New Zealand Government supports WAF capacity building

CAPACITY building and training of Water Authority of Fiji (WAF) staff will be boosted by the New Zealand Government’s recent funding support of over $800,000.

In announcing the initiative, New Zealand Deputy High Commissioner, Ms Amanda Vercoe, said, “The New Zealand Government is delighted to support some of WAF’s practical training needs as the Authority continues to implement a series of ambitious and large-scale infrastructural projects throughout Fiji.”

CEO Mr Opetaia Ravai thanked the New Zealand Government for its ‘generous support’ and re-emphasised the importance of a highly skilled workforce to WAF’s primary role of providing quality water and wastewater services to Fiji.

“This contribution by New Zealand will go far in helping us achieve this goal, with 180 employees benefitting from the series of training modules, which have already started and will run at specified times during the remainder of the year.” Mr Ravai said.

The training programme will be delivered by Opus International Consultants (Fiji) Ltd, using Opus Environmental Training center (ETC) based in New Zealand.

Opus ETC provides water and wastewater operator training for National qualifications in both New Zealand and Australia.

Water Authority of Fiji partners with China Railway

A new contract has been signed by the Water Authority of Fiji (WAF) with China Railway First Group (Fiji) Ltd. It will see China Railway upgrade WAF’s water and wastewater pipe network in the Central-Eastern Divisions and the Western urban centers.

The objective of the two-year project is to expand the water and wastewater coverage in adjoining rural areas to the existing Suva-Nausori and Nadi-Lautoka reticulation systems.

“The project would improve the quality and quantity of water supply to meet the increasing water demand from residential and commercial customers,” CEO Mr Opetaia Ravai said.

“This pipe works is significant for Fiji and we hope that this relationship that we have established will be a long-term one,” he added.

Survey work on the $93million project has already started.
From the CEO’s desk

THE last two months have been an exciting time for the Water Authority of Fiji (WAF).

Contracts have been signed that will see our work programmes being fulfilled in a timely fashion and our water supply service guaranteed in times of power outages.

WAF and Appleby Engineering Limited of New Zealand have signed a contract to ensure reliable power supply for the Waimanu Pumping Station in Sawani.

The contract will see Appleby Engineering install two new standby generator sets at the pumping station, which supplies water to the greater Suva-Nausori area.

The new generators cost approximately $3.4 million and when permanently installed, will ensure consistency and reliability of the overall system with reduced downtime.

“New operating parameters will be thoroughly monitored to ensure that the generators are always in good operating condition, so any power shutdown will cause the least disruption to the water supply to our customers,” said CEO Mr. Opetaia Ravai.

Installation will begin in late October and will be completed after 12 weeks.

Training contract with Opus

WAF and Opus International Consultant (Fiji) Limited have signed a contract in July which will see knowledge transfer in the areas of operations, repair, maintenance and onsite problem solving skills for staff in wastewater services.

“The contract also covers training of staff members for the effective and efficient operation of the wastewater treatment plants in Kinoya,” said WAF CEO, Mr Opetaia Ravai.

This is the second time this year that WAF and Opus have come together on a joint initiative. The first one is the Water and Wastewater services training modules underway, made possible through an $800,000 funding from the New Zealand Government.

Mr Ravai thanked Opus for their assistance in improving WAF services to the people of Fiji.

The contract was signed by Mr Ravai and Opus Board members, Mr Peter Mathewson and Mr Paul Rooney.

Use wastewater system sensibly

THE misuse of the wastewater system in Fiji unnecessarily wastes time and money to fix and WAF is pleading with the public to act more responsibly.

“No wastewater system in the world can suffer abuse and continue to do what's expected of it,” CEO Mr Opetaia Ravai said.

The abuse of the system is the chief cause of blockages, burst pipes, overflows and backflows.

WAF and TLTB sign MOU

Data and information sharing between the Fiji Water Authority (WAF) and the Taukei Land Trust Board is now possible with the recent signing of an MOU between the two parties.

The MOU is expected to enhance the coordination and dissemination of information, data sharing and also strengthen the relationship between the two organisations.

WAF CEO Mr Opetaia Ravai and TLTB General Manager, Mr Tevita Kuruvakadua, agreed that the initiative would help both organisations identify ways of how best they can work together in accessing and providing data and information.
WAF Projects improve rural life

Safe water in Nabukelevuira

Reliable and safe water supply has returned to Nabukelevuira in Kadavu after WAF engineers upgraded the existing dam and installed a new water tank, together with new pipes and fittings.

Village headman Mr Maikeli Tuitubou thanked WAF on behalf of the 400 villagers, especially the 87 children attending the village school, who will now have easy access to safe drinking water. “We are all very grateful. Now, all households, including those located in higher areas, can have piped water at any time,” Mr Tuitubou said.

For over 10 years, Nabukelevuira had struggled with an intermittent water supply and often resorted to unsafe sources to meet their needs.

The village has now established a village water committee to monitor the new system’s performance and condition to ensure its ongoing reliability.

Naililili Settlement connect to main supply

THE eighty-five residents of Naililili settlement in Rewa were among the beneficiaries of WAF’s water project, designed to bring safe and reliable water services directly from the reservoir to their homes.

It took WAF engineers three months to connect Naililili to the Lokia mains supply.

“We used to travel by boat to fetch drinking water from a nearby school. It was very difficult, but now we have easy access to piped water,” said settlement spokesman Mr Savenaca Tagidua.

“This project has made life easier for us and we are thankful to the Government and to WAF for their tremendous assistance,” he added.

The residents now enjoy piped water in the comfort of their own homes.

Water comes to Vatuyalewa

Mosese Halofaki and Kolino Cagi enjoy clean drinking water.

AFTER 56 years of relying on a bore hole for their daily water need, residents of Vatuyalewa settlement in Nasinu finally have access to safe, reliable and clean water services made available in their homes through a $296,000 project.

WAF engineers installed a 700-metre pipeline to connect the settlement to the Tovata reservoir and the WAF reticulation system.

For the 15 families living in Vatuyalewa, the project was a ‘blessing’ ending years of walking for miles to fetch water from streams and rivers to do their washing and they thanked WAF and the Government for making life easier for them.

The settlement sits at the same elevation as Tovata reservoir so a booster pump and a water storage tank have also been installed to ensure that those at slightly higher elevation would also get an uninterrupted water supply.

No more river baths at Nakasayaga

WITH the commissioning of their Rural Water Project, villagers living in Nakasayaga Village, 57 kilometres out of Sigatoka town on the West Bank Road, no longer have to bath and wash their clothes in the Sigatoka river.

The Water Authority of Fiji (WAF), working closely with Government and the Nakasayaga Water Committee, have constructed a new dam, in the hills four kilometres outside the village, a 10,000 gallon ferro-cement tank and installed 10 standpipes and showers for the 50 residents living in the village that is comprised mainly of beef farmers.

“The completion of this project has improved our lives and we don’t have to go to the river again to bath. The mothers don’t have to spend long hours washing in the river and carrying up those wet clothes from the river to our homes. We are so grateful for this great work which has brought great relief to everyone in our village,” said spokesperson Ratu Ilaisa Niutabua.

He said that the 50 residents of Navakasayaga were now working on their next project, the construction of flush toilets in the village. “Without a reliable source of water supply we could not have started this project.”

Better system for Namatabitu

Namatabitu resident, Waisale Turaganivalu.

ONE letter changed everything for residents of Namatabitu in the Naitasiri Highlands.

It brought them a better water supply and upgraded their entire water supply system.

“I first heard of the Government’s Rural Water Scheme on the radio. I simply wrote one letter and WAF came over to survey our system,” said Waisale Turaganivalu, washes his cane leaves at a new standpipe.

This was followed by the upgrading of the existing dam, the laying of 25 lengths of 50mm UPVC pipes and the installation of eight sets of standpipes and shower connections. In a mere eight days.

“We are now getting good and strong water pressure in our homes and we thank the Government and WAF for quickly coming to our aid,” said Mr Turaganivalu.

Eight families live in Namatabitu, which is located in Lutu District, about seven kilometres from the Vunidawa Government Depot.
THE Water Authority of Fiji (WAF) annual staff sports weekend, held at the Suva Grammar School grounds, was more than a huge success. Hundreds of WAF staff from all over Fiji came with their families to be part of the event, sponsored by the Central and Eastern Divisions. A power walk on Saturday set the scene for the day of competitions that included volleyball, netball, rugby and soccer. This was followed by the Sports Awards Night, held at the Royal Suva Yacht Club, where the Western Division were announced as winners of the overall Sports Day competition. Addressing the staff during the Awards Night, WAF CEO, Mr Opetaia Ravai, stressed the importance of discipline and hard work and thanked everyone for all the good work done so far. He encouraged the staff to do their best to provide sustainable quality water through service excellence to customers.

First Opus training module completed
A total of 180 staff are expected to complete capacity-building training workshops funded by the New Zealand Government and conducted by trainers provided by the Opus Environmental Training Center.

The first in a series of three modules was carried out from July 15th to 17th with the second module planned for September this year.

CEO Mr Opetaia Ravai said WAF “greatly appreciated the New Zealand Government’s grant of more than $800,000 that supports and enhances the on-going WAF capacity-building programme. “This collaborative effort by New Zealand, OPUS International Training Center and WAF will go a long way towards effectively and efficiently upskilling a significant number of our people.”

The workshops were aligned to two areas of expertise being developed concurrently. The Drinking Water Treatment Training was conducted by Ms Sarah Cresswell at Waila Water Treatment plant, while the Wastewater Treatment Training, held at Kinoya Wastewater Treatment plant, was carried out by Mr Ian Couling.

WAF employees Mr Ilaisa Latiana, Technical Officer West; Mr Satendra Prasad, Technical Officer North and Mr Navin Prakash, Project Leader, Central/Eastern tested water quality at Waila. Each training module was attended by 18 WAF staff members.

WAF hosts Hibiscus teens
AS part of expanding their understanding of important issues confronting their generation, the Vodafone Hibiscus teens visited the Water Authority of Fiji (WAF) Headquarters at Manohan Building, Nasinu.

Here, they were introduced to Water Facts by Mr Manasa Tusulu, WAF Senior Business Analyst, in which the global water crisis was highlighted. Mr Tusulu said he was impressed by the quality of questions the young women asked following the presentation and that they “well deserved being made Water Champions.”

The teens were participating in the annual Vodafone Hibiscus Festival, Fiji’s largest and longest-running charity event.

Importance of GIS shared
An 11-week training exercise, conducted by Mr Josua Wainiqile, WAF Team Leader, GIS, has seen a total of 89 Water Authority of Fiji (WAF) Supervisors and Team Leaders in the Central/Eastern, Western and Northern Divisions gaining a better understanding of the role GIS plays in effective planning and project management, the sustainable and continued supply of water to customers, the exact location of meters and WAF assets, and the updating of information.

The GIS training concluded with an examination.