



STANDING COMMITTEE ON SOCIAL AFFAIRS

Review Report on the 2024 Civil Aviation Authority of Fiji Annual Report



PARLIAMENT OF THE REPUBLIC OF FIJI
Parliamentary Paper No. 34 of 2026

April 2026

Published and printed by the Department of Legislature, Parliament House, Government Buildings, SUVA

Table of Contents

	Page
CHAIRPERSON’S FOREWORD	3 - 4
ACRONYM	5
COMMITTEE MEMBERS	6
1.0 INTRODUCTION	7
1.1 Committee Procedures	7
2.0 BACKGROUND	8
3.0 KEY FINDING	9
4.0 COMMITTEE RECOMMENDATION	10
5.0 SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOAL AND GENDER ANALYSIS	11
6.0 CONCLUSION	12
7.0 COMMITTEE MEMBERS SIGNATURE	13
8.0 ANNEXURE	14

CHAIRPERSON'S FOREWORD

I am pleased to present the Standing Committee on Social Affairs report on *the Review of the 2024 Civil Aviation Authority of Fiji Annual Report*.

As part of the scrutiny process, the committee received written responses from the Civil Aviation Authority of Fiji together with additional information during the site visit. The process has proven to be an effective means of gauging its progress and maintaining a high level of scrutiny of the agency under review.

Some of the key highlights of CAAF for the review period were as follows:

1. Official opening of ICAO's office in Nadi has strengthened regional aviation safety, security and sustainability.
2. New five-year plan outlines strategic goals to strengthen regulatory oversight, innovation and stakeholder partnerships.
3. CAAF received a clean audit opinion, reflecting sound financial management and transparency.
4. CAAF hosted the ICAO Universal Security Audit Programme (USAP) and Continuous Monitoring Approach (CMA) Auditor Training, building regional capacity in aviation security oversight.
5. CAAF marked its 45th anniversary with a new logo, strapline and revamped website, honouring its legacy while embracing a modern, forward-looking identity.
6. Redesigned of user-friendly website was launched to allow online payments, application submissions and enhanced stakeholder access.
7. CAAF maintained its ISO certification following a successful surveillance audit, demonstrating commitment to quality and continuous improvement.
8. Airworthiness inspectors completed the ICAO Government Safety Inspectors course enhancing CAAF's technical capability in certifying aircraft maintenance and air operators.

The committee visited the CAAF headquarters in Namaka, Nadi. During the visit the committee was thoroughly briefed on its master plan for their land development project. The committee was also informed that the land is partly occupied by sitting tenants and the matter is before the court.

To conclude, I sincerely thank the Chief Executive Officer of CAAF and their officials for their services and contributions to this review process and commend the implementation of our recommendations.

I am thankful to the Hon. Members, Hon. Ratu Rakuita Vakalalabure, Hon. Alipate Tuicolo, Hon. Viam Pillay, Hon. Aliko Bia, Hon. Parveen Bala and Hon. Ketan Lal for their invaluable contribution and support.

I would like to thank the secretariat for their dedication in compiling this report.

On behalf of the Standing Committee on Social Affairs, I commend this report to Parliament.



.....
Hon. Iliesa Vanawalu
Chairperson

ACRONYMS

CAAF	Civil Aviation Authority of Fiji
CMA	Continuous Monitoring Approach
ICAO	International Civil Aviation Organisation
ISO	International Organisation for Standardization
PSIDS	Pacific Small Island Development States
SO	Standing Order
USAP	Universal Security Audit Programme

COMMITTEE MEMBERS

The Standing Committee on Social Affairs (**‘Committee’**) is established under Section 70 of the Constitution of the Republic of Fiji and Standing Order 109. The Committee’s mandate and functions are provided under SO 109 (2) and 110 (1) (a)-(d) & (f).

The Members of Committee are:



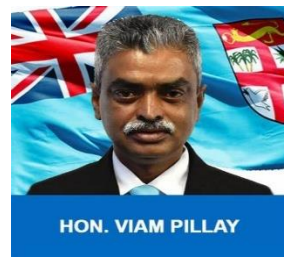
HON. ILIESA SOVUI
VANAWALU

Chairperson



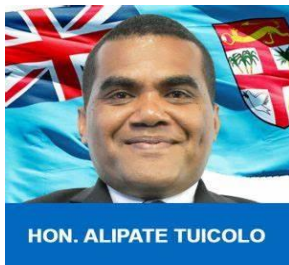
HON. RATU RAKUITA
S. VAKALALABURE

Deputy Chairperson



HON. VIAM PILLAY

Member



HON. ALIPATE TUICOALO

Member



HON. PARVEEN KUMAR

Member



HON. ALIKI BIA

Member

1.0 INTRODUCTION

The 2024 Civil Aviation Authority of Fiji Annual Report was tabled in Parliament on 3rd November 2025 and was referred to the Standing Committee on Social Affairs pursuant to Standing Order 109(2)(b).

Standing Order 109(2)(b) empowers the Standing Committee on Social Affairs to examine matters related to health, education, social services, labour, aviation, culture and media.

1.1 Committee Procedures

Deliberations on the 2024 Civil Aviation Authority of Fiji annual report commenced in January 2026. The Committee reviewed the report, prepared questions and sought clarifications on key issues of interest from CAAF.

The Committee held Public Submission with the Executives of CAAF on 4th February 2026.

Further the Committee conducted the site visit exercise at CAAF Headquarters and ICAO Office in Namaka, Nadi.

Upon receipt of all pertinent information addressing the Committee's queries, the report was finalised and subsequently endorsed on 31st March 2026.

Responses from CAAF can be accessed via the following link:
<https://www.parliament.gov.fj/committees/standing-committee-on-social-affairs/>

2.0 Background of Civil Aviation Authority of Fiji

2.1 The Civil Aviation Authority of Fiji is a statutory body established by the CAAF Act of 1979. Apart from providing regulatory oversight for domestic civil aviation and fulfilling international air safety obligations, it also owned and managed Nadi International Airport, Nausori Airport and 22 small domestic airports in Fiji.

The reorganisation of CAAF, facilitated by the Civil Aviation Reform Act 1999, separated the CAAF's regulatory role from its commercial operations while the commercial responsibilities and assets were transferred to the Airports Fiji Ltd.

The CAAF's regulatory role was given to a newly formed regulatory organisation called the Civil Aviation Authority of the Fiji Islands (CAAFI). The CAAF's functions, as provided under the Civil Aviation Reform Act, include civil aviation regulation and international civil aviation obligations, along with safety oversight and safety education responsibilities for all airports, airlines, airport operations and personnel.

It oversees the activities of airport operators, air traffic control and air navigation service providers, aircraft operators, managing a housing estate (with over 150 residential sites) and other properties.

3.0 KEY FINDINGS

The Committee conducted its review of the 2024 Civil Aviation Authority of Fiji Annual Report and identified the following key findings:

- 3.1 The Committee noted that CAAF had effectively implemented 76% of its obligation under the Universal Safety Oversight Audit Program.
- 3.2 The Committee noted the establishment of ICAO Office in Nadi.
- 3.3 The Committee noted that CAAF receives \$5.00 from departure tax paid by each departing passenger.
- 3.4 The Committee noted CAAF's intention to consolidate three civil aviation legislation into single legislation aligned with ICAO standards and modern regulatory best practice.
- 3.5 The Committee noted that CAAF faces major challenges in attracting qualified staff to work in the aviation industry.
- 3.6 The Committee noted that CAAF conducted comprehensive surveillance, audit and inspections on airlines, aerodromes and other aviation security entities.
- 3.7 The Committee noted that the land acquired by CAAF in Wailoaloa is partly occupied by sitting tenants and the matter is before the court.
- 3.8 The Committee noted that CAAF Certified 22 Aerodromes in Fiji that is 15 by Government (Fiji Airports Ltd) and 7 Private Aerodromes.

4.0 RECOMMENDATION

The Committee recommends the following

- 4.1 The Committee recommends that CAAF must maintain its safety standard obligation under ICAO.
- 4.2 The Committee recommends that CAAF continue to support the ICAO Office in Nadi as the new ICAO office positions Fiji as a regional aviation hub.
- 4.3 The Committee recommends that the CAAF must continue to engage with government as to how they can increase its share of departure tax.
- 4.4 The Committee recommends that CAAF must liaise with relevant stakeholders to fast track its legislative changes and ensure that it is aligned with ICAO standards and modern regulatory best practice.
- 4.5 The Committee recommends that CAAF must review its remuneration package to attract more qualified staff to work in the aviation industry.
- 4.6 The Committee recommends that CAAF must monitor all unregistered Aerodromes in Fiji.

5.0 SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOALS AND GENDER ANALYSIS

(Provided by the Civil Aviation Authority of Fiji)

CAAF actively contributes to Fiji’s national and the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) through its regulatory mandate, workforce policies and operational practices. In 2024, CAAF’s most direct and measurable contributions were aligned with the following SDGs:

- SDG 5 – Gender Equality, through increased female participation across technical, operational and leadership roles, equitable recruitment practices and targeted professional development opportunities for women in aviation.
- SDG 8 – Decent Work and Economic Growth, by strengthening aviation safety and security oversight to support sustainable tourism and trade, investing in staff training and skills development and promoting stable, decent employment within CAAF.
- SDG 9 – Industry, Innovation and Infrastructure, through digital transformation initiatives such as online forms, tablets for audits and inspections, ICT cloud migration and regulatory modernisation, improving efficiency, resilience and service delivery.
- SDG 13 – Climate Action, through practical sustainability measures within CAAF’s direct control, including energy-efficient lighting upgrades, installation of solar-powered exterior lighting, replacement of air-conditioning systems with more energy-efficient units, ICT modernisation to reduce on premise energy demand, and digitalisation of services to reduce paper consumption.

Progress against these SDGs is reported in the Annual Report 2024 through indicators including workforce diversity statistics, training investment levels, digital service delivery milestones and sustainability-focused infrastructure upgrades.

Gender Equality

Table below provides staffs allocation based on Gender.

Year	Male	Female	Total
2022	32	25	57
2023	38	26	64
2024	45	27	72

CAAF continues to promote gender equality, with increasing female participation in technical, operational and leadership roles.





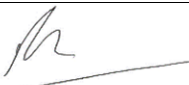

6.0 CONCLUSION

- 6.1 In conclusion the overall performance of CAAF demonstrates its sound governance, proactive response to ICAO findings and aligns with national aviation priorities.

The Committee trusts that the recommendations outlined will support CAAF, in achieving its strategic objectives and improving its ability to meet statutory and international obligation.

COMMITTEE MEMBERS' SIGNATURE

We, the Members of the Standing Committee on Social Affairs, hereby agree with the contents of this report:

Committee Member	E-Signature
Hon. Ilesa Vanawalu Chairperson	
Hon. Ratu Rakuita Vakalalabure Deputy Chairperson	
Hon. Alipate Tuicolo Member	
Hon. Viam Pillay Member	
Hon. Parveen Bala Member	
Hon Aliko Bia Member	
Date: 31 st March, 2026	

St

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-social-affairs/>

[VERBATIM REPORT]

STANDING COMMITTEE ON SOCIAL AFFAIRS

2024 ANNUAL REPORT

SUBMITTEE: **Civil Aviation Authority of Fiji**

VENUE: **Big Committee Room, Suva**

DATE: **Wednesday, 4th February, 2026**

VERBATIM NOTES OF THE MEETING OF THE STANDING COMMITTEE ON SOCIAL AFFAIRS HELD AT THE COMMITTEE ROOM (EAST/WEST WING), PARLIAMENT PRECINCTS, GOVERNMENT BUILDINGS ON WEDNESDAY, 4TH FEBRUARY, 2026 AT 11.21 A.M.

- | | | | |
|---|-------|---|----------|
| 1. Honourable Iliesa Vanawalu | _____ | - | Chairman |
| 2. Honourable Aliko Bia | | - | Member |
| 3. Honourable Viam Pillay | | - | Member |
| 4. Honourable Parveen Bala | | - | Member |
| 5. Honourable Alipate Tuicolo (virtual) | | - | Member |

Interviewee/Submittee: Civil Aviation Authority of Fiji (CAAF)

In Attendance:

- | | | |
|---------------------------|---|---|
| 1. Ms. Sereima Bolanavatu | - | Acting Chief Executive Officer |
| 2. Ms. Alisi Namoro | - | Executive Manager Ground & Safety |
| 3. Mr. Niroshana Perera | - | Executive Manager Corporate Services |
| 4. Captain Tom Cama Waqa | - | Executive Manager Air Safety |
| 5. Mr. Rigamoto Aisake | - | Executive Manager Aviation, Security & Facilitation |

MR. CHAIRMAN.- Honourable Members, members of the public, Secretariat, dear viewers, ladies and gentlemen, a very good morning to you all. It is a pleasure to welcome everyone here this morning, especially the viewers who are watching this public hearing session.

At the outset, for information purposes, pursuant to Standing Order 111 of the Standing Orders of Parliament, all committee meetings are to be open to the public. Please note that this submission is open to the public and the media, and it is also being aired via the *Walesi* platform and streamed live on the parliamentary website and social media platforms. For any sensitive information concerning the matter before us this morning that cannot be disclosed in public, this can be provided to the committee either in private or in writing.

Please be advised that Standing Order 111, in the following circumstances, permits non-disclosure of information. These are:

- (i) national security matters;
- (ii) third-party confidential information;
- (iii) personnel or human resources matters; and
- (iv) committee deliberations and development of the committee's recommendation based on this report.

This is a Parliamentary meeting, and all information gathered is covered under the Parliamentary Powers and Privileges Act 1965. Moving forward, please bear in mind that we do not condone slander or libel of any sort, and any information brought before this Committee should be based on facts. In terms of protocol for this Committee meeting, please minimise the use of mobile phones and ensure all mobile phones are on silent mode while the meeting is in progress.

I also wish to remind honourable Members and our guests that any questions to be asked are to be addressed through the Chairperson. I now invite the members of the Committee to introduce themselves. Honourable Members, the floor is yours.

(Introduction of Committee Members)

Today, the Committee will be hearing a submission from the Civil Aviation Authority of Fiji (CAAF) in relation to its Annual Report 2024. Before us, we have representatives from CAAF, and I thank them for availing themselves to appear at this hearing. Due to time constraints, you may give brief responses. The honourable Members will intervene with their supplementary questions during your presentation. I now invite the officials from CAAF to introduce themselves and then begin with the presentation.

MS. S. BOLANAVATU.- Mr. Chairman of the Standing Committee on Social Affairs and honourable Members, *ni sa bula vinaka*. Thank you for your warm welcome and for inviting us to clarify aspects of the Civil Aviation Authority of Fiji's Annual Report 2024, as requested by the Committee. We recognise the vital role the Committee plays in ensuring Government funds are used wisely and that key social issues are properly addressed. Allow me to introduce CAAF's executive team present here today.

(Introduction of the officers from CAAF)

Mr. Chairman, Sir, I will be presenting CAAF's response to the questions that have been raised by the Standing Committee on the CAAF Annual Report of 2024. The presentation highlights CAAF's performance, focusing on governance, financial stability, and regulatory effectiveness. I kindly request, with your permission, that the members of the CAAF executive team answer any technical questions asked by the Standing Committee in areas relevant to their expertise.

I will begin by taking us through CAAF's guiding values, which are professionalism, partnership, innovation, integrity, and fairness. These define our organisation as Fiji's aviation regulator. These principles guide our daily work and remind us of our responsibility to serve. Above all, we are entrusted with maintaining safety and security for aviation in Fiji. The purpose of today's presentation is to provide an overview of ICAO's and Fiji's oversight obligations, and we will provide responses to the Committee's questions based on the 2024 Annual Report, demonstrating accountability, governance, and transparency.

The format of this presentation is guided by the questions from the Standing Committee on Social Affairs to CAAF on its Annual Report 2024. I will explain in a nutshell why CAAF exists. Fiji is a contracting State to the Chicago Convention. As an obligated signatory, Fiji is required to discharge its obligations to ICAO. Under the Civil Aviation Authority of Fiji Act 1979, CAAF has been designated to discharge Fiji's obligations on behalf of the Government.

Before you is ICAO's framework on its State Safety Oversight System. This framework ensures that a State's responsibilities are discharged in compliance with our obligations as signatories to the Chicago Convention. This means that the aviation system in Fiji is regulated and safe and secure for the traveling public. The ICAO State Safety Oversight System consists of eight critical elements. Of these, five elements require a State to establish, including the primary aviation legislation and the specific operating regulations. Basically, ICAO requires that a State has an aviation legislative framework in place that governs aviation on behalf of the State.

Critical element three requires that the State has a civil aviation authority that is well resourced.

Critical element four is that the authority has qualified technical personnel and the necessary tools, guidance, and provision of safety-critical information to its inspectors.

In terms of implementation, there are three critical elements. For critical element six, relating to our licensing, certification, authorisation, and approval obligations, ICAO requires that any aviation documents issued to organisations and personnel, including license holders, comply with ICAO requirements.

Critical element seven, which relates to our surveillance obligations, requires that the regulator continues to ensure the ongoing compliance of these aviation document holders. Critical element eight concerns the resolution of safety issues, where ICAO requires that the State is able to resolve any safety issues that have been identified. ICAO audits the implementation of this framework to determine how effectively a State implements this oversight management system. This is done through their audit system, called the Universal Safety Oversight Audit Programme.

Under ICAO's audit programme, they assess the implementation of these eight critical elements. Fiji was last audited in 2019, and the effective implementation rating currently stands at 76 percent, which is above the global and regional average.

Financial Performance Overview - Overall, CAAF's revenue mix in 2024 reflects a strengthened and more diversified financial position, underpinned by improved Government support through the grant, sustained growth in aviation-linked revenues from departure taxes, stable regulatory income through fees and charges, and a recovering investment return profile. This is not a one-off result, Mr. Chairman, Sir. It is driven by governance reforms, aviation recovery, and prudent treasury management. CAAF's revenue streams for 2022 to 2024 are shown in this slide.

MR. CHAIRMAN.- Can we just go back to the last slide, please? On the topic of the Government support grant, while looking at your figures in the report, 2022 was about \$3.5 million, 2023 was \$668,000, and 2024 was \$7.2 million. I believe the explanation was in the report itself. How do you view sustaining the organisation in the long run? Because, if you read those figures, there was a significant drop in 2023.

How does this affect your operations? When considering your major projects, how do you best accommodate other income sources? From the Government's perspective, the variation in the figures — from \$3.5 million in 2022 to \$668,000 in 2023 — is substantial. I know you have explained this, but in terms of operational prospects and major projects, does this impact the sustainability of the entity?

MR. N. PERERA.- Mr. Chairman, may I respond to that question? It depends entirely on three streams of income. The most important one is the Government grant that we receive. Currently, because we have faced this issue quite often, there is a policy in place that requires us to maintain a safety net. The safety net is at least one year of CAAF's full expenses.

At present, we have achieved this. With the Unit Trust of Fiji (UTOF), we have a fixed deposit of \$13.5 million, which covers our total expenses for a year. That is the short-term solution we have for the time being. At the same time, we are looking at 87 acres of land in Wailoaloa. We are trying to develop that property with the support of the Ministry, our directors, and management. We are working on that project, and most probably by mid-year we should have some sort of solution.

HON. P.K. BALA.- Mr. Chairman, this is a supplementary question. You have mentioned the development of the 87 acres of land. Is this a mixed development or a special project that CAAF has undertaken on its own, or is it in partnership?

MR. N. PERERA.- Mr. Chairman, through you, may I respond? Currently, the project has not started. What we are doing first is developing a master plan to identify which areas can be utilised for which purposes. We have engaged a company to handle the planning part. After that, we will look for investors or partnerships; that will be the second stage. At present, we have some issues to resolve, and we are working on those matters to move forward.

HON. P.K. BALA.- Mr. Chairman, through you, a supplementary question. We can see here, as mentioned by the Chairman, that the Government grant figures supplied to us reflect what the Government has provided. But what was your original request?

MR. N. PERERA.- Mr. Chairman, through you, let me answer. For the last two years, we requested \$7.5 million in one year. We received \$6.5 million. In 2024, we received the full grant that we requested.

MS. S. BOLANAVATU.- Mr. Chairman, through you, just to answer your question regarding the grant received from Government. To enlighten the Committee, ICAO requires and recommends that civil aviation authorities are autonomously funded, meaning they should not have to rely on Government. With that, we have had to review our reserve fund policy. ICAO requires that civil aviation authorities maintain a reserve fund. Our policy mandates holding one year's operating expenditure plus 20 percent. This ensures that, as during the COVID period, we can sustain operations when the required assistance or Government grant is not received. As my colleague mentioned, we had to draw on some of our fixed deposits during that period to sustain operations.

HON. P.K. BALA.- Mr. Chairman, through you, a question. It is very interesting. Are you able to maintain that 20 percent, or do you still face difficulties in meeting the policy requirement you mentioned?

MR. N. PERERA.- Currently, yes, we are covered under the policy. We have the required funds to manage any unforeseen issues, and we will be able to fund CAAF operations with the security of our own funds that we hold at present.

HON. A. BIA.- Mr. Chairman, through you, a supplementary question. I note that the honourable Bala and Mr. Chairman have alluded to sustainability. For CAAF to continue to perform well, it will need the support and partnership of the relevant stakeholders in the industry. I would like to understand the level of cooperation from these stakeholders to ensure a strong partnership that enables CAAF to continue to operate effectively.

MS. S. BOLANAVATU.- To answer your question, one of CAAF's values is working in partnership with the industry. We are working towards changing the culture and building better collaboration with the industry. We have been doing this, and it has improved engagement in terms of creating safety awareness, providing safety education, and discussing with our stakeholders and aviation participants how they can better meet and comply with regulatory requirements.

Regarding regulations that need to be implemented, we understand that with ICAO's evolving standards and rapid changes in technology, the standards also evolve. The challenge for a small Pacific Island Developing State such as Fiji is keeping up and ensuring these standards are mandated in our regulations. However, before implementing them in the industry, we have a process to consult with stakeholders on newly adopted ICAO amendments. This allows us to assess their readiness and the applicability to the State. If the State decides to adopt a standard, or needs to file a difference, we inform ICAO that "No, we cannot comply within the required time." Thus, we do have a partnership with the industry, and we have seen significant improvement in our engagements over the years.

HON. A. BIA.- Mr. Chairman, through you, a follow-up question. At the moment, are there regulations that need to be reviewed to ensure that CAAF continues to operate effectively and maintain strong collaboration with other relevant stakeholders?

MS. S. BOLANAVATU.- Yes, in December last year, we carried out a public consultation on the Civil Aviation Bill, 2025. We engaged with the industry, not only with our stakeholders but also with the public, conducting consultations in Nadi, Suva, Savusavu, and Labasa. This allowed us to gather public views on the proposed amendments to the reforms we were introducing. That is at the primary legislation level. Moving forward, we will also need to harmonise our regulations. Yes, that is part of the process and the plan.

Regarding the financial turnaround drivers reported in the Annual Report 2024, CAAF achieved a strong and sustainable financial turnaround, driven by the recovery in aviation activity. We observed an increase of \$250,000 in departure tax revenue, strengthened by financial governance, evidenced by four consecutive clean audit opinions, and stable Government funding support, which rose to \$300,000 between the 2023–2024 and 2024–2025 financial years.

Mr. Chairman, the higher grant receipts recorded in 2024 primarily reflected timing differences in disbursements across the financial years rather than abrupt funding changes. If you have any questions on these financial turnaround drivers, we are ready to respond.

HON. V. PILLAY.- Mr. Chairman, in the recent submission by Fiji Airways, we are all aware that the departure tax amount has increased. During that submission, they mentioned that this increase could affect visitor arrivals. Since CAAF also receives a share of the departure tax, what is your view on this matter?

MS. S. BOLANAVATU.- Mr. Chairman, currently, CAAF receives a \$5 share from the departure tax paid by each departing passenger. I understand that other entities also receive a portion of the share. The honourable Minister for Finance visited us last week, and we proposed that the Government consider increasing the \$5 share, which would assist us in meeting our financial obligations.

Our fees and charges are currently very low, which is another source of revenue. We are also looking at reviewing these fees and charges to consider an increase, which will need to be implemented through a review of our regulations.

MR. CHAIRMAN.- Madam Acting CEO, we totally agree. Your fees need to be reviewed to meet the current standards for doing business. From our perspective, we are looking at how best you can organise a timeline. I am just adding to what you have already explained. We have looked at the fees shared with us, your regulations and policies, and even your legislation.

I may say that much of it is not updated to reflect the current situation. If you map out a timeline and set targets to enable you to convince the Government—by whatever means necessary to speed up the processes—then meetings such as this one this morning will assist you in achieving long-term outcomes. This is just a comment.

MS. S. BOLANAVATU.- Thank you, Mr. Chairman. That is well noted.

HON. A. BIA.- Mr. Chairman, regarding expense management, I have noted that during the period under review, expenses increased from \$7.26 million to \$9.71 million. There was a strong net

operating surplus, and you mentioned in the report that one of the main reasons was the increase in project activity. Could you elaborate further on these project activities?

MS. S. BOLANAVATU.- Mr. Chairman, to answer your question, we identified major expenditure areas. One was staff remuneration and training. During this year, the figure provided was \$6.1 million, with staffing at 94 percent of the approved establishment.

This naturally increased training requirements as part of our Critical Element 4 obligations. Regarding projects, we focused on ICT modernisation and cloud migration. At the end of 2024, CAAF also rebranded its mission and vision. The reason for this was to assess our needs and determine how best to address them. Most of our processes were slow and inefficient, and our systems were outdated. To modernise, we upgraded our ICT, including email services to Microsoft 365 and our website. Most services were moved online, enabling stakeholders to submit forms and make payments electronically. This was made possible through ICT modernisation and cloud migration.

In addition to these projects, we also identified capital works aligned with long-term infrastructure and service delivery needs, as well as regulatory oversight for audits, inspections, surveillance, and investigations. Operations were modernised by transitioning from workstations to laptops, providing inspectors with the tools needed for their work. We also upgraded our aviation quality database system used for audits and inspections. All of these were part of the projects undertaken in 2024.

MR. CHAIRMAN.- Madam, let me ask a supplementary question regarding staff remuneration and training. Looking at the figures of about \$6.1 million, I note that currently you have approximately 96 to 98 percent of the approved staff positions filled.

MS. S. BOLANAVATU.- We have 95 percent.

MR. CHAIRMAN.- Looking at the nature of your operations, when staffing is at 100 percent, would you have a fully capable team to manage the industry effectively?

MS. S. BOLANAVATU.- Thank you for your question, Mr. Chairman. As we all know, CAAF faces challenges in attracting staff from the industry, where salaries are much higher than what CAAF offers. This is one of the challenges in achieving a 100 percent staffing level at the authority.

However, we offer other attractive benefits. Aside from salary, we provide flexible working policies, such as work-from-home options, insurance coverage for staff, and opportunities for training, capacity building, and professional development for inspectors when they join. These are some of the benefits we offer in addition to pay.

HON. V. PILLAY.- Mr. Chairman, through you, Madam, you mentioned earlier the evolving requirements by ICAO. To meet the standards required by ICAO, as far as training for personnel at CAAF is concerned, what are some of the challenges faced by the authority in providing that training?

MS. S. BOLANAVATU.- Mr. Chairman, through you, CAAF is guided by its own training manual, developed in line with ICAO's capacity-building framework, which is competency-based. Under this framework, specific training has been identified for each inspector role and specialised area. We have a guide, a training programme in the manual, and an annual training plan.

The challenge for us is resources. As part of the training plan, we must prioritise and space out training, focusing on what can be delivered each year and what staff can complete. For new staff,

the training plan is designed to be fully implemented by the third year. The main challenge is that training is expensive.

To address this, we utilise scholarships and fellowships offered by countries such as Singapore through their Civil Aviation Academy, the Republic of Korea, Japan through JICA, and the FAA. Once HR identifies the training needs for the year, they reach out to these States to access fellowship programmes that can be used to train our staff.

HON. P.K. BALA.- Mr. Chairman, while we are on the topic of staff, does CAAF have unions in the organisation?

MR. N. PERERA.- Yes, Sir, we do.

HON. P.K. BALA.- Do you have any pending issues with the unions?

MR. N. PERERA.- Currently, we are in the process of negotiating the terms and conditions for their implementation. It has not yet been finalised, and discussions are ongoing.

HON. P.K. BALA.- How many workers are involved in this process?

MR. N. PERERA.- Currently, we have approximately 30 staff involved in the process.

HON. V. PILLAY.- Mr. Chairman, in the report, I have noted that there are still five vacancies to be filled. By when do you expect these positions to be filled?

MR. N. PERERA.- Some of the positions currently have challenges because, although we have advertised them several times, we have not been able to find the right candidates. We are not just trying to fill the positions; we want to ensure that the right person is in the right role. We are aiming to fill these five positions as soon as possible this year.

MS. S. BOLANAVATU.- Mr. Chairman, to add on, one of the challenges for CAAF is that applicants must meet the minimum qualification requirements for the role. ICAO requires that, for an inspector to oversee a specialised area, they must be trained and qualified to a level equal to or higher than the area they are overseeing.

For a Small Pacific Island Developing State, it is very difficult to find that level of expertise. We have a limited pool of qualified candidates, and this has been a challenge over the years, which is why we have not been able to achieve a 100 percent staffing level.

HON. A. BIA.- Mr. Chairman, through you, a supplementary question. Given that it is very difficult to find the right person for these roles, do you provide training if you hire someone who does not yet meet the criteria, so that they can be developed to the required standard? In other words, do you empower staff through training to reach the level needed to take up these positions?

MS. S. BOLANAVATU.- Yes, we do have a training programme. However, the minimum qualification requirement (MQR) must be met first. Under ICAO's training framework, a person must meet the MQR to become an inspector. If someone comes from the industry without the required inspector qualifications and experience, CAAF builds their expertise through training focused on regulatory oversight.

We have faced challenges in certain specialised fields, such as aircraft maintenance engineering inspectors. In some areas, we develop staff internally through a cadet programme, training them and then releasing them to sign agreements with operators to gain practical experience before returning to CAAF.

Regarding operational efficiency gains from the 2024 expenditure, with a 94 percent staffing level, we have staff trained and competent to discharge their duties. The introduction of online services has improved inspector productivity and service delivery. These gains translate directly into better service while maintaining strong safety standards. We have also discussed changes to our policies and regulations earlier.

HON. A. BIA.- Mr. Chairman, regarding safety management, I note that the report mentions the National Aviation Safety Plan, which is to be Fiji's first National Aviation Safety Plan. Has this plan been launched or introduced, and what is its current progress?

MS. S. BOLANAVATU.- Mr. Chairman, thank you for your question. The National Aviation Safety Plan is still in draft form. It is in its final draft stage, and we need to consult with the industry before it is finalised. The plan identifies high-level safety issues for the State, prioritises areas that staff need to address at higher-risk levels, and outlines how the State is managing these risks.

The plan sets out safety goals and targets, objectives, and safety enhancement initiatives, which are mitigating actions for high-risk occurrences such as mid-air collisions, controlled flight into terrain, loss of control in flight, runway excursions, and runway incursions. Consultation with the industry is essential because they are responsible for implementing some of these corrective actions as part of their programmes.

The National Aviation Safety Plan is a national document, not just CAAF's. It demonstrates to ICAO how the State manages aviation safety risks and mitigates them. This aligns with ICAO's initiative for zero fatal accidents by 2050. Fiji, through CAAF, is driving this initiative in collaboration with all stakeholders to manage aviation safety at the national level.

The National Aviation Safety Plan complements the State Safety Programme, which was revised and published in September 2025.

Regarding the impact on service delivery from policy and regulatory changes, we have seen improved legal clarity, certainty, and oversight effectiveness. For service providers, these improvements increase understanding of rules and regulations, leading to better compliance, improved service, and more predictable timelines for certification, licensing, and approvals. The industry is informed through our service charter, which includes timelines for processing and issuing aviation documents.

On regulatory amendments and their effects on stakeholders and the public, in 2024, changes to five ICAO annexes resulted in 12 CAAF standards documents affecting navigation service providers, including air traffic services, communication, navigation, surveillance, and aeronautical information management. These improvements have increased the reliability and accuracy of aeronautical information for flight crews and operators, enabling pilots to receive better service from air traffic controllers.

For aerodrome operators, amendments included requirements on aerodrome certification, pavement strength reporting, and operational safety standards, which improve safety margins and benefit users such as airlines.

Finally, there were amendments to personal licensing. For aviation license holders, including pilots, aircraft maintenance engineers, and air traffic controllers, the competency training framework was updated, strengthening competency standards for license holders.

HON. V. PILLAY.- Mr. Chairman, through you, Acting CEO, regarding the Terrorism Bill, CAAF provided recommendations. Can you provide an update on the review of the draft Counter-

Terrorism Bill? CAAF made recommendations to ensure that the Bill adequately supports aviation-specific counter-terrorism measures. This is referenced on page 38 of the report and is currently under review.

MR. R. AISAKE.- Mr. Chairman, through you, yes, CAAF contributed to the Counter-Terrorism Bill. We provided an outline of how aviation security addresses similar counter-terrorism challenges, such as hijackings like 9/11 and other unlawful acts of interference. There are similarities in how aviation security handles these acts and how counter-terrorism measures are applied.

For example, we highlighted the importance of security culture, insider threat management, and thorough background checks. These were some of the measures we suggested to assist in counter-terrorism efforts. We also emphasised the need for a reporting culture that identifies discrepancies or suspicious activity, ensures that reports follow the proper chain of command, and allows for assessment and action. These measures align with the objectives of the Counter-Terrorism Bill. That was our contribution.

MS. S. BOLANAVATU.- Mr. Chairman, regarding the amendments to the Civil Aviation Acts, the question was to provide updates on the Civil Aviation Act 1976, the Civil Aviation Reform Act 1999, and the Civil Aviation Security Act 1994.

As highlighted earlier, the Civil Aviation Bill has consolidated three safety-related civil aviation Acts: the Civil Aviation Act 1976, the Civil Aviation Authority of Fiji Act 1979, and the Civil Aviation Reform Act 1999. This Bill also addresses deficiencies identified by the ICAO audit in 2019, which recommended ways for Fiji to strengthen its primary aviation legislation. In addition, we considered international best practices, adopting elements from the civil aviation frameworks of Papua New Guinea, Singapore, and New Zealand to suit our operational landscape.

The Civil Aviation Security Act 1994 has undergone its eighth draft and is now ready. This draft addresses gaps identified in the ICAO audit programme and incorporates provisions relating to advanced passenger information and passenger name records. It is also aligned with ICAO Annex 9 and international border security obligations.

MR. CHAIRMAN.- Madam CEO, you mentioned that the draft was sent to the Ministry. Now that it is 2026, can you provide any update on its progress?

MR. R. AISAKE.- We are working closely with the Ministry and the Office of the Solicitor-General on this matter. The target date set is 2026. The Civil Aviation Bill is being prioritised first, followed by the Civil Aviation Security Bill, which also has a target for 2026.

MS. S. BOLANAVATU.- Mr. Chairman, regarding infrastructure development, there were several key projects and capital works in 2024. The first focused on ICT network and system upgrades. The second was the launch of the new CAAF website, which incorporated online applications, form submissions, and payment functionality. The third key project was the establishment of ICAO's Pacific Small Island Developing States (PSIDS) Liaison Office in Nadi. This office positions Fiji as a regional aviation hub and enhances access to ICAO technical assistance offered to Small Pacific Island Developing States, particularly in training and capacity building.

Sustainability is embedded into CAAF's infrastructure planning and operations. To reduce carbon emissions, we have converted lighting to LEDs and use solar exterior lighting. Air conditioning systems have been replaced with more energy-efficient units. We have migrated to cloud-based systems instead of hosting servers on-site and have gone paperless by digitising forms and checklists, reducing the need for physical paper.

There were no major project delays or significant budget overruns in 2024. Minor timing adjustments occurred during the planning phase but were managed without adverse impacts on budget or service delivery.

Regarding the impact of the ICAO PSIDS Liaison Office in Nadi, it delivers lasting regional benefits by strengthening access to ICAO technical assistance. Fiji provides direct, on-the-ground support to Small Pacific Island Developing States in strengthening their safety oversight systems. The presence of the liaison office positions Fiji as a regional hub and reinforces its leadership role within ICAO and the Pacific region.

Funding for the ICAO Liaison Office is provided by the Government through the grant. When CAAF appears before the Ministry of Finance to justify grant disbursements, the funding for the ICAO PSIDS office is included. Under the MOU between the Government of Fiji and ICAO, CAAF provides host State facilities to the office, and these costs are proportionate and transparent, as outlined in the report.

During 2024, CAAF conducted a comprehensive programme of surveillance, audits, and inspections, completing 244 audits across airlines, aerodromes, maintenance organisations, and aviation security entities.

MR. CHAIRMAN.- Madam, while looking at safety and security compliance, it is noted that 244 audits were conducted. Are these all based on checklists used in your operations, or are some audits still pending or not included in this figure?

MS. S. BOLANAVATU.- Thank you for your question, Mr. Chairman. All audits and surveillance checks conducted by inspectors are guided by documented procedures with corresponding checklists. Each check is recorded, in line with ICAO's State Safety Oversight eight critical elements—specifically, Critical Element Seven on Surveillance Obligations and Critical Element Six on Licensing and Certification Obligations. Most of these audits are required for issuing aviation documents, certificates, or personal licenses. To answer your question, yes, all inspections are guided by documented procedures and checklists.

On financial efficiencies, we noted improvements through strengthened financial controls, continuous review and enhancement of finance manuals, improved revenue collection, and effective debt management. There were no project overruns, and prudent investment and treasury management were maintained through our reserve funds.

Regarding the 2022 capacity framework assessment to upgrade technical personnel, CAAF has a structured capacity-building programme with targeted training plans for each inspector role. Specific recruitment is undertaken for specialised roles or subject-matter experts. Training includes both international and regional programmes and is competency-based, aligned to Fiji's operational aviation context.

CAAF also provides international and regional training in aviation security. Staff development is supported through scholarships and fellowships, and personnel are required to attend regional and global ICAO forums. In 2024, CAAF staff attended 21 ICAO meetings.

CAAF's 2024 contribution to the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) is embedded in workforce policy, digital transformation, and practical sustainability initiatives. Four SDGs were prioritised:

- SDG 5 – Gender equality
- SDG 8 – Decent work and economic growth

- SDG 9 – Industry innovation and infrastructure
- SDG 13 – Climate action

As part of Fiji's State Action Plan to reduce carbon emissions in aviation, CAAF collaborates with stakeholders. Fiji Airways is adopting sustainable aviation fuel, and Fiji Airports is implementing green initiatives such as electric vehicles. Other measures are also underway to meet the State Action Plan.

On gender equality, CAAF continues to promote participation in technical, operational, and leadership roles. In 2024, the workforce ratio was 62 percent male to 38 percent female, with a 50 percent ratio at leadership level. There was also an increase in female inspectors, with four female inspectors in 2024.

MR. CHAIRMAN.- What are your current figures on the ground for 2026?

MR. N. PERERA.- The current figures are: we have 75 staff in total, of which 27 are female and 43 are male, if I am not mistaken in our cadre.

MR. CHAIRMAN.- The reason I asked the question is that it ties in with your gender equality data on the current basis we are working on, because we are referring to the 2024 Report. Most of the time, you can refer back to the current figures to provide a benchmark of best practices as we move forward.

MS. S. BOLANAVATU.- I think this is the final question posed by the Committee. Was CAAF's performance measured against the Corporate Plan 2024 to 2029? In terms of deliverables and outcomes achieved in 2024, CAAF performed well against the priorities of the Corporate Plan. We maintained ICAO's effective implementation outcomes and continued to progress corrective actions identified to increase our rating above the current level of 76 percent. This was the same for safety and security audits. We also achieved ISO 9001 certification in 2024.

We maintained our staffing capacity, attracting and retaining staff at a level of up to 94 percent, ensuring that the right person was in the right role, met the minimum qualification requirements, and received training to conduct oversight in their specialised areas. This training and capacity-building remain ongoing. As mentioned earlier, the current staffing capacity is 95 percent. Progress has been gradual due to the challenges previously discussed.

MR. CHAIRMAN.- Thank you very much, Acting CEO, for a very fruitful discussion and in-depth presentations, which have given us a clear and detailed picture of how the organisation runs its operations on a daily basis. Apart from reading through the reports, it has been valuable to have face-to-face engagement and gather this information firsthand.

HON. A. BIA.- In your 2024 Report, we noted the important work of enforcement to ensure compliance. We also noted that you were to review your enforcement manual. Is there any update or progress on that?

MS. S. BOLANAVATU.- Thank you for your question. Enforcement falls under Critical Element Eight, which covers mechanisms to ensure that identified safety issues are addressed and mitigated to an acceptable safety level.

To answer your question, yes, we have progressed, and the enforcement manual is in its final draft form. The delay has been due to the reform of the Civil Aviation Act. We needed to strengthen

enforcement provisions in the Act, as the existing legislation did not provide sufficient authority. Establishing these provisions was foundational for the legislative framework.

For CAAF to enforce compliance effectively, we must have the necessary legislative authority. Once the Civil Aviation Bill is passed in Parliament, we will review regulations and align the enforcement manual with the updated provisions.

HON. A.N. TUICOLO.- Mr. Chairman, I have a supplementary question regarding commercial pilot licensing. When a commercial pilot license is issued by the Personal Licensing Office, has any commercial pilot license been cancelled? What were the reasons for such cancellations, and how would these issues be prevented in the future?

CAPTAIN T.C. WAQA.- Good morning, Mr. Chairman. I am Captain Tom Waqa from the Air Safety Department. Personnel Licensing does not actually fall under my department, but I can provide an answer. Like any aviation document, a commercial pilot license is only cancelled when the holder no longer meets the requirements to hold it.

In general, a pilot's license can be cancelled through enforcement action by the Civil Aviation Authority, or if the person does not meet the necessary requirements. For example, pilots under 40 years of age are required to undergo a medical examination annually. If they fail to meet the medical standards, their license may be cancelled, and they no longer have the right to exercise the privileges of that license. So, in a general sense, cancellation occurs when the holder no longer meets the requirements, whether due to medical issues or other criteria.

MR. CHAIRMAN.- Honourable Tuicolo, does that answer your question?

HON. A.N. TUICOLO.- Yes, Sir.

MR. CHAIRMAN.- *Vinaka*. On that note, I wish to sincerely thank you all for availing yourselves for this public hearing session. We appreciate your time and hope that you will be available for any further queries the Committee may have regarding today's submission.

With that, we have concluded the second part of our deliberation today. Apart from reviewing the report, we have now had the value of face-to-face discussions. The Committee's final task will be a site visit exercise, which we believe you are aware of. Once the site visit is finalised, we will send you a copy of the schedule so that you are informed of the timings and can provide a briefing on the same subject area. We hope that the executive team, or the relevant personnel, will be ready to lead us during the site visit. Thank you very much, and this meeting is now closed.

The Committee adjourned at 12.35 p.m.