

HR UPDATE

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Water Authority of Fiji now a Method A company

THE Water Authority of Fiji (WAF) is now a Method A company.

It was with this "breaking news" that Water Authority of Fiji (WAF) Human Resources Manager, Mr Ravinesh Shankar, began his presentation at the second WAF Annual Conference, 22nd – 23rd January, held at the Novotel Conference Centre, Lami.

This makes WAF the 60th company to join Method A, out of approximately 7,600 registered companies in Fiji.

What is a Method A company? It is a company where there is a systematic training system, with all training captured and evaluated using four levels of evaluation, it is a company with a training policy, with Management Development Programmes, and in the case of WAF, with three levels of



WAF HR Manager, Mr Ravinesh Shankar, announcing that WAF is now a Method A company.

Training Needs Analysis put into practice and the 2015 Training Plan ready for implementation.

"Let's transit into a systematic way of doing training," said Mr Shankar. "Each training conducted will be accompanied by four levels of evaluations. It's a must for participants to complete these so the learning outcome

of the courses can be gauged and, if necessary, a remedial action plan developed to assist participants in bridging any skills gaps.

"The journey began on 10th November 2014 to prepare for the transit and in one month's turnaround time, we prepared all the documentation, so a big vinaka to all WAF staff, Team HR and to Fiji National University."

Each year WAF has paid a training levy of approximately \$250,000, much of which has not been reclaimed back

in staff training grants, contributing to a loss of almost \$800,000 of unclaimed grants in four years.

"The challenge is to claim the maximum and utilise it for staff development at WAF and in doing so, WAF will create history as we intend to score 100% grant claim," said Mr Shankar.

Swift response from Water Authority of Fiji OHS



WAF OHS Executive, Mr David May, assists with emergency signage.

AS soon as the message was received that the main sewer pipe connecting Suva to the Kinoya Waterwater treatment plant had been broken by the heavy rainfall on the 6th of December last year, the Water Authority of Fiji (WAF) Occupational Health & Safety (OHS) Division sprang into action.

"Our first priority was to ensure the safety of our workers, so an immediate OHS risk analysis was carried out.

"The immediate concern was to make sure that everyone had the correct Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) before starting work on work on the pipeline at Cunningham bridge."

Because of the critical risk to WAF workers, the OHS team met with Management and Supervisors to rapidly facilitate the procurement process where new PPE needed to be acquired.

At the same time, a multi-organisational Task Force was convened, with representatives from the Ministries of Health and Environment, the Fiji Police Force, the Navy, the Fiji School of Nursing, DISMAC and members of the WAF OHS and Environmental Divisions.

"Our next major concern was to advise the public as quickly as possible of the dangers the spill into the Cunningham Creek posed to their health. Here at

WAF we initiated a poster campaign for immediate display in affected areas," said Mr May.

The Task Force divided into groups that all included representatives from each organisation and a two-week face-to-face awareness campaign took place, meeting with the affected communities to explain the dangers and the necessary precautions to take.

"The 30 Day Decree came into force, which prohibits the fishing, swimming and all recreational activities in the affected area and if it proves necessary, this ban may well be extended. Failure to comply will result in fines of up to \$2,000. The potential risk to human health is too high to take lightly," said Mr May.

Daily monitoring of the contaminated seawater is being conducted by the University of the South Pacific.

From Team Human Resources:

HR is focused on a positive and continuous improvement culture and, more importantly, a total commitment at all levels in achieving excellence and growth.

HR is dedicated to delivering the greatest value in our service delivery to customers, employees and the other stake-holders.

HR recommends all staff to abide by WAF policies and procedures at all times.

PADI qualifications for WAF divers

FOLLOWING a week-long course comprised of a combination of training in the pool, knowledge development sessions in the classroom and at least five open-water ocean dives, six Water Authority of Fiji's (WAF) divers are now PADI (Professional Association of Diving Instructors) Advanced Open Water Divers, a qualification recognised by HASWA (Health and Safety at Workplace Act 1996). A further 11 WAF divers will also undergo this training during February.

Tailored to suit WAF's operations and specific jobs performed by WAF divers, as well as meeting PADI's requirements, Mr Greg Buxton, senior instructor for Suva Scuba with 28 years experience in the U.K. and the Pacific, conducted the training that ensures the safety of WAF divers while complying with the Health and Safety Workplace Act.



Suva Scuba Senior Instructor, Mr Greg Buxton (right) conducts open water training for WAF divers.

The training also included diver first aid training, the first essential step towards becoming a Rescue Diver, the next qualification

the divers will be eligible to complete. After this, with additional experience, they will be ready to progress to Dive Master.

Urgent signage in emergency



WAF OHS Officer, Mr Iqbal Khan and WAF OHS Support Officer, Ms Diviya Kumar.

MS Diviya Kumar, OHS Support Officer was one of the people on the frontline after the wastewater pipe at Cunningham bridge was swept away.

"We were advised to put up notices as

quickly as possible to warn the public of the health hazard the spill had caused," said Ms Kumar.

Helping Ms Kumar in this campaign to warn the public and keep them safe were Mrs Sobha Devi Kumar, WAF Supervisor Environment, Mr David May, WAF Manager OHS and Mr Iqbal Khan, OHS Officer.

Ms Kumar said that it had been necessary to return and regularly replace notices along the seawall because, "People had been pulling down the notices and throwing them away. In some places, the signs were still there, but over the Christmas period, people were ignoring them and still swimming and playing in the contaminated water.

Ms Kumar said after they put the signs up in the iTaukei language, Hindi and English, people then paid attention to the message and stay out of the water.

Recruitment and retention- challenges to be met

WITH a permanent staff of 1,226, maintaining these staffing levels at the Water Authority of Fiji (WAF) is a process that takes time and generates a lot of paperwork, according to Mr Sitiveni Vatuvoka, WAF Executive Recruitment Officer.

"Last year alone, we recruited a total of 99 new staff from outside WAF to permanent positions. This figure does not include the appointment of permanent staff WAF to another position with the Authority," said Mr Vatuvoka.

Mr Vatuvoka is in the process of investigating strategies that could address the challenge of retaining appropriately qualified and experienced staff and appreciates the assistance he is now receiving with the recent



WAF Executive Recruitment Officer, Mr Sitiveni Vatuvoka.

appointment of four new staff members to his department.

He looks forward to the introduction of appropriate software that would streamline processes such as recruitment or transfers within the Authority.

HRSS modules coming soon to Water Authority of Fiji

BY mid-March this year, it is expected that the Water Authority of Fiji (WAF) will have completed the purchase of software from the supplying company, Eclipse, which will enable all WAF employees to enjoy the benefits of a Human Resource Self Service (HRSS) that is tailor-made to suit the Authority's needs.

Amongst the many detailed fields that will be available, the on-line advantages of the new system will include: online applications for all vacancies, on-line applications for allowances and leave, an online performance management system, systematic training record sheets with evaluation analyses, an online hazard and accident reporting system and an email pop-up alert of the approaching end to the probationary period for new staff. Privacy will be safeguarded with restricted access to personnel files, individual contract information and any disciplinary action that may have been taken.

HRSS will allow for more efficient and effective analysis of data as the on-line system will provide faster access to information.



- efficiency in service delivery

In order to provide superior customer service, Team HR has introduced the HR database at Reception. All requests sent to HR department via emails to be copied to HR Help Desk and Manager HR. All hard copies of requests are to be registered at HR Reception.