

# The REFORMER

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## Rising Above All



Jekope Vukivou is flanked by the Commissioner, Rev. Tikonatabua, senior officers and farm hands in the interior of Nautoa village

Commissioner of Corrections, Commander Francis Kean paid a visit to one of the inmates on early release under the Fiji Corrections Service's rehabilitation program in Naitasiri last month.

Accompanied by the Officers in charge of the Women, Nasinu, Suva, Remand, Pre-Release and Emergency Unit Institutions, they journeyed for two and a half miles through the muddy and rugged terrain of the interior of Nautoa village to check out the work progress of 43 year-old Jekope Vukivou.

The father of seven was released in January, six month prior to his actual release date, for community work under the supervision of Corrections Chaplain Reverend Josefa Tikonatabua.

Vukivou is working on a piece of land offered to him by Reverend Tikonatabua in Nautoa, Naitasiri to rebuild his life when he is released. His wife remarried while he was still behind bars

and with the help of Rev Tikonatabua, he aims to build a house of his own in his village in Wainibuka in order to give his children a secure future and a steady life.

Since January, Vukivou has planted 4,595 dalo with a market value of around \$20,000 and he hopes to expand if more cuttings are made available. He has also planted yaqona and banana in his plantation. Due to the geographical location of his farm, his harvest at the end of the year could only be transported by bamboo raft to where it could be easily transported to his market of choice.

"I am thankful to talatala for believing in me and also to the Fiji Corrections Service for allowing me to undertake this project. I chose the wrong path when I decided to steal in order to provide for my children and I ended up behind bars," Vukivou said.

"While inside, I had been worried about my life

outside and what I would do to support my children but with this initiative, it is enough to give my children a proper roof over their head and enough to support their education."

His eldest is currently majoring in agriculture studies at the Fiji National University campus in Koronivia.

Vukivou is a first offender and was jailed for five years for a robbery case in Rakiraki. He was also part of FCS educational program and graduated with 17 certificates from the Fiji National University majoring in Joinery and Cabinet Making.

Commissioner of Corrections, Commander Francis Kean is happy with Jekope's progress.

"We wish Jekope all the best and pray he makes a successful reintegration back into society," he said.

More pictures on Page 6.





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

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**Consistency  
is the  
Key**



Reverend  
Josefa Tikonatabua

### GOD'S GRACE AND MERCY

**I**t is God's sole prerogative to forgive; He decides on whom He will bestow mercy. Forgiveness and being merciful are part of the grace of God. God's grace gives unconditional love, mercy and forgiveness when you don't deserve it.

The path toward forgiveness is one all of us must choose if we are to follow Jesus, the one whose death makes forgiveness possible. The act of forgiving one another is one based on love, and is at the heart of the Christian faith, and the basis of our spiritual growth. It is God who first forgave us. God also commands us to forgive one another in Christ. Salvation and coming to faith in Christ, is the beginning of a relationship with God which hinges on our loving and forgiving others just as God loved and forgive us. We all need God's loving arms to forgive and be forgiven.

It is Godly to forgive. He determines it in our salvation which is based on God forgiving our sins through Christ's sacrifice, given freely by His grace. See Ephesians 2:8-9; Romans 6:23. God will show us relationships that aren't right, or areas of our lives where we are no longer growing, and distractions that hinder our walk with Him. The Lord desires to reveal our weaknesses so that we will walk more righteously especially through forgiving others and ourselves.

Forgiveness is of God. Our salvation is based on God's forgiveness of our sins. Forgiveness is giving up your resentment against someone else, along with your right to get even, no matter what has been done to you. Unforgiveness on the other hand is the deliberate, wil-

## Padre's Message

**"But God shows His love for us in that while we were yet sinners. Christ died for us."**

*Romans 5: 8*

ful refusal to give up one's resentment and right to get even, based on the attitude that someone must pay for the wrong done.

Forgiveness exists at two levels:

1. Forgiveness from God
2. Forgiveness from us to others

God's desire to forgive us our sins is based on His mercy and great love for all of mankind – John 3:16. God forgave us our wrong doings (sins) through Jesus Christ. Christ death on the Cross and His resurrection makes it possible for you to be forgiven of your sins, and for you also then forgive those who wrong you. He forgives you and me daily of our sins to restore our fellowship with Him, when we confess our sins to Him. According to 1 John 1:9 we need to confess our sins to God to receive forgiveness from Him.

The second type of forgiveness is dependent on you forgiving others for wrong s they have to you. Don't wait for them to apologise or say 'sorry' to you. You choose to forgive them regardless, so your Heavenly Father may also forgive you (Matthew 6:14-15). Don't wait until it's too late. The time to forgive now: as soon as you are aware that you are angry, offended, hurt, resentful, or jealous, or condemned, you choose to forgive completely those who wronged you just as Christ forgives you completely. Forgiveness has nothing to do with feelings. It is a choice we make. We are required by God to choose to forgive in obedience to His command, even when we don't feel like it. Fear God and obey his word.

God bless you all



Losalini  
Bolatagici

## Editor's Note

**I**t has been 11 years since the Fiji Corrections Service (FCS) formalised the paradigm shift from one of containment to rehabilitation and corrections under the Corrections Act 2006.

While security is still one of the major functions of the department, our mission is to provide an effective and efficient prisons and corrections system through the adoption of innovative programs of offenders' management and rehabilitation programs. We work in collaboration with the community and other agencies. Many tend to question this move to date and

the new role absorbed by the department without realising that the new visioning stresses paramount importance on the need to stir offenders to become responsible citizens not only to ensure successful reintegration into society but contribute passively to nation building. For some prisoners, especially those that have spent years or decades of their lives locked up, getting out come with a mixture of overwhelming joy and anxiety.

They often want to start over, but don't know how to achieve that. They need somewhere to live, to work. They need counseling, but have limited resources. Some prisoners are released with only the clothes on their back. Life on the outside can be a huge challenge - so hard that many prisoners fail at it and end up back be-

hind bars before long.

That's why programs that help inmates re-enter society are critical. With the introduction of the Yellow Ribbon program and other rehabilitation initiatives, FCS is trying to make a difference, starting from when an inmate is first incarcerated and following through to those initial hours when an ex-inmate is released and to the months that follow as they work to get their lives back on track.

In this edition, we bring to you some of the extra miles taken to prepare those under our care for the outside, so that they do not reoffend and return to our custody. We should continue with our effort to save the lives of those who have fallen in the wrong side of the law as 'Captains of Lives'.

# Plan ahead, leaders learn

**M**ore than 80 senior officers attended the Fiji Corrections Service Leadership Forum held at the Novotel Convention Centre in Lami on January 12-13 in a quest to improve their leadership skills.

Minister for Labour, Jone Usamate, Fiji Rugby Union chief executive officer John O'Connor and Fiji Electricity Authority CEO Hasmukh Patel were guest speakers at the event and they provided inspirational presentations to assist the officers with their leadership roles.

Minister for Labour, Jone Usamate encouraged officers to always strive for excellence and to continue challenging them-

selves "I believe leadership is a choice where you can choose to be a leader."

Fiji Rugby Union CEO John O'Connor talked about the importance of having a good customer service.

He said helping customers efficiently, in a friendly manner is one of the things that can set FCS apart from the others.

Mr Patel spoke on the importance of planning ahead and to prepare for the worst scenario.

He said rewarding your workers also makes them work and it is important to understand the vision of your organisation and to work towards it.

According to him, one should never be sat-

isfied that they have reached the peak as there is always room for improvement.

Commissioner of Corrections, Commander Francis Kean said it was a sound time to look back to where we had come from and where we want to journey in the years ahead.

"We hope this becomes an investment in their lives – an investment in their personal journey as leaders in the Fiji Corrections Service and hopefully we build up a stronger institution," Commander Kean said.

He added was now up to the officers to look into ways where they could motivate and inspire those under their command to help in achieving the institution's vision.



Jone Usamate



Hasmukh Patel



John O'Connor



Senior Officers listen attentively during the presentation



Participants of the 2017 Leadership Forum



# Push for Restorative Justice

Assistant Commissioner Operation, Apimeleki Taukei was the chief guest at the launch of Pacific Center for Peacebuilding's (PCP) publications on March 30. The publications– i) Baseline Action Research on Discipline in Fiji's High Schools; ii) Restorative Justice Curriculum; iii) Restorative Justice in High School Case Studies and iv) Victim, and Offender Conferencing: Case Studies in Fiji contain 5 case studies showcasing the RJ journey i.e the work PCP has done with the offender(s) and the victim(s) in collaboration with FCS.

ACP Taukei said restorative justice (RJ) is a powerful approach to discipline that focuses on repairing harm through inclusive processes that engage all stakeholders. It empowers victims by giving them a voice. Implemented well, RJ shifts the focus of discipline from punishment to learning and from the individual to the community. It is similar to the paradigm shift undertaken by the Fiji Corrections Service (FCS) from containment to correctional approach.

He added that the Fiji Corrections Service was working to-

wards shifting its focus to not only concentrate on the offenders but also to take into consideration the plight of the victims. This is all part of our Strategic Development Plan 2017-2018 and FCS is looking forward to continue working together with the Pacific Centre for Peacebuilding (PCP) in the future.



ACP Taukei, PCP director Florence Swamy, Police Constable Uluilakeba and PCP board member Sekove Naqiolevu

## Recognition for our officers

The Fiji Corrections Services (FCS) honoured 52 of its officers, awarding them with long service, general service, distinguished service and efficiency service decoration medals for their contribution to FCS and to the nation.

The medal parade was held during the first Commissioner's Parade for 2017 in Naboro in February.

Commissioner of Corrections, Commander Francis Kean congratulated the recipients for the awards. Most of the recipients were deployed to war torn countries as part of UN mission.

"That is a big and great achievement for you personally in your service to the Fiji Corrections Service, your first service to the Government of Fiji, to the people of Fiji and most importantly to the world in bringing peace to some of the trouble spots in this world," Commander Kean said.

"It was one year of sacrifice, one year of hardwork leaving behind your loved ones in order to carry out the peacekeeping mission- a task that is shouldered to a small country like Fiji."

Commander Kean has also urged officers present at the pa-

rade to be committed to their everyday duties and to be consistent with their work.

Long Service Good Conduct-30, Efficient Service Decoration-2, Distinguished Service Medal- 19, General Service Medal - 38



COA Suli Vosabeci greets the Commissioner



Medal recipients with the Commissioner



# Awards for the Brave

**I**t was an event that could have claimed the lives of many.

Unknown to many, the story of the brave effort of the corrections officers in 2000 when they stormed into the three corrections institutions in Naboro to take over from the inmates and rescue their colleagues in the process, was finally brought to light this year.

This was when 12 selected individuals were awarded with the FCS Distinguished Service Award for conspicuous gallantry or valuable service market by exceptional ability, merit and exemplary conduct at the Investiture Ceremony held at the State House on February 24.

A total of 24 officers were held hostage by inmates at the maximum corrections centre for about two weeks.

The inmates also took over the Medium and Minimum Corrections Centre where 12 officers were held hostage for six days. The hostage situation happened around the same time when the parliamentarians were held hostage at the Parliament complex in Veiuoto after the May 19, 2000 coup. Some inmates had managed to break out with the intention to join those who were gathered in parliament supporting the takeover.

Deputy Commissioner of Corrections Jo Kulinidilo, who was OC Emergency Unit at the time, thanked the Commissioner of Corrections for recommending them for the awards.

Supervisor Western Division, SP Sakiusa Veiwili said through teamwork, they managed to bring back our officers without any harm.



SWD Sakiusa Veiwili and OC Pre Release Laisiasi Malumudrodoro receive their medals from the President



DCP Jo Kulinidilo, his wife with the Military Commander Viliame Naupoto



SSD Tui Saladoka receiving the honorary medal



COA Vilikesa Guva receiving the honorary medal



SSD Tui Saladoka with his wife



COA Timoci Raluve receiving the honorary medal from the President





**T**hirty three year-old Navitalai Saluvou loves sitting amongst the vendors in the Nausori Municipal Market to sell his produce.

He gets around \$200 a week but that is more than enough for him to attend to his family needs in looking after his wife and two young children.

The earning might not be enough for many but for the man from Navatuvula village in Naitasiri, he enjoys it because he says nothing is sweeter than the reward of his hard work and sweat.

But more than 10 years ago, Navitalai had resorted to crime to earn a living. He would steal in order to put money in his pocket and that life had led him to prison on many occasions.

He was introduced to crimes at an early age so serving terms in prison

# Sweet Reward

became a norm for him.

In 2013, after completing another six months imprisonment term for theft, Navitalai decided it was time to make a "U-turn" and make a meaning of his life. The constant counselling provided by the Fiji Corrections Service (FCS) and the many Yellow Ribbon initiatives introduced aimed at giving ex-offenders a second chance at life contributed immensely to Navitalai's self realisation.

"I decided it was time to focus on a better future. Coming to prison is a waste of valuable time and I have other ways to earn an honest living than stealing and committing other crimes," Navitalai said.

Through the help of a former officer of FCS, he was blessed with a piece of land, a few kilometres away from his village, to utilise and to help him get back to his feet.

He cultivated the land to plant cassava, dalo, ginger and pineapples. Through the years, he started his pig farming and recently ventured into prawn farming.

"I enjoyed living here on the farm with my family. We eat from the fresh produce and even without money, we can still survive," he said.

"We have harvested our ginger already and we are about to replant as well as other crops around here. My prawn farm is expected to mature soon for harvest and it is all about time management and hard

work."

"I had about 20 bags of ginger which was sold at \$25 each and I harvest more than 1,000 dalo. That is more than enough given that I work alone with little help from his relatives every now and then."

Early last year, Navitalai thought about finding a proper market for his produce to help sustain his family until harvest time.

"That's when we decided to come and sell in the market. My wife brings our produce early in the morning while I stay back to do some farming and I usually join them later in the day."

"We sell whatever we can bring from our farm – rourou, coconut, cassava, dalo, ginger and sometimes we buy too from middlemen from our earnings and re-sell to our customers. On an average day, we get \$50 a day and the lowest we could collect in a week is \$200 and we put aside some for our saving."

His wife is full of praise for his hardworking husband acknowledging the change in his life.

"He is not the same man I first met and I am grateful for his new life. I'm glad that we have officers from FCS who still come around to visit him and to encourage him," she said.

As for now, Navitalai continues to work hard towards his dream of expanding into large scale farming in the near future.

## Rising Above All ...



The two and a half mile journey to get to the farm of inmate Jekope Vukivou in the interior of the Naitasiri forests



# Operation Solesolevaki gathers Community Support

Rehabilitation initiative, Operation Solesolevaki continues to gain support from members of the communities.

As part of the Commissioner's Intent, the initiative is aimed at re-establishing the relationship between the vanua, church and general community to partner and network in a consolidated effort to restore the lives of inmates who are often rejects of society.

In February, a team from the Suva Corrections Centre visited Manu Settlement in Wainibuka, across the river from Nabulini village, with inmate, 43 year-old to begin work on his farm. He was set to be released five weeks from then.

The intention behind this is to prepare him for his release so that he is not

dependent when he is returned to the community or resort to crimes to restart his life.

The work at his cassava plantation didn't take longer than expected thanks to the enormous support provided by the members of the community.

"I'm thankful to FCS for identifying me for this project. Ever since I got imprisoned for domestic violence, something I regret dearly, I had been asking God to direct my path. Self realisation has taught me to control my temper because that has been my downfall," the inmate said.

"Such program gives us hope and it is an eye opener for us. When we get support from FCS and the community, it is an encouragement for us to become better citizens and not to re-offend."

29 year-old Peni Narai said they were

happy to assist his uncle and to have him home for a day.

"It's the first time to hear of such initiative. FCS is very helpful and they do care for those they look after. For the officers to come out here and do the work themselves is a testament of their commitment to rehabilitation," Mr Narai said.

Akosita Gonewai, 61, also commended FCS for the initiative.

"We do appreciate the assistance rendered to my brother-in-law. We totally support your work and it can be proven by the huge turnout to assist us with farming. Thank you FCS for your continuous help and for the opportunity for him to reconnect with his family and community."





# BSP Life keeps promises

A few months after BSP Life became the insurance provider for the Fiji Corrections Service, two death benefit payouts have been made for the untimely death of two officers.

35 year-old widow Penina Vulakoro received \$30,000 from his late husband, Corrections Officer Class B (COB) Temo Tadulala's insurance policy, who died in January.

In March, widow Fane Waqanivalu received a \$50,000 payout for the death of her husband, the late Corrections Officer Class B (COB) Eminoni Waqanivalu, who died at 51.

With the help of Marsh Limited which came in as the insurance broker to address the FCS's (client) risk management and insurance needs, BSP Life took over as FCS Group Insurance provider in December. Members of the FCS were previously covered internally by the FCS Welfare Insurance.

Both widower thanked BSP Life and FCS for the payout which, according to them, would be directed towards their children's education.

Head of BSP Life Operation,

Atelina Muavono said it was a moment of truth for them to pay out the death benefit.

"We felt happy when the claimed was lodged because this is actually what we are here for. It's the moment of truth of us as it happens and when we do pay out," Ms Muavono said.

"While it is not something that we anticipate- to lose someone so early, we have Mrs Tadulala here as a witness to our work and we want to assure all insurers, the department (FCS) and the group as a whole, including members of your families that we got you covered when instances like this happen. This is the first witness and the first confirmation of our promise to you (FCS)," she added.

Commissioner of Corrections, Commander Francis Kean hopes that the small contributions given in partnership with BSP Life can contribute to the wellbeing of both families.

He applauded Marsh Limited for facilitating the insurance deal and for bringing the matter to a prosperous conclusion. He also thanked BSP Life for their partnership in the journey.



## Needy Children Assisted

Eight year-old Adi Mirini Sorowale aspires to be a doctor. Despite being away from her parents, she believes that she can achieve her goal and make her parents proud.

Her parents have been behind bars since last year.

Sorowale and her two siblings were among the underprivileged inmates' children who received stationery packs from BSP Life, in partnership with the Fiji Corrections Service (FSC) in February.

She and her siblings are being looked after by her aunt and their 74-year-old grandmother.

Her aunt, Nanise Vakatale, said she worked to ensure that her two nephews and niece were always happy.

"I have six children and four are still in school and I do not have any problems looking after the children because they are still young and they deserve the love and support from their families," she said.

"They do have their moments where I see that they miss their parents but I take them on outings whenever I feel that they're missing their parents."

Commissioner of Corrections Francis Kean said a cheque for \$1000 received from BSP Life was divided to help purchase \$200 worth of stationery for underprivileged inmates' children. Five families were assisted.

"We hope this generous donation by BSP Life will be put to good use," he said.





# QUARTERLY ACTIVITIES





# Wardens in Fine Form

The news of our champion men's side missing out on the Fiji Bitter Marist 7s tournament broke the heart of many.

The team held on until the last day hoping for a miracle to happen. Players were gutted and the supporters were hurt. Our dream of stamping our mark yet again was shattered. However, it taught the team management a lesson to be active on their roles.

The team is now hoping for a comeback at the Martintar 7s tournament in Nadi at the end of April where they will be defending their title as well at the Fiji Bitter Nawaka 7s tournament in May.

At the Coral Coast 7s tournament in January, the side rampaged on an unbeaten run for a playoff against an unknown First Light Tav-

euni side in the final. It was a closely-fought Cup final where we went down 10-12.

Wardens had earlier ousted Army 19 -9 in the semi final at Lawaqa Park in Sigatoka.





# Women need more exposure

Our women's rugby side is working on improving their performance and to lift their standard of playing in the field.

The team was just formed before the Marist 7s tournament last year and they have had only three outings so far.

While they finished as the finalist in the Marist 7s tournament last year, the team then comprised of many civilians.

This year, the officers took ownership of the team and marched into the Coral Coast 7s with a group of inexperienced ruggers yet committed to the sport. Many had their first taste of rugby then and they lost in the final of the Plate competition.

Still that was an achievement for us and we continue to look at areas of improvement and growth for the side.

The team missed out on getting into the semi finals at the Marist 7s tournament this year but managed to finish on the fifth spot.

While COC Raijeli Daveua chose not to play for the side due to a hamstring injury, fellow Olympian Merewai Cumu joined the side and was very instrumental throughout the tournament. Coach CCO Lemeki Koroï is confident that the side will be a team to watch out for in the future with more exposure and commitment from the players.

The ladies are now preparing for the Nawaka 7s in May.





# Farewell Fallen Comrades



The Fiji Corrections Service (FCS) was saddened by the loss of two of its officers early this year.

The late COB Temo Tadulala's untimely passing was on January 6. He died at the age of 36 and was stationed at the TMA office in Naboro at the time of his passing. He is survived by his wife Penina Vulakoro and his teenage son. The late COB Tadulala was originally from Totoya in Lau.

Exactly a month later on February 6, 7029 TCOB Eminoni Waqanivalu

passed away after a short illness leaving behind his wife Fane and their five children.

He joined the Service in 1992 and passed on at the age of 51 after 25 years of service. He was stationed at the Naboro Minimum Corrections Centre at the time of his passing.

Both officers were laid to rest at the FCS burial grounds in 9 Miles in the presence of the Corrections Commissioner and other senior officers.

