



FIJI TEACHERS UNION

NEWSLETTER

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JULY 2026

GREETINGS

"Where there is unity there is always victory."
(Publius Syrus)

Warm greetings to all members of the Fiji Teachers Union! We are into the mid of term two and the union takes this time to thank its members for the work done both inside and outside the classroom.

The union acknowledges the valuable support rendered by the members and their passion, steadfastness, dedication, determination, and unwavering commitment in preparing our students for their Mid-Year examination and LANA for Year 5 and 7.

The General Secretary has been on record for attending matters pertaining to members on print media. FTU will abide by its principles of dedication, commitment and calling a spade a spade. We will not bow down.

At this juncture, we remember Bro. Nakul Deo Barman, our National Executive Committee Member who departed for eternity on Sunday May 24 at the Aspen Hospital in Ba. Bro. Nakul Deo Barman was cremated on Friday, May 29. His contributions as a teacher, administrator and unionist have been immense. May the departed soul find peace and solace!

INDUSTRIAL RELATIONS PRESENTATION- CRC

On 6 July, 2026, the Secretariat had the privilege of presenting the Fiji Teachers Union's submission to the Constitutional Review Commission. The presentation emphasized that a strong Constitution must protect the rights, dignity, and welfare of all workers, including teachers, who play a vital role in nation-building. The presentation advocated for the full protection of freedom of association, the right to collective bargaining, and the independence of trade unions without unnecessary interference. We also called for constitutional safeguards that promote fair labour practices, equal opportunities, transparent governance, and accountability

within the public service. The submission highlighted the importance of quality public education and the need for policies that attract, retain, and value qualified teachers.

It was also stressed that constitutional principles should support decent working conditions, job security, professional respect, and meaningful consultation with teacher unions on matters affecting teachers. The message was clear: a democratic and inclusive Constitution must recognise education as a national priority and ensure that teachers are empowered to serve students effectively.

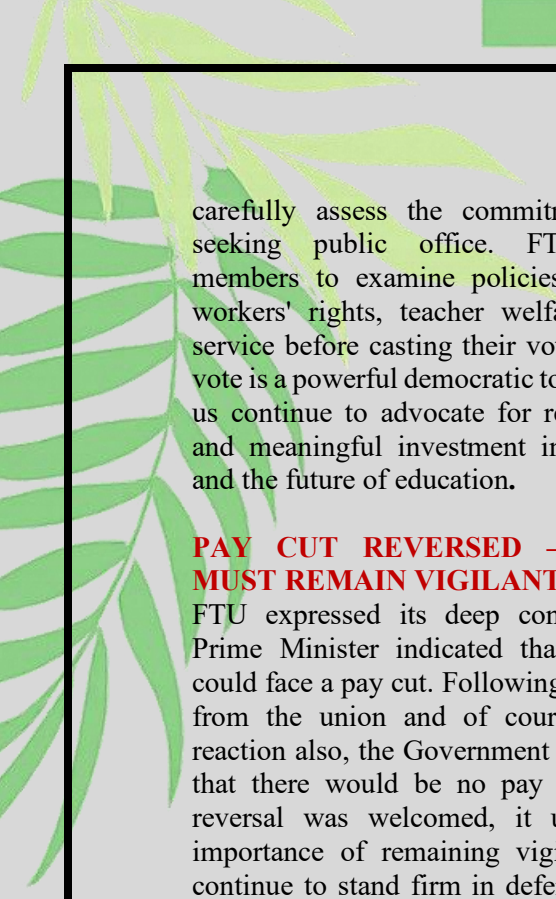
The Fiji Teachers Union remains committed to advocating for constitutional reforms that strengthen workers' rights, uphold democratic values, and create a fair, equitable, and prosperous future for all Fijians.

2026/27 BUDGET SUBMISSION

In June this year, the Secretariat presented a comprehensive submission to the Ministry of Finance ahead of the 2026/27 National Budget. FTU's proposals were aimed at improving teachers' salaries, addressing retention, and recognising the professionalism and dedication of teachers. We sought an 8% Cost of Living Adjustment (COLA), a 3% Salary Scale Progression Payment, a 2% Merit-Based Increase, and a 2% Equity and Retention Adjustment.

The union also advocated for the restoration of Long Service Leave, fair salary progression for graduate teachers, improved school funding, and stronger measures to retain teachers in Fiji. The call for a Job Evaluation Exercise was also made. Despite these well-founded recommendations, it is sad to note that nothing was considered. This was disappointing, particularly at a time when teachers continue to face rising living costs, increased workloads, and a growing exodus of experienced teachers from the profession.

As our nation prepares for the next General Election, every teacher has an opportunity to



carefully assess the commitments of those seeking public office. FTU encourages members to examine policies on education, workers' rights, teacher welfare, and public service before casting their vote. An informed vote is a powerful democratic tool. Together, let us continue to advocate for respect, fairness, and meaningful investment in Fiji's teachers and the future of education.

PAY CUT REVERSED – TEACHERS MUST REMAIN VIGILANT

FTU expressed its deep concern when the Prime Minister indicated that civil servants could face a pay cut. Following strong reaction from the union and of course from public reaction also, the Government later announced that there would be no pay cut. While this reversal was welcomed, it underscores the importance of remaining vigilant. FTU will continue to stand firm in defending members' salaries, conditions of service, and dignity, ensuring that teachers' interests are always protected.

PAY OUR NEW TEACHERS NOW

FTU has publicly called on the Ministry of Education to urgently pay the salaries of newly appointed teachers who continue to serve without receiving their rightful wages. Our press release, published in *The Fiji Times*, highlighted the financial hardship and uncertainty these teachers are facing despite faithfully carrying out their duties. FTU will continue to advocate strongly until every new teacher receives the salary they have earned. Fair and timely payment is a basic employment right.

POLICY ON EXAMINATIONS AND ASSESSMENT

FTU made detailed submissions on the proposed Policy on Examinations and Assessment, advocating for a fair, transparent, and balanced assessment system that supports quality teaching and learning. The union's recommendations focused on protecting professional standards, reducing unnecessary workload, ensuring equity for all learners, and promoting meaningful consultation with teachers in policy implementation.

FTU DECRIES 2 % SUPER CUT

Following the 2026/27 National Budget, FTU expressed its concern over the temporary 2%

reduction in the employer FNPF contribution, effective from August 1 for a period of 12 months. While presented as a short-term measure, FTU cautioned that it will reduce members' retirement savings and could have a lasting impact on their financial security.

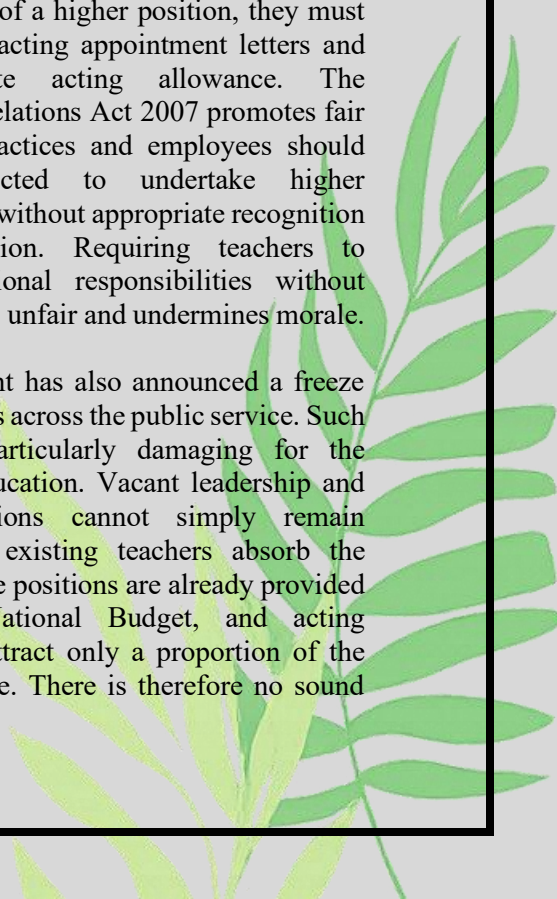
The union urged the Government to reconsider the decision and explore alternative measures that do not erode workers' superannuation benefits. FTU remains committed to protecting members' long-term financial interests and advocating for policies that strengthen, rather than diminish, retirement security.

FTU DEMANDS WITHDRAWAL OF CIRCULAR 06/2026 FOR THE MINISTRY OF EDUCATION

The FTU strongly condemns the application of Ministry of Civil Service Circular 06/2026 to the education sector. While cost-saving measures may be workable in some parts of the public service, they are simply not practical in our schools. Teaching is not an office-based function where duties can be redistributed through multitasking. A teacher cannot effectively teach two or more classes simultaneously without compromising on the quality of education and student learning.

The Circular's restrictions on acting appointments and the withholding of acting allowances are unacceptable. Where teachers are required to perform the duties and responsibilities of a higher position, they must receive formal acting appointment letters and the appropriate acting allowance. The Employment Relations Act 2007 promotes fair employment practices and employees should not be expected to undertake higher responsibilities without appropriate recognition and remuneration. Requiring teachers to shoulder additional responsibilities without compensation is unfair and undermines morale.

The Government has also announced a freeze on appointments across the public service. Such a policy is particularly damaging for the Ministry of Education. Vacant leadership and teaching positions cannot simply remain unfilled while existing teachers absorb the workload. These positions are already provided for in the National Budget, and acting arrangements attract only a proportion of the salary difference. There is therefore no sound



justification for denying legitimate acting appointments where operational needs clearly exist.

Teachers are already leaving Fiji in significant numbers in search of better opportunities. Denying career progression, acting opportunities and fair remuneration will only accelerate this exodus. Schools require qualified leaders, motivated teachers and stable staffing if quality education is to be delivered.

FTU therefore calls on Government to immediately exempt the Ministry of Education from Circular 06/2026, restore normal acting appointment processes, issue acting letters without delay, and pay the appropriate acting allowances. Our teachers will not continue performing higher duties without recognition or compensation. Quality education depends on a workforce that is respected, properly supported and fairly rewarded.

ANNUAL CONFERENCE OFFICIAL OPENING

During the 96th Annual Conference at Xavier College in Ba, we gathered as a united force. The official opening was held at Xavier College a day prior to the Annual General Meeting. The Chief Guest was Honourable Agni Deo Singh- the Minister for Employment, Productivity and Workplace Relations.

We are grateful to our sponsors- Remington, Vodafone, Sigatoka Electric Limited, Global Healthcare, Vinod Patel and LICI for injecting the much-needed finance to ensure the success of the AGM. FTU extends its appreciation to all members for their unwavering support throughout the Annual Conference. The Remington-sponsored President's Night honoured the National President, Bro. Sashi Mahendra Shandil. His contributions to FTU were highlighted. Members enjoyed the meet and greet session. Members of the Publicity and Sports Committees and the Executive of Ba branch were rewarded for their efforts in hosting the Conference.

SPORTS MEET

Sporting events have always brought an added level of excitement and energy to the AGM and Annual Conference. 2026 was no exception, as the games drew a large crowd to the newly

constructed 4R Stadium. For the first time in history, the sports uniforms were sponsored by Global Healthcare. We sincerely accord our gratitude to Mr Yogendra Sharma and Global Healthcare for donating the soccer and netball uniforms and t-shirts for the National Executive and Branch Reps.

The soccer competition was a tough battle as Lautoka ended their winless run, emerging victorious over Nasinu 2-0. Rewa claimed the women's volleyball title after defeating Navua. Nadroga defended their netball title after defeating Rewa. Labasa created history as they triumphed over Taveuni in the men's volleyball final. It was the first time that both teams played in the final of the men's volleyball competition.

The best player awards were given as follows: soccer- Bro. Ashneel Nand (Lautoka), women's volleyball- Sis. Karalaini Logaulu (Navua), netball- Sis. Emalaini Rabuatoka (Nadroga) and men's volleyball- Bro. Sumeet Kumar (Labasa).

The best dressed teams were: soccer- Nadi, women's volleyball and netball- Lautoka and men's volleyball- Rewa.

THANKS, AND APPRECIATION

The host branch- Ba deserves credit for hosting the 96th AGM and Conference. The Executive pulled the loose ends, got a 'spirited' team, and organized the four-day Conference and the pre-conference and post-conference meeting. It was pleasing to note the support from FTU stalwarts, including those who have retired from FTU. The membership at large is complimented for the wonderful support that was rendered to us in Ba.

Special thanks are due to the Ba branch Executive, led by Bros. Manoj Kumar, the late Nakul Deo Barman, Shalveen Prasad, Timoci Seru and Mohammed Naushad for their exceptional efforts in organizing what was a remarkable conference, marked by great sportsmanship and impressive attendance.

TRIBUTE TO THE LATE BRO. NAKUL DEO BARMAN

Bro. Nakul Deo Barman, who engineered this year's Annual Conference was the Branch Rep of Ba. He got elected to the National Executive

in December. Bro. Nakul Deo Barman served in various branches like Nadi and Ba before serving as Vice President and President of the Fiji Trades Union Congress Youth Wing.

Bro. Nakul Deo Barman was the head of school Drasa Primary School and made a difference in the lives of the many children whom he taught.

He was a passionate, committed and dedicated leader who called the shots and led by example. He played a vital role in the success of this year's Annual Conference. We pray that the departed soul finds peace and solace!



The late Nakul Deo Barman with the National President, Bro. Sashi Mahendra Shandil, Publicity Officer Bro. Vishal Raj Goundar and Vice President Bro. Pratosh Kumar

EXTERNAL RESOLUTIONS

1. COLLECTIVE BARGAINING

Noting that the Government of Fiji has ratified the International Labour Organization Conventions 87 and 98, which uphold the principles of freedom of association and the right to organize and bargain collectively;

Further noting that such ratification carries both a legal and moral obligation on Government to engage constructively with recognised trade unions through genuine collective bargaining processes;

Recognizing that the Employment Relations Promulgation (Amendment) Act 2016 provides for collective bargaining within essential national services;

Acknowledging the critical role teachers play in nation-building and the importance of fair and progressive terms and conditions of employment;

The Fiji Teachers Union 96th Annual General Meeting calls upon the Ministry of Education and the Ministry of Civil Service to fully and meaningfully engage with the Fiji Teachers Union in collective bargaining to address salaries, allowances, workload, career progression, and all other terms and conditions of service for teachers.

2. JOB EVALUATION EXERCISE 2017

Noting with grave concern that the 2017 Job Evaluation Exercise was carried out without meaningful consultation and active participation of the recognised teacher unions; Further noting that the outcomes of the exercise resulted in significant flaws within the grading structure and salary scales applicable to teachers;

Recognising that serious anomalies continue to persist, particularly in the entry-point salaries of graduate teachers following the implementation of the Job Evaluation Exercise;

Concerned that these unresolved disparities have adversely affected teacher morale, workplace equity, motivation, and staff retention across the education sector;

Further concerned that seven years have elapsed since the 2017 exercise, despite the expectation that a Job Evaluation Exercise be undertaken every five years to ensure relevance, fairness, and alignment with current responsibilities and economic realities;

The Fiji Teachers Union 96th Annual General Meeting calls upon the Ministry of Education and the Ministry of Finance, in collaboration with the Ministry of Civil Service and the recognised teacher unions, to urgently commence a formal consultative process for the 2027 Job Evaluation Exercise without further delay, and to make the necessary financial allocations and public announcements in the forthcoming 2026/27 National Budget.

3. CLASS SIZE

Noting with concern the increasing workload placed on teachers because of ongoing changes to the assessment system and curriculum requirements;

Further noting the rapid growth in class sizes, particularly in urban schools, driven largely by

rural-to-urban migration and rising student enrolments;

Acknowledging the recommendations contained in the Job Evaluation Exercise of 1993 regarding appropriate staffing levels and manageable class sizes;

Recognizing that the implementation of these recommendations is long overdue and remains critical to improving the quality of teaching and learning;

Concerned that overcrowded classrooms and multiple-class teaching arrangements place undue pressure on teachers and negatively affect student outcomes;

The Fiji Teachers Union 96th Annual General Meeting calls upon the Ministry of Education to urgently implement the recommendations of the 1993 Job Evaluation Exercises to achieve maximum class sizes of:

30 students and below for straight classes;

25 students and below for Year 1 and Year 13 classes;

20 students and below for composite classes;

and to abolish the practice of multiple-class teaching through the provision of adequate teacher staffing in all schools.

4. HUMAN RESOURCES CAPACITY IN THE MINISTRY OF EDUCATION

Noting with serious concern the increasing number of delays, inconsistencies, and unresolved matters relating to teacher appointments, confirmations, transfers, leave applications, salary adjustments, and other personnel issues within the Human Resources Department;

Further noting that many of these matters require a sound understanding of school operations, teaching service regulations, career structures, and the practical realities faced by educators in schools;

Recognizing that the absence of adequately experienced senior educators within the Human Resources Division has contributed to administrative inefficiencies, poor communication, delayed decision-making, and growing frustration among teachers;

Concerned that these shortcomings have caused unnecessary hardships to teachers, placed union members in difficult and embarrassing situations, and brought disrepute to the Ministry of Education;

Acknowledging that an effective Human Resource Department is essential to

maintaining staff morale, professional confidence, and the efficient delivery of education services;

Therefore, the Fiji Teachers Union 96th Annual General Meeting resolves to call upon the Ministry of Education to urgently strengthen its Human Resources Division through the appointment of suitably qualified and experienced senior teachers and education professionals who possess practical knowledge of the teaching service, so that teacher-related matters are handled efficiently, fairly, professionally, and in a timely manner.

5. OVERSEAS TRAVEL- MEDICAL GROUND

Noting that members become sick and need to travel overseas for medical treatment or procedure;

Further noting that the member is under duress and needs physical and psychosocial assistance;

The Fiji Teachers Union 96th Annual General Meeting calls upon the Ministry of Education to grant leave with pay if the spouse is travelling overseas with the sick partner or medical treatment if the spouse is a teacher rather than taking leave without pay.

6. PAYMENT OF LONG SERVICE ALLOWANCE

Noting that long service allowance was unilaterally taken away from the teachers on silence;

Further noting that this allowance is paid in other sectors of the civil service;

The Fiji Teachers Union 96th Annual General meeting calls upon the Ministry of Education to restore the payment of the long service allowance.

7. RELEASE OF CHILDREN ATTENDING ECE SCHOOLS

Noting that the Ministry of Education, in the 2025/2026 National Budget, has extended the working hours of Early Childhood Education (ECE) teachers, thereby increasing the duration of the school day for ECE children;

Further noting that children, typically aged 4-5 years, have limited attention spans and are developmentally more susceptible to fatigue and reduced concentration over extended hours;

Recognizing that prolonged school hours may have adverse psychological effects on young children, including increased stress, irritability, and reduced overall well-being;

Further recognizing that adequate rest and meaningful time with parents and caregivers are essential for the healthy emotional, social, and cognitive development of young children;

The Fiji Teachers Union 96th Annual General Meeting calls upon the Ministry of Education to implement a policy for the early release of children attending ECE schools at midday.

8. SALARY JUSTICE FOR GRADUATE TEACHERS

Noting that approximately 600 secondary-trained graduate teachers currently serving in primary schools across Fiji hold recognized bachelor's degrees in education and related disciplines;

Further noting that these teachers are presently classified as 'unqualified' by the Ministry of Education due solely to their deployment at the primary level, and are remunerated under Band E, Step 1, with a starting salary of FJD \$21,121; Recognizing that this classification is inequitable and fails to realize that academic qualifications, professional training, and competencies are not diminished by the level of teaching assignment;

And further noting that this disparity violates the fundamental principle of equal pay for equal work, undermines professional dignity, and erodes confidence in the fairness and integrity of the education system;

The Fiji Teachers Union 96th Annual General Meeting calls upon the Ministry of Education to remunerate these graduates accordingly with a graduate salary.

9. INCREASE IN FREE EDUCATION GRANT (FEG)

Noting that the Free Education Grant (FEG), introduced in 2014, was a landmark initiative aimed at ensuring equitable access to education under the national vision that no child should be left behind;

Further noting that schools are currently facing escalating costs in utilities, teaching resources, maintenance, and technology, thereby affecting the quality of teaching and learning;

The Fiji Teachers Union 96th Annual General Meeting calls upon the Ministry of

Education to increase the FEG at the ECE, primary and secondary school levels.

10.0 TEACHER EXODUS

Noting that teacher exodus is a national crisis that threatens the fabric of our education system, affecting the delivery of quality education;

Noting that both young and experienced teachers are leaving our shores for greener pastures and better living conditions;

Further noting that there is a need to create workplaces where educators can raise families, build lives and prosper.

The Fiji Teachers Union 96th Annual General Meeting calls upon the Ministry of Finance and the Ministry of Education for a 15% pay rise which shall comprise of 8% COLA, 3% Salary Scale Progression Payment, 2% Merit Pay and 2% Equity and Retention Pay.

FTU JOURNAL

The Publicity Committee, comprising of Bros. Vishal Raj Goundar, Rajnesh Lingam, Pranesh Kumar, and Sis Urmila Singh, worked tirelessly to complete the journal. We apologize for any shortcomings.

BRANCH VISITS/ CLUSTER MEETINGS

The General Secretary continues to visit schools and districts and address cluster meetings to enlighten members on current issues as well as maintain connectivity.

SCHOOL REPS SEMINAR

Rewa, Nasinu and Suva branches organised a school reps' seminar. HQ was impressed with the turnout. The topics focused on: MABS, the insurance medical scheme, empowering women, the role of principal officers, industrial relations, communication, improving union services and trade union renewal.

GO PUBLIC! FUND EDUCATION CAMPAIGN STRATEGIC PLANNING MEETING

The Go Public! Fund Education Campaign Strategic Planning meeting was held in Samoa from June 15 to 17, which was organized and facilitated by the Education International and Council of Pacific Education. The objectives of the workshop were to: initiate advocacy for increased public funding to education, recognize the transformative power of education, and prioritize and adequately fund public education systems to ensure quality education is accessible to all children globally. The strategic meeting met to: understand the current landscape to assess critical issues such as teacher shortages, working conditions, workload, mental health, and education financing in their respective countries, leverage the UN panel recommendations, explore practical strategies to address these challenges, guided by the recommendations of the UN high-level panel, strengthen sub-regional and national advocacy, align with the Go Public! Fund Education! Campaign and develop coordinated advocacy plans at national and sub-regional levels. The General Secretary, General Treasurer and Sis. Urmila Singh attended the meeting.



The General Treasurer, Bro. Pranesh Kumar, General Secretary, Bro. Muniappa Goundar and Vice President, Sis. Urmila Singh with the Samoan Prime Minister La'auli Leuatea Schmidt

FOOTBALLERS REWARDED

The Lautoka branch organised a thanksgiving for their football players for winning this year's football competition during the Annual Conference. The National President was part of their thanksgiving function. Players were

awarded a certificate, medal and trophy for doing the Sugar City proud.



The National President with the Executive and soccer players

SUVA ORGANISES THANKSGIVING

The rejuvenated Suva branch also organised a thanksgiving function to thank their players and Executives for representing the branch at the Annual Conference. Players were rewarded with a certificate, medal and trophy for their efforts. Dinner was also provided by the branch. The General Secretary, General Treasurer, Assistant General Secretary and Vice President, Sis. Urmila Singh were part of the thanksgiving ceremony.



Team Suva on the go

LABASA UNITES TO CELEBRATE HISTORIC VICTORY

The Labasa branch united to celebrate their historic men's volleyball victory. History was created when the men's volleyball trophy

crossed the mainland for the first time. We congratulate Labasa for being part of history.

NASINU AT THEIR BEST

Nasinu also organised a thanksgiving function to thank their players and Executives for representing the branch at the Annual Conference. Dinner was served to all.

NADI REWARDS PLAYERS

The Nadi Executive did their part as they got their players together and thanked them for flying the branch's flag at the Annual Conference. Our National Executive Committee Member, Bro. Madhur Prakash, represented HQ.

NEW INSURANCE PREMIUM

Members are once again reminded of the new premium subs for the medical scheme:

Cover	Premium per pay	Annual Premium
Single	\$46.00	\$1196.00
Family	\$57.00	\$1482.00

This includes a deductible of \$1000.00. The Evacuation limit has been increased from \$250,000.00 to \$300,000.00. Members must note that the FTU medical scheme is still an average of 30% cheaper than the current insurance market price.

ARREARS- UNION SUBS

Members who have arrears for their insurance premium have been sent letters and emails. We urge all those members to pay their arrears.

CONCLUSION

“Unity to be real must stand the severest strain without breaking.” (Mahatma Gandhi)

Despite the trying times, as a Union, FTU has provided the best service to the membership in terms of industrial relations and social security benefits. There have been challenges, but things have been done, and results have been achieved.

FTU is optimistic about good days ahead, and we plead with our members to have patience. The General Secretary continues to attend

meetings with the Ministry to address member grievances.

The Secretariat extends his warmest wishes to all teachers. May you continue to inspire with dedication and passion.

Wishing every member a joyful and productive academic term!











PRESS RELEASES

Teacher workload row

FTU warns extra duties could affect teaching quality

By REPEKA NASIKO

THE Fiji Teachers Union (FTU) has condemned an application from the Ministry of Civil Service to the education sector that allegedly could lead to teachers taking on more responsibility.

FTU general secretary Muniappa Goundar said while cost-saving measures may be workable in some parts of the public service, they were simply not practical in our schools.

"Teaching is not an office-based function where duties can be redistrib-

uted through multitasking," he said.

"A teacher cannot effectively teach two or more classes simultaneously without compromising the quality of education and student learning.

"The Circular 39 restrictions on acting appointments and the withholding of acting allowances are unacceptable.

"Where teachers are required to perform the duties and responsibilities of a higher position, they must receive formal acting appointment letters and the appropriate



Muniappa Goundar.
Picture: FILE

acting allowance."

He said the Employment Relations Act 2007 promotes fair employment practices and employees should not be expected to undertake higher responsibilities without appropriate recognition and remuneration.

"Requiring teachers to shoulder additional responsibilities without compensation is unfair and undermines morale.

"The Government has also announced a freeze on appointments across the public service.

"Such a policy is particularly dam-

aging for the Ministry of Education. Vacant leadership and teaching positions cannot simply remain unfilled while existing teachers absorb the workload.

"These positions are already provided for in the National Budget, and acting arrangements attract only a proportion of the salary difference.

"There is, therefore, no sound justification for denying legitimate acting appointments where operational needs clearly exist."

Mr Goundar added teachers were already leaving Fiji in significant numbers in search of better opportunities.

Union sounds alarm

Average of two teachers leaving Fiji daily, says Goundar

By REPEKA NASIKO

A TOTAL of 360 teachers left the country for greener pastures between January 1 and May 31 in 2026.

Fiji Teachers Union general secretary Muniappa Goundar said this meant an average of two teachers left every day within

the five-month period.

"The total exit from the ministry from 1st January to 31st May is 360 which means an average of 72 teachers per month for the five first months of this year," he said.

"If we break down further into days, the same five months have 154 days meaning an average of two teachers per day."

He said this was concerning be-

cause the ministry was already struggling to retain teachers.

"We have to seriously look into this issue because our current population of teachers are being overwhelmed."

Mr Goundar said while the ministry addressed this issue, they acknowledged Government's efforts to look after current teachers.

He said the Government would soon pay teachers who took on acting roles and new graduate teachers.

"A total of approximately \$1.698million will be paid out maybe in the 17th pay to 98 new appointments, 164 acting appointments and 12 nonteaching appointments.

"That means a total of 318 of-

ficers will be paid later this month."



Muniappa Goundar.
Picture: FILE

Union seeks answers

Goundar criticises Government's silence over job evaluation program

By REPEKA NASIKO

THE Fiji Teachers Union (FTU) is questioning Government's silence over the job evaluation exercise (JEE) program for teachers which would have resulted in salary readjustments for some.

FTU general secretary Muniappa Goundar said the last JEE was carried out between 2017 and 2018 and failed to involve union representatives.

"A credible evaluation cannot be undertaken without the

participation of the very people who understand the work, responsibilities and challenges of teachers," he said.

"Teachers were given renewed hope when the former Minister for Finance announced in his 2024 Diwali message that a job evaluation exercise would be undertaken.

"That same message was repeated at the FTU annual general meeting by the chief guest on behalf of the Prime Minister, who indicated that the exercise would commence during the 2026-27 financial

year. Unfortunately, the national budget was silent.

"Equally disappointing was the absence of any salary increase for teachers despite the growing cost of living and worsening teacher shortage."

He said a JEE would ensure equal pay for work of equal value and recognise increased responsibilities of teachers working in a changing classroom environment.

"International good practice recommends that comprehensive public sector job evaluations be reviewed approxi-

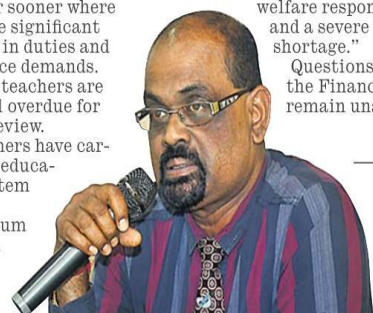
mately every five to seven years, or sooner where there are significant changes in duties and workplace demands.

"Fiji's teachers are now well overdue for such a review.

"Teachers have carried the education system through curriculum reforms, technological chang-

es, increasing student welfare responsibilities and a severe teacher shortage."

Questions sent to the Finance Ministry remain unanswered.



FTU general secretary Muniappa Goundar.
Picture: FILE



FIJI TEACHERS UNION

(THE CHILD OUR HOPE)

Headquarters: 1-3 Berry Road, Suva, P.O. Box 2203 Govt. Buildings, Suva, Fiji
Phone: (679) 331 4099 or (679) 331 4668 Fax: (679) 330 5962
Email: ftu@connect.com.fj Website: www.ftu.com.fj



FTU DEMANDS WITHDRAWAL OF CIRCULAR 06/2026 FOR THE MINISTRY OF EDUCATION

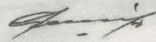
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Muniappa Goundar
General Secretary

Union decries 2% super cut

By PHYLLIS SIMPSON

Health gaps persist – FMA

By PHYLLIS SIMPSON

THE Fiji Teachers Union (FTU) has slammed the Coalition Government for asking workers to sacrifice again while weakening their retirement security and failing to deliver for teachers in the 2026-2027 National Budget, despite the record \$883 million allocation to the education sector.

General secretary Muniappa Goundar said the budget failed to recognise the contribution of teachers and public servants and instead shifted the burden onto workers.

"This is not a budget for workers," he said. "It is not a budget for teachers. It is certainly not a budget worthy of a Government seeking another mandate from the people in an election year."

Mr Goundar said the Government's decision to reduce the employer Fiji National Provident Fund contribution from 10 per cent to 8 per cent for the next 12 months amounted to an indirect cut to workers' remuneration.

"While Government

BUDGET cuts to mental health, family health and research services, along with staffing and planning gaps, could undermine healthcare delivery despite an overall increase in health funding, the Fiji Medical Association (FMA) has warned.

The 2026-2027 National Budget has allocated \$647 million to the health sector, with \$477 million earmarked for the Ministry of Health to cover salaries, medicines, medical supplies and biomedical equipment.

FMA acting president Dr Ronal Kumar said the association welcomed the increased investment in health but was concerned that key areas such as mental health, family health and research had experienced funding reductions, particularly in wages and salaries.

"This is a concern to us as an association," he said.

Dr Kumar said the allocation for new positions was encouraging but questioned whether frontline support services had been adequately catered for.

may argue that employees' take-home pay remains unchanged, the reality is that every worker will receive 2 per cent less in retirement savings from their employer."

He said the Government, as Fiji's largest employer, should have been leading efforts to protect workers' retirement savings instead of reducing its own contribution.

Mr Goundar said teach-

ers had expected the budget to address long-standing concerns, including fair salary progression, retention and equity adjustments, increasing workloads, teacher shortages, improved conditions of service, and measures to attract and retain young graduates.

"Those submissions have largely been ignored."

IN MEMORIAM

Deaths

Message of Condolence



Aneel Sudhakar

Sunrise June 12, 1946 – Sunset July 31, 2026

A Lasting Legacy of Selfless Leadership

The Fiji Teachers Union Pays Tribute to a Distinguished Former National President
It is with profound sadness that the National President, National Executive, Secretariat, staff and members of the Fiji Teachers Union (FTU) mourn the passing of one of our most distinguished leaders, whose unwavering commitment, exemplary leadership and lifelong service have left an enduring mark on our Union.

For more than two decades, he served the Fiji Teachers Union with exceptional dedication in numerous leadership roles, including National President from 1989 to 1995, Acting National President from 1987 to 1988, and National Vice President from 1977 to 1986. At the branch level, he provided outstanding leadership as President of the FTU Ba Branch from 1973 to 1998, guiding the branch with vision, wisdom and steadfast commitment.

His leadership was particularly invaluable during the difficult and uncertain years of 1987 and 1988. During one of the most challenging periods in the Union's history, he demonstrated remarkable courage, resilience and integrity, always placing the interests and welfare of teachers above his own. His calm, principled and selfless leadership earned him the admiration and respect of colleagues throughout Fiji. Beyond his distinguished union service, he was an outstanding teacher and an exceptional Head Teacher who inspired generations of students, teachers and school leaders. His commitment to excellence in education was recognised nationally when he received the Ministry of Education's Best Head Teacher Award in 1980. A gifted mentor, he nurtured and encouraged many young teachers and union members who later rose to become respected leaders of the Fiji Teachers Union.

His legacy is one of humility, dedication, service and unwavering commitment to the teaching profession. The values he lived by and the foundation he helped build will continue to inspire future generations of teachers and union leaders. On behalf of the National President, the National Executive, the Secretariat, staff and the entire membership of the Fiji Teachers Union, we extend our deepest and heartfelt condolences to Mrs. Sudhakar and the entire family during this time of immense sorrow. May the Almighty grant strength and comfort to the bereaved family, and may his noble soul rest in eternal peace.

"Those who dedicate their lives to serving others leave behind a legacy that time can never erase."



FIJI TEACHERS UNION
1-3 BERRY ROAD, SUVA



CONDOLENCE MESSAGE

With Profound Grief and Deepest Respect

The National Executive, National Council, Branch Executives, members, and staff of the Fiji Teachers Union mourn the untimely passing of our beloved colleague, courageous trade unionist, and dedicated leader:

BROTHER NAKUL DEO BARMAN

31st July 1976 – 24th May 2026

It is with immense sadness that we bid farewell to a loyal servant of the Union who dedicated much of his life to the welfare of teachers, workers' rights, and the advancement of education in Fiji.

Bro. Nakul Deo Barman joined the Fiji Teachers Union in 1998 and served the Union with unwavering commitment, integrity, and distinction throughout his years of dedicated service.



POSITIONS HELD IN THE FIJI TEACHERS UNION:

- ★ National Executive Member (2013 – 2020)
(Dec. 2025 to date)
- ★ Vice President (2021 – 2022)
- ★ Ba Branch Treasurer for several years
- ★ Active member Nadi Branch



Bro. Nakul was a fearless, outspoken, principled, and passionate unionist who stood firmly for justice, equality, and the protection of teachers' rights. His strength of character, humility, wisdom, and unwavering dedication earned him the admiration, trust, and respect of colleagues and members throughout Fiji.



The Fiji Teachers Union family has lost a true son of the Union – a brave advocate and dependable leader whose legacy of solidarity, service, and sacrifice will continue to inspire generations of unionists to come.

*"Those who live selflessly for others never truly depart;
their noble deeds and unwavering spirit continue to inspire forever."*

During this difficult time, we extend our heartfelt condolences and deepest sympathies to his beloved family, relatives, friends, colleagues, and loved ones. May the Almighty grant them strength, comfort, and peace as they mourn this great loss.

MISSED BY THE ENTIRE FTU FAMILY
REST IN ETERNAL PEACE
— Om Shanti, Shanti, Shanti —

From:
National Council, National Executive, Branch Executives, Members and Staff
FIJI TEACHERS UNION
1-3 Berry Road, Suva