

The REFORMER

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Supporting Second Chances



COB Jo Kulidilo, Supervisor Northern Division ASC Sevuloni Naucukidi and IT Manager ASC Sakeo Livali at one of the characters provided by our sponsor, Go Advertising



Attorney General and Minister for Justice, Aiyaz Sayed-Khayum leads the way

It was a sea of yellow on November 4 when close to 400 people took to the streets in Suva for this year's Fiji Corrections Service's Yellow Ribbon Walk in support of the successful reintegration of ex-offenders into the community.

It was a record turnout since the annual event began in 2010 and the first YRP walk under the leadership of Corrections Commissioner, Commander Francis Kean. The YR Campaign was launched in Fiji in 2008.

The event attracted heads of Government including our line Minister and Attorney General Aiyaz Sayed-Khayum; civil servants; members of the statutory bodies, business communities, non-governmental organisations, media, national women's rugby side and members of the general public- young and old alike.

Captain of our Rio Olympics winning 7s rugby side Osea Kolinisau officially started the walk

with our very own Olympian, Raijeli Daveua.

Sevanaia Rayawa who is partially disable, went against all odds to finish the 6.5km race from Albert Part to Ratu Sukuna Park, even though he was last to reach the final destination.

"I am firm believer in second chances because that is one of God's principles. If God is able to forgive us for our sins then we should also find it in our heart to forgive the ex-offenders and to give them a second chance at life," Mr Rayawa said.

"I had to wake up at 3am in order to get across to Suva from Nausori because I want to show my support for the YR campaign. We need to help with the rehabilitation of the ex-offenders because they will return to us and be part of our community."

Also for the first time, the event saw the participation of some of the inmates incarcerated at

Naboro Maximum Center who were released to witness the effort of the FCS and members of the community who have continuously worked together to raise awareness for the successful reintegration of the ex-offenders.

Mr Sayed-Khayum said giving people a second chance would also benefit the country.

"This Government started the Yellow Ribbon initiative and now under the FijiFirst initiative, this fundamentally stands from the fact that we believe that we need to be a caring nation, we need to nurture our people, because lots of these people who may have been to prison may have enormous skills, enormous intellect, enormous potential to contribute in a very meaningful productive manner to the society. And if we give them the opportunity to do so, not only do they benefit gradually but also we benefit as a country," he told the Fiji Sun.



'Commissioner's Jackspeak' A Seaman's Eye Never Fails

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**Consistency
is the
Key**



Reverend
Josefa Tikonatabua

THE FULFILMENT OF HOPE

We talk a lot about hope.

We hope for a good weather on Christmas Day, we hope that our Rugby Sevens Team will win the HSBC series and we hope that we get just what we want for Christmas.

But for many of us, hope lacks a sense of certainty. It is more like a wish—something that we want to happen but have no way of knowing that it ultimately will. So we keep our fingers crossed and “hope” that everything will go the way we want it to.

The reality is that often life doesn't turn out the way we hoped it would. Hope is a fragile commodity. When life is disappointing, our optimism is replaced by feelings of discouragement and hopelessness. Before long we run the risk of becoming cynics who believe that there is nothing in which we can confidently hope.

This was the landscape of life when Jesus entered the world. The prevailing mood of Israel was anything but hope. The once proud nation was now a puppet state of the pagan Roman Empire. The common person lived under the defeating burden of the exaggerated requirements of the religious establishment. Centuries before, they had been promised a deliverer who would restore Israel to its former glory, but it

Padre's Message

“Why are you downcast, O my soul? Why so disturbed within me? Put your hope in God, for I will yet praise him, my Savior and my God.”
Psalm 45:5

had never happened.

Into this sense of cynical hopelessness, true Hope was born. But the tragedy of that first Christmas was that very few realized the hope that had been introduced. Hope for the forgiveness of sins. Hope for a bright future—forever. Hope for God's presence and power in daily living. Hope that would enable us to forget the past and set our sights on stuff that doesn't disappoint. A hope that, because of Jesus, is a certainty and not just another wish to be dashed on the rocks of reality.

I love the honesty of the psalmist who said, “Why are you downcast, O my soul? Why so disturbed within me?” We've all been there. But let's not stop there. Keep reading! “Put your hope in God, for I will yet praise him, my Savior and my God” (Psalm 45:5). Rejoice that Jesus came to give you something better than the disappointments of life on planet earth. And when by faith you embrace Him and all that He promised, you can have a hope that is no longer a fingers-crossed wish that you harbor in your heart, but rather a confident, courageous optimism that is rooted in the certainty of His Word.

Pin your hopes on Jesus this Christmas—you won't be disappointed!

*Merry Christmas & Happy New Year
to the
Fiji Corrections Service and Families.*



Losalini
Bolatagici

Editor's Note

face their problems.

In ensuring they are not neglected, a pilot program aimed at reducing the number of young offenders from re-entering prison has been introduced under the Yellow Ribbon Program. Operation Sow A Seed hopes to nurture these first offenders to become better citizens by realising their mistakes with the help of mentors. The positive response received after the launch of this strategy in November has been overwhelming. People have been coming forward to offer their assistance.

There was also a record turn-out at this year's annual YR walk, again, a positive indication that we are on the right path. As we target our youths, particularly the first offenders, we actually want to stop people from pursuing lifelong

careers in crime and be held up in an artificial environment.

Instead, rehabilitation should be our goal when it comes to youths. Not only for the good of young offenders but also for the good of the community as we continue our work towards nation building.

It seems that our lone effort in seeking alternatives to “locking up” those who have broken the law is very encouraging.

Yes! We are trying new approaches and we are giving others a second chance to re-discover their worth.

May 2017 bring about more success to our rehabilitation effort !! Happy New Year to all readers!

SOWING A SEED IN SOCIETY



The Fiji Corrections Service has launched a new rehabilitation strategy under its Yellow Ribbon Program.

Commissioner of Corrections, Commander Francis Kean said the Operation is a Voluntary Mentoring Program (VMP) geared to assist in the rehabilitation efforts of our youths between the age group of 17 to 25 years old who are currently incarcerated with the Fiji Correction Service (FCS) Institutions.

This VMP is specifically for first offenders within this age category whom the FCS Rehabilitation Unit believe and recommend deserve to be granted a lifeline for character development.

A good majority of these youths have a history of family disconnection which has led them to a life of crime.

Comdr Kean said a primary role in the VMP is to heal and restore this family connection.

The program will allow volunteer mentors to commit to become role models, a life supporting hand, a guiding light, a confidant, a friend and a sponsor.

The program will rely on the volunteer mentor to make this connection to the selected candidate, reconnection to his/her family, sponsor education training programs that he/she could pursue whilst under FCS care or to pursue once they are discharged.

Applications have been received from members of the public who are keen to become mentors. Meanwhile, FCS would like to thank all the sponsors for making the YRP Walk/launch possible. Special thanks to Go Advertising, CJ Patel, Fiji Water, Fiji Sun and Lincoln Refrigeration Ltd.



54 graduate to Save Lives

“Welcome to the business of saving lives.”

Those were the words of Commissioner of Corrections, Commander Francis Kean at the passing out parade in Naboro last month.

“To you the 54 graduates welcome to the business of the great commission. Welcome to this honourable profession.”

Commander Kean reminded them that the hard work has started from that day as he welcomed them into the real world.

He added they should always make the right decisions all the time and every time because it is critical for them, their family and for the respective Corrections Institutions that you’d be posted to and for the FCS.

“I implore you to be passionate about the profession you have chosen, to ensure that your attitudes are right at all times no matter how tough the journey ahead maybe. Be humble in your triumphs and gracious to learn too from your errors in becoming stronger, effective and efficient contributors to the success of this FCS.”

Baton of Honour: Elwood Welsh

Commissioner’s Book Prize (Best Theory): Manueli Ratanuiyarawa



Commissioner issues timely reminders

Commissioner of Corrections is reiterating the importance of saving money to the officers.

He issued these reminders during his addresses at his monthly parade, church services and the end of the year break-party.

He has encouraged officers not to spend lavishly during the festive season and to be mindful of preparing their children for the new educational year.

Commander Kean also encouraged them to start investing in having a property as well as furthering their education.

He also discouraged inter marriages within the Service. According to Commander Kean, inter-marriage has many effects which include affecting staff movement within the service.

He also stressed the importance of following simple instructions to the officers at the November Commissioner's Parade.

The last parade of 2016 did not eventuate due to the adverse weather condition however, the church service was held instead.

It was later followed by a social event with lunch catered by the officers' wives.



Special Day for Inmates

Seventy-five year-old Kusitino Buka of Lautoka had to wake up so early on December 25 to prepare food for this special day.

It was a day he had been looking forward to not only because it was Christmas but because the Fiji Corrections Service (FCS) is making it extra special for all those under their care by allowing their immediate family members to spend the day with them.

Mr Buka has two sons incarcerated and he was thankful for the opportunity given to celebrate Christmas with them. He was amongst the hundreds of people who turned out at the various Correction Facilities around the country to be with their closed ones.

"We want to thank FCS for allowing us to spend Christmas with our lives ones. They are here because of some of their wrong judgements and we always think about them during special occasion such as this but we are thankful to be given the opportunity to bring Christmas and the days message to them."

54 year-old Asena Nakesa had to leave her Malolo Island home too so that she didn't miss out on the opportunity.

"It's Christmas and we want to spend it with our loved ones. My brother has been in jail for the past 9 years and this is the first time for us to be allowed to spend Christmas with them," Ms Nakesa said.

"Our 87 year-old mother had also wanted to come when we were informed that we could



Asena Nakesa with her brother



Inmates and Corrections officers partake at the Holy Communion at the Suva Womens Corrections Centre

spend Christmas with our family member inside but I had to beg her not to come because she is old and traveling by boat and on the road will be hard for her."

Veronica Naduva, 54, of Suva accompanied her children and grandchildren to visit her son at the Naboro Maximum Facility.

"Today is one of the happiest days of my life because I'm able to spend Christmas with my son. People may have a different perspective about them being jailed but FCS is changing that perspective and I'm so grateful that this event is being organised for us to come and enjoy it with our loved ones."

Inmates were allowed to spend the day with their immediate family members in the 13 correction facilities nationwide.

In doing so, FCS is bringing Christmas and the day's message of love, sharing, forgiveness and hope to those who have fallen in the wrong side of the law.

Commissioner of Corrections, Commander Francis Kean stated that the intent behind this special occasion was for prisoners to understand that we care, their families and loved ones care and that one day they may turn a new leaf and become law abiding citizens contributing positively to our country.

Commander Kean also thanked the men and women of FCS who sacrificed time with their families to make the special visit possible on Christmas.



A family enjoys each others company at the Nasinu Corrections Centre



ASC Vitoriano Koco gives out gift to inmates' children

Vow to be Better



Forty-three year-old Apisai Vakacoko lived a life of dependency more than five years ago. He cared less about life and didn't think his role as head of the family mattered.

Although he had a wife, children and grandchildren including an extended family that respected and looked up to him, he failed to recognise that in any society, the family is an important unit and plays a crucial role in instilling values and responsibilities.

Not until he was convicted and sentenced

to over five years imprisonment that he got to come to his senses and realized the importance of families above everything else.

For some people, prison can be a very life changing experience that helps them to see the error of their ways and to try and make amends. Apisai is one of them.

While at first he was worried about the perception of others, he became thankful that while behind bars, the counselling and rehabilitation measures put in place by the Fiji Corrections Services (FCS) is helping him change

and to become the person needed in society.

Due to his good behaviour, Apisai was selected to undertake a job placement after successfully completing several training and rehabilitation processes during incarceration at the Suva Corrections Centre.

He is one of a few inmates selected to be part of the program where volunteer organisations would employ them over a certain period to gain work experience before being re-integrated into the community.

He will receive his salary upon his release.

He has been an important employee for Quality Print Limited for the past five years and this is an opportunity, Apisai never dreamt of having. Growing up on Tuvuca Island in Lau, education was not really a focus for him and he was forced to leave school in Class 4. He moved to Suva, had his family and lived in a settlement outside Lami.

"I didn't think getting a job was important. Even back in the island, I was one of those kids that did not bother to work hard in school," he said.

"Working here is probably the first proper employment for me and I have enjoyed every moment of it. I always thought it was hard, I guess I was just being lazy.

"Being in prison and being given the employment opportunity has helped me realised my role as head of the family. I was supposed to work and support my family and hold them together and I am thankful to FCS for giving me the opportunity realise that and to change for the better.

Apisai was still in prison when his wife died in 2013 from cancer and also missed his children's wedding.

"It really hurt to realize that she was the one holding the fort and I wasn't really there for her. My family visits me often and we have a healthy relationship. I have promised myself that once I get out of prison, I will be the father they really need."

Apisai works as an assistant printer and is set to be released in February next year. Quality Print Fiji Limited owner Dewan Prasad has praised Apisai for his hard work and his effort in making sure that the job is done on time.

"He is a quiet worker and he gets the job done. That is what is important to us," Mr Prasad.

He has also assured that Apisai would continue working for them after being discharged.

Apisai was the second inmate on job placement with the company. Alipate Qaraniqio is now a full time employer after completing his five years job placement program in 2013.

They are classic examples of the successful partnership between the prisons department and organisations such as Quality Print, in giving ex-offenders a second chance in life.

We shall Remember Them

The sound of the cornet echoed through the air in the break of dawn at the Military Cemetery in Lovonilase on November 10.

No! It was not a military funeral but an annual tradition to remember our fallen heroes in the battle field.

About 100 officers from the disciplined forces and ex-servicemen waited till day break to commemorate this year's Remembrance Day with a few minutes of silence observed.

The memorial services paid tribute

to those who paid the ultimate sacrifice during the 1st and 2nd World Wars and those involved in the many conflicts worldwide since 1945, including those fighting for our peace and freedom today.

"We shall remember them," said Fiji Returned Soldiers and Ex-Servicemen Association president Ratu Peni Volavola before placing a wreath on the memorial stone.

Commissioner of Corrections, Commander Francis Kean laid his wreath to pay his respect to the fallen heroes joining

the Defence Minister Ratu Inoke Kubuabola, military commander Rear Admiral Viliame Naupoto, and Deputy Commissioner of Police Isikeli Ligairi who also took turns to pay respect.

Representatives of various embassies in Suva were also present at the dawn memorial service.

Following the service at Lovonilase, a service was held at the Stanley Brown Naval Base in Walu Bay.

FCS was well represented by senior officers and personnel from Suva and Nasinu.



A Day For Wives

More than 150 gifted women showcased their skill and talents through their products at the Fiji Corrections Service's annual Officers' Wives Handicraft Fair in Suva on November 4.

Assistant Minister for Women Veena Bhatnagar, who was chief guest, said the craft show was a great platform for officers' wives to contribute to the economy.

"The opportunity provided to our sisters present here today is a very positive sign that Fiji is moving away from the lack of platforms as such that encourage the economic participation of women in the informal sector to be recognized and promote more women to become entrepreneurs.

The market day offers a variety of home-made products ranging from beddings, kitchen sets, assorted house ornaments



□ Assistant Minister for Women Veena Bhatnagar, Mrs. Ledua Biu and Mrs. Lilian Naupoto

and traditional handicrafts. The event was introduced to assist wives with the sale of their products especially for those who were unemployed.

In the evening, the wives were hosted

to a dinner at the SCED Bure in Korovou whereby winners were presented with their prizes by the Patron, Mrs. Kean.

Mrs. Cherie Kean said they hope to make the event bigger and better next year.



□ FCS Wives Patron Mrs. Cherie Kean gives out prizes at the wives dinner
□ Others : Highlights from the dinner event



Netters join Fiji, Vanuatu Police

In a move to strengthen ties between Fiji and Vanuatu feminine cops, a first ever netball event was organised in November at the National Netball Centre in Laucala.

The Fiji Corrections Service (FCS) netball team also joined the competition against the Fiji Police Force and Vanuatu Police.

Games committee spokesperson Assistant Superintendent Sala Radaniva stated this was step one adding they had decided to also extend the invitation to FCS.

She said the preliminary talks have been executed in the course of the Melanesian

Spearhead Group assembly with the Police Commissioner.

"The plan is to reinforce partnership between the Police businesses, change programmes with how greatest we will tackle ladies policing within the area," she said.

FCS was boosted with the presence of national reps Vaiti Waqatabu and Afa Rusivakula.

Most of our nationwide netball reps like Alisi Waqa, Vaiti Waqatabu and Afa Rusivakula took half within the event.

They played only one game defeating Fiji Police 12-10.



Top: Action from the Competition. Pic: Fiji Sun

Another 7s title in the bag

THE Fiji Corrections Service (FCS) sevens rugby continues with their victory run in the local 7s competition with another title bagged at the Wadigi 7s held at Nadovu Park in Lautoka on December 10.

Even the presence of Fiji 7s Olympics gold winning playmaker Vatembo Ravouvou failed to spark the McDonald's Saunaka 7s team as they went down in the final 17-10.

The Australia-based 7s flyhalf gave his best, but he was not given any room to weave his magic as the Max Hughes-coached Wardens side ended Saunaka's unbeaten run.

The hard tackling and the continued pressure applied by the Wardens forced Saunaka to commit mistakes.

Tournament director Apimeleki Nasalo said the epic final ended the tournament in great fashion.

"The final was a contest between the top best teams and congratulations to the Wardens team for the victory," he said.

FCS Five for Fiji Barbarians

Four Fiji Corrections Service (FCS) personnel have forced their way into the Fiji Rugby Union 7s side preparing for the Sudamerica's Rugby Sevens 2017 to be held in Argentina and Chile.

COC Sevuloni Tawake, Rusiate Tadulala, Timoci Sinati and Semisi Matawalu have been named in the side. They were very

impressive at local tournaments including the Oceania 7s tournament won by Fiji. Officer In Charge Emergency Control Unit, PCO Josateki Savou is also returning to the sevens fold as coach for the Fiji Barbarians.

The tournament will be held in Argentina from January 6-7 while the Chile tournament will be from January 14-15.



PCO Savou at training. Pic: Fiji Times

Warden Stars in the Mix



❑ Top: Four FCS personnel - Kitone Taliga, Timoci Sinati, Sevuloni Tawake and Rusiate Tadulala were part of the Fiji 7s team that won the Oceania 7s tournament held at the ANZ Stadium. COC Raijieli Daveua also featured for the National Womens 7s side.

❑ Top left: COC Rusiate Tadulala with members of the Fiji Barbarians 7s team bound for the Sudamerica 7s tournament.

❑ Top Right: COC Sevuloni Tawake and COC Semisi Matawalu with a team member arrive in America for the Sudamerica 7s.

❑ Right: COB Kitone Taliga in action during the last leg of the HBSC IRB 7s Series in Dubai.



Farewell CCO Balenaveikau

The late Chief Corrections Officer Salase Balenaveikau was laid to rest at the Nasinu Cemetery on December 2 following 28 years of service in the Fiji Corrections Service.

The former ICT manager died from End Stage Kidney Disease on November 16 at the CWM Hospital normal again.

Of the 19 years he spent at Naboro, 13 years and 2 months was spent at the Maximum Corrections Centre as it was the first Correc-



tions Institution to be installed with surveillance camera in 1996.

During the hostage crisis in 2000 he was able to disconnect the surveillance cameras at the outside gate and the compound.

He has been described as a passionate worker and a dedicated officer who made sure that he accomplished the tasks given.

He is survived by wife Jacqueline Rodan and six children – Ro Unaisi, Augustine, Tamara, Christopher, Belasio and Fiona.

