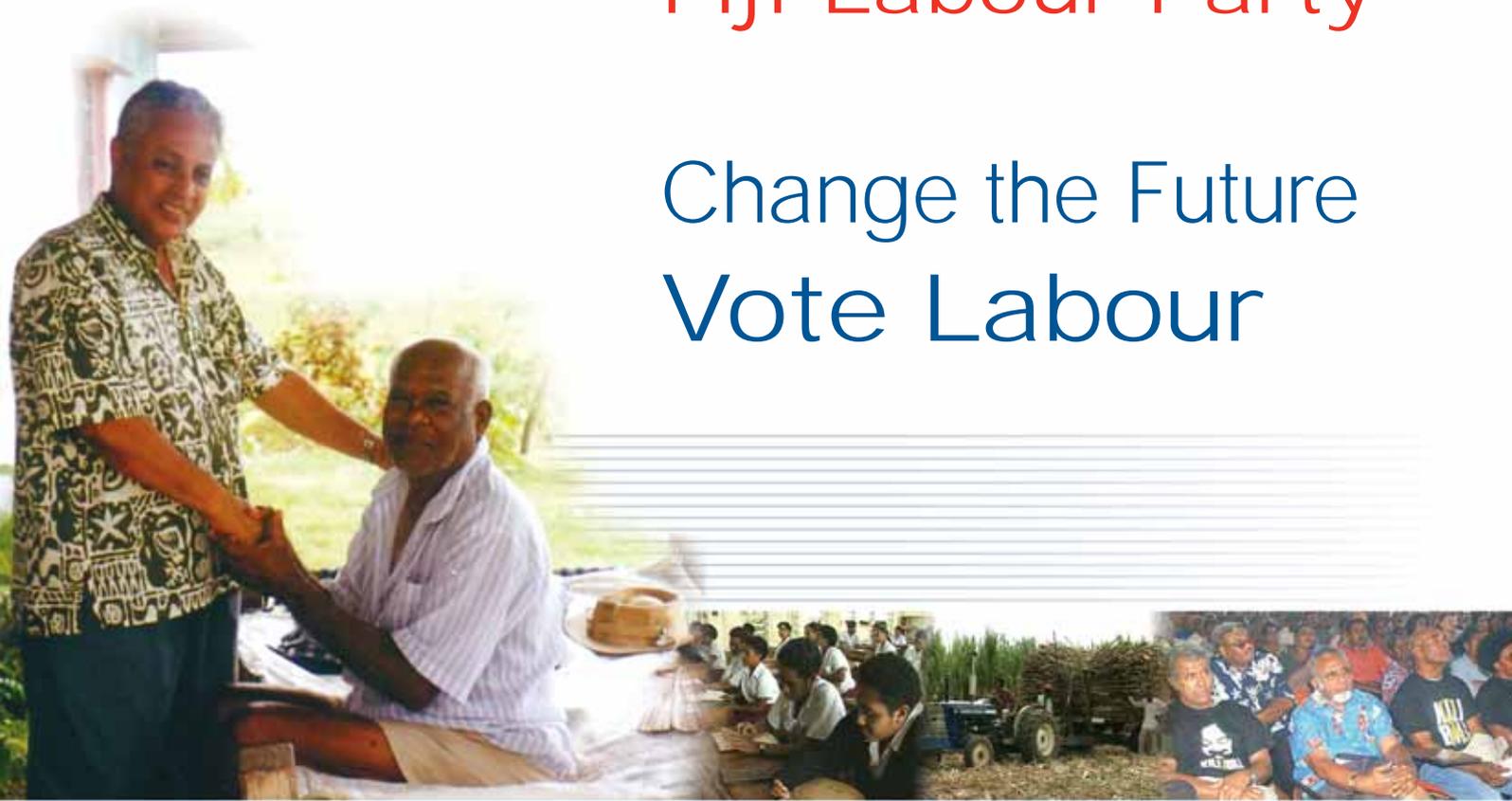


# Fiji Labour Party

Change the Future  
Vote Labour



2006 Election Manifesto



**FIJI LABOUR PARTY**

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Seeking common ground—Labour leader Mahendra Chaudhry with the leaders of two other parties—Mick Beddoes (UPP) and Ratu Epeli Ganilau (National Alliance)



Working with PANU – PANU leaders Meli Bogileka and Senator Ponipate Lesavua discuss common policies with Mahendra Chaudhry and Krishna Datt.





## Labour's vision for the people

**I** know that for many of you, life is getting harder. Keeping a roof over your head, putting food on the table for your family, and getting health care for your loved ones have become a tough challenge.

People from all backgrounds tell me that they live from day to day; that there is no certainty for them or their family.

Labour wants to make life easier for people. We have always fought for the ordinary people – in towns, in villages, on farms and at the workplace.

**Now we are ready to take up a new challenge for a prosperous and stable Fiji, where everyone gets their fair share.**

Labour wants to rid the government of corruption so public money can be used to benefit all of us – not just a wealthy elite.

We want education to be the number one priority – so our children can take part in a growing national and regional prosperity.

We want to make sure that our health care facilities are up to expected standards and that the older people have access to effective, affordable health care and a secure income.

We want to ensure that people have clean drinking water, that roads are serviceable and that our rural people have access to the comforts and amenities of modern living.

The Fiji Labour Party stands before you with a sound record of 21 years of committed service to all the people of Fiji.

Despite our adversities, our leadership has never shirked its responsibility to work for the good of all the people of Fiji – regardless of race or religion. Our concern for the Indigenous community and their welfare has always been at the cornerstone of our policies for Fiji, despite a lot of myths that have been created to discredit us in the eyes of the Fijian people.

Our 2006 Election Manifesto presents to you a dynamic set of policies which deal with the key issues that confront our nation. We are confident that we can rebuild our tattered economy and return it to the dynamism of 1999/2000. On this solid foundation of growth we will build a progressive, just and fair society.

Your support will enable us to translate our vision for Fiji into reality

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Mahendra Chaudhry'.

**Mahendra Chaudhry**  
Leader – Fiji Labour Party





## It's a question of leadership...

Leadership is an important issue in the 2006 general elections. A caring, compassionate, competent leadership committed to the policies of good governance, untainted by corruption and with the courage to do that which is right is essential if Fiji is to progress, and the benefits of development shared fairly by all its people.

The following record of achievements of the two Prime Ministers – Mahendra Chaudhry in 1999/2000 and Laisenia Qarase in 5 years – provide a clear message.

### Mahendra Chaudhry

- ✓ **Economy** grew by a record 10%. All sectors of the economy sugar, tourism, garment showed record performance; record investment levels;
- ✓ **Jobs** – 9000 new jobs created with 10,000 new jobs forecast for 2000
- ✓ **Finances** – prudent management of government finances led to a budget surplus with government revenue the highest ever, and expenditure lowest; Inflation – a low 0.2%
- ✓ **Relief for the Poor** – Labour Govt. showed real compassion for the poor:
  - Direct Social Welfare assistance raised from \$3.3m to \$11m
  - Vat and Import Duty removed from staple food items
  - 17 essential household items brought under Price control
- ✓ **Housing** – brought down interest rates on HA loans to 6% for workers in lower income workers
- ✓ **Education** – Fee-free education raised to F5 and for poor schools to F6; Introduced \$1m student loan scheme for needy students
- ✓ **Health** – \$200,000 State assistance to poor for overseas medical treatment
- ✓ **Utilities** – water, electricity rates and telephone charges reduced;
- ✓ **Third Party Premiums** (vehicles) cut by half;
- ✓ **Corruption** – untainted by corruption; Drafted Bills for Code of Conduct, Freedom of Information; set up Commission to inquire into prevalence of corruption and make recommendations for an Anti-Corrupt Practices legislation

### Laisenia Qarase

- ✗ **Economy** – driven into serious recession with key exports falling drastically and foreign investment negligible;
- ✗ **Jobs** – record unemployment with 10,000 jobs lost in the garment industry alone
- ✗ **Finances** – near bankruptcy – debt levels doubled in five years; Budget deficit critical;
- ✗ **Poor** – unprecedented levels of poverty with 23,000 families lining up for State assistance each month, 13,000 of whom are Fijians;
- ✗ **Housing** – squatter settlements sprouting everywhere with 90,000 squatters in Greater Suva area alone, majority of them Fijians
- ✗ **Education** – slashed the per capita grant to schools by 50% creating hardships for poor families
- ✗ **Health** – driven to appalling levels of neglect, inefficiency and incompetence, lacking adequate manpower, supplies and drugs
- ✗ **Rural stagnation and agricultural decline** have forced hundreds of families to move to towns seeking non-existent jobs
- ✗ **Infrastructure and Utilities** – road conditions, particularly in rural areas are appalling; constant disruptions to water supply and water contamination are serious problems; Electricity costs have gone up;
- ✗ **Corruption is rampant** – scams, abuse of office and wastage of funds have left a deep stigma over government operations; No Code of Conduct, Freedom of Information or anti-corrupt practices legislation in 5 years
- ✗ **Affirmative action** – failed to benefit the indigenous community with benefits accruing to a select group of SDL supporters, cronies
- ✗ **Rule of Law** – Qarase has shown a blatant disrespect for the rule of law and the Constitution; caused deep divisions in society





## Rebuilding the Economy and Creating quality jobs

### 5 years of SDL Misrule

Five years of misrule, incompetence and corruption by the SDL has wrecked the good done in just one year of a Labour government. The SDL has failed to revamp the post-coup economy.

#### Fundamental weaknesses in the economy are:

- X Collapsing exports, especially sugar and textiles – Sugar exports have declined from \$282m in 1999/2000 to \$218m in 2005. Garment exports are down from a record \$333m in 1999 to a dismal \$142m in 2005.
- X Lack of investment
- X High cost of public utilities
- X High unemployment
- X A growing budget deficit
- X High levels of public debt
- X Rising inflation
- X Critical level of balance of payments
- X A falling Fiji dollar

**The SDL has demonstrated it is completely incapable of governing Fiji's economy responsibly.**

Labour believes that a strong, healthy and vibrant economy is the key to national well being. It creates jobs, enhances incomes, and funds government services such as health, education, security, and welfare.

**Labour has the experience, the competence and integrity to manage the economy for the good of all.**

Under the last Labour government the economy surged forward by a remarkable 10% in just 12 months. Investor confidence was at an all-time high with some \$400 million worth of investment projects poised to take off in tourism alone. Over 10,000 new jobs were projected for 2000.

Through SDL incompetence and corruption, the country is now trapped in a cycle of economic stagnation, with limited growth, low investor confidence, and unprecedented levels of poverty and unemployment.

Labour believes that the economy has to grow at an average rate of 6% annually if we are to create jobs for the 15,000 who enter the employment market annually. Unfortunately, under the SDL government, growth this year is forecast at a dismal 0.7%.

Labour's plan to revive Fiji's economy involves real assistance to the private sector and careful investment and management of public sector spending. Labour will prioritise reviving the rural economy to spread the benefits of prosperity across our nation.

### Labour's plan for Fiji's economic future

Restore investor confidence in Fiji through good governance – financial prudence, open government, political stability and respect for the rule of law are essential for growth and investor confidence. Only Labour's vision for a multiracial and democratic society can deliver a stable environment for investment.

In 5 years under the SDL public debt levels have more than doubled. The money borrowed has been swallowed up by financial mismanagement, kickbacks, corrupt deals and vote buying. Labour in government will spend wisely to improve our quality of life.



# Vote Labour Change the Future

## Economic Zones

We will establish fully developed special economic zones for designated industries which will qualify for benefits under productivity based incentive schemes. Enterprises which offer high employment levels will receive special consideration

## Technical/Vocational Training

The State will invest heavily on technical and vocational education programmes to address the acute shortage of skills in the various industries and professions. Affordability and accessibility will be a hallmark of this specially designed programmes.

## Assist workers in our export industries

Fiji's export industries are under pressure, with exports declining massively in recent years. Several thousand jobs have been lost as a result. Labour will work closely with all stakeholders to maintain a sustainable export economy.

## Undertake a skills audit

Under the present government, displaced workers, such as garment workers, have been left to sink or swim. Labour will determine where employment opportunities will lie in the future, and assist displaced workers to receive training for new industries.

## Initiate a national service scheme to provide training and development opportunities for young people

Labour's plan will give school leavers the opportunity to enhance their skills through organised activities.



Investment must mean jobs with decent wages and working conditions.



Labour's plan to revive Fiji's economy involves real assistance to the private sector and competent management of public sector spending.

## Establish a Venture Capital Fund to stimulate the growth of small and medium sized businesses

Fledgling entrepreneurs with viable business propositions will be able to borrow funds for business start up on favorable terms and conditions

## IT development

Fiji's well educated multi lingual population means we should lead the region in IT. Labour will ensure we have the necessary infrastructure and skills training to exploit this important opportunity to create more jobs.

## Bring down business costs

Labour will reduce the two largest cost components for business: electricity and telecommunications charges. Bank fees and charges will be kept under surveillance. We will ensure that the spread between lending and deposit rates is kept at an acceptable level.

## Improve incentives for business

Labour will initiate an investment friendly and fair tax regime that will benefit all investors.

## Dismantle monopolies

Labour will dismantle monopolies in the telecommunications, television and energy sectors thus creating room for competition for the benefit of all.

## Upgrade infrastructure including roads, hospitals and electricity

Labour will establish partnerships between the private and public sectors to upgrade health services, roads, bridges, supply of electricity, water and telecommunications.

## Support the rural economy

Labour will invest in rural communities to ensure modern amenities are available and to bring jobs and services to rural areas.





## Tackling Poverty Head On

Labour believes that no citizen should endure poverty. We are all entitled to the basic necessities of life – food, housing, clean water – and a just wage.

Tragically, recent years have seen an alarming increase in the levels of poverty in Fiji. There is an ever widening incomes gap in the country with a small group getting richer while a large number of our people live in abject poverty. Official figures show 29% of the population now live in poverty while another 25% live on the brink of poverty – more than half the population are either poverty-stricken or at serious risk.

### Visible signs of increasing social distress and poverty levels are everywhere.

All around our towns squatter settlements are growing – well over 100,000 people are now living as squatters in make shift sheds without access to water, electricity or sanitation. In our urban areas, families crowd into substandard housing. On our streets we see increasing number of beggars – particularly little children – and there has been an alarming increase in prostitution involving very young girls and boys. Students from poor families are dropping out of school unable to afford the rising cost of education.

### Labour's plan to arrest poverty

Labour believes poverty needs to be tackled on several fronts. We aim to create a socially just and prosperous society through jobs, social welfare and education.

Job creation and economic well-being are pivotal to fighting poverty. And we need to develop and diversify economic activity in the rural areas to improve incomes and lifestyles for our rural community. Labour will ensure that employers pay fair wages to their employees.

Through social welfare, education, housing and health programs, we will provide special assistance and affirmative action programmes for the poorest in our community.



**Labour can alleviate poverty by acting on people's problems.**

## The SDL has not tackled poverty seriously

- X Failed to address unemployment
- X Failed to address low wages for many of our workers
- X Increased VAT from 10 to 12.5% which has hit the pockets of the poor the hardest
- X Forced hundreds of families to move to towns from our rural areas in search of non-existent jobs, thus adding to squatter problems
- X Failed to provide sensible solutions for land lease renewal, stripping both farmers and landowners of steady and secure incomes.



# Vote Labour Change the Future

## Labour will:

- ✓ Introduce an old age pension scheme for those over 60 and without any means of earning a regular income
- ✓ Introduce medi-care or a national health insurance scheme to enable the poor to access quality health care
- ✓ Review the State welfare allowance payment criteria, and increase the rates of allowances to reasonable levels over a period of time
- ✓ Provide State assisted housing to the poorest sections of society
- ✓ Step up price surveillance of essential consumer items, particularly, food stuff and other household supplies
- ✓ Create income earning opportunities by developing cottage industries in the rural and peri-urban areas through micro finance schemes

The number of people in squatter camps has doubled under the SDL Government



All young people must grow up believing they have a future. Education and training is the way forward.



Labour aims to create a socially just and prosperous society through jobs, social welfare and education.





## Labour's plan for Fiji's Health System

Labour believes that all our citizens deserve high quality health care, whether they are rich or poor.

FLP is very concerned about the appalling state of our hospital services and the increasing incidence of life-threatening diseases.

Labour has an integrated plan to improve public health care and invest in our hospitals and clinics.

### Labour's plan

#### ✓ Introduce a Medi-Care scheme

Labour's number one priority will be to establish a national health scheme to pay for health care services. This will be implemented through the Fiji National Provident Fund (FNPF). Special arrangements will be made for those not represented through the FNPF to ensure that the poor and elderly are not left out of the scheme.

#### ✓ Hospital management

Management of major hospitals will be put on public/private partnership contracts. Labour acknowledges that the specialised skills and expertise of the private sector needs to be enlisted to fix chronic problems facing our hospitals and health centres. Labour will, therefore, put the management of our hospitals under public-private partnership arrangements. The management company will be responsible for all staff matters. It will upgrade and modernise equipment and supplies and ensure delivery of quality service to the public.

#### ✓ Fix the doctor shortage

Labour will work in consultation with donor countries such as Australia, New Zealand, India and the US to meet the problem of doctor shortages and a lack of specialized skills. In addition, specialist doctors and consultants will be encouraged to fly in for short periods to work in our hospitals to make up for the lack of such expertise here.

#### ✓ Prevent lifestyle diseases

Modernization and sedentary lifestyles mean Diabetes and heart diseases are on the increase. We will raise public awareness on healthy living practices to combat the onset of such crippling diseases.



## SDL Record

The SDL has presided over a shocking decline in health service delivery, despite increased funding, which has been wasted. This impacts most on the poor who can't afford expensive private or overseas treatment.

### The SDL record includes:

- ✗ Overcrowded hospitals and desperate shortages of essential drugs including anaesthetics, equipment and basic supplies
- ✗ Increased patient deaths, including new born babies through neglect, wrong diagnosis and lack of proper resources and equipment.
- ✗ Shortage of doctors and nurses, who leave our shores in hordes because of poor pays, long working hours and shocking conditions of work.
- ✗ Long waits for hospital patients before they receive attention, and delays in surgery because of acute doctor shortages.
- ✗ Failure to provide basic services in Oncology for cancer patients, dialysis for kidney patients, or mammography machine to detect breast cancer.

## ✓ Improve patient data

FLP will introduce a computerized patient record system which can be available at hospitals as well as health centres. This will contain online data such as the patient's x-ray results, blood tests, medical diagnosis, adverse drug reactions, current medications, family history and clinical reports.

## ✓ We will require **annual health check up** of all citizens under the Medicare scheme to detect the early onset of diseases and provide timely treatment. All school children will be required to undergo annual medical checks.

**Labour will cut the crippling doctor and nurse shortage through regional assistance and private/public hospital management.**



## Labor's plan for a super speciality Hospital

Labour will help establish a multi-speciality hospital to provide state-of-the-art tertiary care in Fiji.

Although the majority of deaths in Fiji (80%) are caused by lifestyle and congenital diseases, there is no speciality care or equipment available at government hospitals to deal with this rising threat to our health.

The tertiary care hospital will provide specialized world class treatment for cardiac, kidney, cancer and AIDS patients. Labour will make sure the poor can receive treatment at these hospitals through medicare and special State assistance.

At present due to the non availability of these services in Fiji, hundreds of people travel overseas for medical treatment and surgeries resulting in enormous loss of foreign exchange for Fiji. The poor, however, miss out because they cannot afford tertiary hospital care overseas.

As an additional benefit a world class hospital will attract patients from Australia, New Zealand and even the US because of the high cost of these treatments overseas, earning foreign exchange for Fiji. Such a hospital will also create hundreds of new jobs and promote Fiji as a health-holiday destination.





## Education for Fiji's future

Labour believes that education is a basic right of all children. Only through education can we effectively eliminate social problems such as poverty, unemployment, high crime and delinquency.

Under the SDL, hundreds of parents struggle to find money to keep their children at school. SDL slashed funding to schools and has not treated all schools and students alike. The school dropout rate has worsened markedly in the past 5 years.

### Labour's plan

- ✓ Labour will restore and raise the per capita grant and increase it gradually to ensure all schools have adequate funds and the poor are not penalised
- ✓ Introduce an annual "Back to School" allowance of \$70 per child in primary school and \$120 per child in secondary school for families living below the poverty line
- ✓ Provide fee-free education to all Form 7 students
- ✓ Reduce the cost of text books by encouraging every school to put in place a text book hire scheme to reduce costs to parents.
- ✓ Reduce school bus fares by deregulating school bus licensing, while ensuring safety standards.
- ✓ Restore the student loan scheme scrapped by the SDL in 2001.
- ✓ Focus on helping indigenous Fijian students  
A special unit will be set up within the Ministry of Education to assist indigenous Fijian students to attain high academic results. Labour will maintain the special assistance funding provided for Fijian education and continue scholarships for Fijian education.
- ✓ Review the scaling of marks for external examinations and introduce a more acceptable and equitable method of assessment of students

## Education has gone backwards under SDL

The SDL has failed to provide the education our children need to go forward in life, and to build a strong united Fiji. Poor families struggle to pay rising school fees and levies, rural schools are neglected and Fijian students continue to experience disadvantages because affirmative action funds have been wasted or misdirected.

### The SDL record speaks for itself:

- ✗ Slashed the per capita grant to schools in 2001.
- ✗ Scrapped the student loan scheme introduced by the Labour-led government in 1999
- ✗ Wasted affirmative action funds, instead of spending them on much-needed improvements to Fijian schools and students.
- ✗ Rural schools sadly neglected, ill-equipped and under resourced.
- ✗ Educational standards and attainment of indigenous Fijians have fallen drastically under the SDL
- ✗ Failed to develop adequate opportunities for vocational education – so school leavers miss out on opportunities to learn real skills for the real world.



# Vote Labour Change the Future

- ✓ Place emphasis on students achieving a high rate of success in external examinations as a means of acquiring academic excellence
- ✓ Upgrade teacher training and curricula development programmes to uplift the standard of education generally
- ✓ Increase training for real life jobs through more vocational education programmes. Opportunities for IT training will be expanded to make sure our young people are prepared for new economic opportunities.

Mahendra Chaudhry as PM visited a village in Yasawa-i-rara where the Labour Government had donated a school bus.



Parents' single biggest concern in Fiji today is to raise the standard of their children's education.





## A strong future for our Sugar Industry

The sugar industry is at the core of our society, providing livelihoods for 200,000 farmers, cane cutters, mill workers and their dependents.

Labour believes that strong government action is required to ensure our sugar industry continues into the future, and farmers get a fair price for cane.

### Labour's plan

- ✓ **Maintain the incomes of the farmers** – through a productivity-based incentive scheme – against cane price reductions resulting from the phasing out of EU preferential prices for our sugar
- ✓ Subsidise the cost of farm inputs such as fertilizers, chemicals and farm machinery to minimize cost to the farmer
- ✓ Initiate crop rehabilitation/development programmes to boost production so that cane growers are not forced to borrow funds
- ✓ Pay resettlement grants to farmers whose leases are not renewed
- ✓ Retain the assistance package for incoming indigenous Fijian cane farmers
- ✓ Ensure that Quality Cane Payment system is introduced only after all the mills have attained internationally accepted operational standards
- ✓ Abolish the Sugar Export Tax
- ✓ Undertake a comprehensive study of the current harvesting and transportation system with a view to reducing costs
- ✓ Retain and upgrade the rail transport system
- ✓ Retain the Sugar Industry Master Award to provide stability and security to the industry
- ✓ Reform the Sugar Cane Growers Council: to exclude government nominees from its membership
- ✓ Abolish the SCGC levy and provide for government funding of SCGC expenses
- ✓ Re-examine the current industry restructure plans, in light of the rapidly changing circumstances, in order to assess the long term viability of this industry. The bottom line will be for farmers to get a fair price for cane.
- ✓ Use the Alternative Livelihood Programme to develop new industries in rural areas and assist farmers who can no longer make a living from farming cane. Our approach will return prosperity to rural villages, stemming the tide of young people who are abandoning our rural areas.



## The SDL Record

- ✗ Failed to address the lease problem – endangering the financial security of both landowners and farmers as productive lands reverts to bush
- ✗ Mismanaged the Fiji Sugar Corporation to a point of virtual bankruptcy
- ✗ Burdened the industry with significant debt through the Industry Reform Programme without addressing the fundamentals that are threatening the future viability of the industry
- ✗ Failed to fully exploit the Crop Diversification and Alternative Livelihood Programme to assist displaced farmers develop new sources of income
- ✗ Ignored the farmers' call for State assistance during the prolonged drought of 2004/2005

**SDL's inaction, in 5 years as government, led to a reduction in the cane crop from 4 million tonnes in 2000 to 2.7 million tonnes in 2005**





## Natural Resources

Labour believes that sustainable development of our natural resources is the key to rural employment and prosperity. Unfortunately, under the SDL this sector has run into serious difficulties with exports falling sharply – a problem which must be reversed.

Labour's approach will combine support for indigenous land owners with the most modern approaches to marketing, sustainability and development to deliver prosperity and security to rural communities.

## Agriculture

In 1999/2000 the Labour-led government revitalized agriculture, achieving a 19% increase in agricultural output in just 12 short months.

### Labour's plan to revitalize agriculture

- ✓ Labour will invest in agricultural infrastructure such as irrigation and drainage systems, floodgates, quarantine clinics etc. to enhance production and facilitate exports.
- ✓ Labour will promote agricultural exports across a wide range of agricultural products and encourage import substitution in vegetables, beef/sheep meat and dairy products.
- ✓ We will explore the export potential for organically grown fruits and vegetables.
- ✓ Labour will support CIDA's role in coconut development, including assistance to diversify the range of products.
- ✓ We will establish industry bodies with strong farmer participation to expand exports of dalo, yaqona, fruits and vegetables.
- ✓ Labour will encourage expansion in beef production particularly in the coastal areas of Vanua Levu, and possibly in pine areas. Labour will consider a central beef feed-lotting and marketing operation.

### SDL has failed to promote agriculture

- ✗ Less than 50% of the arable area is under productive use while significant areas lie idle.
- ✗ self-sufficiency in food production is declining while urbanization is driving the demand for higher consumption
- ✗ The number of professional farmers has decreased owing to lack of government support and insecurity of land tenure.
- ✗ Research and related services have declined in quality and coverage

Labour believes that sustainable development of our natural resources is the key to rural employment and prosperity.



# Vote Labour Change the Future

- ✓ Labour will work with the Rewa Cooperative Dairy Company and landowners in Tailevu and Naitasiri to expand the dairy industry. We will pursue similar large scale dairy production units in the Western Division to supply the tourism sector.
- ✓ We will promote the integrated processing of fruits such as mango, papaya, passion fruit, guava and pineapple into a range of fruit, pulp, puree/juices, chutneys and dried fruit for export.
- ✓ Labour will improve research and extension services. A National Food and Agriculture Research Institute will co-ordinate research, focusing on technology and innovation as well as improved performance and accountability.
- ✓ A Food Safety Authority will be established to regulate food hygiene.
- ✓ We will encourage best practice in land use, with active links to the Natural Resources Management Plan to ensure environmental sustainability.
- ✓ We will provide a more supportive climate for agri-business through the Fiji Development Bank.

## Forestry

Labour believes that our forests are an important resource for Fiji – bringing us clean water and air, attracting tourists from overseas, providing a home for our native birds and animals, and of course, an important source of income through timber cutting.

Labour will sustainably manage our forest resources, focusing on community participation and ownership. Labour will encourage value-adding to maximize the returns for Fiji's economy.

### Labour's plan for Forestry

- ✓ Labour will work with resource owners to develop new business models to manage the forests to benefit local communities.
- ✓ Labour will implement a sustainable land use policy in consultation with landowners, improve certification, update policy and legislation, including licensing, to strengthen institutional mechanisms.
- ✓ Labour will protect our native forests, including mangrove forests. Planting of exotics will only be permitted in cut-over or non-forested areas. Labour will ensure our drinking water supply is secured by keeping 40 percent of each catchment naturally forested, in line with the Millennium Development Goal

Labour will protect our native forests, including mangrove forests. Planting of exotics will only be permitted in cut-over or non-forested areas.



## Fisheries

Our fisheries resources have the potential to be a significant component of our national income. However, the SDL Government has mismanaged this important natural resource, with local waters being over-fished and declining yields. Labour believes that fishing must be sustainable – so that we have a healthy industry not only now but in the future.

### Labour's plan for Fisheries

- ✓ We will enact the Fisheries Management Bill and the implementation of management plans in qoliqoli, on a progressive basis, including marine reserves, to serve as perpetual restocking areas.
- ✓ We will strictly enforce the Tuna Management Plan, in particular the allowable catch and vessel numbers.
- ✓ We will extend the network of rural fish centres, especially in isolated areas, providing marketing and shipping facilities to help enhance incomes for villages.
- ✓ We will encourage new industries such as pearls, aquaculture and seaweed, involving the community
- ✓ Mangroves are an important site of breeding and renewal for fish stocks, but our mangrove areas are under threat from development and clearing. Labour will improve management of mangroves to protect the future of our fishing industry.
- ✓ Labour will support a 'research and development' commercial fishing vessel, aimed at unexploited deeper water species, in addition to the 'snappers', on sea mounts and deep slopes in southern waters.

Labour believes that fishing must be sustainable – so that we have a healthy industry not only now but in the future.





## Rural Development

Labour believes that people in the rural areas have a right to decent incomes and the basic amenities of modern life – good roads, effective sanitation and health care, clean piped water, electricity and telephones.

Rural Development has always been an important cornerstone of Labour's policy for national development to create jobs and improve the quality of life of rural people. Closely linked with this is Labour's focus on agricultural and infrastructure development designed to open up areas in the interior.

### What Labour plans:

Labour will revamp the rural economy by refocusing attention on agricultural growth and diversity to create jobs and provide increased opportunities for income generation.

- ✓ Land is a crucial part of Labour's initiative for rural development. Opening up more land with proper roading, water reticulation, electricity and other necessary infrastructure will create impetus for agri-commercial development.
- ✓ Labour will promote the integrated processing of tropical fruits such as mango, papaya, passion fruit, guava, citrus and pineapple into a range of fruit pulp, juice, chutneys and dried fruit as a major commercial initiative
- ✓ Labour will expand beef production in coastal areas of Vanua Levu
- ✓ We will explore the scope for organically grown fruits and vegetables, especially for export
- ✓ Extension of dairy production in Tailevu and Naitasiri. We will also pursue similar large scale dairy production in the West geared in particular to meet the demands of Tourism.
- ✓ In partnership with the private sector, we will upgrade rural infrastructure and ensure they are well maintained.

Rural Development has always been an important cornerstone of Labour's policy for national development to create jobs and improve the quality of life of rural people.

### SDL's Legacy

The rural sector has been grossly neglected under the SDL. Depressed rural economies have forced hundreds of families to move to urban areas in search of jobs and improved quality of life, creating social problems in towns and cities. SDL's neglect and insensitivity to the needs of rural people abound everywhere:

- ✗ Failure to renew agricultural leases have led to a real decline in rural incomes and employment opportunities particularly in the North
- ✗ The deplorable condition of roads cause enormous hardship to the travelling public with buses refusing to service routes with bad roads.
- ✗ Constant disruption to water supplies and contaminated water is a real issue both for rural as well as urban societies
- ✗ Rural schools and medical facilities are neglected, ill equipped and inadequately staffed





## Tourism

Fiji's friendly people and unspoilt tropical environment makes it a highly attractive destination for tourists from our region and beyond.

Tourism has the potential to particularly benefit indigenous Fijians, create jobs and investment opportunities.

However, a lot more needs to be done to spread the benefits of tourism and to ensure greater Fijian participation. Labour in 1999/2000 – facilitated \$300 million in hotel investment projects which were poised for takeoff when the coup took place.

### Labour's plan to develop Tourism

- ✓ Labour will open up our air routes to provide greater competition and cheaper fares.
- ✓ We will ensure tourist income benefits the local economy, including measures to ensure greater use of local agricultural products.
- ✓ We will encourage tourism development in other parts of Fiji – currently it is confined largely in the West.
- ✓ Labour will work to make inter-island travel affordable and comfortable.
- ✓ Labour will prioritise tourist development in the heritage areas of Levuka in Ovalau, Taveuni, Kadavu and other outer islands
- ✓ Labour will revive the sales of Fijian paintings, authentic arts and crafts to help boost village incomes

Labour will ensure that tourism benefits the local economy far more than at present





## Environment

Fiji's natural, largely unpolluted tropical environment is one of its most important assets. Labour believes that this natural beauty must be preserved and our natural resources managed for the benefit of both current and future generations.

### Labour's plan to protect our environment

- ✓ Labour will monitor the exploitation of our marine resources to ensure long term sustainability.
- ✓ Labour will support indigenous communities who seek to use traditional customs (tabu) to prevent overfishing in their local areas.
- ✓ Labour will promulgate regulations to limit pollution from industry, including requiring major tourist developments to have effective sewage treatment facilities, and monitoring the impact of fertilizers and other pollutants on our precious coral reefs.
- ✓ Labour will give priority to the conservation of Fiji's biodiversity, much of which is unique to Fiji. We will provide the necessary resources to implement the National Diversity Strategy and Action Plan.
- ✓ Labour will fund stormwater programs to prevent pollution and flooding during heavy rains.

Labour believes that Fiji's natural beauty must be preserved and our natural resources managed for the benefit of both current and future generations.

### Labour's plan for Ecotourism

Fiji's natural heritage is enormously attractive to those who seek to escape the tensions and stresses of modern cities. Labour will work to develop tourism opportunities that exploit this attraction, while protecting and preserving the environment

- ✓ Fiji's vast array of colourful flora and fauna will be in a system of nature parks and gardens which will attract tourists and provide recreational facilities for our people. Botanical Gardens in Suva and other municipalities will be restored, with Suva becoming the "Garden City of the Pacific".
- ✓ Labour will establish a special fund to assist eco tourism projects on land owned by Fijian villages.
- ✓ We will work with the tourism industry to promote and develop new tourist activities, including hikes and trips to the remote interior, canoeing and traditional fishing.





## SDL has failed the Fijian people

Social indicators show that the plight of the ordinary Fijian has worsened in the 5 years of SDL rule despite its much-vaunted Blueprint:

- X Of the 25,000 desperate people who line up each month to receive the State's meagre Family Assistance allowance, the majority are Fijians. They make up 57% of the total or 13,000 families
- X Fijians make up the majority of the 90,000 people squatting in the Suva/Nausori corridor today – in overcrowded, unhealthy hovels lacking water, electricity and proper sanitation
- X Fijian students continue to do poorly in education despite the SDL's massive funding for Fijian education under the Blueprint.
- X Of the 1279 prison population, Fijians make up 984 or 77%.
- X There has been an alarming increase in the death rate of Fijian babies – standing at 70% of the total infant mortality in 2004. This is clearly an indication of declining standards of living
- X An alarming increase in HIV/Aids cases among the Fijian community – 172 out of a total of 182 in 2004

Labour believes that SDL's blueprint was designed to enrich only the elite in Fijian society, those close to the SDL.

## Supporting our indigenous heritage

The Fiji Labour Party believes that the social and economic progress of the indigenous Fijian people is essential for the well-being of the nation.

Labour has a deep sympathy for the ordinary Fijian men and women torn between their social and cultural obligations and the expectations of modern life. As a result, they are often misguided and exploited by the unscrupulous among their own.

The tragedy is that the unscrupulous use the race card to play on the emotions and fears of the ordinary Fijian to serve their own vested interests and to fill their pockets.

Three coups have been staged since 1987 under the guise of protecting indigenous Fijian interests. Twice, democratically elected Labour governments were deposed by these coups which plunged the nation into darkness. Tens of millions of dollars have been spent on affirmative action programmes for the community. Yet, the majority of them are today among the poorest in the nation.

### Labour's plans:

- ✓ Labour believes that as owners of Fiji's rich natural resources, there is no reason why the ordinary Fijian should be classified as poor. It is obvious that the benefits of these resources are not filtering down to the ordinary Fijian people.
- ✓ We believe that the wealth and well-being of the Fijian people lie largely in the sustainable development of their land, forest, mineral and marine resources. There must be an equitable sharing of wealth among the Fijian people.
- ✓ FLP believes that the problems of the indigenous community have to be addressed through an integrated approach – we have therefore identified a range of special assistance programmes for each important socio-economic sector: Education, Tourism, Rural Development, Economy, Natural Resources.
- ✓ In addition, our policies on Health, Poverty Alleviation, Social Welfare, Youth, Sports and Culture will all benefit the Fijian community, as others. We believe that a vibrant, strong economy will create jobs, improve wages and the general quality of life of all our people.
- ✓ FLP will endeavour to bring Fijians into the mainstream of commerce through sustainable development of their resources
- ✓ We will ensure all provinces benefit equally from special State assistance, based on needs.





## Land

The special relationship between indigenous Fijians and their land will form the cornerstone of Labour's approach to land. Labour will fully protect Fijian ownership of land, and encourage a pragmatic approach to land development for the economic benefit of the landowners and the nation as a whole.

Labour believes that landowners stand to gain tremendously from proper utilisation and use of their land resources thus building a strong rural economy and community. Labour's approach will end the present situation where land lies idle and unproductive.

### Labour's plan

- ✓ We will co-operate with land owners to introduce land utilization programmes aimed at boosting agricultural production.
- ✓ Landowners will be encouraged and assisted to participate in land development programmes/projects of all types - agricultural, commercial, residential and industrial - so as to enhance their incomes
- ✓ A special financial allocation will be set aside each year to assist native landowners to participate in land development projects for commercial agriculture
- ✓ We will work closely with the Native Lands Trust Board to formulate policies on productive utilization of native land for the benefit of landowners and the national economy.

### Myths and Facts

During the term of the Labour-led Government in 1999/2000 unscrupulous politicians misrepresented our position on land, creating fear in the Fijian community.

These are the real facts:

Lies	Fact
Labour tried to take land away from the Fijian people	Labour's plan was to use government resources to help develop land for the benefit of traditional owners.
Labour tried to undermine the Great Council of Chiefs	Labour always believed that co-operation with the Great Council of Chiefs was the best approach.
The proposed Land Use Commission undermined traditional Fijian rights	The Land Use Commission would have brought enormous benefits to Fijian landowners and the rural community, and this idea has now been copied by the SDL government but they have failed to allocate funds to implement it.





## Housing

Labour believes that we are all entitled to secure housing. Yet housing has become a critical national problem with squatter settlements springing up all over Fiji. There are an estimated 90,000 squatters in the Suva-Nausori-Navua corridor alone.

SDL has failed to address poverty, especially in rural areas, forcing many rural people to move to urban areas in search of jobs. Many people find themselves without housing or employment in the city, far from their family and village support.

The housing shortage affects all sections of our community

Squatter Population	Fijians	Indians	Others	Total
Central Division	5295	3,377	15	<b>8,687</b>
Western Division	837	3,316	15	<b>4,168</b>
Northern Division	177	655	38	<b>870</b>
<b>GRAND TOTAL</b>	<b>6309</b>	<b>7,348</b>	<b>68</b>	<b>13,725</b>

2003 figures: Ministry of Local Govt, Housing, Squatter Settlement

## Labour's plan

Labour is committed to ensuring that every family has a decent home. We will encourage home ownership through policies which will make it affordable.

- ✓ We will increase the squatter resettlement funding to more realistic levels
- ✓ We will identify and develop large tracts of vacant land for resettlement including working with private developers to open up residential areas along the Suva/Nausori/Navua and the Sigatoka/Latuoka corridors
- ✓ We will keep housing loan interest rates low through provision of soft money to both private and public lending institutions
- ✓ Public Rental Board housing will be improved and made safer; PRB will phase out the current unsafe multi-storey structures.
- ✓ Labour will strengthen cooperation with and increase assistance to welfare agencies providing homes for the disadvantaged.
- ✓ We will continue the rural housing funding begun in 1999 and cooperate with Provincial Councils and leaders to improve village housing.





## Women

Labour believes that women are equal partners with men, and should play a full and active role in the political, economic, cultural and social life of Fiji.

However there are still many barriers to women's full participation. Women are not adequately represented in Parliament; they face exploitation in the workplace and frequently do not receive wages equal to male workers. Women are also more likely to live in poverty, as their access to resources, including credit and land, remains poor. Violence against women and children, both physical and sexual, is on the rise.

### What a Labour Government will do:

- ✓ We will enforce the principle of "equal pay for work of equal value"
- ✓ We will not tolerate exploitation and discrimination against women workers including sexual harassment
- ✓ We will work to reduce violence against women and children, including better law enforcement and improved support services for victims,
- ✓ We will reactivate the National Women's Advisory Council formed by the Labour Government in 2000 and hold an annual Women's Summit for women community leaders.
- ✓ We will improve facilities and support for women's health, in particular reproductive health, including mammography, pap smears, ante and post natal care and teenage pregnancy.
- ✓ We will set up a Gender Equality Commission to review existing legislation to remove discrimination against women and to ensure women's issues are considered when government is making new laws. The Commission will deal with complaints regarding domestic violence and workplace discrimination.

Labour believes that women are equal partners with men, and should play a full and active role in the political, economic, cultural and social life of Fiji.



Rural women outline their concerns.





## Law and Justice

Labour believes that a strong and prosperous future for Fiji requires clean, open and transparent government, with strict adherence to the rule of law. Justice must be available swiftly and transparently, and we need a well equipped and professional police and security force to ensure we can all feel safe.



### SDL's failure to uphold our constitution

SDL failed to honour constitutional provisions on power sharing through the appointment of a multi-party cabinet.

They undermined Fiji's democratic and legal system through their sympathy for the conspirators of the 2000 coup, including giving them Cabinet positions and sending them as heads of diplomatic missions overseas. The Amnesty Bill, which is designed to free those convicted of terrorist activities, exposes SDL's willingness to toy with Fiji's democratic traditions for their own narrow purposes.

### Labour's plan to improve security, eradicate corruption and restore justice

- ✓ Labour will legislate a **Code of Conduct** for all holders of public office including Government Ministers and Members of Parliament (Section 156 of the Constitution).
- ✓ Labour will enact a **Freedom of Information Act** providing open access to government information (Section 174 of the Constitution).
- ✓ Labour will scrap the PRTU (Amnesty) Bill and will approach national reconciliation through dialogue and consensus.
- ✓ We will enact tough anti-corrupt practices legislation enabling the appointment of an independent commission with powers to inquire into **allegations of corruption** and prosecute offenders, both in private and public sectors.
- ✓ Labour will give more resources to the **courts** to clear the huge backlog of cases and introduce timelines for cases to be concluded and decisions given
- ✓ Labour will create special courts for traffic offences and petty crime to free up the established court system to deal more swiftly with serious cases
- ✓ Labour will appoint a Legal Services Commission to receive and investigate complaints against legal practitioners – this will be independent of the Fiji Law Society.
- ✓ We will establish a separate Environment Court to deal with breaches of the environment legislation
- ✓ Labour will provide for the upgrading of the **Police Force**, to fully equip it with professional and technical skills
- ✓ A **Police Integrity Commission** will be established to investigate and prosecute complaints against police.
- ✓ Labour will initiate, assist and fund community policing schemes to keep homes safe from attacks by thugs.
- ✓ Labour will review penalties and bail conditions for violent crimes.





## Labour Relations

The Fiji Labour Party believes that a sound Labour relations framework is vital for national development, ensuring a fair distribution of benefits to workers and business owners.

Unemployment, poverty and squatter settlements have reached record levels as a result of overall social and economic iniquities brought on by the SDL.

Surveys indicate that 85% of those living in poverty actually hold jobs, but receive wages that are well below the bread-line. A just living wage is therefore essential in our efforts to contain poverty and ensure social justice.

### What a Labour Government will do:

- ✓ We will ensure that every worker enjoys the right to fair labour practices, including humane treatment and proper working conditions (Section 33 of the Constitution).
- ✓ We will re-establish the Tripartite Forum to ensure a harmonious industrial relations environment through partnership between the government, trade unions and employers.
- ✓ We believe in the principle of equal pay for equal work and will strengthen legislation against sexual harassment, exploitation and discrimination against women.
- ✓ We will strengthen provisions on maternity leave for workers
- ✓ We will ensure fair and equitable Worker's compensation for work-related illness, injury/death.
- ✓ We will streamline mediation and arbitration machinery for early settlement of industrial disputes, providing fairer outcomes and minimizing the costs and delays of litigation to both workers and employers.
- ✓ We will work to eliminate child labour and ensure that rules governing wages, humane working conditions and occupational health and safety are enforced.

The Fiji Labour Party believes that a sound Labour relations framework is vital for national development, ensuring a fair distribution of benefits to workers and business owners.



Good relations between employers and the union lead to greater productivity.





## Youth, Arts, Culture, Heritage and Sport

### Youth

Labour will reduce the voting age to 18 , as we recognize that young people are quite capable of making important decisions.

Labour believes that young people are our most valuable asset. Labour will work to ensure that our youths have the opportunities and support to make the most of their individual or group talents.

Labour will set up an Institute of Fine Arts to help develop skills in fine arts such as painting, music, dance and acting so as to create a viable entertainment industry

Labour will set up a [National Service Volunteer Scheme](#) to engage young people in community service and vocational training to prepare them for the job market

### Sport

Labour will actively promote sports as a healthy pursuit particularly for our young people, actively seeking support from role models such as Vijay Singh, Waisale Serevi.

Labour will encourage and assist in the development of sports which not only brings national glory but also provides income earning opportunities on the international circuit.



Mahendra Chaudhry, a rugby enthusiast, meets a member of the Fiji team in 2000.



# Vote Labour Change the Future

Scores of our young sportsmen are already earning huge sums of money as professionals overseas.

Labour will assist in the development of sporting facilities at all major urban centres

Labour will explore the possibility of setting up a sports academy for professionally oriented training to prepare our talented sports people for overseas sporting opportunities.

## Arts

Labour believes that arts and culture should form a lively part of Fiji's life. Fiji has a rich and diverse tradition, including a unique indigenous culture, with traditions and value systems which must be preserved.

Quite apart from its aesthetic and emotional appeal, art, music and culture carry enormous potential for job creation and income generation.

Unfortunately, this is a neglected area. The SDL government has done very little to preserve and promote our cultural heritage.

## Labour's plan for the Arts

- ✓ Labour will promote and support opportunities for cultural expression and experience for all ethnic groups. A fund will be established for this purpose. The private sector will be encouraged to participate.
- ✓ Fiji's heritage sites such as Levuka, Vuda and other historical places will be restored and preserved – they will provide an added dimension to our tourism industry
- ✓ Labour will set up an Institute of the Arts to help develop skills in fine arts such as painting, music, and dance.
- ✓ Labour will encourage commercial opportunities for traditional art and crafts to boost incomes for people in the outer islands and preserve and develop the unique craft of each province.
- ✓ Labour will encourage and sponsor an annual Arts Alive International Festival as a cultural celebration.



Fiji's people possess a rich and diverse cultural mix which Labour sees as our strength.

Labour believes that arts and culture should form a lively part of Fiji's life. Fiji has a rich and diverse tradition, including a unique indigenous culture, with traditions and value systems which must be preserved.





## Infrastructure and the Utilities

### SDL's Legacy

- X Children forced to walk four miles to school in the heat and slush because roads are in such appalling condition buses have stopped operating
- X Muddy tap water for days in the Suva city cause an epidemic of skin and eye diseases, gastroenteritis and other health problems
- X Chronic water disruptions in certain parts of Suva and Nasinu, Lautoka, Ba and Sigatoka lead to water cuts for cooking and drinking at peak hours
- X Unannounced power outages cause frustrations particularly over the week-ends and cause costly damage to electronic and IT equipment
- X Government failed to heed warnings for months that the Savusavu Highway in the North was slipping dangerously - the highway totally collapsed during prolonged rains in February cutting off vital supply links between Labasa and Savusavu.

Labour believes that people have a right of access to clean piped water, good roads, electricity and telephone and that these amenities must be affordable.

Under the SDL government our infrastructure and the utilities have deteriorated to a point where it is causing serious hardship and inconvenience to the public. When residents of our towns and cities are forced to go without water for weeks on end, the problem has reached crisis point.

Infrastructure is an important indicator of a country's progress and development. It also plays a significant role in attracting and determining investor confidence. The state of Fiji's roads, including the highways, water reticulation, constant power outages, the deteriorating state of medical services, filthy towns and cities, overgrown gardens and green verges and clogged drains along the roadside all give a general air of decay and neglect that characterizes the SDL rule of 5 years.

**The people of Fiji deserve better.** The problem is not funding but the proper utilization of funds. A lot of the money allocated for capital works have been swallowed up by scams, corruption, financial mismanagement and wastage. Scams abound in the Ministry of Works in the delivery of water, the granting of contracts for road works, bridges etc.

### What Labour will do:

- ✓ Labour will build more dams for water storage both for household and industrial use as well as irrigation
- ✓ Labour will explore partnerships with the private sector to upgrade roads, bridges, water supply, electricity and telecommunications services
- ✓ Labour will ensure greater outlay on capital works through prudent government spending
- ✓ Labour will weed out corrupt practices in the Ministry of Works.

**Labour Leader Mahendra Chaudhry receiving a gift of appreciation from the people of Koronubu, Ba after the donation of power supply extension**





## Land transport

Fiji Labour Party believes that everyone has the right to safe and affordable means of transport and that roads in rural as well as urban centres should be maintained in good condition.

Labour is particularly concerned at the mounting criticism from private and public vehicle owners against the excesses of the Land Transport Authority.

The LTA's major focus should be the safety and convenience of the travelling public. Under the SDL, LTA has turned into a cash cow for the government, making money through the imposition of excessive fines for minor infringements. Corruption is high and it has become an unwelcome imposition on the travelling public. LTA's excesses have made life difficult for farmers, taxi operators, carrier operators as well as private vehicle owners.

### Labour will:

- ✓ Review the entire LTA Act of 1998 and its subsidiary regulations (2000) to address current grievances against the LTA.
- ✓ Deregulate public transportation in the rural areas to meet the needs of the rural population
- ✓ Reduce the excessive fines currently provided for in the LTA Regulations to take account of people's ability to pay
- ✓ Bring total transparency in the issuance of public transport licences.

Fiji Labour Party believes that everyone has the right to safe and affordable means of transport and that roads in rural as well as urban centres should be maintained in good condition.



Rural communities, such as farmers, are desparately in need of improved transport infrastructure and facilities.





## Foreign Policy

Fiji's foreign policy must be guided by what is in its best interest. As a sovereign nation, Fiji must exercise its right to pursue an independent foreign policy.

We will ensure Fiji's commercial interests are promoted with vigour through its diplomatic missions, and strengthen links with international and regional organisations.

We will concentrate all our resources in securing maximum development assistance and better accessibility for our major exports.

We will continue our friendly relations with our neighbouring island states and with Australia and New Zealand, the US, Asian nations and the EU. We value also our relations with all nations and organisations which provide us technical assistance and trade opportunities.

At the same time Fiji will actively pursue alliances with other vulnerable economies around the world to combat the adverse impact of globalisation and trade liberalism policies on our economy.

## Media



The media has a crucial role in an open, democratic society. We must encourage the highest standards of journalism through training and self-evaluation. We will ensure that:

- ✓ The media is free to inform and express opinions
- ✓ Encourage the media to support the values of our multi-cultural society
- ✓ Support the establishment of a television channel for programmes in both the main vernacular languages, Fijian and Hindi which should eventually be extended to other ethnic groups.

## Local Government



Fiji's towns and cities are in a state of neglect and deterioration. They look unkempt and dirty and are sadly lacking in amenities for the public. Ratepayers are just not getting value for money despite regular hikes in rates.

There has been little development of recreational facilities, parks and gardens in the past decade or so.

FLP believes the existing local government system is fraught with inefficiencies, corruption, and laxity in enforcing regulation and by-laws and promoting the interests of the ratepayers.

We will carry out a review of the present system to bring about changes to ensure maximum benefit to ratepayers.



Now we are ready to take up a new challenge for a prosperous and stable Fiji where everyone gets their fair share.



With humility and honesty, that is part of our living tradition, we must serve the people of the land.

That challenge is for all of us. National development plans must ensure that the interests of our masses become paramount. If our ordinary people lose faith through unfair and inequitable policies, then the future is fraught with uncertainties.

Our coalition must restore the faith of our people in democracy, in the government of the day and above all, in Fiji



**FIJI LABOUR PARTY**



Dr Timoci Bavadra  
Fiji Labour Party leader, 1986