



## WELCOME TO SAFE DRIVER

Welcome to the first edition of LTA's Safe Driver newsletter. As a bi-monthly, it will be filled with timely news about Authority activities to keep you up to date. We want your feedback. So please send your comments and ideas to: [rashmi.chandrani@lta.com.fj](mailto:rashmi.chandrani@lta.com.fj)

THE OFFICIAL NEWSLETTER OF THE LAND TRANSPORT AUTHORITY OF FIJI

## LTA is 365 hard working honest employees



LTA Chairman, Vijay Maharaj, and Permanent Secretary for Transport & Infrastructure, Paul Bayly.

AND so began the headline of a fact sheet handed out at a media conference held recently, organised to address concerns about the report of corruption in the newspapers earlier in the week.

The fact sheet continued, 'It is unfortunate that those few, who have been accused of corruption have cast a shadow over the 365 hardworking honest employees, who are operating what is among the finest organisations in Fiji: LTA.

Presiding over the media conference were the Chairman of LTA Board, Vijay Maharaj, and the Permanent Secretary in the Ministry of Infrastructure and Transport, Paul Bayly, also an LTA Board member.

Both said that corruption has no place in LTA and that, working with FICAC, they would deal forcefully with it wherever it was discovered. But both reaffirmed their belief that the LTA team was honest and hard working – it was only a few that had damaged its image.

The response by the media to the conference was positive with wide coverage citing the diverse range of services effectively provided by LTA, as well as Mr Maharaj's and Mr Bayly's comments on corruption.

## LTA addresses overloading



The Lami weighbridge (pictured here), is one of three permanent weighbridges that ensure trucks are within their legal weight loads.

MAJOR damage to the bridges and roads in Fiji caused by overloaded vehicles is now being addressed by the LTA.

From June to October this year, according to LTA's Acting CEO, Aptinko Vaurasi, 351 companies as well as drivers have been booked for overloading with fines amounting to \$1,624,500. Companies are being fined \$1,000 for every tonne over the legal limit.

To enforce the overloading, the LTA now operates two round the clock weighbridge stations, one in Lami and the other in Lautoka. An additional weighbridge is located at the LTA headquarters in Valelevu.

The LTA is also operating three portable weighbridges in both Viti Levu and Vanua Levu. These portable weighbridges are fitted with "accurate" scales that vehicles

drive onto to check their weight.

Vehicles found to be overweight are taken off the road, fined, and forced to reduce their load to a legal limit – or are not allowed to proceed.

"We are taking this very seriously. Five trucking companies that continued to reoffend have been asked to show cause why their licenses should not be suspended," said Mr Vaurasi.

An MOU between LTA, Government and the Fiji Road Haulage Association was recently signed to address the overloading and to investigate ways in which the truck companies can reduce their vehicle loads through better distribution of weights.

"In the end, it is to everyone's benefit to bring loads down to legal limits no matter the solution," Mr Vaurasi concluded.

## Enforcement officers to be equipped with electronic devices

THE LTA is currently trialling the efficiency of Tough Pads in the Central, Western and Northern Divisions. Once fully operational, the electronic tablets "will assist our enforcement officers to accurately check and transmit driver information data automatically from the field directly to LTA's main server," according to the Authority's Manager IT, Rajeshwar Prasad.

With five devices currently on trial, the Tough

Pads have replaced the Tough Books and can either be handheld or fitted onto the steering wheel of an LTA enforcement officer's vehicle.

A mobile phone application called e-App is also being trialled and will complement the Tough Pad.

"All LTA managers and road safety officers will be equipped with the e-App on their smartphones once the trial period is complete and the app is ready for use.

"LTA wants our enforcement officers to be fully equipped when they're in the field so our job here at IT is to make the necessary information available to the officers whenever and wherever they need it," he said.



Systems Network Administrator, Ritesh Mani (l), and IT Support Officer, Aisake Qarikau, display the Tough Pad and Smart Phone e-App.

# Learning road safety essential for children, says LTA

FIJI'S Land Transport Authority is determined to bring road safety closer to children.

Its team of former teachers has carried out school visits since the beginning of the year to actively promote to students the importance of safety on the roads.

Commenting on the effort, LTA's Manager Road Safety, Veronica Malani, said her team presented each classroom visited with road safety information to create awareness among the students as pedestrians, and of their future responsibilities when they are of an

age to drive their own vehicle.

Road safety, she said, is everybody's business and none are more important than the children.

As of October, LTA's schools road safety awareness team has reached more than 81,000 students and 6,870 teachers across 18 pre-schools, 165 primary schools, and 45 secondary schools.

"We also want the children to take the message of road safety home to their parents. We believe that children have an influence in reminding their parents that safe driving saves lives," Mrs Malani said.



Students of Mahatma Gandhi Memorial School question LTA Road Safety Instructor, Ange Deo, about wearing earphones while walking on the road.

## Fully automated system now in place

PREVIOUSLY handled by LTA vehicle examiners, the Authority now has a Fully Automated Motor Vehicle Inspection System that "minimises contact between the examiners and customers and improves safety and turnover time," says LTA Mechanical Engineer, John Macarthur.

With the automated vehicle inspection, vehicles go through eight stages of inspection that tests brakes, headlight aim, smoke emission, gas, tint, noise, suspension, and dynamometer (checks for taxi metres).

"What used to take 20 minutes to examine one vehicle is now reduced to 10 to 12 minutes for each examination, depending on the vehicle," he said.

In the automated system, drivers veer their vehicles onto the inspection lane while the LTA examiner inspects the vehicle



Inspection turnover time is lessened with the fully automated vehicle inspection system.

through the automated system, at the same time offering the driver instructions through the eight stages.

"At the end of the inspection, the examiner prints out and hands over the inspection document to the driver of the vehicle. It is fast, efficient, and safe for all concerned," said Mr Macarthur.

## Vaurasi is Acting Chief Executive

LTA Board Member, Aptinko Vaurasi, has been appointed Acting Chief Executive replacing the former CEO, Naisa Tuinaceva, who took early retirement that will complete his six-year contract with the Authority at the end of December.

Mr Vaurasi is expected to continue in his present position until a new CEO is named early next year.



## MOU signed to improve TIN processing

MEMBERS of the public will benefit from a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) signed between LTA and the Judicial Department of Fiji that "will significantly clear the confusion between the issuing of a Traffic Infringement Notice (TIN) and court proceedings," according to the LTA Chairman, Vijay Maharaj.

Signing the MOU was Mr Maharaj and the Chief Registrar of the Judicial Department, Yohan Liyanage.

The MOU provides for access by the Judicial Department to the LTA database of all TINs issued by the Authority. It also allows the Judicial Department to directly upload court decisions into the LTA's database relating to the TIN. It further provides information from LTA to the courts if the TIN has been paid.

"Hundreds of TINs are issued almost daily with dates for people to pay their fines at the LTA. But most

don't. These unpaid TINs are sent to the courts for action, although they continue to show as unpaid in the LTA database," he said.

A person, who has been acquitted by the courts, Mr Maharaj explained, may have difficulty renewing his driving license because, "As far as LTA is concerned, he can't, not until LTA is notified by the court that he has been acquitted or paid his penalty.

"To clear a name, a person must visit the courts to obtain the document that will show acquittal. With the MOU this is no longer the case."

Mr Maharaj said LTA will now know immediately the status of all TINs in its system and that will ensure prompt attention to any requests or concerns relating to TINs from members of the public.

While the MOU process will initially begin in the Nasinu Court, it will eventually expand throughout Fiji.



Shown exchanging the MOU documents are (left) Chief Registrar for the Judicial Department, Yohan Liyanage, and Chairman, Vijay Maharaj.

## Call Centre service attracts members of the public



Call Centre agents receive close to 5,000 calls per month relating to traffic infringements.

ACCORDING to Call Centre Team Leader, Abhishek Chandra, the Centre receives up to 5,000 telephone calls and 1,700 texts in a month relating to traffic infringements from members of the public. The numbers, he says, continue to increase.

“Complaints vary from witnessing or experiencing reckless driving behaviour to observing thick exhaust emissions from vehicles,” he said.

Call Centre agents receive calls and text messages daily through its free Short Message Code (SMS) 582, live chat on the Authority’s website, landline, email, and walk-ins.

“Since we are not a 24-hour operation, our response may not be

instant, but we do respond as soon as possible.

The text messaging service operating on both the Digicel and Vodafone networks, he says, could amount to about 300 messages.

In October, there were a total of 1,196 complaints, of which 1,038 were resolved, 12 were pending awaiting a resolution and 146 were referred to other authorities.

“We consider both the offender and complainants’ statements and depending on the incident, we may call them in for an interview. Sometimes people come in with video recordings on their mobile phones. Depending on the evidence, we may take it up with our Enforcement team,” he added.

## Online services to ease customer needs

CUSTOMERS of the LTA can now register online to access the Authority’s new range of web-based services that are focused on registration and licensing. LTA’s IT Manager, Rajeshwar Prasad, says the services are now available on its website.

The new services are part of an LTA system upgrade that is designed to soon allow many customers to do their business “from the comfort of their homes on their computer,” said Mr Prasad.

The online services available now are focused on a range of customer information that includes infringement notices, license and registration expiry dates, fee calculators for determining driver license and vehicle registration renewal fees, and the ability to update contact details.

A more extensive range of online services is expected to be fully operational by early 2017 when customers will be able to:

- Book online and make payments for vehicle inspection,
- Make TIN payments for those TINs payable at LTA,
- Submit a PSV preliminary application,
- Book a Defensive Driving Course,
- Apply for a learners permit, and
- Renew their drivers’ license.

To access the online services, customers may download a registration form from [www.lta.com.fj](http://www.lta.com.fj) or pick one up from an LTA Customer Service Centre.

“Once the form is completed it will be processed with confirmation through email that the customer is now registered online,” he said.

## Shore Buses expand fleet

THE Chairman of the Land Transport Authority, Vijay Maharaj, recently launched five new 61-seater buses belonging to Shore Buses that will grow the bus company’s fleet to 55.

“For Director, Jasper Singh, his family and team, they are to be congratulated for their continuing outstanding contribution to the growth of the transport industry and their commitment to the community,” he said.

Mr Maharaj said that LTA is actively involved with the country’s bus companies “in setting standards in operations and equipment. A key to this is its

Quality Assurance Management System, QAM.

“I am happy to say that Shore Buses has been awarded the Quality Assurance Management Awards by LTA for all three phases of the programme.”

The three phases of the programme address proper data registration, tools and training to equipment maintenance.

Shore Buses began operation in Fiji in 1944 with a 12-passenger bus operating out of Veisari. Today, it operates out of Wailada and runs three main routes around Suva transporting an annual average of 1,825,000 passengers per year.



Chairman, Vijay Maharaj, officially launches Shore Buses new vehicles.

## Road safety promoted around the country

ROAD safety teams from LTA’s Central/Eastern office joined counterparts in Lautoka, Ba and the Northern Division recently to promote road safety messages to communities.

Teams conducted EEE (Encouragement, Education and Enforcement) programmes with motorists, communities and schools, fulfilling Government’s Fiji Decade of Action for Road Safety Campaign 2011 to 2020.

The programme is focused on “reminding members of the public of the consequences of not heeding road safety rules and advice,” said LTA’s Manager Road Safety, Veronica Malani.

“Mobile checkpoints were established close to Community Police Posts between Sigatoka and Ba during peak morning and afternoon traffic hours. Drivers, who were cited for breaching traffic rules, were counselled on the spot of their responsibilities towards



The Authority’s road safety teams are proactively sharing road safety messages with members of the public.

other road users,” said Mrs Malani.

Triple E checkpoint operations, she said, had reached 98,384 people between the Nadi, Lautoka and Ba corridor, while the Northern programme reached 3,487 between Nabouwalu, Seaqaqa and Labasa.

Teams targeted primary school students as part of their schools road safety awareness. Demonstrations included the use of video clip presentations to highlight road safety messages.

## ISO certification to standardise LTA operations



General Manager Finance and Administration, Semisi Tawake (standing), makes a point to staff members (l-r) Payroll Officer, Mere Tuqiri, Team Leader HR, Matila Cama, and Manager Finance, Rishi Prasad.

THE LTA is currently undergoing an ISO certification project that will eventually standardise the Authority's operations across the Central/Eastern, Western and Northern regions.

LTA General Manager Finance and Administration, Semisi Tawake, says that the project "will assess all our internal policies, procedures and processes to align ourselves to the ISO standards so that we synchronise across the board.

"We aim to complete the policy part by 7th December throughout our departments in all 21 offices in Fiji. Once endorsed by the Board, we will then move on to the procedures and processes," he added.

The Authority, Mr Tawake said, engaged an independent consultant in 2015 to guide LTA through the certification process, which will include trial runs, internal audits, and reviews before an ISO stamp of approval can be obtained.

He added that a part of the certification process was the upgrading of LTA offices. LTA has recently refurbished its Customer Services Centre in Valelevu and Nakasi and opened and upgraded its Nausori office to a new location in the area.

"Within one and half years we expect to upgrade all our 21 offices in Fiji. Not only will our internal operations be standardised, but our offices will also be aligned to ISO certification," he concluded.

## User friendly public transport for physically challenged



LTA is paving the way to make specially designed public transportation accessible to the physically challenged.

WHILE consultations continue between the Land Transport Authority (LTA) and relevant stakeholders, Fiji could soon see its first user-friendly public transportation for the physically challenged.

"We are in discussion with the Ministry of Transport, bus operators, and the Fiji National Council for Disabled Persons to, among other things, identify suitably designed vehicles that will enable wheelchair-bound persons to enter and exit a bus with ease. We would also like to rope in the taxi operators in our discussions as well," said LTA's Mechanical Engineer, John Macarthur.

The initiative will focus initially on the Central/Eastern Division. Bus routes have yet to be identified. LTA, he said, is "benchmarking designs to international standards. We're looking at the Australian and New Zealand transport industries for guidance on design aspects."

## Speed cameras operational around Viti Levu

TWENTY speed cameras around Viti Levu are now operational, according to Aptinko Vaurasi, Acting CEO of LTA.

Mr Vaurasi said that the cameras have been strategically placed to provide maximum coverage against speeding motorists. Added to the coverage are two portable speed cameras.

"Of the camera locations, only a certain number will be active at any given hour on any given day. There will be no way to determine which are active and which are not," he said.

Speed cameras were initially installed in Kinoya, Nabua and Samabula (inbound towards Central Suva) earlier in the year.

"But the camera locations have been substantially increased to now include three outside of Suva in Lami, Naboro and Navesi as well as 13 sites on the Queens Road from Sigatoka to Lautoka. The cameras have also been installed beyond Lautoka on the Kings Road in Vitogo, Tuvu, as well as in Manoca and Nakasi close to Nausori," said Mr Vaurasi.

From January to mid-November, he said,



To help control incidences of over-speeding, LTA has installed speed cameras at strategic locations on the Kings and Queens roads.

44,733 citations were issued with revenue totaling \$633,730, primarily targeted at speeding vehicles and those running red lights.

"We hope the speed cameras will be a continual reminder of the dangers of speeding. The purpose is not to issue citations, it is to encourage everyone to drive safely," he concluded.

## MOU cements ties between transport authorities

A MEMORANDUM of Understanding that was recently signed between the Land Transport Authority and the Papua New Guinea Road Traffic Authority (RTA) will strengthen ties and enhance information sharing between the two organisations.

Cementing the milestone partnership that began in 2014 were the Chairman of LTA Board, Vijay Maharaj, and his PNG counterpart, Mr Melvin Yalapan,

Board Chairman of Papua New Guinea's RTA.

In signing the MOU, Mr Yalapan described LTA a "model" institution. The RTA is currently upgrading its transportation system and is looking at best practice models outside of PNG as a beacon.

"For the Road Traffic Authority of PNG, we don't need to go far to have a model to look to; the model being LTA. At least in the Pacific, we have a road transport management system that is



LTA staff join with PNG management in witnessing the signing of the MOU between Chairman, Vijay Maharaj, and PNG's RTA Board Chairman, Melvin Yalapan.

established and working," said Mr Yalapan.

Mr Yalapan was part of a top-level delegation from the RTA to observe and draw lessons from LTA's transport management

operations. LTA Acting CEO, Aptinko Vaurasi, said that "since its inception in 1998, LTA has gone through various developments and changes to shape what we are today."