



FIJI TEACHERS UNION

NEWSLETTER

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GREETINGS

Warm greetings to all our valued members.

84th ANNUAL CONFERENCE 2014

The AGM and Conference was well attended by the delegates and guests in the Friendly North. It was very encouraging to see members in large numbers. Congratulations to Labasa Branch for the successful organization of the 84th Annual Conference.

KEYNOTE ADDRESS

Bro. Angelo Gavrielatos, the Federal President of the Australian Education Union was the Chief Guest and Keynote Speaker at the 84th AGM & Conference in Labasa.

Bro. Gavrielatos, while addressing the delegates and guests on the conference theme in Labasa said that "Education is a public good. The values of public education are essentially the values that underpin democracy. They encompass the principles of equity and equal opportunity, of non-discrimination and social justice."

Furthermore, he stressed that the legitimacy of a democracy was based on its citizens being able to understand both, rights and responsibilities and to be able to make informed decisions.

He said it was through education that a society equipped young people with the knowledge, skills, values and attitudes they needed in order for them to play an active role in their communities.

He stated that there were three main duties for us as unionists today.

Firstly, informed by our fundamental belief in the transformative power of public education and what it meant for each individual child and the nation as a whole, it was our duty as teacher unionists to speak up for public education, and to lobby for and demand quality public education for all.

Secondly, he stated that it was our duty as teacher unionists to participate in, and shape

the public debate on education, and put forward a vision for the future of our education system.

Thirdly, the freedom to associate and form representative democratic independent unions was indisputable. However, teachers across the globe still struggled to access their trade union rights. He added that Fiji was no exception, where fundamental Trade Union Rights are being denied blatantly.



Keynote address by Bro Angelo



PRESIDENTIAL ADDRESS

The National President, Bro. Muniappa Goundar, in his address alluded to the theme and stressed that, quality was the most cherished goal in any human endeavour, more so in any field of education. He emphasized on quality public education. He further emphasized that if all our children could be given that quality education that we all espoused, the rest would fall in place.

He quoted the Secretary of US Teachers' Association's address to the 2009 Summer Seminar for Teachers. "I believe that education is the civil rights issue of our generation. And if you care about promoting opportunity and reducing inequality, the classroom is the place to start. Great teaching is about so much more than education; it is daily fight for social justice."

The National President also stressed on five key issues that directly affected teachers: Salary Increase, Acting Appointments and Policies, Graduate Salary, Post Processing and In-Service Training.



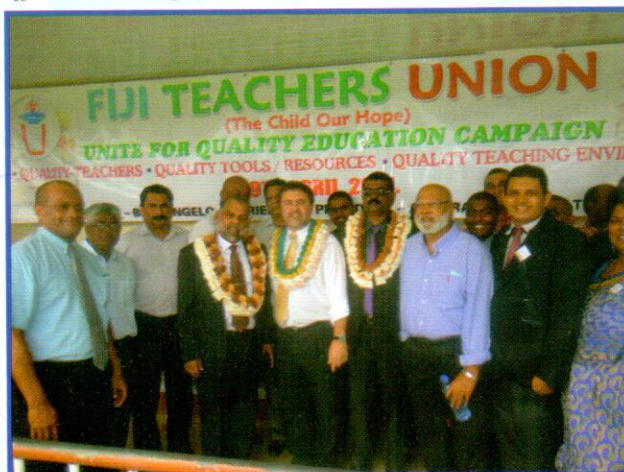
President Bro. Muniappa Goundar

LAUNCHING – UNITE FOR QUALITY EDUCATION CAMPAIGN

While the campaign for Quality Public Education has been ongoing for almost a year now, the chief guest officially launched it at the AGM in the presence of about 1000 members and guests. The AGM subsequently passed resolutions to be submitted to the relevant authorities for appropriate action. Sensitisation of teachers will continue through Branch Workshops/Cluster meetings and school visits.



Official Launching by the Chief Guest



Guests during the launch in Labasa

RESOLUTIONS

The AGM has endorsed the following resolutions which would be sent to the appropriate authorities for action.

1. MERIT INCREASE

Noting with grave concern that teachers were denied normal salary increases for 8 years. Realizing that the cost of living has escalated by about 40% during this period.

Further noting that other sectors of the civil service have benefited from increases which teachers have been denied.

Fiji Teachers Union 84th Annual General Meeting calls upon the State to treat all its employees equally and restore the annual merit increment for teachers from 2014.

2. LONG SERVICE LEAVE ALLOWANCE

Noting the unilateral decision of PSC to cease the long service leave allowance provision which had been in place since the inception of the teaching service. Recognising that this was an entitlement negotiated by the Teacher Unions and agreed upon.

Further noting the practice of bad faith on the part of the Commission which is supposed to be an exemplary employer.

Fiji Teachers Union 84th Annual General Meeting calls upon PSC to restore the age old provision.

3. FTU ON CURRICULUM ADVISORY BOARD

Noting that National Policies and Action Plans to achieve Education For All must be developed and implemented in partnership with civil society, including NGOs and

education unions,

Fiji Teachers Unions 84th Annual General Meeting calls upon the Ministry of Education to ensure that there be active participation of teachers in the development and implementation of education policies, plans and curricula through their respective teacher union.

4. TRAINING FOR TEACHERS – SPECIAL EDUCATION

Recognising that quality education is a human right,

Accepting that education must be provided by the state,

Noting that education must be available freely to all,

Further noting that education should be all inclusive and people with special needs need assistance to achieve their maximum potential,

The Fiji Teachers Union 84th Annual General Meeting calls upon the Ministry of Education to provide more funding towards the training of the teachers for effecting teaching and learning in Special Education Schools.

5. TEACHER TRAINING PROGRAMME

Considering that today's teachers encounter a range of classroom and social conditions; multilingual classes, increase mainstreaming of special education students, growing number of students in poverty and students from single parents,

Agreeing that although students are of similar age and in same class, their achievement levels vary greatly,

Noting that teachers would be needing different teaching methods to reach different students,

Fiji Teachers Union 84th Annual General Meeting calls upon the Ministry of Education to ensure that training programmes at the Teacher Training Institutions are well equipped to meet the needs of the trainee teachers mentioned herein.

6. CLASS SIZE

Noting the increase in teacher workload arising out of the changes in the assessment system and the Curricular,

Further Noting the rapid increase in class sizes especially in urban area schools arising from internal migration, Acknowledging the recommendations of the Job Evaluation Exercise 1993 and knowing that its implementation is long overdue,

The Fiji Teachers Union 84th Annual General Meeting calls upon the Ministry of Education to implement the recommendations of 1993 JEE to achieve class sizes of 30 and below for straight classes, 25 for class one and Form 7 and 20 for composite classes and there should be no multiple class teachings.

7. POST PROCESSING / APPEALS BOARD

Noting the number of complaints received from the members regarding the filling of vacancies, Further Noting that many better merited officers have missed out on promotions,

And that these officers have no mechanism to seek redress,

The Fiji Teachers Union 84th Annual General Meeting calls upon the Ministry of Education to include the teacher unions in the Central Staff Board Meetings and restore the Appeals Process.

8. NON TEACHING TIME FOR SCHOOL HEADS

Acknowledging the enormous responsibility of guiding, developing, monitoring and reporting on teachers and the school,

Noting the time consumed to provide professional guidance, assisting and assessing training needs of the teachers under their care,

And attending to the needs and queries of the parents,

The Fiji Teachers Union 84th Annual General Meeting calls upon the Ministry of Education to reconsider their stance and allow for Head Teachers of grades 4C, ED3C, 2C and 1B to have zero teaching load to enable them carry out their administrative work effectively. Furthermore a pool of relieving teachers be established to assist ED6D and ED5E heads at least 1 day per week.

9. EXECUTIVE TEACHER POSITIONS

Noting that the 1993 JEE saw merit in making recommendation that 854 Executive Teacher positions be created in primary school,

Further noting that the recommendation was implemented in 1997 which had since brought in a marked improvement in the quality of classroom work in primary schools, This allocation of 854 ET positions was reduced to 427 by Ministry of Education as a cost cutting measure in 2009, and which had a negative impact on the delivery of quality education,

The Fiji Teachers Union 84th Annual General Meeting calls upon the Ministry of Education to restore the ET positions to its full complement without any further delays.

10. EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION

Noting that many primary schools have kindergarten attached to their schools,

Recognising that kindergarten teachers play a major role in the grooming of a child,

Further recognising that early childhood education is the foundation of learning and that it needs everyone's attention

The Fiji Teachers Union 84th Annual General Meeting calls upon the

Ministry of Education to provide a grant of \$6,000.00 to all established kindergarten towards the teacher's salary.

11. DECREE NO.21 OF 2011

Noting with deep concern that Decree No.21 of 2011 has effectively removed all the rights of the Public Service Unions to represent their members and to seek redress under the provisions of the Employment Relations Promulgation 2007,

Further Noting that this Decree has given PSC unfettered powers to unilaterally decide and change terms and conditions of Civil Servants that have been negotiated by the unions over the decades,

The 84th Annual General Meeting of Fiji Teachers Union calls upon the Interim Administration to repeal Decree No. 21 and restore the rights of the Unions to register the Trade Dispute under the Employment Relations Promulgation.

12. INSERVICE TRAINING

Noting that teaching methods and teaching materials are ever changing,

Acknowledging that new standards for children require that teachers have deep and flexible knowledge of their subject matter and wide repertoire of teaching skills,

The Fiji Teachers Union 84th Annual General Meeting calls upon the Ministry of Education to inject more funds into the in-service programmes and ensure that these programmes are structured and provide opportunities for greater number of teachers to enhance their teaching / learning skills.

13. POOL OF RELIEVING TEACHERS

Acknowledging that teachers are the delivery agents of quality education.

Accepting that students are at times left without teachers in cases of prolonged sicknesses and cases of maternity leave.

The Fiji Teachers Union 84th Annual General Meeting calls upon the Ministry of Education to have a pool of teachers on standby in all the Education Districts so that the quality of education is not compromised.

14. CONVERSATIONAL VERNACULAR

Noting that the teaching and learning of conversational I-Taukei and Hindi has now been made compulsory via the Constitution.

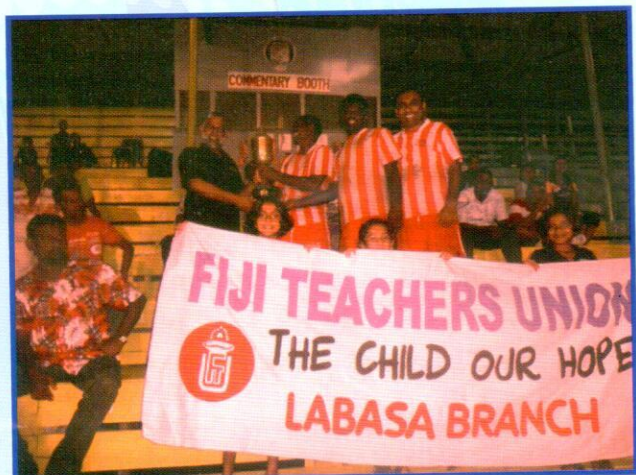
Accepting that learning each other's language is a way forward,
The Fiji Teachers Union 84th Annual General Meeting calls upon the Ministry of Education to ensure that teachers coming out of the teacher training institutions are well equipped to teach the same when posted to schools.

2014 CONFERENCE SPORTS RESULTS

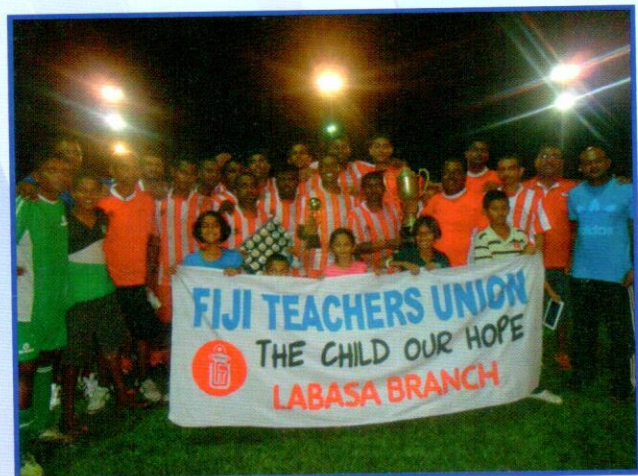
SPORTS	WINNER	RUNNER UP
Soccer	Labasa	Nadi
Netball	Suva	Labasa
Men's V/Ball	Suva	Labasa
Women's V/Ball	Labasa	Suva
Best Player Soccer	Ajesh Prasad (Labasa)	
Best Player Men's V/Ball	Navitalai Naivalu (Suva)	
Best Player Women's V/Ball	Lavenia (Labasa)	
Best Player Netball	Naomi Asoli (Suva)	

A very big thank you to Sports Chair, Bro Vishnu Sharma and his team for a very successful Conference Sports

CONFERENCE SPORTS IN PICTURES



Soccer Winners (Labasa)



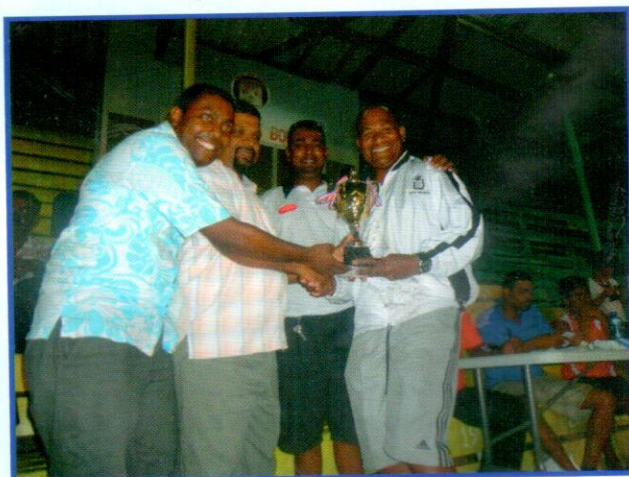
Labasa Soccer team



Soccer runner up (Nadi)



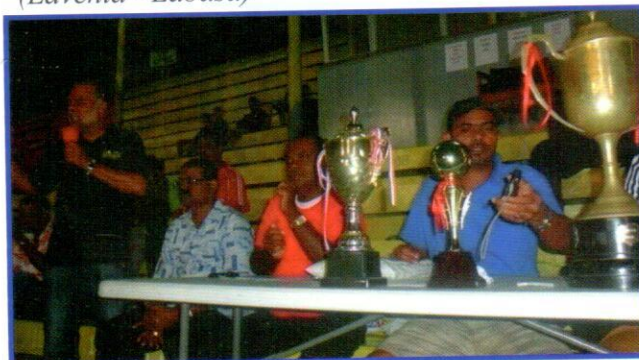
Netball Winner (Suva)



Men's Volleyball Winner (Suva)



*Best Player Womens Volleyball
(Lavenia - Labasa)*



Sports Summing Up

BRANCH WORKSHOPS

Workshops will continue be conducted for all the Branches.

The Union will liaise with the Professional Development Unit to get the Workshop/Seminar registered and added to the teachers 20 hours of PD required by FTRB.

Divisional workshops for Branch Executives and Women leaders will be conducted in regards to roles and responsibilities of Principal Officers. Members are urged to make use of the opportunities provided.

CONSTITUTIONAL AMENDMENTS

It is pleasing to note that the amendments proposed by National Executive were all voted in favor of. The approval of the additional Vice President position to be reserved for a woman is a significant step forward in our consistent effort to achieve gender balance at the National level.

NATIONAL WOMENS WING OFFICE BEARERS 2014-2016

Chairperson	- Vidya Singh (Lautoka)
V Chairperson	- Rukmani Lal (Labasa)
V Chairperson	- Sima Kumar (Lautoka)
Secretary	- Sangeeta Prakash (Ra)
Asst. Sect	- Sherina Riaz (Nadro)
Treasurer	- Vijay S. Naicker (Navua)
Comm Mem	- Latchmi Devi (Nasinu)
Comm Mem	- Ajeshni Lal (Suva)
Comm Mem	- Urmila Singh (Rewa)



FTU Womens Wing Executives 2013-2014

UNION LITERATURE

Approximately 20% to 30% of the members attend Union gatherings at Branch and National level. These forums discuss issues in-depth and are also a means for information dissemination on the functions and the services provided by the Union. Annual Activities Report are sent to Branches to be distributed to all the members. Members are once again urged to read all Union literature to be able to access the services in times of need.

FTU CTCL

The CTCL AGM was attended by over 500 members. The announcement of a 10% and 4% dividend for investments in the resort and CTCL respectively was received with acclamation. The Loan ceiling is also being increased from \$75,000 to \$80,000 wef 1st July 2014. The interest rate on **Housing Loans** is to be relooked at by the Board.

FTU WOMENS WING RATED BEST IN COPE REGION

FTU Womens Wing was judged as the best performing Womens group in the South Pacific at the last Triennial Conference in Nadi in August 2013. The chief guest presented a laptop to the Womens Wing on behalf of Australian Education Union (AEU) as an incentive to further the capacity building of women leaders.



Chairperson WW Sis Vidya Singh receiving the Laptop from Bro. Angelo.

MABS & INHOUSE MEDICAL INSURANCE SCHEME

1. If husband and wife are both teachers, both have to be members not just for MABS but also for Medical Insurance. Only **one** is required to pay for Medical Insurance.
2. Where Medical reports are required to determine pre-existing conditions **all** covered by the scheme must oblige.

MEMBERSHIP

Members are to note the legal requirement of not to be a member of more than one Union.

ORBITUARY

The Union notes with deep sadness, the passing away of Bros. Jagdish Singh [former President] and Gyan Chand Prasad [former Vice President]. Both contributed immensely towards Unionism during their terms.

2014 AGM AND CONFERENCE IN PICTURES

