualifications through International bodies;
- iii. Ensuring compliance with immigration requirements, including obtaining work permits; and
- iv. Contracts stipulating that international coaches must have local understudies and reside in Fiji.

Challenges include immigration approval issues for coaches, and the Commission closely monitors contracts. Approximately \$2 million is allocated annually for international coaches across various sports such as rugby, sailing, soccer, and more.

The Committee recommends that educational and technical support be provided to local coaches in order to attain international accreditation.

### 3.3.16 **Training Programs Provided**

The Sports Commission offers training programs for rugby players, particularly younger ones, that include building capacity in financial literacy, management, and leadership skills, alongside rugby skills. These programs aim to help players sustain and manage their earnings as they participate in regional and international competitions.

The Commission clarified that Fiji Rugby, not the Commission, handles financial literacy and training for rugby players, especially younger ones. Fiji Rugby provides financial literacy training, and many international players are encouraged to pursue university degrees. However, life skills such as financial management and leadership are not yet fully integrated into youth development programs. While national teams, particularly in rugby, receive guidance from bankers and financial advisors, there is a gap in the education system. For example, when Sevens players began receiving contracts instead of allowances, many were unfamiliar with the Fiji National Provident Fund (FNPF) and taxes, underscoring the need for better education on these topics.

The Committee strongly recommends that life skills such as financial literacy and leadership be integrated into youth development programs for both amateur and professional sports.

### 3.3.17 **Future Prospects for the FNSC**

The outlook for the FNSC is promising, with plans to enhance the sports landscape in Fiji. Future initiatives will focus on:

- i. **Investment in Infrastructure:** Prioritizing the development and upgrading of community sports facilities.
- ii. **Enhanced Training Programs:** Expanding coaching and athlete development to ensure more competitiveness on the global stage.
- iii. **Community Engagement:** Increasing FNSC efforts to engage communities and foster a culture of sports participation across all demographics. Encouraging all Community age groups to actively participate in regular Wellness programs to work towards a healthier nation.
- iv. **Volunteerism:** Expanding and encouraging volunteerism through the sports platform.
- v. **Good Governance:** Prioritize Good Governance Training for our Sports Volunteer Administrators to better support not just the development of sports but also the talented and elite athletes as identified through the current programs.
- vi. **Programs for Life After Sports:** We look forward to working with Government to establish a framework and policy on this long outstanding issue.

## 4.0 Sustainable Development Goals

The FNCS is committed to gender equality and inclusivity within its workforce. Current statistics indicate:

1. **Women in Leadership:** Approximately 30 per cent of leadership positions are held by women, demonstrating a growing emphasis on gender representation at the commission and advocating at all NSO's.
2. **Overall, Gender Presentation:** Women make up around 45 per cent of the total staff, highlighting efforts to promote female participation in various roles within the Commission.

The FNCS aligns with several SDGs, there are reported and analysed each month as, maintained and provided to FNCS Board. Relevant SDG's:

1. **SDG 3 (Good Health and Well-being):** Promoting physical activity and healthy lifestyles through sports involvement. This is especially through our Kids in Community Sports and Wellness programs but we ensure all development programs delivered include this goal by encouraging and introducing community physical activities.
2. **SDG 4 (Quality Education):** Supporting education through sports programs such as Train the Trainer, and Educate the Educator to increase Coaches, Sports Administrators and technical officials for NSO Development and scholarships for student-athletes and general athletes as well.
3. **SDG 5 (Gender Equality):** Encouraging more equal participation of women and girls in sports through workshops with NSO's and communities. These workshops included Coaching Girls pathways that Identify Safeguarding pathways on Gender based violence within sports.

### 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 Committee noted that FNCS approximately 30 per cent of leadership positions are held by women, demonstrating a growing emphasis on gender representation at the commission and advocating at all NSO's. In its response it stated that women make up around 45 per cent of the total staff, highlighting efforts to promote female participation in various roles within the Commission. The Committee suggests that in future reports, an indication of gender information be provided.

## **5.0 Conclusion**

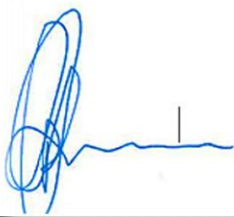
The Standing Committee on Foreign Affairs and Defence has conducted a thorough review of the Fiji National Sports Commission August 2022 - July 2023 Annual Report. The Committee report is bi-partisan and has twelve (12) recommendations for consideration. The Committee is grateful and commends Fiji National Sports Commission for the forthright discussions held with the Committee during their public submissions.

## 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/>