

Uplifting Families, Uplifting Fiji



Social Services Sector
2018-19 Budget Kit



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The Fijian Government

Ministry of Education, Heritage and the Arts

2018-2019 Budget Highlights

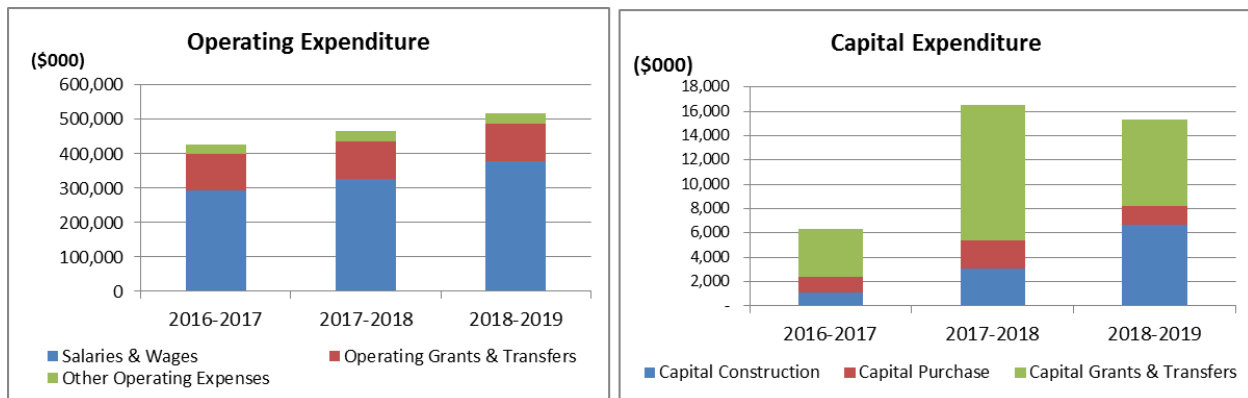
The Fijian Government upholds education as the most effective pathway to growing the Fijian economy, enriching Fijian society, and advancing the upward mobility of the Fijian people. The Ministry of Education, Heritage and the Arts is responsible for building a knowledge-based society by ensuring that Fiji's young people have equitable access to high quality education at all levels of the Fijian education system.

Over the past 11 years, Government's consistent and targeted investment in the education of Fijian students has led to the historic achievement of universal primary education, and given a record number of Fijian children access to secondary and tertiary education.

To better serve Fijian teachers and students, the Ministry is currently undergoing an organisational restructure that will streamline its systems and strengthen its capacity to more effectively respond to the current needs of the sector. Further, this ongoing structural modernisation will provide strategic oversight for mapping out the long-term development of Fiji's education system, allowing the Ministry to adapt to the demands of rapid technological advances and globalisation.

The 2018-2019 Financial Year is one of the most ambitious yet for the education of the Fijian people, with a total of over **\$1.0 billion** set aside specifically for the education sector, making 2018-2019 an unprecedented "billion-dollar year" for education in Fiji.

Within that allocation, **\$535.4 million** is allocated to the Ministry of Education, Heritage & Arts, **\$123.8 million** for Higher Education Institutions, **\$255.0 million** for various scholarships and loans administered by the Tertiary Scholarship and Loans Board ('TSLB'), **\$90.0 million** for rehabilitation and reconstruction of schools damaged by recent tropical cyclones, **\$2.8 million** for agricultural and vocational training for rural communities and **\$850,300** as a grant to Frank Hilton Organisation. The graphs below show the trend in expenditure for the entire education sector.



The increase of **\$60.8 million** in the education sector's 2018-2019 Budget is mainly attributed to:

- salary readjustments for teachers and staff of the Ministry as a result of the Job Evaluation Exercise conducted as part of Civil Service Reforms in the previous financial year;
- an increase in capital expenditure to ensure schools are equipped with proper facilities to support effective teaching and learning;
- a new initiative that focuses on the welfare of teachers working in rural and remote schools by providing teachers quarters. This will allow teachers to be more effective in the classrooms and improve the quality of their work life;
- an increase to fund 250 additional teaching positions (200 in primary schools and 50 in secondary schools);
- an increase in funding to Fiji National University to improve its facilities and procure and install a new student management system;
- an increase in funding to widen the scope of scholarships and loans administered by the TSLB to support the increasing number of young Fijians attending institutions of higher learning. This includes offering awards for Post Graduate studies and funding for overseas scholarships in identified priority areas; and

- new investment to upgrade various facilities that have been identified as important to promoting and preserving Fiji's rich cultural heritage.

New Initiatives

- \$150,000 is allocated to fund work in partnership with the Commonwealth of Learning (COL), an intergovernmental organisation established by the Commonwealth Heads of Government. Fiji is formally joining the COL, giving Fiji's education practitioners invaluable exposure to international expertise in key educational areas, such as technology, teacher training, and higher education management.
- \$300,000 is allocated to review the national curriculum, laying the groundwork for different learning tracks for students of varying skills levels, especially for complex subjects like maths.
- \$200,000 is allocated to implement a new School Scouts Programme in Fijian schools to help children develop life skills such as self-reliance and teamwork, and encourage being active outdoors.
- \$300,000 is allocated to fund a new range of school counselling services. This initiative is in response to concerns by students over the lack of qualified counsellors in schools. Qualified counsellors will be recruited in each education district. A new institutional arrangement to effectively provide counselling services to students will be developed.
- \$50,000 is allocated for the Training and Capacity Building of School Librarians. The programme aims to upskill school librarians on the use of information technology to navigate the library information management system and access e-resources. This will allow librarians throughout Fiji to better serve the needs of our students in a modern economy.
- \$300,000 is allocated for 'WASH' Facilities to ensure the sanitation and hygiene of all schools in Fiji adhere to the Water, Sanitation and Hygiene (WASH) Policy. This programme will fund the construction of WASH facilities.

- \$700,000 is allocated to fund the Construction of Teacher's Quarters, which is a new programme focused on building or repairing teacher's quarters in all schools around Fiji. This initiative will ensure the welfare of teachers posted to rural and remote schools are looked after, which in turn will improve their effectiveness in the classroom.
- \$500,000 is allocated for the rehabilitation of Levuka World Heritage Structures. This will fund the start of rehabilitation works on the Levuka Community Centre complex that was damaged by TC Winston. This includes the bond store, museum, library, hall, gymnasium and squash courts. These buildings are part of the world heritage site and contribute to the Outstanding Universal Value of Levuka under the World Heritage Convention.
- A total of \$500,000 is allocated to commemorate the 140-year anniversary of the arrival of the first ship carrying indentured labourers from British India, known as Girmitiyas, to Fiji. To acknowledge the contribution of the Girmitiyas and their descendants to Fiji's development and their enrichment of Fiji's cultural fabric, funding has been set aside for preparatory works for a Girmit Museum in Lautoka (\$200,000). Further funding has been allocated for a national celebration of 140 years of Girmitiyas in Fiji (\$300,000).
- \$2.0 million is allocated for the beautification of Thurston Gardens. This is a bold new initiative designed to raise the profile of Suva as an attractive destination for visitors. Throughout the day and into the evening, tourists and locals alike will be able to experience the beauty of Fiji's various fauna and flora on display at a revitalised Thurston Gardens. Apart from landscaping, building walkways and a visitor information centre, lighting will be installed to allow for evening excursions and events. As Thurston Gardens is connected with the Fiji Museum, this beautification will extend to improve the landscaping of the museum, providing visitors with a lasting impression of Fiji's history, culture and beauty.

Ongoing Initiatives

- Increasing access to early childhood care and education (ECCE) to build stronger educational foundations for Fijian children during their most formative years:
 - Tuition Subsidy: a subsidy towards the tuition fees of students who enrol in registered ECCE centres (\$2.8 million).
 - Facilities for ECCE Centres and Infant Schools: A new programme to ensure ECCE centres and infant schools are equipped with the necessary facilities to support student learning (\$500,000).
- Improving access to high quality primary and secondary education through:
 - Free Tuition Programme: funds the tuition of students from Year 1 to Year 13, ensuring that every Fijian child has an opportunity to at least receive a secondary school education. This is an historic accomplishment for Fiji that is permanently impacting the lives of many thousands of Fijians and advancing our nation's economy (\$66.4 million).
 - Location Allowance: funds location allowances for ECCE, primary and secondary school teachers in rural and remote schools, ensuring that all Fijian students, regardless of geographic location, are brought into the fold of our national development. The allocation has increased due to a rise in the number of teachers (\$21.6 million).
 - Vocational Grants: funds the tuition of students enrolled in vocational centres that are attached to secondary schools, which will open valuable career paths for students wishing to hone their trade skills (\$1.25 million).
 - Bus Fare Assistance Programme: More than 105,000 eligible students in primary and secondary schools, as well as technical college, will continue to benefit from the

subsidy programme, easing the cost burden of commuting to and from their studies (\$25.0 million).

- Free Milk Programme: supplies 250ml of milk to Year 1 students across the country each school day. Over 21,000 Year 1 students from 723 registered primary schools benefitted from this programme as of Term 2, 2018 (\$3.1 million).
- The rehabilitation and development of education-related infrastructure:
 - Bau Central College: covers the construction of specialised rooms such as science lab and industrial arts and home economics workshops (\$1.5 million).
 - Cyclone Rehabilitation: to complete the rehabilitation and reconstruction of schools damaged by TC Winston and begin the rehabilitation of schools damaged by TC Keni, TC Josie and TC Gita. The reconstruction process is geared to raising the standard of school facilities to better withstand severe weather events (\$90.0 million).
 - Water Tanks: to ensure all schools in Fiji have at least one back-up water source, water tanks will be distributed to 50 primary schools and 9 secondary schools in the next financial year. The schools have been identified based on vulnerability to water shortages. In addition, the Ministry will be identifying schools in urban centres which lack a backup water source (\$428,685).
 - Boat and Outboard Engines: schools that are only accessible by waterways will continue to receive boats and outboard motor engines to ensure the safety of students and teachers. Government will assist another 52 schools over the next two years beginning with 25 schools this financial year (\$450,000).
 - Technical Colleges Infrastructure and Specialised Equipment: to upgrade and equip the 13 technical colleges to support the effective delivery of its curriculum, particularly during the practical 'hands-on' sessions. This covers the upgrade of buildings, construction of workshops and the procurement of specialised equipment (\$2.1 million).

- FNU Labasa Campus: covers the construction on Building A of the new FNU campus in Labasa in the Naiyaca Subdivision (\$6.0 million).
- FNU Nasinu Campus: covers the construction on a four-storey building for the College of Business, Hospitality & Tourism Studies at the Nasinu campus in Valelevu (\$4.0 million).
- Veterinary Laboratory, Hospital and Instructional Livestock Shed: completion of consultancy and commencement of construction of a new veterinary facility at the FNU campus in Koronivia, Nausori (\$4.0 million).
- Fiji Maritime Academy: funds the construction of the new three-storey building complex and a fire simulator for the academy in Suva (\$5.0 million).
- Increasing the reach of special education programmes to benefit children with special needs:
 - Grant to Special Schools: to support the delivery of programmes, special schools are allocated funding to recruit specialised teachers, procure teaching aids, lenses, hearing aids, prosthetics and other specialised equipment that will support the education of children with special needs (\$1.36 million).
 - Scholarship Scheme: provides scholarship for students with special needs to enrol in recognised tertiary institutions. From January 2019, awardees will be entitled to allowances on the same terms and conditions as those on the National Toppers Scholarship Scheme (\$266,000).
- Granting more of Fiji's young people the opportunity to pursue affordable higher education through:
 - Tertiary Education Loans Scheme: Government has expanded the scope of TELS to support the higher education aspirations of Fijian students throughout the country. TELS will continue to be offered to any student who is eligible for tertiary education, including in technical colleges. This funding has increased by \$46.5 million compared to the previous financial year (\$205.6 million).

- National Toppers Scheme: Government has also significantly expanded NTS to offer an additional 320 awards to take the total awards under the Scheme to 970. This includes the introduction of an Overseas Award Scheme under the NTS (\$43.8 million).
- Funding to other scholarships managed by the TSLB¹ will continue (\$1.6 million).
- Operating Grants to Higher Education Institutions: funds operational grants for Fiji's higher education institutions. Specifically, Government is assisting these institutions to develop coursework in fields that will help fill careers aligned with a modern and dynamic economy. This forward-thinking approach is an investment in the economy of tomorrow; as more Fijian students fill the nation's tertiary classrooms, new career paths in modern industries will await them upon their graduation. These institutions include FNU, USP, University of Fiji, CATD, Corpus Christi, Fulton College, Montfort Boys Town, Montfort Technical Institute, Sangam Institute of Technology and the Vivekananda Technical Centre (\$104.8 million).
- To support the development of livelihood opportunities in rural areas, the Rural Maritime Livelihood Training programme will continue to provide specialised skills training to rural communities in areas such as small engine repair; carpentry and joinery; block laying; freehand garment cutting and construction; household sanitary and plumbing; and electrical safety and domestic electrical wiring. This programme will also help fill the national demand for construction labourers (\$1.8 million).

¹ Refer to the Highlights on Tertiary Scholarships and Loans Schemes within this Budget Kit for a more in-depth breakdown of the ongoing and new policies introduced under the various scholarships and loans schemes administered by the Tertiary Scholarships and Loans Board (TSLB).

- Supporting the promotion and preservation of Fiji's unique culture and heritage through:
 - Fiji Museum Renovation: to upgrade the Fiji Museum in Suva, ensuring the integrity of cultural artefacts currently stored or displayed is preserved and promoting the capital city as a compelling tourist destination. Works will include refurbishment of both the building's interior and exterior, upgrading of the administration block and electrical rewiring throughout (\$500,000).
 - National Gallery for Contemporary Art: To refurbish Suva's old St. Stephens Building, a Class A heritage building, to serve as the new National Gallery for Contemporary Art. The founding of the Gallery is an important cultural initiative, recognising the explosion of creative talent among Fijian contemporary artists, and providing them with resources to showcase their work. Further, it will provide parents and educators with an important starting point for developing creativity among young Fijians. For the City of Suva, the gallery will provide new opportunities for business, tourism and heritage. The refurbishment will be guided by technical advice of industry experts to ensure it meets international standards (\$3.0 million).



The Fijian Government

Ministry of Health and Medical Services

2018-2019 Budget Highlights

Government is committed to protecting and improving the health of all Fijians, regardless of income or geographic location. It aims to achieve this through a wide-reaching and holistic approach, from the provision of preventative, curative, and rehabilitative medical care and treatment, to the encouragement of healthy lifestyles, to the training and education of a healthy public.

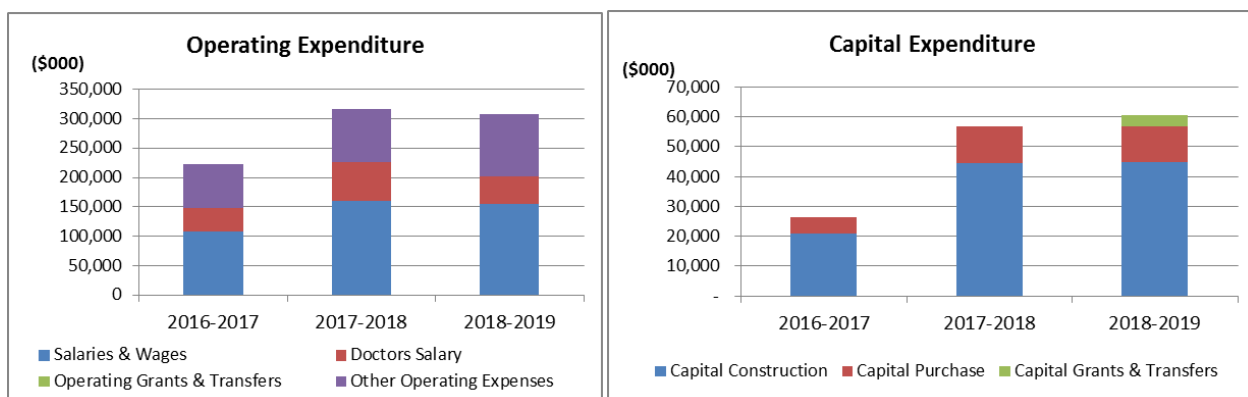
The Ministry of Health and Medical Services is tasked with achieving Government's vision of a more modern and affordable Fijian healthcare system. The Ministry is actively improving and bolstering its internal capacity, alongside partnering with outside experts, to address the specific health needs of the Fijian population. It is seeking out innovative ways to deliver high-quality medical services and health education that reaches every Fijian community, no matter how remote.

To meet today's demand in health services, throughout Fiji, the Ministry is constructing, upgrading and refurbishing divisional and sub-divisional hospitals, health centres and nursing stations. Government is dedicated to filling these new and improved healthcare facilities, along with those that already exist, with modern, state of the art technology and equipment and skilled medical professionals. Improving the provision of medicinal products, strengthening the health workforce and improving the health information systems are other focus areas for the Ministry.

While Government is putting extensive resources behind upgrading the nation's healthcare network, it remains dedicated to keeping the cost of healthcare in Fiji to a bare minimum, as affordable healthcare is a fundamental and constitutionally-enshrined right of every Fijian.

The total budget for the Ministry of Health and Medical Services in 2018-2019 is **\$335.0 million²**, comprising of **\$260.0 million** for operating expenditure, **\$60.5 million** for capital expenditure and VAT of **\$14.5 million**.

² The allocation covering doctor salaries is reflected under the Ministry of Civil Service due to the reforms being undertaken to improve service delivery. However, doctor's salary allocations for 2017-2018 and



The increase of **\$13.9 million** in the Ministry's 2018-2019 Budget is mainly attributed to:

- Government's significant investment in the upgrade and expansion of existing health facilities, construction of new facilities, and equipping of all health facilities in the country with modern medical equipment;
- an increase in the recruitment of allied and technical staff to ensure prevention, diagnosis and treatment of a range of conditions and illnesses;
- an increase in medical human resource contingencies for hiring of locum doctors, including private general practitioners and specialists, to cater for the current shortage and to better meet patient needs; and
- the provision of allowance for community health workers to improve and increase access to health services.

2018-2019 are incorporated in the graph above to illustrate Government's overall investment in the health sector.

New Initiatives

- \$5.0 million is allocated to fund a Parenthood Assistance Payment. After childbirth, Fijian mothers from families with a household income below \$30,000 will be given a \$1,000 grant in an HFC Bank Account for each newborn child registered with the Births, Deaths and Marriages Office. \$500 will be available immediately and \$500 can be accessed when the child enters Year 1. This is intended to assist Fijian families by easing the financial burden of parenthood and meeting the needs of their new baby.
- \$1.0 million is allocated to begin preparatory works on a Fiji Centre for Communicable Disease Control. The new facility will serve as a national referral centre for communicable disease.
- \$1.0 million is allocated to engage consultancy services to undertake preparatory works on the Lodon Health Centre. Funds also cover the reconstruction of a Level B health centre to ensure that high-quality and accessible health services are available to Fijians residing in the area.
- \$500,000 is allocated for the upgrade and maintenance of the Korovou Hospital. Funds also cover the reconstruction of the administration and dental blocks, and the construction of new staff accommodation.
- \$2.5 million is allocated to upgrade the classification of the Valelevu Health Centre to a Sub-Divisional Hospital. Funds will cover the engagement of civil works consultants and a contractor to commence the upgrade of the Accident & Emergency Department and various wards, including the children's, men's and women's ward.
- \$3.0 million is allocated for the upgrade of Lautoka Hospital Operating Theatre & X-Ray Department. The project involves expert consultancy and works for peer review of the hospital's operating theatre and the reconstruction of block Q to high engineering standards.

- \$1.75 million is allocated for the upgrade of Labasa Hospital, including general interior upgrading and the re-alignment of various wards.
- \$2.0 million has been set aside to fund the operation of new Kidney Treatment Centres in Suva and Nadi to address the growing incidence of kidney disease, which is one of the leading causes of death in Fiji. This will improve accessibility of haemodialysis treatment to kidney patients.
- \$3.5 million is provided to subsidy the cost of kidney dialysis to ease the cost of treatments on patients and their families. Treatments will be offered at \$150 for patients with household incomes of over \$30,000, while those who fall below this income threshold will be offered a subsidised rate of \$75.

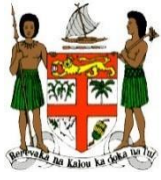
Ongoing Initiatives

- Improving the administration and quality of health and medical services throughout Fiji:
 - Complementing the Ministry's new kidney health initiatives, work on the establishment of the new National Kidney Research and Treatment Centre will be advanced. The Centre will act as a national hub for the affordable treatment and prevention of kidney disease. This will address a countrywide epidemic head-on, providing Fijians with unprecedented access to the treatment of kidney disease at highly economical prices (\$200,000).
 - Doctor Salaries: caters for the filling of doctor positions that are currently vacant. This will improve the doctor-to-patient ratio, increasing the number of patients who receive treatment and reducing mortality (\$47.6 million).
 - Allied and Technical staff: recruitment of 61 allied and technical health professionals who will provide a broad range of services in the prevention, diagnosis and treatment of a range of conditions and illnesses to improve the treatment of patients. These positions are mainly in the dental, medical imaging, laboratory, physio, pharmacy and biomedical fields (\$1.9 million).

- Community Health Workers: caters for the allowance of \$200 per month for 1,794 active Community Health Workers currently based in Fijian villages and communities, along with operating expenses such as training and capacity building. The initiative aims to improve and increase the general public's access to health services (\$4.6 million).
- Expenses of Local and Overseas Medical Consultancy Services: enhances access for patients seeking overseas treatments, particularly for cancer and cardiac treatments that are not yet available in Fiji (\$2.0 million).
- Charter of Aircraft: hiring of aircraft to meet the increased demand for medical evacuation of high-risk patients, especially those residing in rural and maritime regions (\$2.55 million).
- Outsourcing Services: covers the cost of outsourcing janitorial and security services for Fiji's health facilities (\$7.4 million).
- Health Information Unit: upgrades the Ministry's Information System to strengthen the surveillance of and response to communicable diseases (\$400,000).
- Public Health Services: to address the rise of non-communicable diseases (NCDs) and strengthen preventative/outreach programmes relating to NCDs, HIV/AIDS, family health, adolescent health, child health, environmental health and mental health (\$8.1 million).
- Consumables and Medicine: includes the purchase of items such as drugs and consumables, as well as the continuation of the free medicine programme, to assist Fijians with an annual income below \$20,000 to access the medicines they need to maintain a healthy and productive life (\$26.7 million).

- Developing modern health facilities around the country to improve access to high quality health services:
 - Extension of CWM Hospital Maternity Unit: in alignment with Government's mission to improve medical care for women in Fiji, these funds will begin construction of the significant extension of the existing CWM hospital maternity unit, which will vastly expand the Hospital's capacity to serve Fijian mothers and babies (\$11.0 million).
 - Upgrade and Maintenance of Urban Hospitals and Institutional Quarters: involves the upgrade and maintenance of three divisional hospitals (Lautoka, Labasa and CWM) and two specialised hospitals (St. Giles and Twomey) (\$2.0 million).
 - Construction of Navosa Sub-Divisional Hospital: to undertake civil works and begin construction of the new hospital (\$11.0 million).
 - Maintenance of Sub-Divisional Hospitals, Health Centres and Nursing Stations: funds the upgrade, maintenance and/or extension of Nasau Health Centre and Quarters; Cuvu Health Centre; Valelevu Health Centre; Samabula Health Centre; Nadi, Nabouwalu and Savusavu Sub-Divisional Hospitals. Also includes reconstruction of Rakiraki Sub-Divisional Hospital Nurses Quarters and relocation of Nailaga Health Centre & Staff Quarters (\$5.0 million).
 - Divisional Development Projects: implements projects identified and prioritised through the rural development machinery. These include construction of Grade 6 Quarters at Nabouwalu Sub-Divisional Hospital, 1 x 2 Duplex Quarters for Naduri Health Centre, refurbishment of clinic and construction of Grade 6 Quarters for Tawake Nursing Station and relocation of Nacula Health Centre (\$1.0 million).
 - Minor Works: caters for the upgrade and maintenance of health infrastructure to a useable standard (\$2.5 million).
- Equipping all health facilities with modern, state-of-the-art technology and equipment to support the delivery of quality healthcare:

- Purchase of Equipment for Urban Hospitals: ensures hospitals have the necessary equipment to support efficient and effective delivery of health services. Equipment includes medical beds, incinerators, trolleys, boilers, furniture and fittings for the new health facilities (\$890,000).
- Purchase of Equipment for Sub-Divisional Hospitals, Health Centres and Nursing Stations: includes purchase of medical beds, generators, incinerators, furniture and fittings for the new health facilities (\$1.0 million).
- ICT Infrastructure and Network: covers the purchase, installation and replacement of ICT equipment to support the Patient Information System for hospitals and health centres (\$694,800).
- Purchase of Dental Equipment for Urban Hospitals and Sub-Divisional Hospitals: ensures that health facilities have the appropriate dental equipment to efficiently and effectively provide dental services to all Fijians. Procurement is undertaken to replace unserviceable dental equipment, purchase new equipment for dental laboratories to assist in making dental prostheses, and purchase spare parts and accessories (\$500,000).
- Purchase of Biomedical Equipment for Urban and Sub-Divisional hospitals: ensures that health facilities have the appropriate biomedical and anaesthetic equipment to efficiently and effectively provide health services to all Fijians. The procurement of biomedical equipment for the new Ba hospital is a major component of this allocation (\$5.0 million).
- Purchase of MRI Machine (CWM Hospital): procures a state-of-the-art magnetic resonance imaging machine for diagnosis of medical conditions and illnesses (\$4.0 million).



The Fijian Government

Ministry of Housing and Community Development

2018-2019 Budget Highlights

The Fijian Government has announced the formation of a new ministry in the 2018-2019 Financial Year, the Ministry of Housing and Community Development ('Ministry'), to realise the right to housing for every Fijian, as enshrined in the Fijian Constitution.

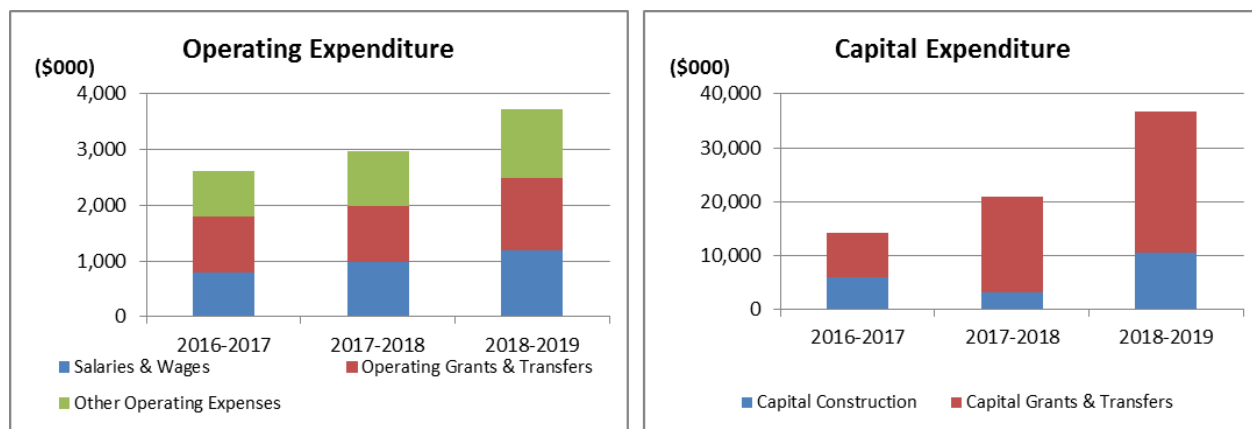
The Ministry will be responsible for all of the functions of the Department of Housing and the Rural Housing Unit formerly under the Ministry of Rural and Maritime Development, along with the various housing and community services previously offered by the Ministry of Lands and the Ministry of Local Government to help more Fijian families own their homes.

A thriving Fijian economy and an increased demand for skilled labour have incentivised more Fijians to flock to urban centres to seek employment and raise their families. In effect, this rapid urban growth has increased the demand for quality and reasonable housing at affordable prices. However, the internal migration has put increasing pressure on urban centres, their infrastructure, and their surrounding environment — challenges that are being addressed by Government through targeted investment and thoughtful development planning.

The Ministry will be working closely with the Reserve Bank of Fiji and financial institutions to give homeowners the opportunity to finance the purchase or construction of new homes at discounted rates of interest. To expeditiously increase the supply of affordable housing in Fiji, the Ministry will also engage with all stakeholders, including construction companies, with the ambition to reduce the construction costs of homes by harnessing new technologies. The Ministry will also work with development partners, including the private sector, to introduce innovative new strategies employed in other parts of the world to successfully meet increasing demands for home ownership.

The Ministry will also continue the important work around the country to provide security of tenure to Fijians residing in informal settlements, bringing the stability and peace of mind of long-term land ownership to more Fijian families.

The total budget for the Ministry of Housing and Community Development is **\$41.4 million** in 2018-2019 comprising **\$3.7 million** for operating expenditure, **\$36.6 million** for capital expenditure and VAT of **\$1.0 million**.



The increase of **\$17.2 million** in the Ministry's 2018-2019 Budget is mainly attributed to:

- an increase in funding to Housing Authority (HA) and Public Rental Board (PRB) to increase the supply of housing lots and low cost housing units;
- an increase in the level of assistance to Fijians living in informal settlements, particularly through providing basic infrastructure and assistance with relocation; and
- an increase in funding for First Home Owners to enable low-middle income Fijians to buy or build their own homes.

New Initiatives

- \$500,000 has been allocated for making Fijian buildings more inclusive and comfortable for People Living with Disabilities (PLWD) and their families. This initiative will be implemented by Habitat for Humanity where funding will be allocated to retrofit Fijian homes and community centres to meet the needs of PLWD. This funding will cover a variety of structural upgrades, including the construction of ramps, railings, PLWD-friendly footpaths around the home, accessible washroom and toilet facilities, and the

alteration of community centre entrances to be PLWD-accessible – a change that will truly open doors to the entire Fijian community.

- In response to the feedback from the general public, the First Home Purchase programme, which assists individuals seeking to buy or build their first home, has been restructured:
 - \$5.0 million has been allocated for eligible households with a combined annual income below \$50,000 to receive a grant of \$10,000 if they buy a house or \$15,000 if they build a house; and
 - \$10.0 million has been allocated for eligible households with a combined annual income between \$50,001 to \$100,000 to receive a grant of \$5,000 if they buy a house or \$10,000 if they build a house.
- \$5.0 million is allocated for the First Land Purchase programme to support home ownership by subsidising the cost of lots developed by Housing Authority and Fiji National Provident Fund for Fijians with a combined family income less than \$50,000 that do not have sufficient funds to purchase the developed lot to construct a house.
- \$750,000 is allocated for Government to outsource the survey of land services (through tender) for the survey of un-surveyed lands. The objective is to empower Fijians who dwell on these lands with formal documentation on the land boundary and a proper title.
- Interest Subsidy for Home Loans: eligible for First Home Buyers with a combined income of less than \$50,000 that have financed their home loan through the Concessional Finance Facility under the Reserve Bank of Fiji (\$1.0 million).

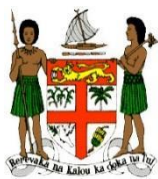
Ongoing Initiatives

- Assisting informal settlements by drafting proper tenancy agreements and improving basic infrastructure at the community level:

- Town Wide Informal Settlement Upgrade: involves the upgrading of informal settlements on iTaukei land. Areas for upgrade include Waidamudamu, Wakanisila, Nadonumai, Qauia and Tauvegavega. More than 1,000 families are expected to benefit from this programme in 2018 (\$5,758,880).
- City-Wide Informal Settlement Upgrading: involves incremental upgrading of informal settlements. For 2018-2019, priorities include: a garbage management plan, road access and footpaths for Navakai (Nadi); road access, drainage system and upgrading the footpath for Thomson & Penang Settlement (Rakiraki); and road upgrading and waste disposal for Nasekula Village (Labasa). Projects expected to be completed in 2018 include: Vunato Settlement and Kalili Sanitary Project (Lautoka); Tavualevu Settlement Sanitary Project (Tavua); Vuci Settlement Drainage Upgrading Work (Nausori); Wainiveidio Settlement Upgrading Work (Navua); and the Baba Settlement Road Upgrading (Levuka Town) (\$300,000).
- Informal Settlement Upgrading: involves the evolution of informal settlements into formal communities by providing basic infrastructure and security of tenure. Works expected to be completed include: Omkar (Nasinu); Ledrusasa (Nadi); and Cuvu (Sigatoka). Projects in Caubati (Nasinu) and Sasawira (Nasinu) are projected to be completed in early 2019. Clopcott Settlement (157 residential lots) is expected to be further upgraded with a sewerage reticulation system and fire hydrant. Civil construction work at Nakama settlement is expected to start in late 2018 (\$4,466,103).
- Regularisation of Informal Settlements: this will give Fijians living in these communities a new sense of security and dignity. This includes both informal settlements located on vacant State land and those who are currently living in illegal subdivisions on State land. Programme involves improving basic infrastructure and issuing a formal lease to sitting tenants (\$300,000).
- Informal Settlement Relocation Programme: Over 300 Fijian families living in informal settlements at Nabua (Fiji Muslim League land) will be relocated to Waidra (Baulevu) (\$1.31 million).
- Increasing the market supply of low-cost housing units:

- PRB Subsidy: operating grant to subsidise the rental obligations of PRB tenants in all four divisions (\$1.3 million).
- Grant to HART: funding for reconstruction, renovation and general maintenance of the existing 847 homes under the programme (\$500,000).
- Supporting sustainable income generation in informal settlements:
 - Sustainable Income Generating Project: aims to control rural-urban drift, a phenomenon that feeds the formation and expansion of informal settlements, by supporting income-generating activities in targeted rural communities. The project is implemented in partnership with the Ministry of Rural & Maritime Development and Department of Social Welfare. The programme will continue in Nakoro (Navosa) and Sorokoba (Ba) while new areas in the provinces of Bua, Macuata, Namosi and Serua will be identified (\$300,000).
- Boosting home-ownership for the Fijian people
 - Debt Relief Scheme: settling of housing loans for clients held by the Housing Authority (HA) who have paid more than the principal loan amount, along with those who have retired or who can prove genuine financial difficulty based on low-income or medical grounds. The Government and HA repays the outstanding debt on a 60:40 basis (\$500,000).
- Support to ordinary Fijians during times of crisis:
 - Social Housing Assistance: provides assistance on a cost-sharing basis (1/3 cash or in-kind contribution by applicants) for the construction of homes in rural and maritime areas. The funds cover the rebuilding and repair of homes that are destroyed in disasters or fires, in addition to the construction of homes for families under the Family Assistance Scheme as referred by the Ministry of Women, Children and Poverty Alleviation (\$1.0 million).
 - Housing Assistance to Fire Victims: This initiative is intended to assist fire victims with rebuilding their homes through a grant of \$5,000. The assistance is available to Fijians with a household income below \$50,000 and who have proper leases, but lack insurance (\$250,000).

- Cyclone Insurance: In partnership with the Fiji Institute of Engineers, Insurance Council of Fiji and the World Bank, Government will work to develop affordable cyclone insurance for at-risk homes (\$1.0 million).



The Fijian Government

Ministry of Women, Children and Poverty Alleviation

2018-2019 Budget Highlights

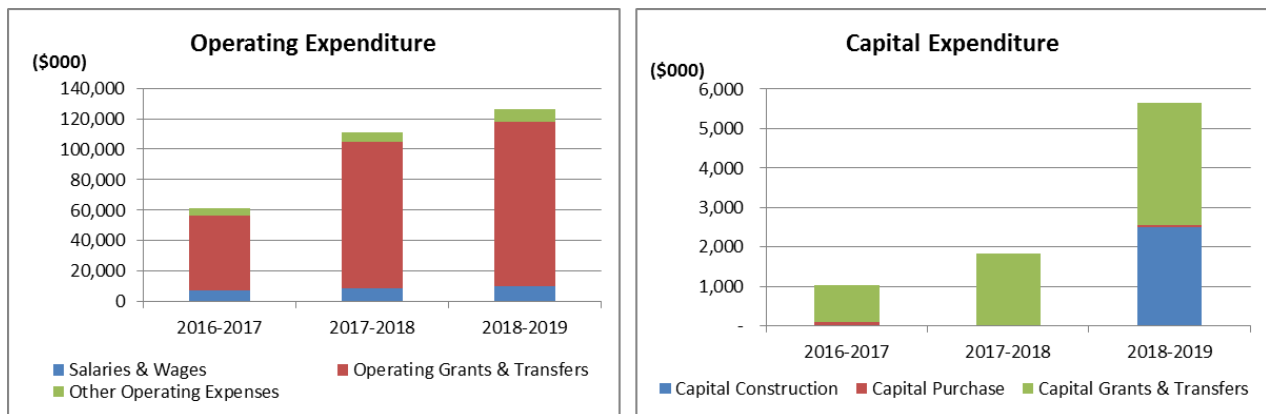
The Ministry of Women, Children and Poverty Alleviation is responsible for providing services and administering programmes that protect Fiji's most vulnerable groups, enabling Government to reduce poverty and empower all Fijians.

The Ministry's work provides a social safety net that empowers disadvantaged Fijians, creating a more level playing field in Fijian society. It aims to break down barriers of gender, disability, age, and economic standing, allowing all Fijians to fully participate in society and benefit from the nation's growing prosperity.

Within the Ministry, the Department of Social Welfare administers Fiji's well-reformed social welfare programmes, which include the Poverty Benefit Scheme, the Child Protection Allowance, the Food Voucher Programme, the Social Pension Scheme and the Bus Fare Subsidy for the elderly and Fijians living with a disability. The Department is focussed on ensuring all Government assistance is well-targeted and administered in a transparent and accountable manner. It is equally committed to ensuring that these programmes do not create a culture of dependency, focusing efforts and energy on graduating Fijian families and individuals from "welfare to workfare".

Through the Department of Women, the Ministry is responsible for providing Fijian women and girls, particularly those in rural communities, with the skills and education they need to participate as equal members in society. The Ministry also works to increase women's participation in decision-making, eliminate violence against women, improve women's access to basic services, and address women's issues in new legislation. The Department works with other Ministries to ensure that gender perspectives are addressed in all Government policies and initiatives and to promote gender equality.

The total budget for the Ministry of Women, Children and Poverty Alleviation in 2018-2019 is **\$133.0 million**, comprising **\$126.4 million** for operating expenditure, **\$5.7 million** for capital expenditure and VAT of **\$0.9 million**.



The increase of **\$19.8 million** in the Ministry's 2018-2019 Budget is mainly attributed to:

- Significant new funding to expand the reach of existing social protection programmes, reforming these programmes to make them more effective at supporting Fiji's most vulnerable populations. Allocations have been increased for the Social Pension Scheme and Child Protection Allowance;
- an increase in operating grant to the Fiji National Council for Disabled Persons to further strengthen the Council's capacity to implement the Rights of Persons with Disabilities Act 2018; and
- an increase in funding for the upgrade of all three of Fiji's State Homes for Older Persons.

New Initiatives

- \$100,000 is allocated for the economic empowerment of Persons Living With Disabilities. This programme will assist in lifting PLWDs and their families out of financial hardship through skills training and the provision of seed grants to shape their business concepts.
- \$100,000 is allocated for the implementation of the Rights of Persons with Disabilities Act 2018. This will fund the preparation of a national policy and an implementation

framework that ensures that services are provided to all persons living with disabilities and a national plan of action for rehabilitation services.

- \$200,000 is allocated in the form of a grant to Homes of Hope, an assistance programme for residential homes in which victims of sexual abuse, sexual violence and sexual trafficking are given a wide range of support, including a safe shelter, legal advice, medical care, counselling and skills training, empowering these victims with a new start on life.
- \$2.5 million is allocated for the establishment of a Fiji “Barefoot College”. This is a joint initiative between Government and Barefoot College International to construct a vocational college targeted at rural-based women. Through this programme, Fijian women will undergo on-the-job training in specific technical skills required for sustainable rural development, fostering their independence and uplifting their communities.
- \$300,000 is allocated to fund the Community Based Corrections Act 2018. This is a system that fosters community-based sentencing options, rehabilitation and reintegration of offenders. This Act requires the supervision of offenders when they are sentenced to community-based work. The allocation caters for the appointment of staff and volunteer supervisors, training and enumeration of community volunteer supervisors.
- \$100,000 is allocated for the Domestic Violence Support Fund (DVSF). The fund will serve as a temporary financial support system for unemployed victims pending the making of an order for urgent monetary relief under section 34 of the Domestic Violence Act. It will provide allowances to unemployed victims who have no support system and who have taken out a restraining order against the employed perpetrator or perpetrator who normally provides for the victim’s wellbeing. The allocation provided in this financial year would cater for the formulation of the framework and criteria of the DVSF.
- \$580,970 is allocated to secure land for the construction of a Western Disabilities Centre. The Centre will serve the needs of persons living with disability in the Western Division by providing specialised services and support.

- From 2018-2019, Government will provide free bus fare assistance to Fijians 60 years of age and older who currently receive a 50% bus fare concession. The free bus fare assistance will continue for persons living with disabilities. These programmes will now be fully funded by Government.

Ongoing Initiatives

- Providing a social safety net to assist the vulnerable in society:
 - Poverty Benefit Scheme: targeted at households living below the Basic Needs Poverty Line by providing them with a monthly allowance of \$30 - \$127 and a food voucher of \$50 to sustain themselves. With a 15% increase over last year's funding, the scheme will expand to assist 25,457 Fijians, ensuring that their basic needs are met (\$38,050,931).
 - Social Pension Scheme: provides \$100 monthly allowance to Fijians who are 65 years of age and older who have no form of income and have never been beneficiaries of a superannuation scheme. This allocation has been increased by \$10.2 million, allowing for an expansion to 5,963 new recipients (\$47,434,560).
 - Child Protection Allowance: ensures that Fiji's underprivileged children are provided with proper care and protection. This programme is specifically targeted at single mothers, deserted spouses, widows, prisoner dependents, foster parents/guardians and children under the care of the State. The allocation has been increased by \$2.5 million to cater an additional 1,032 recipients (\$9,312,936).
 - Food Voucher Programme for Rural Pregnant Mothers: improves maternal health and reduces infant mortality by supporting expecting mothers in rural areas. The allocation will cater for a monthly food voucher of \$50 (\$1,651,350).
 - Child Protection Programme: involves awareness programmes and the implementation of the recommendations from the committee on Convention on the Rights of the Child (\$1,256,785).

- National Council of Older Persons: supports the operation of the National Council of Older Persons to advocate the interests of senior citizens, particularly through the implementation of the Fiji National Aging Policy (\$404,000).
- Fiji National Council for Disabled Person's (FNCDP): the role of the Council is to advocate the interests of persons living with disabilities. It is the national coordinating body for disability development initiatives in Fiji (\$1.0 million).
- Grants to Disabled Peoples Organisation: supports various activities undertaken by disability organisations that complement the work of Government and the FNCDP. Organisations can submit proposals to the Ministry to access grant funding (\$1.1million).
- Welfare Graduation Programme: aims to help social welfare recipients move from 'welfare to workfare'. The programme identifies potential existing beneficiaries who may have the capacity to graduate from receiving welfare assistance by starting fresh in the Fijian workforce. Beneficiaries are given seed funding after training is completed. Trainings are conducted by the National Centre for Small and Medium Enterprise Development (\$500,000).
- Capital Grants to Voluntary Organisations: contributes to social justice and poverty alleviation by supporting NGOs that complement the work of Government. This is an effective way for the Ministry to capitalise on the expertise and capacity of NGOs in advancing its critical missions, specifically the care and protection of children and of the disadvantaged in society (\$200,000).
- Grant to Frank Hilton Organisation (FHO): through a multidisciplinary team approach, this grant assists FHO in the implementation of its early intervention programme throughout the country. This approach creates a system of combined services that help infants and children with disabilities and developmental delays. It involves cross-collaboration between the health, education and social development sectors, who work in cohesion to provide a support and coping mechanism for the child and their family.

FHO has also commenced Fiji's first specialised speech therapy programme, which is expected to contribute significantly to addressing the challenges of early development delays in children (\$850,300).

- Assistance to Fire Victims: provides immediate relief to Fijians who have lost their homes to fire and do not have insurance to cover the damage. Victims can seek assistance at any Social Welfare Office in the country (\$200,000).
- Seeking gender equality and the empowerment of women:
 - Women's Plan of Action: the taskforce would seek to review the Women's Plan of Action, conduct activities under its five thematic areas, and establish a new thematic area, 'Gender and Climate Change'. The new thematic area will focus on programmes that will address gender issues during natural disasters, and spearhead women's activities for promoting resilience, mitigation and adaptation (\$1,173,461).
 - NGO Grants: provides grants to various women's organizations to advance the interests of women and children (\$150,000).
 - Fiji National Women's Expo: supports women's economic empowerment through the hosting of the National Women's Expo. The Expo provides a platform for rural women to sell their produce and gain access to potential urban markets (\$500,000).
 - Domestic Violence Helpline: funds the 24-hour toll-free Domestic Violence Helpline, which provides a free reporting and referral platform for victims of domestic violence and sexual assault (\$200,000).
- Seeking improved facilities to ensure a healthy and safe environment for all:
 - Upgrading of State Homes for Older Persons: All three of Fiji's State Homes for Older Persons will be renovated, namely, the Babasiga Home (Labasa), Golden Age Home (Lautoka) and Samabula Senior Citizens Home (Suva). Currently, there are 150 residents in these state homes and 58 staff assisting in their day-to-day operations (\$2.0 million).

- Juvenile Centre: revitalising minor damages to buildings and equipment at the Centre, located at 10 Lakeba Street, Samabula. These upgrades will provide an environment that better enables the development and rehabilitation of juveniles committed into the care and custody of the State (\$100,000).



The Fijian Government Ministry of Youth and Sports 2018-2019 Budget Highlights

The Ministry of Youth and Sports ('Ministry') is assigned with both promoting Fiji's young people and fostering the nation's athletic potential— two distinct, yet overlapping, tasks. Government recognises this inextricable link, rooted in the formative role that sports play in shaping Fijian youth, instilling them with values and promoting a healthy, active lifestyle.

Given Fiji's young population, the Ministry carries the responsibility of harnessing and channeling the untapped raw potential of Fiji's young people and releasing them into productive areas of society where they can make a difference. This involves providing training to develop both soft and hard skills, encourage networking, mentoring, providing opportunities to build leadership skills through local level implementation, and promote entrepreneurship and innovation. By doing so, Government is enabling Fiji's next generation of leaders—an investment of developing the youth of today to improve Fijian communities of the future.

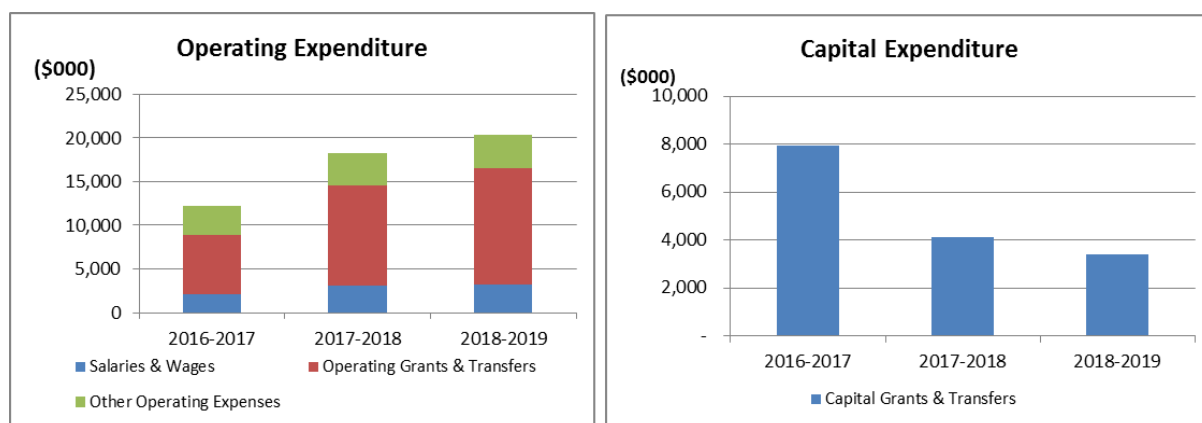
The Ministry offers training to youths through five Youth Training Centres around the country, along with mobile training in rural and urban areas. The training is run in close cooperation with other ministries, particularly the Ministries of Agriculture, Fisheries, Forests, and iTaukei Affairs. The training is aimed at empowering young people to be productive members of the community and equipping them with the knowledge and skills to venture into specific income-earning opportunities. In 2018-2019, Government will continue to support these Youth Training Centres.

The Ministry also drives sporting development in Fiji to encourage healthy lifestyle choices among Fijians of all ages, in addition to maintaining and building upon Fiji's position as the Pacific hub for athletic competition. The Ministry's work falls within the framework of a number of existing policies that govern national sporting development.

In line with Government's goals of both creating a healthier society and bolstering the nation's sports tourism capabilities, the Ministry's Sports Development Unit is charged with the

advancement of Fijian athletic facilities. The Ministry will continue to invest in building and upgrading Fiji's sporting infrastructure, particularly in rural areas. This includes upgrading rural sports fields in various schools and rural sports complexes in identified regional hubs.

The Ministry of Youth and Sports has been allocated a budget of **\$24.1 million** for 2018-2019, of which **\$20.4 million** is for operating expenditure, **\$3.4 million** is for capital expenditure. The difference of **\$0.3 million** accounts for VAT.



The increase of **\$1.4 million** in the Ministry's 2018-2019 Budget is mainly attributed to:

- more international sporting tournaments being hosted in Fiji; and
- a marginal increase in operating expenditures to fund various Fijian sporting organisations.

New Initiatives

- \$10,000 is allocated for exhibitions and inter-Ministry roadshows. The Ministry will partner with other agencies to create more dynamic pathways to achieving youth development and success.
- \$10,000 is allocated for a Sports Education Programme that will promote sports curriculum development in all five of Fiji's youth training centres.

Ongoing Initiatives

- Supporting community-based capacity building initiatives for youth:
 - Youth Capacity Building and Training Programme: encourages young Fijians to become productive members of society by funding training and supporting income-generating projects, such as Seeds of Success, Empowerment Training, Youth Feed the Nations and Multi Skills/Mobile Skills training programmes (\$1,055,688).
 - Youth Voluntary Organisation Training Programme: encourages volunteerism and community work among Fijian youth, this programme is implemented in partnership with non-governmental youth organisations (\$200,000).
 - Upgrading of Youth Training Centres: Improvement for Fiji's Youth Training Centres, namely, Nasau (Sigatoka), Yavitu (Kadavu), Naleba (Macuata), and Naqere (Savusavu). The upgrades will increase the capacity of the facilities to undertake skills training and development (\$891,000).
 - District Youth Workers Pilot Project: through a grassroots approach to youth development, this new pilot project funds the engagement of 21 district youth workers who will partner directly with Fijian communities at the district level (\$277,200).
- Promoting Youth Leadership:
 - National Youth Policy: review of the National Youth Policy to ensure it can be effective in addressing emerging challenges faced by Fiji's young people (\$50,000).
 - Duke of Edinburgh International Awards: continues the Programme to develop life skills, promote physical activity and encourage community service among 14 to 24 year olds (\$30,000).

- Promoting the development of sports at all levels through:
 - Fiji National Sports Commission: actively advances the development of Fijian sports at all levels, from beginner to elite level by supporting national sporting bodies (\$1.0 million).
 - Engagement of International Coaches: supports the engagement of international coaches to foster the development and participation of Fijian athletes at the international level. Through this initiative, Fiji's national athletes are exposed to higher levels of professional coaching, tapping their potential to thrive in the international spotlight and bringing pride and joy to Fijians at home. This programme has already contributed towards Fiji winning the first-ever Olympic gold medal during the 2016 Olympic Games in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil (\$1,656,800).
 - Overseas Sports Tournaments: supports the participation of Fiji's national teams in international tournaments. Some of the key events include: the HSBC 7's series; ICC Under-19 Cricket World Cup qualification; 2020 Paralympics qualification; FIBA in Oceania Under-15 Basketball World Championship; Special Olympics Summer World Games 2019; Netball World Cup; Youth Olympic Games; and the Pacific Games (\$4,080,000).
 - Hosting International Tournaments: Fiji will host a number of international tournaments in the upcoming financial year, including: ICC East Asia Pacific Sub-Regional World T20 Qualifier (Cricket Fiji); the 2019 IWF World Junior Championship (Fiji Weightlifting Association); and International rugby matches (Fiji Rugby Union) (\$3,172, 585)³.
 - 2018 Oceania Men's and Women's Rugby Sevens Tournament: Fiji will host the international tournament. The event will also be the qualifier for 2018/2019 Sevens series for both the Men's and Women's teams (\$1,514, 888).

³ A further \$3.5 million is allocated under Ministry of Industry and Trade for International Super Rugby Event.

- Short-Term Experts: caters for the engagement of local and international experts to assist with the development of minor sports in the country (\$250,000).
- Sports Outreach Programme: funds a weeklong sports development programme in rural communities to hone basic skills in a range of sports and identify clear career pathways for young people (\$250,000).
- Sports Scholarships: supports the development of elite athletes by providing sports scholarships for promising athletes (\$221,000).
- Fiji Boxing Commission: supports the operations of the Fiji Boxing Commission to help revive the sport of boxing in Fiji (\$80,000).
- Ministry has been allocated sports grants for persons living with disabilities to increase physical activity and encourage greater participation in national sports activities, in line with Government's commitment to ensure social inclusion in sports for all Fijians (\$120,000).
- Expanding access to sporting infrastructure for the Fijian people to encourage healthier living:
 - Rural Sports Fields: develops sporting fields in rural schools to provide more opportunities to develop rural sporting talents (\$500,000).
 - Rural Sports Complexes: funds the construction of rural sporting complexes in Kadavu and Gau in line with Government's long-term plan to establish modern sporting facilities around the country, providing athletes throughout Fiji with the opportunity to further develop their skills in a wide range of sports (\$2.0 million).



The Fijian Government

Tertiary Scholarships and Loans Schemes

2018-2019 Budget Highlights

In line with Government's long-standing commitment to Fijian students and its aggressive investment to improve access to high quality education, there is a dramatic increase in funding available to students who aspire to higher education in the 2018-2019 Budget.

This significant investment in higher education seeks to boost the competitiveness of the Fijian workforce over the medium- to long-term by giving Fiji's young people greater opportunity to pursue graduate studeis in growing industries. More importantly, this new funding seeks to give Fiji's young people the chance to better their lives through education, without being limited by economic standing, gender, age or disability.

The new funding will be funnelled through the Tertiary Scholarships and Loans Board (TSLB) to fund scholarships and loans, including the Tertiary Education Loan Scheme (TELS), National Toppers Scheme (NTS), Overseas Scholarship Programme, Scholarship Scheme for Children with Special Needs and other scholarship programmes.

A total of **\$255.0 million** is allocated in the 2018-2019 Budget to fund the various scholarships and loans administered by the TSLB. This represents an increase of **\$59.1 million** or 30% compared to the previous financial year.

Currently, scholarships and loans administered by the TSLB support 21,049 students in Fiji. The increase of \$59.1 million in the TSLB's 2018-2019 Budget will fund the expansion of these financial aid programmes to reach 4,233 more students.

In 2017-18, TEELS opened the door for all students who have passed Year 12 (having met the minimum requirements for certain engineering courses at FNU) to tap into Government funding. Allowances were also increased for recipients of TEELS to support their studies.

Policy changes introduced in the 2017-2018 financial year provided recipients greater flexibility in their pursuit of higher education. This progress has allowed recipients to repeat any unit once

with no restriction on the number of units that can be repeated, and enabled recipients to change their programme of study once to promote students' freedom to find their best life path. In addition, for those recipients who successfully completed their certificate and diploma programmes, the scheme provided an option to continue to upgrade their qualifications up to their first bachelor's degree. These policies, proven to be popular, will continue through 2018-2019 financial year.

New initiatives

- \$43.8 million is allocated to increase the number of awards under the National Toppers Scholarship from 630 to 970. This includes:
 - \$40.8 million to fund Local Scholarship Awards to 950 'toppers', an increase of 320 awards from the previous financial year. Awards under each of the priority areas have been increased. In addition, a variety of innovative new areas have been added, including: medical imaging science; computer science; climate change; real estate and property valuation; human resource management; industrial relations; speech therapy; educational and clinical psychology; occupational therapy; and nutrition and sports science. The fields of study correlate directly with Fiji's current and projected economic demands; and
 - \$3.0 million is allocated to fund a new Overseas Awards Scheme under the National Toppers Scholarship to ensure Fijians are trained in highly-specialised areas not currently offered by local higher education institutions, but which are needed for Fiji's economic development. Each year, 20 awards will be offered for specialised undergraduate areas.
- A new Civil Service Scholarship Scheme will be introduced to support the professional development of civil servants thereby raising the level of service delivery. \$2.3 million has been allocated to fund 60 awards as follows:
 - 10 awards will be offered each year to civil servants to pursue a postgraduate diploma or master's degree abroad in areas of need within the civil service (\$1.5 million); and

- 50 awards will be offered to in-service teachers to upgrade their qualifications as follows:
 - a) 30 awards to upgrade to a bachelor's degree. Teachers in the following fields will be eligible for this upgrade: maths and physics; English language and literature; information Technology, industrial arts, special education, and early childhood education; and
 - b) 20 awards to upgrade to a post graduate degree (including PhD). Only teachers in the fields of maths, physics, and English language and literature will be eligible for this upgrade.
- A new Post Graduate Scholarship scheme will be introduced and offer 50 awards each year for post graduate study locally at a registered higher education institution as follows:
 - 40 awards to upgrade to master's degree, of which 20 places will be reserved for civil servants (\$746,400); and
 - 10 awards for candidates to pursue a doctorate degree of which 5 places will be reserved for civil servants (\$100,000).
- \$266,000 is allocated to grant recipients of the Scholarship Scheme for Special Children with allowances of \$6,800, on the same terms as those under the National Toppers Scholarship.
- An increase of **\$46.5 million** in new funding is allocated to the Tertiary Education Loans Scheme (TELS) to accommodate a number of new initiatives:
 - The threshold for eligibility for receiving allowance will be raised, meaning recipients whose combined parental income is below \$50,000 per year will be eligible to apply for allowances offered by TELS. This is expected to benefit an additional 1,100 recipients.

- To assist students who require at least two bus trips to get to classes, the bus fare allowance will be increased to \$30 per week; and
- TELS will fund 30 places for students seeking to upgrade to Bachelor of Medicine, Bachelor of Surgery (commonly known as MBBS).

TELS Accelerated Repayment Incentives

- After receiving valuable feedback from parents and students on how TELS could be further improved to benefit the Fijian people, Government is pleased to announce the new Accelerated Repayment Incentive (ARI) schedule, which will drastically change how tertiary graduates settle their loans.
- Early loan repayments are now heavily incentivised, giving TELS recipients the opportunity to have a significant portion of their student debt paid off by Government. Each TELS graduate's Government incentive will be equity-based, allowing those with more debt more time to repay their loans at a discounted rate.
- This change will enable graduates to settle the balance of their tertiary loans at a much faster rate. This will immediately make TELS as a whole self-sustaining, allowing for an influx of repayments to be reinvested in the scheme at a much faster rate. For Fijian jobholders, this incentive schedule will shorten the road to financial independence, and encourage prudent and responsible financial management early in their professional careers.
- For example, if a new graduate with a student debt of \$20,000 settles 75% of the balance of their loan within three years, their remaining balance will be covered by Government—effectively a \$5,000 discount, as very little interest would have accrued in that period.
- TELS Accelerated Repayment Incentives are set at three steps, affording 10%, 25%, and 50% discounts on the amount of the loan. ARI steps are determined based on the student's total amount of debt and how quickly their discounted portion of the loan is settled after their first day of employment after graduation.

Total Debt Level (Upon Graduation)	Discount applicable at various repayment periods		
	50%	25%	10%
1: Less than \$20,000	<2 years	2-4 years	4-6 years
2: \$20,000 - \$49,999	<3 years	3-6 years	6-8 years
3: \$50,000 - \$99,999	<4 years	4-8 years	8-10 years
4: \$100,000 +	<5 years	5-10 years	10-12 years

Ongoing Initiatives

- Other Scholarships: funds students under existing scholarship schemes (namely, the Fijian Affairs Board, Multi-Ethnic Affairs, and Public Service Commission) that were created prior to the National Toppers Scholarship Scheme (\$1.6 million).
- Other Overseas Scholarship Support Scheme: funds supplementary allowances to Fijian students studying overseas on donor-funded and bilateral scholarships. Through this scheme, students receive an allowance of USD\$200 per month (\$676,222).