

Fiji Bank & Finance Sector Employees Union

(Advocating for Workers in Fiji for over 45 years)

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Newsletter

Bula members

It has been a challenging 1.5 months not only for me but for the Secretariat staff as well. Major emphasis was on clearing works pending from 2020 in particular the RBF motions of 2019. We hope to conclude these works before the AGM.

Industrial Relations work is another challenge as I pick up the cases that have been handed over to me and some that was not on the handover list but have appeared nevertheless.

IR committee members have been a pillar of strength to ensure that right directions are given to me to deal with IR matters especially on how to avoid unnecessary legal costs that have been piling on in the Union over the past 6 years.

Highlights are:

Housing Authority – Retirement

We are presently in constructive talks with the HA CEO and his HR/Legal team to iron out the pending Retirement age policy of our members there. The HA has stressed on our Union to align their Retirement age as per other government statutory bodies – which is 55 years.

Accordingly, the HA had issued retirement notices to 5 of our members who had reached the qualifying age. Our Union instituted proceeding at the Employment Tribunal to oppose the same.

At this meeting, we agreed that these employees would be paid their retirement benefits and allowed to work on individual employment contracts, renewed yearly, until they reach the age of 60, provided however, they are in good health and productive.

Collective Bargaining

In my meetings with Mr. Haroon Ali, Country Head, BSP and also Mr. Thierry Gillot, CEO, Bred Bank, we have resolved to reengage with our

Collective Agreement negotiations. I will soon be meeting with their respective HR Team to enable this work to progress further.

Our Industrial Relations Committee [IRC] is enthusiastically developing a 'Matrix' whereby the Finance/Banking industry-wide entitlements and benefits of all employees are reflected. This would help us to prepare well researched 'Log of Claims' to be lodged to the Employers in the later part of this year for negotiations. We are also collating some RBF data to establish an indicative COLA rate for this year.

Bank of Baroda

On the 1st of April I attended the Employment Relations Court for hearing of an Appeal by Bank of Baroda on an issue to do with the interpretation of the Long Service Leave (LSL) clause in our Collective Agreement. The agreement reads that the LSL ***"shall be availed within 2 years of it falling due at a mutual convenient date"***.

In a bizarre interpretation of this clause the BOB wishes it to be read as ***"that the said leave must be taken within 2 years of it falling due or be forfeited"***. We are awaiting the Court ruling in this matter but in the meantime, we advise all our Baroda members to be vigilant in monitoring their LSL entitlements – lest you lose it.

FNPF – Long Out Standing Grievances

We received two hearing allocations in the Arbitration Court for grievances going back to 2008 and 2011 respectively. The Arbitration Court is sanctioned to adjudicate on matters which were stalled due to the sad imposition of the ENI Decree in 2011. The Court has limitations as to what can be offered as settlements and many employers take unjustified advantage of this.

Thank goodness democracy has returned to our country and the employers who ruthlessly exploited the ENI Decree provisions are now few and sparse. However, these matters do give us a yardstick to measure the expression of goodwill and good-faith of the Employers. We will keep you posted.

Branch Visits

I am pleased to have attended the Branch Committee Meeting in Labasa on the 20th of March, 2021.

There, I emphasized on the great tasks undertaken by our Ex-Co Sub-Committees; *the CRC, Disaster/Relief Committee* and touched upon the work of our *Investment Committee* and the importance of supporting and becoming members of our *Credit Union*.

Whilst in Labasa I took the opportunity to visit all the Banks and met the following managers:

- **M/s Eka Takawake** – (Manager, BSP),
- **Mr. Tevita Turagatani** (Manager FDB) and **Mr. Paula Rakai** (Regional Manager, FDB)
- **Telei Tawake** – (Manager, ANZ)
- **Mr. Ajay Nand** – (Manager, BOB)
- **Mr. Rishi Ram** – (Manager, Westpac)

I thank the FDB and BOB managers for allowing me to meet and talk to our members



Investment Committee members (L-R) Matia Tuisawau (RBF), Anit Singh (NS), Ritesh Joseph (FPCUI), Ravneel Chand (BSP B), Asesela Volavola (RBF), Jainendra Govind (QBE), Usa Kalim (WBC)

Other diary matters:

I have met the following CEOs and am happy to have a healthy working relationship and understanding of our future engagements.

- **Mr. Robert Sen** CEO, Housing Authority of Fiji.
- **Mr. Thierry Charras Gillot**, CEO, Bred Bank (Fiji).
- **Mr. Saud Minan & Mr. Ritesh Singh**, CEOs ANZ and PacOp.
- **Mr. Haroon Ali**, Country Head, BSP
- **Mr. Michael Nacola**, Managing Director, BSP Life
- **Mr. YS Ashok**, CEO of LICl

Training for Executive Council and Liaison officers

commence and are diarized as follows:

- ✓ Vanua Levu Branch - Saturday 1 May 2021
- ✓ West - Saturday 8 May 2021
- ✓ Suva - July (date to be fixed)

These Training programs will be interesting

and interactive. Apart from gaining useful information about what your Union does and the Services it provides, you'll also learn about the Trade Union history and Unionism generally and why Unions are even more relevant Today. You'll also gain knowledge and skills to become effective Union Liaison Officers of your Union and know your rights, limitations and ethical considerations that your role demands.

Committees formed for Constitution review, Investment, Disaster plan and assistance criteria and AGM

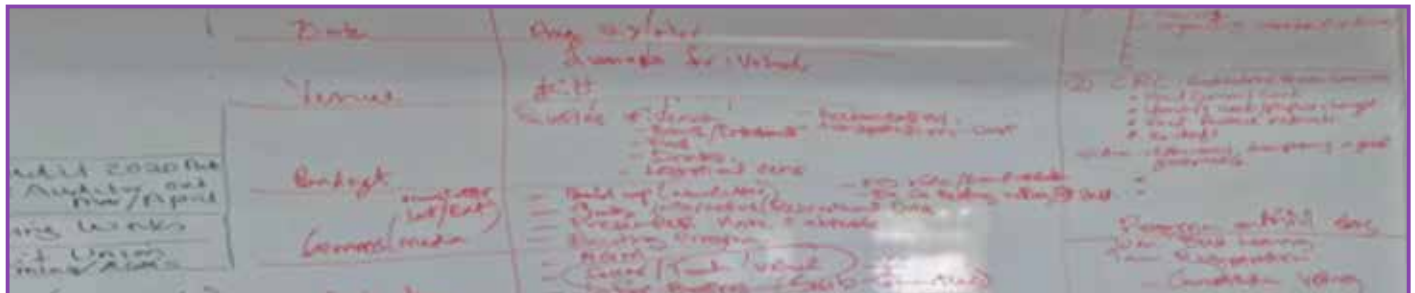
have dedicated their evenings for meetings at the Union office, discussing and preparing notes on the white board. They are tasked to have papers ready for presentation at the Training programs and at the next Ex Co meetings where decisions will be made ready for unveiling at the AGM's. So we are all excited with the improvements that the Union will see in the years to come.

Reminder - Motions for amendments to Constitution

rules are still open to members. Please get together and send your proposals to the Secretariat for Ex Co consideration.



*Seated L-R Mohammed Saiyum (FDB) Vice-President, Anit Singh (NS), Rajneel Maharaj (President)
Standing L-R Atinesh Deo (BOB) Committee member, Sebastian Neel Chand (ANZ) Secretary, Viliame Tamanikaitani (HA) Committee member*



Credit Union

21th and 22sd AGM held on 16/03/21

was attended by 16 members.

A dividend of \$4,000 was declared and shared amongst credit union members.



Asesela Volavola (RBF) (seated in the middle) was elected as the Chairman of the Credit

Union. Other Board members are as follows:

Vice – Chairman	Isei Tuikenawa (BSP B)
Treasurer	Titilia Kamil (FDB)
Secretary	Usa Kalim (WBC)
Committee members	Sharoon Devi (BOB)
	Keresi Lomata (BSP L)
	Kinjioji Bakoso (FDB)
	Niria Seru (WBC)

You will recall that a RBF motion in 2019 had highlighted that members benefit from the union's investments. A committee from the Executive Council was formed for this purpose and they are now brain storming ideas with the Credit Union Board on the start of a project. The Credit Union AGM has endorsed that they will look into small projects as a start so that members can be assisted. We will keep you updated on this.

Website work has commenced and we hope to unveil this at the AGM.

Membership Database upgrade work has commenced. It is important to get updated member information from every member of the Union. Secretariat staff will be sending e-mails to members and where no e-mail addresses are available our

Liaison Officers will be tasked to assist the Secretariat.

International Front:

I have been welcomed by our Regional Trade Secretariats UNI Apro and UNI Global Union. FBFSEU is a Titular member in the UNI Apro Executive Committee.

The 28th UNI Apro Executive Committee meeting takes place

virtually on 29 May 2021. Executive Council members will have the opportunity to be observers at this meeting.

You can view the website of UNI Global Union to learn more about it.

Anit Aunendra Singh
National Secretary