



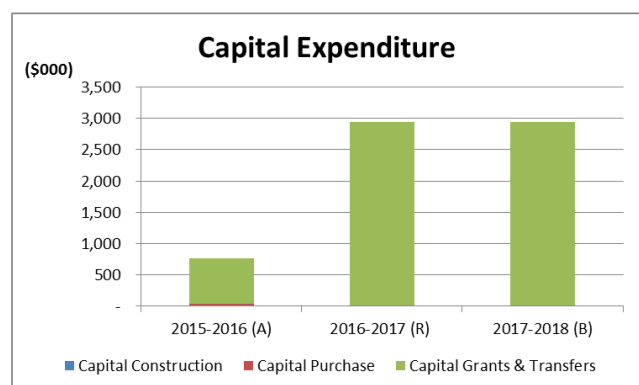
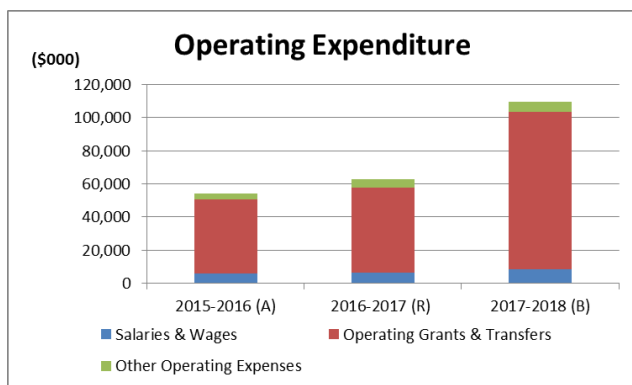
The Fijian Government Ministry of Women, Children and Poverty Alleviation 2017-2018 Budget Highlights

The Ministry of Women, Children and Poverty Alleviation is responsible for providing services and administering programmes that protect those who are most vulnerable, with the goal of reducing poverty in Fiji to negligible levels. The Ministry's work provides a social safety net that uplifts groups that are disadvantaged on the basis of gender, age, disability and economic standing to create a more level playing field in Fijian society.

The Ministry has authority over the Department of Social Welfare and Department of Women and oversees social protection programmes such as the Poverty Benefit Scheme, the Child Protection Allowance, the Food Voucher Program, the Social Pension Scheme and the Bus Fare Subsidy.

The Ministry also works to promote gender equality and women empowerment by mainstreaming the participation of women and girls in Fiji's socioeconomic development, and that mission is driven by the implementation of the National Gender Policy and the Women's Plan of Action.

The total budget for the Ministry of Women, Children & Poverty Alleviation in 2017-2018 is **\$113.4 million**, comprising **\$111 million** for operating expenditure, **\$1.9 million** for capital expenditure and VAT of **\$0.6 million**.



The increase of **\$46.9 million** in the Ministry's 2017-2018 Budget is mainly attributed to:

- significant new funding to expand the reach of existing social protection programmes and reform of these programmes to make them more effective at supporting vulnerable populations. Allocations have been increased for the Poverty Benefit Scheme, Social Pension Scheme, Child Protection Allowance and Food Voucher for Rural Pregnant Mothers;
- an increase in funding of initiatives for persons with disabilities, such as the Allowance for People Living with Permanent Disabilities. There is also an increase in operating grant to the Fiji National Council for Disabled Persons to implement The Rights of Persons with Disabilities Bill 2016;
- an increase in funding for the Child Protection Programme to improve the promotion and protection of the rights of children;
- an increase in funding for the Women's Plan of Action and Grants to Women's Institutions; and
- new funding for the upgrade of State facilities, which include the Fiji Juvenile Rehabilitation Centre in Samabula and the State Homes for Older Persons, starting with Samabula Senior Citizens Home.

New Initiatives

- \$7,974,736 is allocated as a Disability Allowance for people living with permanent disabilities. Eligible recipients will be provided with a monthly allowance of \$90 per person.
- \$25,000 is allocated to initiate an inclusive consultative process amongst stakeholders to foster partnerships and provide a best way forward for the establishment of an institution for the provision of clinical support to psycho-socially challenged individuals. The

initiative will work closely with a taskforce led by the Fiji National Council for Disabled Persons and its affiliates.

- \$138,000 is allocated for the extension and refurbishment of the Fiji Juvenile Rehabilitation Centre located at 10 Lakeba Street, Samabula to provide an enabling environment for the development and rehabilitation of juveniles committed into the care and custody of the State.
- \$300,000 is allocated for the upgrading of three State Homes for Older Persons, specifically the Babasiga Home (Labasa), Golden Age Home (Lautoka) and Samabula Senior Citizens Home (Suva). The homes are in a dilapidated state. Currently there are 125 residents in these state homes and 56 staff assisting in the day-to-day operations. The renovation and upgrading will be phased beginning with the Samabula Senior Citizens home.
- \$200,000 is allocated as grants to umbrella women's bodies, namely the Makoi Vocational Training Centre and the Ba Women's Forum to assist the Department of Women in providing skills training to women in the Central and Western Divisions.

Ongoing Initiatives

- Providing a social safety net to assist the vulnerable in society through:
 - Poverty Benefit Scheme: targeted at households living below the Basic Needs Poverty Line. The allocation towards this programme has been increased by \$8.2 million to cater for an additional 2,294 recipients. The maximum household benefit will also increase from \$160 to \$177 per household, inclusive of the \$50 food voucher. There has also been a transfer of disability cases to the Disability Allowance Programme, creating fiscal space to cater for an additional 1,086 recipients under the programme (\$38,050,931).
 - Social Pension Scheme: The scheme is targeting persons aged 65 years and over that do not have any form of income or have never been beneficiaries of a superannuation

scheme. This allocation has been increased by \$23.2 million as the eligibility age is reduced from 66 years to 65 years, catering for an additional 8,000 recipients. The monthly allowance has also been increased from \$50 to \$100 per month. In addition, the elderly aged 60 and above will continue to be assisted with 50% bus fare concessions to ease the cost of travel (\$37,200,350).

- Child Protection Allowance: targeted at single mothers, deserted spouses, widows, prisoner dependents, foster parents/guardians and children under the care of the State to ensure that underprivileged children are provided proper care and protections. The allocation has been increased by \$1.6 million to cater for an increased monthly benefit provided to children under the programme from a maximum of \$110 to \$119 per child per month, inclusive of a \$50 food voucher (\$6,807,589).
- Food Voucher Programme for Rural Pregnant Mothers: improves maternal health and reduces infant mortality by supporting expecting mothers in rural areas. The allocation for this programme has increased by \$1.15 million to cater for an increase in monthly food voucher from \$30 to \$50 to further reduce incidences of malnutrition and the likelihood of complications during pregnancy. The programme will assist approximately 2,076 mothers (\$1,651,350).
- Child Protection Programme: involves awareness programmes and the implementation of the recommendations of 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 (\$345,000).
- 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. The allocation has been increased to support increased work in advocacy, awareness, empowerment training, self-

employment and livelihood support, the promotion of rights of women and children with disabilities, and policy monitoring and review (\$1,189,356).

- Grants to Disabled Peoples Organisation¹: completes the construction of the Western Disabled Centre and supports various activities undertaken by disability organisations that complement the work of Government and the FNCDP. Organisations can submit proposals to the Ministry of Women to access grant funding in the upcoming financial year (\$1,600,000).
 - 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. For 2016-2017, 32 welfare recipients were assisted by the programme’s partner organisations to set up income generating enterprises through the Ministry’s annual review process. This is in addition to the 291 individuals that have graduated from the system since the inception of the programme in 2009. Beneficiaries are given seed funding after training is completed. Trainings are conducted by the National Centre for Small and Medium Enterprise Development (NCSMED) (\$500,000).
 - Fire Victims Relief: provides immediate relief to Fijians who have lost their homes to fire and do not have insurance to cover the damage. The allocation has been increased by \$50,000 to provide more immediate relief when necessary. Victims can seek assistance at any Social Welfare Office in the country (\$200,000).
 - Capital Grants to Voluntary Organisations: alleviates poverty and contributes to social justice 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).
- Seeking gender equality & the empowerment of women through:

¹ Allocation transferred from Head 50.

- Women's Plan of Action: the key focus of the Plan for the next financial year will be on increasing business training and seed funding for women, improving divisional awareness on elimination of violence against women, improving access to health, education, sexual reproductive health services and advocating women's rights. Fiji will also participate in the United Nations Convention on the Elimination of all forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW) in February, 2018 (\$1,388,000).
- NGO Grants: provides grants to women 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 that provides a free reporting and referral platform for victims of domestic violence and sexual assault (\$200,000).