

2015 Corporate Plan - focus on outcome

THE 2015 Corporate Plan detailing Fiji Road Authority's (FRA) major commitments, key targets and budgetary requirements for the year has been published and is available on the FRA website.

Building on 2014 being a "year of achievement," 2015 will be geared towards "outcomes", said FRA CEO, Mr Neil Cook, with a main focus on the recovery of the roading network, which is comprised of more than 11,000 kilometres of roads, 47 jetties and some 1,000 bridges in place around the country.

Proposed Work Programme

This year, FRA is projecting an overall budget of \$658m, to be spent according to the 2015 Proposed Work Programme, as outlined in the Corporate Plan.

With the emphasis on road network recovery, a total of \$156 million is earmarked for that, and 2015 is FRA's second year into its 10-year recovery plan, designed to reverse the deterioration of assets and to put them on sustainable footing.

"This has been proven around the world to be the only way to create a long term, reliable level of service," said Mr Cook.

Positive progress can be measured.

One way of measuring progress is by comparing the decline in value of our assets (depreciation) against the investment we are making in replacing (or renewing) worn out



Rehabilitation prolongs the design life of a road.

infrastructure. If the loss in value of our assets is less than the investment in renewing them then the condition is improving.

In 2015, FRA will be spending a total of \$156m on renewals against a depreciation of \$59m. This substantial investment will put FRA in a very good position to deliver the recovery plan over the next few years..

Bridges and jetties

The road renewals and maintenance budget spend will be: \$178 million on roads; \$47.6 million on bridges; and \$12 million on jetties. Close to 50% of the spend on roads will go to resealing and rehabilitating sealed roads while major work will be carried out on bridges including the Lomawai, Naganivatu, Stinson Parade, Vatuwaqa and Vunidilo bridges.

The budget for jetty recovery will take care of design, replacement and renewals work on Nabouwalu, Natovi, Savusavu and Vunisea jetties.

A large percentage of the overall budget will be channeled into new capital investments. A total of \$307.5 million will be spread out over six areas: safety, access, community, congestion, tourism and resilience. On its own, access infrastructure commands the biggest slice of that budget – over \$148 million has been allocated for that, with the highlights being the Sawani-Serea Roads Upgrade (\$29.5 million), Buca Bay I and II Roads Upgrade (\$34.5 million) and the Nabouwalu-Dreketi Roads Upgrade (\$58 million).

Corporate Mission

In keeping closely aligned with its Corporate Mission of creating 'a better land transport network for Fiji', FRA is also committed to ensuring that it builds and develops local capacity by giving preference to the employment of local people who have the required skills and experience.

"No appointment of a person who is not a citizen of Fiji will be made to any position unless the requirements of the position cannot be adequately met by the appointment of a citizen of Fiji," said Mr Cook.

As testimony to that belief, over 60% of FRA's supply chain are 'home grown' companies and they include consultants, who design roads, bridges and jetties; contractors who repair and construct these assets and a broad range of equipment and material suppliers.

Extensive upgrade programme in Nadi and Suva (NASRUP)

FIJI Roads Authority's Nadi and Suva Road Upgrade Project (NASRUP), saw Higgins Fiji awarded a \$65m contract last year to build a four-lane road through the Votualevu roundabout area, Namaka Ward, through Martintar and ending at the Wailoaloa Rd junction, with work beginning last September.

FRA Programme Engineer, Ms Zaina Khan, said developments were also taking place near Legalega, close to the Naisoso Road junction where the four-lane road begins. Work there is expected to end in May before gradually moving into the Namaka area.

The entire construction will include eight kilometres of concrete culvert installation, 15 kilometres of kerbing and 25,000 square kilometres of concrete footpath.

It will also extend to the upgrade of the Queen's Rd from the Wailoaloa Rd junction, where the four-lane road ends. This is expected to run through the bottleneck areas of Namotomoto, Navoci and Nakavu villages and end just before the Nadi town bridge near the Denarau Rd junction.

For the Suva leg of NASRUP, over



Upgrading the Nasinu-Nausori corridor is under way.

\$55 million has been allocated in this year's budget for upgrading roads in the Nasinu-Nausori corridor, Samabula-Nasinu corridor and the stretch of road between Nausori town and Nausori airport.

CEO's Message

LAYING the foundation for a fresh start is always an exciting prospect to every New Year. So far, in 2015, we have been fortunate that we have not been hit by any extreme weather event such as cyclones or extreme rains and flooding, all of which have the tendency to derail planning and distort projected budgetary requirements.

The Fiji Roads Authority (FRA) believes its estimated overall budget of \$658 million for 2015 will be money well spent for the benefit of all Fijians. Our 2015 Corporate Plan and Statement of Corporate Intent provides a very detailed analysis of how the \$658 million will be spent and in which areas, with a focus on outcomes.

This means ensuring that all the hard work and investment helps to deliver the Government's objectives for economic and social development. FRA's contribution to these objectives is based around two core areas of activity:

- Maintaining and operating the existing

road network, to provide more reliable, safer and quicker journeys;

- Upgrading and expanding the network, to support development in other sectors of the economy.

Our Proposed Work Programme, which can be found in the Corporate Plan, was drawn up with these objectives in mind. We are committed to the belief that the first fundamental of all successful organisations is to have a good business plan against which actual performance is routinely monitored and reported – throughout the year and not just after year-end. You will find, therefore, a special section in our Corporate Plan which sets out Performance Measures and Targets that stretches to 2017. Specific Performance Targets for 2015 are summarised in four key areas: Governance, Technical, Financial and General Management.

At FRA, we are working very hard to get Fiji's road networks on to a long term sustainable footing so that people and

businesses can invest with surety.

With that comes the challenge of balancing needs, reliability as well as affordability, when building roads, bridges or crossings in the urban centres, without overlooking the needs of our rural communities. To be able to strike that balance with the resources available requires careful planning and the determination to follow through with those plans.

This will support the sustained growth of the economy, unhindered by fragile transport connections.

Standing by the principles of quality and reliability will take resolve and hard work.

But when you see how closely related transport reliability is to improving living standards and economic development, then the logic is unquestionable.



FRA CEO Mr Neil Cook.

PPP model for infrastructure development

FIJI Roads Authority (FRA) Finance Assistant, Mr Sonal Gounder, had much to learn about the advantages of Public Private Partnership (PPP) model of infrastructure development when he attended a two weeks workshop on the subject in Singapore in January.

He is now a firm believer in the way PPP can help Government deliver a nation's infrastructure needs while at the same time encouraging private sector investment in the economy by allowing and helping them to take part in the construction, operation and maintenance of the asset.

"I think if we compare a small country like Fiji to a more developed country like Singapore, which is smaller than Fiji, the main reason for its development is that the private sector was providing for the infrastructure needs and the model is working quite well.



FRA Finance Assistance Mr Sonal Gounder.

Based on the cost-sharing principle, PPP brings the Government and the private sector together, who then help each other with the initial investment costs for an infrastructure.

"For example, in Singapore there is one big stadium, where they host all sporting events. It cost around US\$1.8 billion to build and this work was being done by a French company. I think the agreement is for the French company to operate the stadium for 15 years,

where it will own all the gate takings but after that, they are required to hand over the facility in normal, working condition to the Government. As per the agreement, the government helps in the payment of the loan, on a pro-rata basis, paying 25% of the loan and the French company paying 75%," said Sonal whose attendance at the workshop was funded by the Singapore Government's Cooperation Programme and the FRA.

"Toll roads overseas are built using the PPP model and even contracts for building jetties are given to the private sector. They finance it, operate it, recover their costs, make a small profit, then hand it over to the country's government. At the end of the day, the infrastructure is delivered and the governments don't have to bear all the costs," he said.

Denarau developments to benefit Tourism

DENARAU will be very visible in Fiji Roads Authority's tourism-related roadwork this year.

Upgrade work will be carried out along the Denarau Road and a new link will be formed from Wailoaloa Rd, cutting through Navakai and then exiting at a junction opposite Narewa village along the main Denarau Rd.

The roadwork is expected to ease traffic flow when completed.

Many tourists flying into Nadi travel the Denarau road either to stay in hotels on Denarau or to transit through to the Mamanuca and Yasawa islands.

A new Denarau bridge, funded by a \$9.4 million Government grant in September last year and initially a project between the Government and the Denarau Corporation Ltd, has now been



Pacific Marine and Civil Solutions has started work on Denarau bridge.

taken over by FRA.

Work on this bridge was contracted to Pacific Marine and

Civil Solutions. Like the Denarau Road, the bridge is of great economic importance to tourism.

The opportunity of a lifetime for Christopher Yee

MEET Christopher Yee, Legal Officer and FRA's newest team member. Christopher completed his Bachelors Degree in Law at the University of Queensland and a year of postgraduate studies at Griffith University. Since joining, Christopher is keeping FRA aligned with the legal processes and requirements, in addition to providing legal support and advice to the FRA team.

Having also been admitted into the Supreme Court as a solicitor in Queensland, Australia, Christopher returned home to Fiji and was drawn to being involved in the road construction industry.

For this young gentlemen, it had a lot to do with his desire to take advantage of 'an opportunity of a lifetime', where he gets the chance to experience the field of construction law.

And of course, some of it also had to do with his background,

growing up in Fiji and attending Marist Brothers before moving to Australia in 2005 for further studies.

"Even though I've been studying in Australia, I would come home at least twice a year, so I have seen the changes taking place on Fiji's roads.

"I have always heard about construction law and how it is a good industry to get into," he said. "So when I saw the FRA advertisement for a lawyer, I thought I would just have a go at applying."

"I am really fortunate that FRA has offered me an opportunity of a lifetime. When I was in Brisbane, I practiced mainly family law. The only experience I had with construction, contract law and insurance law was at the university," said Chris.

Fiji Roads Authority would give Chris the chance to build

up his formal experience in construction law.

FRA being an organisation that believes in knowledge transfer and local capacity building, means that Christopher's role allows him to work closely with FRA engineers building up his knowledge of the industry. At the moment, he is dealing with compensation plans, details of which are sensitive, but suffice to say that with the help of FRA engineers Chris is getting his first real taste of what construction law is all about.

"Most of these engineers who have had some ten-plus years of experience are well groomed in the legal aspects of the FIDIC contracts so I am able to access support and advice," said Chris. "It is very exciting to have the opportunity to be part of the



FRA Construction Lawyer, Mr Christopher Yee.

change for the better that is taking place on Fiji's roads."

Christopher's enthusiastic about being part of team FRA and absolutely loves the vibrancy of his office surroundings.

"First of all the staff here is an amazing group of staff and everyone works cohesively. Everyone goes out of their way to ask you how you're doing, how you're coping, which is a good thing. Everything you look for in a working environment is actually here," said Chris.

Four year street lights programme



More improved street lighting in 2015 much like the improvements along Laucala Bay Road.

2015 is going to be a bright year that will shed some light to the tune of \$12.7 million dollars for new and improved streetlights. There are approximately 9000 streetlights across the country and it is no secret that a great percentage of them need replacing.

In all of FRA's existence, this is the first time that the streetlights programme has

been allocated a significant budget to deal with an equally deserving programme in need.

The difference from \$1.5 million in 2014 for all of Fiji to \$12.7million in 2015 is a dramatic increase that will see thousands of streetlights replaced and 30 villages along the major rural highways having streetlights for the first time. This certainly projects a brighter 2015.

Standard templates improve application processes



Subdivision and Development Planning Officer, Mr Eric Singh.

APPLICATIONS to Fiji Roads Authority (FRA) for project redevelopment work will now be processed faster than they used to be, says Subdivision and Development Planning Officer, Eric Singh.

This has been made possible through preparing standard

templates and designing different check lists for each application, which helps ease processing and results in a quicker turnaround time.

In dealing with subdivision applications that come in from the Town and Country Planning Department, Eric's work is to ensure that the roads specifics in those proposed subdivisions are in line with FRA requirements and specifications.

Previously, with accompanying volumes of consultancy reports, the applications would make the rounds to relevant stakeholders and take up to eight months to process.

"When I came in, I would have to go through applications and it would take me two hours to read through the response prepared by our consulting engineers, MWH Global," said Eric. "After a week, I decided there must be a better way, so I designed six or seven templates for standard responses. These assist our consultant to prepare a standard response making it easier for the applicant to understand what we mean," said Eric.

He has also designed checklists to assist investors to specify exactly what their requirements are and to help them provide the

correct information with all the correct, supporting documents.

This has also helped in the broader effort by relevant stakeholders to reduce the final processing of applications, which has been significantly reduced, with aims to reduce it to just a month from the previous six to eight months.

A big achievement too, is the fortnightly meeting of stakeholders, where they are able to touch base on a regular basis, talk to each other and ensure that there is no backlog of applications.

Congestion an unwanted symptom of a thriving economy

FIJI Roads Authority (FRA) is working with key stakeholders to minimise disruption, specifically in the mornings when people are travelling to work and school along the busy Nausori – Suva Corridor, in particular from Omkaar Road to Makoi Road, Piling Road to Caqiri Road.

FRA's focus, in particular, is where road construction work is taking place and is causing delays to travellers between Nausori and Suva. Key stakeholders working with FRA include the Land Transport Authority, Fiji Police Force, our consultants and project contractor China Railway First Group. Combined, the efforts of each stakeholder are too improve and minimise disruption due to ongoing temporary management associated with the active construction site.

As a result, the temporary traffic management layouts will now be adjusted daily for peak and off-peak hours as appropriate, this will be done as each stage of



Road users coming to Suva are requested to allow for additional travelling time on the Kings Road.

construction is progressed to completion.

"FRA appreciates the support of our stakeholders stepping up to assist and improve the traffic situation on Kings Road. In particular the assistance of the Police Force who have been managing busy intersections and assisting our traffic controllers on the ground. Travellers may have noticed that the Makoi traffic signal is not operational at the moment. The traffic signal control box was recently damaged when a road accident occurred in the area, however the lights should be operational later this month once the damaged parts are replaced. In the meantime the

Fiji Police Force will continue to assist directing traffic at the Makoi intersection during peak hours," said Zaina Khan, FRA Programme Engineer for the Nadi and Suva Road Upgrading Project.

To get a better understanding of time spent in traffic, FRA is carrying out traffic surveys and journey time surveys to assess the scale of the problem faced by members of the public travelling along the Suva- Nausori corridor and we are still urging travellers to consider leaving home a little earlier and also to expect traffic building up during peak hours.

FRA and our stakeholders are working to better manage

traffic with our contractor's traffic controllers on ground.

"As ever, we thank you for your patience whilst we are improving and upgrading roads. Please allow extra travel time for your journeys and reduce speed when travelling through our sites. Driver behaviour along our construction sites has improved and has not gone unnoticed. It is great to see drivers observing and obeying the changing traffic management set ups. Well

done!

"There needs to be an understanding that as we work, we will restrict lanes and not close them, because if we did that it would greatly affect hundreds of thousands of travellers along this busy corridor. The roads have to stay operational. Likewise we need the public to understand that lane restrictions are in place to allow our crews a safe area to carry out construction work away from travellers."

"In the context of all things considered, it serves as a great reminder that congestion is really an unwanted symptom of a successful economy," said Ms Khan. "Fiji is thriving!"

New road standards



New standards will guide all road-related upgrade and construction works.

AN interim Standards and Specifications for Fiji roads has been developed within Fiji Roads Authority (FRA) and this will guide all road-related upgrade and construction works.

This will specify the type of roads approved by FRA, the standards they should meet and is expected to streamline

all road construction related processes.

Old standards have been trimmed to include only relevant provisions while additions have been made using mostly Australian and New Zealand standards.

The draft standards have been circulated to all stakeholders.

Local contracts awarded



Hot Springs Ltd, one of the local contracting companies winning FRA tenders.

"WE have a big programme in 2015, so get ready," Mr Cook has advised potential suppliers.

This news is especially important to local contractors as of the 59 contracts awarded in 2014 by Fiji Roads Authority (FRA), 41 went to local companies.

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