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# MEDIA RELEASE

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## **FRA CONCERNED WITH CONTINUED SEVERE OVERLOADING ON THE ROAD NETWORK**

**10 March 2017**

Fiji Roads Authority (FRA) is advising all heavy vehicle owners to comply with the vehicle axle load limits to prevent further deterioration of the road network caused by overloading.

This is made even worse with the recent extreme wet weather saturating and weakening the road pavements.

FRA General Manager Network Operations and Maintenance Aram Goes made the comments after the team witnessed trucks carting more than the legal load limit in areas such as Dawasamu, Bua, Natewa, Nadi and Rakiraki.

“There is a lack of appreciation about the serious effects of overloading which is now causing structural failures, especially along the Kings Road from Ba to Rakiraki, costing the FRA thousands of dollars every year,” Mr Goes said,

He said deliberate overloading needs to be addressed as this could reduce reactive annual maintenance costs up to \$30-50M given the growing number of vehicles.

“This can also reduce planned renewal programme which can save the Government up to \$120M per annum in the annual future maintenance bill.”

Mr Goes disclosed that for even only 1Tonne overload on an axle, the pavement life will reduce from 20 years to 13 years.

The Land Transport Authority (LTA) statistics indicate that over half of the vehicles that the LTA manages to weigh are overloaded and many are overloaded by as much as 3-5Tonne per axle.

“For this reason all developed countries have established weight regulations that protect the Government’s investment into road and bridge infrastructure that still enables the productive movement of heavy goods by road.”

He said rural roads have been particularly hit hard by this phenomenon, mainly because the business owners want to maximise on their profits by overloading vehicles used to transport goods.

“Many of the heavy vehicles carrying loads are heavier than the standard weight limit. In some cases single axle trucks are carrying the weight of double axle trucks.”

“Road are generally designed as flexible pavement and some compression movement is expected, that remains intact. But when the waterproofing is compromised tyres will force water to enter into the pavement structure and weaken a roads ability to withstand the design load.”

Mr Goes said a grossly overloaded vehicle would break through the pavement’s ability to absorb the flexibility required, thereafter letting water in.

“Overloads are causing much more damage as our roads and bridges are in such poor conditions from the maintenance backlog.

He said they were looking at immediate areas of the worst failures to be levelled out into the unsealed road smoothing and major repairs were planned for April.

“Overloading not only damages the roads, costing Fiji taxpayers extra money, but also disrupts network flow by blocking traffic access and roads up so badly, which make it difficult for private vehicles and other public service vehicles to travel on.”

Mr Goes added that the FRA is working with the Land Transport Authority with respect to the Memorandum of Understanding that was signed between them and the Ministry of Infrastructure and the Road Haulage Association on November 2, 2016 on overloading.



*Photo Caption: An overloaded truck- a threat to road safety and causing disruption to community access.*

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