



PARLIAMENT OF THE REPUBLIC OF FIJI

MINUTES

of Proceedings of Parliament at Suva on Wednesday, Twenty-ninth day of April,
2026

1. The House met at 9.30 a.m. pursuant to adjournment.
2. Hon. Deputy Speaker took the Chair and read the Prayer.
3. ATTENDANCE
 - (a) The Hon. Esrom Immanuel, Hon. Ratu Isikeli Tuiwailevu, Hon. Viam Pillay, Hon. Sanjay Kirpal, Hon. Prof. Biman Prasad and Hon. Joseph Nand conveyed their apologies to the Hon. Speaker for being unable to attend the sitting of Parliament.
 - (b) The following Honourable Members obtained approval from the Hon. Speaker for intermittent absence during the sitting of Parliament –

Hon. Ioane Naivalurua, Hon. Lynda Tabuya, Hon. Ketan Lal, Hon. Jovesa Vocea, Hon. Ro Filipe Tuisawau and Hon. Shalen Kumar.

4. CONFIRMATION OF MINUTES

The Leader of the Government in Parliament the Hon. Ro Filipe Tuisawau moved that the Minutes of the sitting of Parliament held on Tuesday, 28 April 2026 as previously circulated, be taken as read and be confirmed.

Motion seconded.

Question put.

Motion agreed to unanimously.

5. COMMUNICATIONS FROM THE CHAIR

The Hon. Deputy Speaker welcomed all Honourable Members to the sitting, those seated in the gallery and those watching the live proceedings on television and the internet. Hon. Deputy Speaker also welcomed the fourth group of PL 100 students from the University of the South Pacific.

6. PRESENTATION OF REPORTS OF COMMITTEES

Standing Committee on Natural Resources

- (a) The Chairperson of the Standing Committee on Natural Resources the Hon. Kalaveti Ravu tabled the Committee's Consolidated Review Report on the 2020, 2021, 2022 and 2023 Fiji Ports Corporation Limited Annual Reports.

The Chairperson of the Standing Committee on Natural Resources moved a motion without notice pursuant to Standing Order 121(5) that a debate on the content of the report would be initiated at a future sitting. The motion was seconded and agreed to unanimously.

Standing Committee on Foreign Affairs and Defence

- (a) The Deputy Chairperson of the Standing Committee on Foreign Affairs and Defence the Hon. Rinesh Sharma tabled the Committee's Consolidated Review Report on the Ministry of Commerce, Trade, Tourism and Transport 2019-2020, 2020-2021 Annual Reports.

The Deputy Chairperson of the Standing Committee on Foreign Affairs and Defence moved a motion without notice pursuant to Standing Order 121(5) that a debate on the content of the report would be initiated at a future sitting. The motion was seconded and agreed to unanimously.

- (b) The Deputy Chairperson of the Standing Committee on Foreign Affairs and Defence the Hon. Rinesh Sharma tabled the Committee's Consolidated Review Report on the Ministry of Women, Children and Social Protection 2021-2022, 2022-2023 Annual Reports.

The Deputy Chairperson of the Standing Committee on Foreign Affairs and Defence moved a motion without notice pursuant to Standing Order 121(5) that a debate on the content of the report would be initiated at a future sitting. The motion was seconded and agreed to unanimously.

Standing Committee on Justice Law and Human Rights

- (a) The Chairperson of the Standing Committee on Justice, Law and Human Rights the Hon. Rakuita Vakalalabure tabled the Committee's Review Report on the Education Bill 2025 (Bill No. 34 of 2025).

The Hon. Deputy Speaker informed all Honourable Members that pursuant to Standing Order 121(1) and Standing Order 86, the Standing Committee has tabled its report accordingly, and the Bill was being set down for consideration by the Committee of the Whole Parliament on a future sitting day.

7. MINISTERIAL STATEMENTS

- (a) The Minister for Justice and Acting Attorney-General the Hon. Siromi Turaga delivered a Ministerial Statement. The Hon. Alvick Maharaj responded.
- (b) The Minister for Public Works, Meteorological Services and Transport the Hon. Ro Filipe Tuisawau delivered a Ministerial Statement. The Hon. Premila Kumar responded.

8. QUESTIONS

Oral Questions

- 27/2026 Hon. Joseph Nand to ask the Minister for Employment, Productivity and Workplace Relations – Can the Minister inform Parliament that in light of the National Skills and Labour Demand Survey launched in late 2025, what specific strategies is the Ministry implementing to address the high rate of skilled worker migration, while ensuring domestic industries remain productive.
- 28/2026 Hon. Alipate Tuicolo asked the Minister for Agriculture, Waterways, and Sugar Industry – Can the Minister update Parliament on Fiji's National Organic Policy 2026-2030.
- 29/2026 Hon. Jone Usamate asked the Minister for Agriculture, Waterways, and Sugar Industry – Can the Minister update Parliament on what measures are being implemented to upgrade aging infrastructure at the Lautoka and Labasa mills given the recent reports of mill breakdowns and operational inefficiencies of mills before the next crushing season.
- 30/2026 Hon. Iliesa Vanawalu to ask the Minister for Finance, Commerce and Business Development – Can the Minister update Parliament on the National Disaster Risk Financing Policy of 2026-2031.
- 31/2026 Hon. Premila Kumar to ask the Minister for Finance, Commerce and Business Development – Can the Minister update Parliament on the methodology used by the FCCC in setting fuel prices.

- 32/2026 Hon. Jovesa Vocea asked the Minister for Agriculture, Waterways and Sugar Industry – Can the Minister inform Parliament on the current status of the proposed Yaqona Bill.
- 33/2026 Hon. Alvick Maharaj asked the Minister for Health and Medical Services – Given the recent \$50 million ADB loan for health system transformation, can the Minister inform Parliament a timeline for the first phase of the CWM Hospital referral facility.
- 34/2026 Hon. Taito Rokomatu to ask the Minister for Housing and Local Government – Can the Minister inform Parliament on the significance of the reserved seats for landowners in Municipal Councils.
- 35/2026 Hon. Semi Koroilavesau asked the Minister for Defence and Veteran Affairs – In light of drugs entering Fiji’s borders and the fact that the easiest and most efficient way is to transport huge volumes by ships, can the Minister indicate what the Government intends to do to cover the huge expanse of ocean within our EEZ.
- 36/2026 Hon. Ratu Josaia Niudamu asked the Minister for Women, Children and Social Protection – Can the Minister update Parliament on the review of Fiji’s National Ageing Policy.

Written Questions

- 37/2026 Hon. Joseph Nand to ask the Prime Minister, and Minister for Civil Service, Strategic Planning, National Development and Statistics – Can the Prime Minister provide detailed information on the following –
- (a) how the recent 20% increase in the Ministry’s budget has been allocated across youth development;
 - (b) elite sports advancement for the current fiscal year; and
 - (c) how much of this Budget has been utilised so far.
- 38/2026 Hon. Premila Kumar asked the Minister for Health and Medical Services – Can the Minister inform Parliament, in relation to the Free Health Scheme launched in June 2021, which provides free GP, dental, and laboratory services to individuals earning under \$30,000 annually –
- (a) what the yearly total cost incurred, and the number of patients treated are, from the launch of the scheme, for each type of service (free GP, dental, and laboratory tests); and
 - (b) how is the scheme monitored to prevent any abuse.

The responses to the Oral and Supplementary Questions were provided by the respective Ministers. The Hon. Deputy Speaker allowed the Hon. Virendra Lal to ask Oral Question 27/2026 in the absence of Hon. Joseph Nand.

The Hon. Speaker informed Honourable Members that Oral Questions 30/2026 and 31/2026 would be asked later in the week, and that Oral Question 34/2026 was withdrawn. The Hon. Speaker allowed the Hon. Virendra Lal to ask Written Question 37/2026 in the absence of Hon. Joseph Nand.

The responses to Written Questions 37/2026 and 38/2026 were tabled by the respective Ministers.

9. CONSIDERATION OF BILLS

(a) Second Reading of the Public Health (Amendment) Bill 2026 (Bill No. 4 of 2026)

The Minister for Health and Medical Services the Hon. Dr Ratu Atonio Lalabalavu moved pursuant to Standing Order 85(1) that the Public Health (Amendment) Bill 2026 be read a second time.

Motion seconded.

Motion debated.

Question put.

Motion agreed to unanimously.

A Bill for an Act to amend the Public Health Act 1935 (Bill No. 4 of 2026).

Hon. Speaker referred the Bill to the Standing Committee on Social Affairs pursuant to Standing Order 85(4)(a), and that pursuant to Standing Order 121(1)(a), the Standing Committee must report back to Parliament within 30 days.

(b) Litter (Amendment) Bill 2026 (Bill No. 5 of 2026)

The Minister for Information, and Environment and Climate Change the Hon. Lynda Tabuya moved a motion pursuant to Standing Order 51 –

- (i) That the Litter (Amendment) Bill 2026 (Bill No. 5 of 2026) be considered by Parliament without delay;
- (ii) That the Bill must pass through one stage at a single sitting of Parliament;
- (iii) That the Bill must not be referred to a Standing Committee or other Committee of Parliament; and
- (iv) That the Bill must be debated and voted upon by Parliament on Thursday, 30 April 2026, but that 1 hour be given to debate the Bill, with the right of reply given to her as the Member moving the motion.

Motion seconded.

Motion debated.

Question put.

Motion agreed to unanimously.

10. SUSPENSION MOTION BY THE LEADER OF THE GOVERNMENT IN PARLIAMENT

The Leader of the Government in Parliament the Hon. Ro Filipe Tuisawau moved pursuant to Standing Order 6 that so much of Standing Order 23(1) be suspended so as to allow the House to sit beyond 4.30 p.m. to complete the remaining items listed on the Order Paper.

Motion seconded.

Motion debated.

Question put.

Motion agreed to unanimously.

11. MOTIONS FOR WHICH NOTICE WAS RECEIVED

(a) Motion for Referral

The Minister for Justice and Acting Attorney-General the Hon. Siromi Turaga moved that the Standing Committee on Foreign Affairs and Defence review the Agreement Establishing the Advisory Centre on WTO Law, 2001.

Motion seconded.

The Hon. Speaker confirmed that he had received copies of the treaty and written analysis as required by Standing Order 130(2). Pursuant to Standing Order 130(3), the treaty was referred without debate, to the Standing Committee on Foreign Affairs and Defence. The Committee may table a report to Parliament no later than 30 days.

(b) Motions for Debate

- (i) The Standing Committee on Social Affairs the Hon. Iliesa Vanawalu moved that Parliament debates the 'Review Report on the 2022-2023 Ministry of iTaukei Affairs, Culture, Heritage and Arts Annual Report' which was tabled on 13 March 2026.

Motion seconded.

Motion debated.

Question put.

Motion agreed to unanimously.

- (ii) The Standing Committee on Social Affairs the Hon. Iliesa Vanawalu moved that Parliament debates the 'Review Report on the 2018-2019 Ministry of Housing and Community Development Annual Report' which was tabled on 13 March 2026.

Motion seconded.

Motion debated.

Question put.

Motion agreed to unanimously.

- (iii) The Standing Committee on Social Affairs the Hon. Iliesa Vanawalu moved that Parliament debates the 'Review Report on the 2017 National Fire Authority Annual Report' which was tabled on 13 March 2026.

Motion seconded.

Motion debated.

Question put.

Motion agreed to unanimously.

12. ADJOURNMENT

The Hon. Speaker thanked all Honourable Members for their contributions and adjourned Parliament until Thursday, 30 April 2026 at 9.30 a.m.

Parliament adjourned at 6.55 p.m.

Speaker of Parliament

Secretary-General to Parliament

29th April, 2026.